

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

To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee - 21 January 2016

Subject: Expansion of Singlewell Primary School from 1FE to 2FE

Key Decision No: Decision Number: 15/00093(c)

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Gravesham (Jane Cribbon and Colin Caller)

Summary:

This report informs the Cabinet Committee of the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to permanently expand Singlewell 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 expand Singlewell Primary School from 1FE to 2FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b) Allocate £2,795,000 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 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
- d) 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.

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

- 1.1. The Gravesham district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 identified a local pressure in Reception year places in the Gravesend South East Planning Area. The Commissioning Plan identified a need to provide additional places in the planning area from September 2016.
- 1.2. Every school in the planning area, and adjacent planning areas 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. Singlewell Primary School was identified as the best option for expansion according to these criteria.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Before a statutory Public Notice is published to initiate a representation period, a public consultation must be undertaken.
- 1.5. This report sets out the results of the consultation, which took place between 2 October and 9 November 2015. A consultation drop-in session for parents/carers, governors, members of staff and other stakeholders was held on 12 October 2015.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. It has been proposed to permanently enlarge Singlewell 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 £2,795,000. 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 places. For each additional

classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will be allocated towards the classroom setup costs.

- c. Human – Singlewell 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, 2015-19’ identified a pressure on primary school places in urban Gravesend District.

4. Consultation Outcomes

- 4.1. The local authority established a formal consultation process over a five week period, between 2 October and 9 November 2015.
- 4.2. Four written responses were received by the local authority through the prescribed consultation process. Three respondents supported the proposal and one 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

Mrs Jane Cribbon and Mr Colin Caller were informed of the proposal.

Mr Caller said: “I fully support the expansion of Singlewell Primary School to two form entry. Singlewell is a popular primary school that is recognised by parents locally as providing children with a good standard of education. These additional places are very much needed in this part of Gravesend and will help to give parents greater choice.”

5.2. Headteacher

The head teacher is supportive of the proposal.

5.3. Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors is 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 in the Gravesend South East planning area, an additional 1FE of Primary capacity is required.

5.5. I acknowledge that there are concerns about the impact of an enlargement to Singlewell Primary School. Key issues raised are:

- a. access on Mackenzie Way
- b. the idea that other schools would be better options for enlargement

5.6. With regard to the above:

- c. *Access during drop off and pick up:* Car parking during pick up and drop off is frequently a challenge to many schools. Singlewell Primary School has a very local intake, which is an encouragement for most children to walk or cycle to school. Forecasts indicate that following an expansion, the school will retain its local school character and it is unlikely that many children will live more than a fifteen minute walk away

Singlewell Primary School will be re-visiting its travel plan to encourage parents to consider alternative transport.

- d. *Other Options:* KCC forecasts that there is actual demand locally in the planning area. When planning, KCC as the commissioner of school places must be mindful of several factors which decide which is the most appropriate school to enlarge. These factors include proximity, cost, site size, willingness of the head teacher and governing body, site access, managing disruption, Ofsted reports, popularity and standards. In comparison with all the other schools in the Gravesend South East Planning Areas, Singlewell Primary School was identified as the optimum choice in all these considerations.

5.7. 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 South East Planning Areas is to enlarge Singlewell Primary School by 1 form of entry.

6. Proposal

6.1. The proposed expansion of Singlewell 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 Property and Infrastructure Support 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' (2015 – 2019).

9 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 expand Singlewell Primary School from 1FE to 2FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b) Allocate £2,795,000 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 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
- d) 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

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 Background Documents

- 10.1 Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework
- 10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015 – 2019
- 10.3 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of Written Responses

12. Contact details

Report Author:

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Relevant Director:

Keith Abbott

Director of Education Planning and Access

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Appendix 1

Proposal to expand Singlewell Primary School, Gravesham

Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed: 250
Consultation responses received: 4

A summary of the responses received showed that:

	In Favour	Undecided	Opposed
Governors			
Staff	1		
Parents	1		
Pupils			
Other	1	1	
Totals	3	1	

Comments in favour of the proposal:

- The headteacher, Governors and Staff are in favour of the proposals and wholeheartedly support the local authority.
- Feel expansion of the school beneficial to staff, children and parents as it will bring more opportunities, create more space and bring new challenges.
- Popular school with parents and the expansion will create more spaces for more children and siblings attend the school.
- No objection to school increasing, although would have thought Westcourt or Chantry a better option

Comments against the proposal:

- None

Undecided

- Happy for the school to expand if parking issues addressed during pick up and drop off sessions concerned. Until then remain undecided.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

15/00093(c)

For publication

Subject: Proposal to expand Singlewell 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 expand Singlewell Primary School from 1FE to 2FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- a) Allocate £2,795,000 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 proposed to permanently enlarge Singlewell 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 £2,795,000. 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 places. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will be allocated towards the classroom setup costs.

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

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

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 Gravesham District.

21 January 2015 report to Education and Young Person’s Cabinet Committee

Recommendations to be added following meeting

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’ (2015 – 2019).

The proposal to expand Singlewell Primary School from 1FE to 2FE to meet the predicted future demand in the Gravesham district was deemed a suitable option.

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

N/A

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Signed

Date