

Education Statement – Land adjacent to Holy Trinity Primary School

January 2016

The rising birth-rate in Thanet and increasing inward migration of families resulted in a deficit of primary school places in Ramsgate and across Thanet for Year R entry in September 2012.

One of the solutions considered was the expansion of Ramsgate Holy Trinity CE Primary School utilising the KCC owned land adjacent to the school, this was the preferred option for providing the additional places at this time. KCC Education requested that the piece of land be removed from the disposals list and at this point the possibility of expansion was discussed with the school management team and governing body. The school made it clear - after lengthy discussion had taken place, with the senior leadership team, Chair of Governors and full governing body – that the unanimous response from the school was that they did not think it appropriate, at that time, to consider any expansion.

As Holy Trinity is a Canterbury Diocesan Voluntary Aided School, the Diocese also wrote to the school to emphasise their support for expansion and to ask that they re-consider their decision. The school confirmed that they did not wish to expand.

With the Holy Trinity option to provide the urgently needed additional primary school places no longer available, other options had to be explored and funds raised to facilitate the additional Primary School places urgently required in Thanet.

The Headteacher and governing body of Newington Primary School and Nursery were willing expand. This expansion was agreed, following consultation, with additional accommodation provided on the current site at a cost of £1.2m. (Newington Primary School and Nursery is now a thriving 3FE primary school, judged good by Ofsted.)

Along with a new 2 FE primary school provision at St Georges CE Secondary School planned to open for September 2016 and the opening of the Ramsgate Free School, Bromstone Primary School has taken an additional four forms of entry for a temporary period and building work to provide them with the accommodation to deal with the children they have already taken will shortly commence on site. With these investments, ¹projections indicate that there will be sufficient primary school places in the locality to serve the current and projected pupil population (based on birth data and patterns of inward migration over the preceding 3 years), apart from that generated from large housing developments which generate their own need for a school such as Westwood Cross, Manston Green and developments proposed at Birchington and Westgate-on-Sea - all of which have been included in KCC's response to the draft Thanet Local Plan to 2031. Funding from the disposal of this surplus land is integral to the current Education strategy and required as part of the forward funding KCC has had to undertake to meet the existing need, following the Holy Trinity decision not to expand. Should this capital receipt not be realised, developments proposed within the current Kent Commissioning Plan for Education 2016-2022 will be impacted and have to be removed or delayed.

¹ Kent Commissioning Plan for Education 2016-2020

Further primary provision will need to be commissioned as housing development in Thanet brings forward additional need. The proposed new Schools at Westwood and Manston Green are some distance (3 miles) from this site and their pupil places are already allocated to mitigate their own housing needs along with other locally consented sites. The location of Holy Trinity CE PS therefore will not serve any of this new housing. As Thanet Local Plan objectively assessed need is 15,660 new homes, of which 4400 are already consented, there will be further Primary requirement to provide places as set out in KCC's response to the draft Thanet Local Plan with timely delivery of Primary places to meet increased need reflecting location and development timescales for the delivery of the new homes.

We would confirm, following submission of this planning application for housing on the site at Dumpton Park Lane, Ramsgate Holy Trinity CE Primary School did approach the Area Education Officer (AEO) in 2015 to say that their position had not changed with regard to expansion, but that they would have liked the land to be available for the school to establish a junior football pitch. The AEO explained that this could not be an option for both financial reasons (KCC had already committed to alternative expansion projects predicated upon the funds released from the disposal of this site), and should the school (at any future date) agree to consider expansion, and the site was being used for sports, this would cause issues with Sport England that could prevent expansion going ahead in any event.

KCC Education carefully evaluated a strategy to include the capital receipt from this land to mitigate the shortfall in primary places, informed by the Governing Body's decision at Holy Trinity. They have already expended £1.2m at Newington PS based upon the Holy Trinity decision, and are now progressing with the new £6m 2 Form Entry Primary School (having obtained planning consent recently) at St George's, opening in Sept 2016 and with the Education Funding Agency also investing capital funding in the building being provided for the new Ramsgate Free School.

KCC owns land opposite the school. Should expansion on this site be required at any point in the future, this could be utilised to facilitate this. The land is currently leased to a Sports Club but they are open to 'dual usage' in the future.

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