

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 19 March 2013
Subject	Decision No. 12/02016 - Proposed expansion of Oakfield Community Primary School, Dartford
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report informs members of the results of the Public Consultation
Recommendations:	The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills on the decision to issue a public notice to expand Oakfield Primary School.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Dartford district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2017 indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Dartford West planning area.

1.2 On 12 September 2012 the Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member of Education, Learning & Skills that a consultation takes place on the proposal to expand Oakfield Primary School.

1.3 This reports sets out the results of the Public Consultation which took place between Monday 19 November 2012 and Monday 14 January 2013. A public meeting was held on 21 November 2012.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Oakfield Primary School by 30 reception year places taking their PAN to 90 (3FE) for the September 2013 intake. Successive reception year intakes will offer 90 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 630 pupils.

3. Bold Steps and the Kent Commissioning Plan

3.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places” as set out in ‘Bold Steps for Kent’.

3.2 The Dartford section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Dartford West planning area.

4. Outcomes of the Public Consultation

4.1 A significant majority of respondents were in favour of the proposal. The concerns raised at the public meeting are explored in paragraph 5.2 below.

4.2 A summary of the comments received during the consultation period are given at appendix 1.

4.3 A summary of the questions, comments and responses made during the meeting are given at appendix 2.

5. Views

5.1 Local Member

The Local Member is Mrs Ann Allen. Mrs Allen supports the proposal.

5.2 The following views were raised in the public consultation meeting:

(i) Concern over the potential for a dilution in standards at the school.

The responsibility for maintenance of standards at the school is vested in the Head teacher, Mr Garry Ratcliffe who made it clear during the public meeting that he believed that performance standards were not at risk.

(ii) Residents concern over the potential for an increase in traffic or local parking issues.

On site car parking is limited due to site constraints. Increased traffic during drop off and pick up would need to be considered in the wider planning, following a survey by Kent Highways. The school will revisit its travel plan and walking buses may be part of the solution.

(iii) Concerns about whether the school site and playground facilities are large enough for an enlargement.

The feasibility study indicates that the site size is capable of accommodating 3FE. The head teacher is adamant that an enlargement will not jeopardise the provision of existing facilities at the school.

5.3 Area Education Officer

The AEO fully supports this proposal. Demand in Dartford West planning area is outstripping capacity and forecasts indicate that this increasing demand is likely to continue.

5.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Oakfield Primary School are supportive of the proposal.

5.5 Headteacher

The head teacher of the school has been fully consulted and is supportive.

5.6 Parents

A majority of the parents who responded, support the proposal.

5.7 Pupils

The pupils of the school have been offered the opportunity to contribute.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. No comments were received and no changes needed to be made to the Equality Impact Assessment following the consultation period.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Capital funding is required to complete this expansion. The funding available comes from an annual Government allocation, topped up, where eligible, with Developer contributions. The estimated cost for 2013-14 on this expansion is £35,000. This has been included within the 2013-14 capital programme although we still await confirmation from the DfE of our 'basic need' capital allocations for 2013/15

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills on the decision to issue a public notice to expand Oakfield Primary School.

9. Background Documents

Oakfield Primary School consultation document

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Oakfield/consultationHome>

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities,_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/bold_steps_for_kent.aspx

Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-2017

[https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/plans-and-consultations/strategic-plans/Commissioning%20Plan%20for%20Education%20Provision%20Kent%202012-17%20FINAL%20\(Sept-2012\).pdf](https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/plans-and-consultations/strategic-plans/Commissioning%20Plan%20for%20Education%20Provision%20Kent%202012-17%20FINAL%20(Sept-2012).pdf)

Education Cabinet Committee report – 12 September 2012 – Primary Commissioning – Dartford District

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/g4880/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Sep-2012%2010.00%20Education%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Lead Officer Contact details

Simon Webb

Area Education Officer - West Kent

01732 525110

simon.webb@kent.gov.uk

Proposal to expand Oakfield Community Primary School, Dartford

Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed: 400
 Consultation responses received: 23

A summary of the responses received showed that:

	In Favour	Undecided	Opposed
Governors	2		
Staff	12		
Parents	5		3
Pupils			
Other			1
Totals	19		4

Comments in favour of the proposal:

- Oakfield ensure the highest standards and it is expected that similar quality and consideration is given to any new build.

Comments against the proposal:

- I am really concerned about the increased traffic, safety of children crossing the roads and the amount of cars parking on the pavements.
- Severe traffic/parking problems at drop off and collection times.
- The school functions to its capacity now. An increase of 190 would place further strain on the staff, children wouldn't get one-one if needed.
- The playground is not big enough for 630 children.
- Five years ago the children were not getting a good deal - now they are – this must not be jeopardised.

Proposal to expand Oakfield Primary School, Dartford

Summary of Public Consultation Meeting

Purpose of the Meeting

- To explain the proposal to expand Oakfield Primary School
- To give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions and comment
- To listen to views and opinions

Kent County Council is proposing that Oakfield Primary School increases its Year R intake to 90, taking the proposed total capacity of the school from 420 places to 630 places.

The western part of Dartford has seen significant numbers of large and small scale housing development over the last few years. This brings new families to the area, requiring enhancements to the infrastructure of the school in order to meet the future needs of area and its residents.

In 2010 Oakfield Primary School agreed to temporarily enlarge to accommodate the increasing demand for primary school places.

A feasibility study has been undertaken and will be with the school shortly.

A short presentation outlining the proposal for expansion was given by Simon Webb.

Statement from Headteacher, Garry Ratcliffe

The site previously accommodated two separate schools, Oakfield Nursery and Infant and Oakfield Juniors. Standards and attendance were low and the school roll falling. Since the opening of the new school in 2008, there has been a trend of sustained improvement with the school achieving an Ofsted outcome in February 2012 of Good.

Kent vision is to expand the most successful and popular schools and the HTs vision is to support as many children in Dartford as possible. The school has recorded its first ever year of oversubscription, with children on the waiting list.

KS2 results L4 E&M – 2008/09 = 54% : 2011/12 = 88%

KS2 results L5 E&M – 2008/09 = 27% : 2011/12 = 29.3%

When asked about the benefits of a larger school the children said:

- Chance to make more friends
- Chance to raise more money for charity
- Make the school well known in the area
- Council will give more money to fund more resources
- Easy to organise sets

- Children's concerns were:
- Loss of playground space
- School hall
- Staggered play/lunchtimes

Statement from Vice Chair of Governors, Linda Cavender

The school has been in turmoil for a number of years and the governors pushed for expansion to 3FE which they felt necessary to accommodate the growing population.

Governors agree to the proposals subject to:

- Feasibility will be shown to maximum benefit to the children of school
- New permanent buildings necessary to same standard
- Place for collective worship is vital
- Minimum disruption
- No additional temporary buildings
- To ensure best possible outcomes for parents, children and staff at Oakfield.

Question	Response
Will the feasibility report be on display in school and if so, where?	Happy for HT to make feasibility study available to parents and the children.
Note you are consulting with 6 schools in Dartford, what feedback have you received?	We are consulting with, Maypole, Oakfield, Stone St Mary's, Fleetdown, Dartford Bridge and Manor Community and the discussions have been very similar. Parents are concerned, with parking & traffic issues, culture and ethos of school and the health & safety of the children whilst the building works are underway.
Will the expansion programme for all 6 schools be carried out at the same time or will the timetable be staggered.	Hopefully at the same time, during the school holidays to minimise disruption. Obviously we cannot guarantee this but this site should be relatively easy to convert from 2FE to 3FE. Hope to have new buildings in by March 2014.
What are funding requirements to take school up to a 3FE?	Basically the local authority receives funding from central government for basic need. Local authority need to show that due to indigenous growth, there is a need too provide additional accommodation for the school. We are only statutorily required to put in basic accommodation; this might include additional toilets, main hall space, parking and access, soft play and hard play areas but the final decision lies with Headteacher and governors.
	We need 6 more classrooms and

	<p>associated toilets, a PE cupboard, extension to the school adequate for 420 children. Pushing it a little bit further we would like to put a mezzanine floor in new school hall.</p>
<p>Have no doubt that by expanding the school it will remain a success due to Mr Ratcliffe and his staff. I am concerned about the roads and increase in traffic. Walking to school is already quite dangerous and a lot of children will be coming from farther a field.</p>	<p>If the consultation is successful we will progress to a separate consultation with local planning and highway authorities to discuss road network and ensure what is planned is acceptable or mitigated.</p> <p>What I can guarantee to you is that the safety of the children is paramount.</p>
<p>When I came to Dartford I was hoping to get my children into West Hill. Reluctantly I came to Oakfield and now I am very pleased I did. However, one of the reasons why we liked Oakfield initially was due to the green spaces for the children to play on and am afraid we will eventually lose this. Will we be looking at another expansion in 3-4 years time?</p>	<p>No we cannot expand Oakfield Primary school greater than 3FE because of the size of the site. Sports England do not permit us to build on green space.</p> <p>The new classrooms will be by the air raid shelters and link into new school hall. No green space will be lost.</p>
<p>Do we have any guarantees that the new building will match like for like to what we have already in place – is there sufficient funding to ensure this happens? Will parents have the opportunity to comment on the feasibility proposals?</p>	<p>Basic need funding will provide a basic footprint for the new build. It will be up to the governors and headteacher to negotiate and factor in extras. The feasibility study will be available for all to view.</p>
<p>How will the school manage the building works?</p>	<p>The growth will be happen incrementally, year on year so the classrooms will be fitted out one year at a time. If you have empty classrooms you will be committed to offer places to children on a casual admissions basis.</p>
<p>My child is in Y5 and they have split classes of 3 will this be affected by the changes?</p>	<p>My desire is to lower the class sizes in these year groups to raise standards so will continue with the 20 children per class rather than 30 to accelerate learning.</p> <p>The new extension will give us 21 classrooms whilst keeping the nurture spaces free.</p>
<p>Would like to know what the school will look like so await the feasibility plans with interest. At the moment the school already has more classes than classrooms so will there be temporary accommodation as well. The school will</p>	<p>This expansion, although temporary at the moment will be permanent. The nursery will be part of the first stage as we are committed to open in January. There will be 4 classrooms in the nursery and the new style mobile will remain in place for</p>

<p>be disrupted whilst the building work goes on, it is inevitable and if so will one of the playgrounds be the site.</p>	<p>the time being. Both playgrounds will be open whilst construction work is undertaken.</p> <p>There will be disruption and I accept that the children have endured a lot since 2008. There will be loss of some playground space for a while but am hoping that most of the construction work will take place during the summer holidays.</p>
<p>If the proposal does not go ahead, the school has already temporarily enlarged to 3FE, so what happens?</p>	<p>The temporary expansion will continue as the school is already managing. The headteacher and governors are in agreement to making this proposal permanent so unless there are extenuating circumstances I would think the enlargement will go ahead.</p>
<p>Parent There is a lot of new developments in Dartford, how will the schools cope with the additional children coming from those sites. You cannot keep expanding existing schools.</p>	<p>We work very closely with Dartford Borough Council and understand the Glaxco site will provide a 2FE school in 2015 and St James Pit a 2FE primary school which will help to alleviate some problems. If a housing development is over 500 units, the developers are committed to providing a new primary school.</p> <p>If the birth rate continues to rise which it is with a peak in 2019, we will have to identify new areas for expansion.</p> <p>The County Council has invested a significant amount of money into a new forecasting method which is far more accurate than the last one.</p>
<p>Will the old and new buildings physically touch?</p>	<p>Yes, they will.</p>
<p>I am a local resident and was unaware of the success of the school, so congratulations to the headteacher and staff.</p>	
<p>Understand this is a school public consultation what as a local resident I came aware of it today so why was all stakeholders invited?</p> <p>I am in agreement with the proposals but just wanted to ensure that local residents</p>	<p>This is an educational consultation on whether to enlarge the provision at Oakfield Primary School and at the moment it is KCC policy not to consult with local residents. However, I understand the County will be looking at this part of the process in the future.</p>

are consulted.	Headteacher confirmed, he was always willing to meet with parents and residents to discuss the proposals.
General parking is a real issue, especially during pick up and drop off times with some parents parking in front of the garages.	I understand the issues regarding highways /traffic management and this will be looked at as part of a separate consultation with the planning and highways authorities.
Could all parties be communicated with regarding the building works as we have had numerous problems with telephones and electric cabling in the past.	Garry Ratcliffe is an outstanding headteacher, with outstanding staff and I am sure he will make sure that this happens in the future.
	<p>There are many benefits associated with the school becoming a 3FE primary school, including more resources but ultimately we hope it will encourage Mr Ratcliffe to remain as headteacher.</p> <p>Headteacher confirmed he was looking forward to the challenges of managing a 3FE primary school and had no plans to move on. Adding he wished to continue supporting the children of the school and will only employ staff that are passionate about the job.</p>

Leyland Ridings thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the questions that had been asked. He encouraged everyone to send in their comments by the closing date – 14 January 2013.

According to the sign in sheet 33 people attended.