

From: Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services

To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee - 17 March 2016

Subject: Proposal to permanently expand Westcourt Primary School from 1FE to 2FE

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway: None
of Paper

Future Pathway: Cabinet Member Decision
of Paper

Electoral Division: Gravesham East (Cllr Colin Caller & Cllr Jane Cribbon)

Summary:

This report informs the Cabinet Committee of the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to permanently expand Westcourt Primary School from 1FE to 2FE and requests members to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform agrees to release sufficient funding to put the necessary infrastructure in place.

Recommendation:

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to:

- a. Agree that a Public Notice be published to permanently expand Westcourt Primary School from 1FE to 2FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b. Allocate £1.5m from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation.
- c. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council.
- d. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

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 in order to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

This decision is subject to planning permission being granted.

1. Introduction

- 1.2. The Gravesham district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016-20 identifies a local pressure in Reception year places in the Gravesend East planning area. The Commissioning Plan identified a need to provide additional places in the planning area from September 2016.
- 1.3. Every school in the planning area was considered as a possible proposal for expansion according to several criteria, including location, cost, proximity to demand, site size, willingness of the school, highways issues, Sport England and Ofsted rating. Westcourt Primary School was identified as the best option for expansion according to these criteria.
- 1.4. The Department for Education issued new Regulations in 2013 (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013), and as a consequence of the changes introduced in these regulations, local authorities can propose making changes to maintained schools including expansion (enlargement of premises) providing that they follow the statutory process.
- 1.5. Before a statutory Public Notice is published to initiate a representation period, a public consultation must be undertaken.
- 1.6. This report sets out the results of the consultation, which took place between 25 Jan 2016 and 29 Feb 2016. A consultation meeting for parents/carers, governors, members of staff and other stakeholders was held on 1 February 2016.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. It has been agreed by the Governing Body to permanently enlarge Westcourt Primary School, increasing the PAN to 60 (2FE) for the September 2016 intake and eventually a total capacity of 420 places.
 - a. Capital – Kent County Council's contribution will be £1.5m. KCC acknowledge that the final amount may be higher or lower as the costs of the project is an estimate. 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, the school will receive protection for an additional 30 Reception Year pupils. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 per additional classroom will be allocated towards the classroom setup costs.

- c. Human – Westcourt Primary School will appoint additional teachers, as the school size increases and the need arises.

3. Kent Policy Framework

- 3.1. These proposals 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 the Education Commissioning Plan.
- 3.2. The ‘Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2016-20’ identified a pressure on primary school places in the Gravesham East planning area. Changes to demographics and increased migration is leading to increased pressure on primary school places in the planning area.

4. Consultation Outcomes

- 4.1. The local authority established a formal consultation process over a five week period, between 25 Jan 2016 and 29 Feb 2016. A consultation meeting for parents/carers, governors, members of staff and other stakeholders was held on 1 February 2016.
- 4.2. A total of 43 written responses were received by the local authority through the prescribed consultation process. 37 respondents supported the proposal. 4 objecting to the proposal. 2 respondent was undecided.
- 4.3. A summary of the comments received by the local authority is provided at Appendix 1.

5. Views

5.1. The Local Member

Cllr Colin Caller & Cllr Jane Cribbon were informed of the proposal.

Cllr Caller said,

”I welcome the proposal to expand Westcourt Primary School to a 2FE. This expansion, combined with the previous decision to expand Singlewell Primary School by 1FE will further increase the number of much needed primary school places in East Gravesham. This increase in school places will help to give parents an improved opportunity to send their children to a local school of choice.”

5.2. Headteacher

The Headteacher fully supports the proposal.

5.3. Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors is fully supportive of the proposal.

5.4. Area Education Officer:

The analysis of the needs in the area indicate that due to immediate pressure and future demand, based on planned new housing in the Gravesend East planning area, an additional 1FE of Primary capacity is required.

- 5.5. The Director of Planning and Access and I have considered every primary school in the planning area with a view to whether that school could be enlarged. I am of the firm opinion that notwithstanding the objections received during the consultation, the most appropriate, sustainable and cost effective solution to the demand in the Gravesend East Planning Area is to enlarge Westcourt Primary School by 1 form of entry.

6. Proposal

- 6.1. The proposed expansion of Westcourt Primary School will increase the value of KCC's property portfolio by adding value to the school buildings.
- 6.2. 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 Infrastructure will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. Forecasts for the Gravesham district indicate an increasing demand for Primary school places, due to small and medium scale housing development and inward migration.
- 8.2. This enlargement will add an additional 30 Reception Year places to the capacity per year, in line with priorities in the Kent Policy Framework, 'Vision and Priorities for Education and Young People's Services' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education' (2016 – 2020).

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to:

- a. Agree that a Public Notice be published to permanently expand Westcourt Primary School from 1FE to 2FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b. Allocate £1.5m from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation.
- c. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council.
- d. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

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 in order to allow for proper consideration of the points raised. This decision is subject to planning permission being granted.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of Written Responses

11. Background Documents

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/bold-steps-for-kent>

Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016 – 2020

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=61244>

Consultation document and Equalities Impact Assessment

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-consultations>

11. Contact details

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Relevant Director:

Keith Abbott

Director of Education Planning and Access

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Appendix 1

Proposal to expand Westcourt Primary School, Gravesham Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed: 300

Consultation responses received: 42

A summary of the responses received showed that:

	In Favour	Undecided	Opposed
Governors			
Staff	14	1	
Parents	23	1	4
Pupils			
Other			
Totals	37	2	4

Comments in favour of the proposal:

- Good school, with excellent staff
- Positive move for the sustainability of the school
- Good idea to allow more local children into a good school
- Agree but have concerns re extra traffic which will be generated
- Need to look at roundabout outside the school as is already dangerous with cars being double parked and parents stopping on the roundabout itself to let children out
- Greater chance of children currently in nursery being accommodated in primary school
- Have concerns over H&S whilst work being undertaken
- Very happy with expansion of good school. Also hoping in future there may be provision of secondary school

Comments against the proposal:

- Traffic and parking an issue and to make the school bigger will make the problem worse
- Children from difficult backgrounds need support and help with behavioural issues and the parents do not realise the impact of that behaviour (ie swearing, fighting) and by increasing the numbers it will only make things worse
- It is a slow process but eventually over the 7 years completion time, it will be increased traffic and congestion. Playground space may not be enough.

Undecided

- Against proposal to close Northcourt School years ago and have now been proved right that there is a need for another school in area.
- Undecided as it will affect my playground duties

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

15/00093(I)

For publication

Subject: Proposal to permanently expand Westcourt Primary School from 1FE to 2FE

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to:

- a. Agree that a Public Notice be published to permanently expand Westcourt Primary School from 1FE to 2FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b. Allocate £1.5m from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation.
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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 in order to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

This decision is subject to planning permission being granted.

Reason(s) for decision:

In reaching this decision I have taken into account:

1. The views received from the consultation with parents/carers, staff and governors.
2. The views of the Governing Body
3. The views of the Local Member
4. the views of the Area Education Officer
5. the views of the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee.

Financial Implications:

It has been agreed by the Governing Body to permanently enlarge Westcourt Primary School, increasing the PAN to 60 (2FE) for the September 2016 intake and eventually a total capacity of 420 places.

- a. Capital – Kent County Council's contribution will be £1.5m. KCC acknowledge that the final amount may be higher or lower as the costs of the project is an estimate. 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, the school will receive protection for an additional 30 Reception Year pupils. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 per additional classroom will be allocated towards the classroom setup costs.

c. Human – Westcourt Primary School will appoint additional teachers, as the school size increases and the need arises.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

17 March 2017 report to Education and Young Person’s Cabinet Committee

To be added after meeting

15 December 2015 report to Education and Young People’s Cabinet Committee

The Committee endorsed the Kent Commissioning Plan, which identified a need for additional secondary places in the Sevenoaks District.

Any alternatives considered:

Forecasts for the Gravesham district indicate an increasing demand for Primary school places, due to small and medium scale housing development and inward migration.

This enlargement will add an additional 30 Reception Year places to the capacity per year, in line with priorities in the Kent Policy Framework, ‘Vision and Priorities for Education and Young People’s Services’ and the ‘Commissioning Plan for Education’ (2016 – 2020).

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

N/A

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Signed

Date