

**From:** Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills

**To:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education & Health Reform

**Subject:** Proposed expansion of West Minster (Community) Primary School from 2FE to 3FE and the addition of a Specialist Resource Base Provision

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee, 24 September 2014

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet Member decision

**Electoral Division:** Sheerness

**Local Member:** Angela Harrison

**Summary:** This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to commission an enlargement of West Minster Primary School from 2FE (60) to 3FE (90) from September 2016 and the addition of a 15 place Specialist Resource Base Provision (SRBP) for children with speech, language and communication needs, starting from September 2015.

*Recommendation(s):*

**The Cabinet Member for Education & Health Reform is asked to consider the responses to the consultation and decide whether to proceed with the proposal and**

- i. Issue a public notice to expand West Minster Primary School from 2FE to 3FE increasing the published admission number to 90 and add a Specialist Resource Base Provision for up to 15 children with speech, language and communication needs.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

- ii. Expand the school and add a SRBP.
- iii. Allocate £3,000,000 from Education & Young People's Services Capital Budget.
- iv. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council
- v. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts

This decision is conditional upon planning permission being granted

Should objections, not already considered by the Cabinet member when taking this decision, be received during the notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal and allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Swale district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 identified a significant pressure in Sheerness and forecast that there would be insufficient places across all year groups from September 2016 onwards and in particular, pressure on places for Reception Year.
- 1.2 It is proposed to permanently enlarge West Minster Primary School by 30 Reception Year places, taking the published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 90 (three forms of entry) for the September 2016 intake. Successive Reception Year intake will offer 90 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 630 pupils.
- 1.3 It is proposed to add a 15 place Specialist Resource Base Provision (SRBP) for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).
- 1.4 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 identified the need for further capacity to serve Sheerness. Kent County Council's strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities recognised the need to increase capacity, including opening SRBPs in mainstream settings so that additional children can have help in a local mainstream school. Feasibility was undertaken showing that there is sufficient space on the school site for a 1FE expansion and the addition of a SRBP.
- 1.5 This report sets out the results of the consultation, which took place between 27 April and 22 May 2015. A consultation meeting for parents/carers, governors and members of staff was held on 13 May 2015.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 It is proposed to enlarge West Minster Primary School by 210 places taking the PAN to 90 (3FE) for the September 2016 intake and eventually a total capacity of 630 places. It is also proposed to add a 15 place SRBP for children with speech, language and communication needs. This would initially open in September 2015 in reconfigured accommodation within the school and take 3-4 pupils.
  - a. Capital: The enlargement of the school requires the provision of 7 additional classrooms, as well as ancillary facilities, plus a classroom for the SRBP. A feasibility study has been completed the total cost is estimated to be in the region of £3,000,000. Appropriate funding has been identified as part of the Medium Term Capital Programme. The costs of the project are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.

b. Revenue: For a period of three academic years from September 2016 the school will receive protection for an additional 30 Reception Year pupils at the rate of £2,740 per pupil. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will be allocated towards the classroom setup costs. The school will receive funding for its SRBP; the funding will be allocated at £10,000 per place, for a guaranteed number of places and top up funding will be allocated in addition to this based on the actual attendance of the pupil.

c. Human: West Minster Primary School will appoint additional teachers, including a specialist teacher for the SRBP, as the need arises and the school size increases.

### **3. Policy Framework**

3.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure that Kent’s young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy” as set out in ‘Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council’s Strategic Statement (2015-2020)’.

3.2 The ‘Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2015-19’ identified the demand for up to 213 Reception Year places within Sheerness. If capacity is not added, there will not be enough places available to meet demand and parental preference.

3.3 The SEND Strategy forms the County Council’s policy and strategy for special educational needs, and was approved by Cabinet in July 2013. It identified the need to increase capacity, including opening SRBPs in mainstream settings so that additional children can have help in a local mainstream school.

### **4. Consultation Outcomes**

4.1 A total of 21 written responses were received; 20 of the respondents supported the proposal to add a SRBP; 19 of the respondents supported the proposal to expand the school.

4.2 A summary of the comments received is provided at Appendix 1.

4.4 A summary of the views and comments given at the consultation meeting is attached at Appendix 2.

### **5. Views**

5.1 The view of the Local Member:  
The Local Member is Ms Angela Harrison who responded that she is in support of the expansion, as long as the school is given enough resources, i.e. proper and adequate space. Ms Harrison commented “as for the SRBP, this is a much needed and welcome resource for the area”.

5.2. The view of the Headteacher and Governing Body:  
The Governing Body unanimously supported the creation of the SRBP and expanding to 3FE at their Full Governing Body meeting on 26 March. Governors recognise that there is a need to provide specialist support to

children with additional needs related to speech, language and communication and that the wider school will benefit from having such a specialist provision with expertise as part of the school. Governors also recognise that there is a shortage of primary school places in Sheerness and wants to support the community by providing additional places for local children.

The Head of School is very much in agreement with creating a SRBP as this would be fulfilling a great need for children.

5.3. The view of the Area Education Officer:

The Area Education Officer for East Kent fully supports this proposal and, having considered other commissioning options, is of the belief that this enlargement is not only necessary, but the most cost-effective and sustainable solution to increased demand in the local area. All other schools in the Sheerness planning area have been considered and Rose Street School, also part of the Sheerness West Federation, is already in the process of being expanded. Other schools on the Island are also being expanded either temporarily or permanently and a new 2FE primary school is being built at Thistle Hill and will open in September, initially in temporary accommodation.

In addition to the increased birth rate a lot of families are moving onto the island with children across the age range and this has resulted in the Local Authority, on an almost weekly basis, having to approach schools with requests to admit of their PAN. This has put the Sheppey schools under a lot of pressure over the last couple of years.

West Minster Primary School is a popular, inclusive and improving school that serves its local community well.

## **6. Proposal**

- 6.1 The proposed enlargement of West Minster Primary School will increase the value of KCC's property portfolio by adding value to the school buildings.
- 6.2 The proposed enlargement of West Minster Primary School and the addition of a SRPB is subject to KCC statutory decision making process and planning.
- 6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

## **7. Delegation to Officers**

- 7.1 The Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. For information it is envisaged, if the proposal goes ahead, that the Director of Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

## **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 Forecasts for the Swale district indicate an increasing demand for primary school places in the Sheerness locality. This enlargement will add an additional 30 Reception Year places in the first year and 30 Reception Year

places to the capacity per year, thereafter, and is in line with our vision to ensure that children and young people in Kent get the best start in life as set out in KCC's Strategic Statement 2015-20 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent' (2015 – 2019).

- 8.2 The SEND Strategy forms the County Council's policy and strategy for special educational needs, and was approved by Cabinet in July 2013. It identified key priorities to improve and expand our provision and close the attainment gap for disabled children and those with special educational needs.

## 9. Recommendation(s)

**Recommendation(s): The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to:**

- (i) Issue a public notice to expand West Minster Primary School from 2FE to 3FE increasing the published admission number to 90 and to add a 15 place Specialist Resource Base Provision for children with speech, language and communication.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

- (ii) Expand the school and add a SRBP.
- (iii) Allocate £3,000,000 from Education & Young People's Services Capital Budget.

## 10. Background Documents

10.1 Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>

10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-2019

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/education-provision>

10.3 Education Cabinet Committee report– 27 September 2013

<http://kent590w3:9070/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=746&MId=5033&Ver=4>

10.4 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment

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

## 11. Contact details

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## Appendix 1

### **Proposal to expand West Minster Primary School from 2FE to 3FE and add a 15 place Specialist Resource Base Provision for children with speech, language and communication needs**

#### **Summary of written responses**

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: 600

Responses received: 21

|                        | Support   |           | Against   |          | Undecided |          | Total     |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                        | Expansion | SRBP      | Expansion | SRBP     | Expansion | SRBP     |           |
| Parents/Carers         | 11        | 12        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 0        | 13        |
| Governors              | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         |
| Members of Staff       | 8         | 8         | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0        | 8         |
| Other interested party | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>0</b> | <b>21</b> |

A summary of the main points:

#### **In support of the proposal to expand the school**

Parents:

- I think it is an excellent idea to expand West Minster Primary School; it is a wonderful, popular school with great facilities. I am a little concerned about traffic and parking during “school run” times.
- My only concern is the way cars are driven in the area when school starts and finishes and the parking. Those parking on pavements are causing unnecessary hazards for the children, all because they do not want to park further down the road.
- My main concern is parking. The situation at school times is already horrendous; I can see it’s only going to get worse. The school encourages the children to walk, but a lot of people can’t walk the children to school.
- I hope the level of education and care will still be a good standard the larger the school becomes.

#### **In Support of the proposal to add an SBRP**

Parents:

- I think that having a local speech and language unit is a much needed provision for the local parents, and will prove invaluable.

#### **Against the proposal**

Parents:

- If the Council is going to continue to allow new housing to be built then you should also build new schools to accommodate the increase in need for primary school places. To expand the school would surely mean using space that is currently used by the children for their play and recreational activities, ultimately leaving far less space for far more children.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Proposal to expand West Minster Primary School from 2FE to 3FE and add a 15 place Specialist Resource Base Provision for children with speech, language and communication needs**

Consultation Meeting for Parents/Carers, Governors and Staff  
Wednesday 13 May 2015

#### **Summary of the Meeting**

The meeting was chaired by Mr Leyland Ridings who welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was attended by 20 parents, members of staff and governors. Mr Ridings introduced Marisa White, Area Education Officer who explained the rationale for the proposals and the consultation timetable.

#### **Expansion**

- Kent County Council is responsible for making sure there are sufficient school places for children in Kent.
- The Isle of Sheppey has an above average birth rate.
- Sheppey also has high levels of inward migration which has increased further over the last 12 months.
- 152 more children in Sheppey primary schools in January 2015 than in January 2014.
- It is therefore being proposed to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) to 90 for Year R entry September 2016
- The school would grow over a 7 year period to reach a total capacity of 630 school places
- The expansion would also be dependent on the planning process to provide additional accommodation on the school site.
- The proposed expansion would be subject to separate planning requirements, which would include further public consultation.

#### **SRBP**

- We are proposing to add a 15 place Specialist Resource Base Provision (SRBP) at the school for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).
- This is an excellent opportunity for the school to use their knowledge and expertise and provide local places for children within a caring nurturing environment.
- Children in the SRBP will be admitted over the Published Admission Number (PAN) and therefore no places will be lost.
- Initially opening for 3 or 4 pupils in Sept 15 and children already at the school will benefit as a specialist teacher will be appointed.

The Vice Chair of Governors spoke about the governors' support for the proposals, and their excitement at the opportunity of having a SRBP that would eventually be a valuable resource for the whole island.

The new Executive Headteacher fully supports the proposals and spoke of his previous experience of school building projects and ensuring that the children have enough space to play. The school has good strong leadership and vision, and with excellent teachers the additional children will not be an issue. The school is definitely on "the up" and more children deserve this kind of provision.

| Comments from parents and staff  | Responses   |
|--|---|
| The additional places are needed otherwise children who come to our excellent nursery may not get a place at the school  |   |
| Parental concern raised about the building work and that it may mean teaching in mobile classrooms.  | Marisa White reassured the parent that there was no intention to use mobile classrooms as they are an expensive solution. We would ensure that classrooms were ready for when they were needed.   |
| Parental concern about the safety of children at school entry and exit times. More children will make the situation worse.   | The Executive Headteacher responded that this was a question that came up time after time with school expansions and said, "I want to promote parents walking their children to school and we need to get that message across to parents early on, otherwise it will be a problem, but we will have to deal with it". |
| Will there be staggered start and end times to the day?  | We will be considering this.  |
| A member of staff spoke in favour of the unit. It has been long awaited.   |   |
| Speech and language is a serious aspect of young people's education and if problems are not dealt with when children are young the problems only seem to magnify as they get older |   |

Marisa White closed the meeting, thanking everyone for coming and explained that there would be a separate consultation around the planning for the building work.