

From: Gary Cooke – Cabinet member for Corporate and Democratic Services

Rebecca Spore – Director of Property and Infrastructure Support

To: Policy and Resources Property Sub Committee – 27 March 2015

Decision No: 15/00032

Subject: Approval to the principle of KCC acquiring a site for a new primary school at Dartford

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper:

Future Pathway of Paper:

Electoral Division: Dartford North East

Summary: This report seeks approval to the principle of KCC acquiring a site for a new primary school at Dartford Northern Gateway East at a price to be agreed, together with authority to agree the final terms to be delegated to the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support.

Recommendation(s): The Property Sub Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services on the proposed decision to approve in principle the acquisition of a site for a new primary school at Dartford, at a price to be agreed and for the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to finalise terms and complete the transaction in due course.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is a requirement for a new primary school within Dartford Northern Gateway East and although in the short term existing growth (indigenous and development related) could be accommodated by expanding local schools, this will be insufficient to accommodate all the planned growth in Dartford. There are plans for up to 2,000 new homes within the borough and as a result, Dartford Borough Council's "Northern Gateway Supplementary Planning Document" of 2012 identified a suitable site of 2.1 hectares for a new primary school.
- 1.2 KCC have had some initial discussions with the landowner, and are intending to make an initial offer, subject to due diligence. Agreement on the terms would allow the landowner to progress their aspirations for the remainder of the site. A feasibility appraisal commissioned by KCC last year indicated that the proposed site was suitable for a 2FE primary school (subject to further environmental investigations) but it has now been decided that as a minimum,

a 1FE school on 1 ha could be sufficient, alongside expansion of other local schools.

- 1.3 The landowner is pressing for KCC to make an offer for the required land or for DBC to release it for residential development in the absence of any offer from KCC to date.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The terms for the acquisition are yet to be negotiated, but the landowner claims the open market value should be based on residential development as they believe this is the most likely alternative use in the absence of the requirement for a school site.
- 2.2 A number of s.106 contributions have been secured to fund the acquisition and construction costs of the new school but some of these are time limited.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

- 3.1 The acquisition of the site will enable the County Council to provide the necessary primary school places to accommodate the expanding local population growth in the vicinity and ensure the following benefits:
- ensure all pupils meet their full potential,
 - shape education and skills provision around the needs of the Kent economy.
- 3.2 The proposed decision does not relate to a plan or strategy set out in the Council's Policy Framework.

4. Proposed Acquisition Terms

- 4.1 Negotiations have not commenced yet but P&IS will endeavour to secure the site on the best terms possible.
- 4.2 No equalities implications are anticipated in respect of the taking of the lease.

5. Conclusions

The acquisition of the site will help safeguard the necessary provision of additional primary school places and mitigate the impact of the proposed development of up to 2,000 new homes in the vicinity. KCC will be seeking to agree terms that will allow the provision of a new primary school within the constraints of the available funding.

6. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): The Property Sub Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services on the proposed decision to approve in principle the acquisition of a site for a new primary school at Dartford, at a price to be agreed and for the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to finalise terms and complete the transaction in due course.

7. Contact details

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8. Background Documents

Appendix 1 - Record of Decision