

**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:** Proposal to permanently expand Hextable Primary School (Community) from 2FE to 3FE

**Key Decision No:** 15/00093(a)

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** None

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

**Electoral Division:** Sevenoaks (Mr Robert Brookbank)

**Summary:**

This report informs the Cabinet Committee of the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to permanently expand Hextable Primary School (Community) from 2FE to 3FE 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 Hextable Primary School (Community) from 2FE to 3FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b) Allocate £2,650,000 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 Sevenoaks district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 identified a local pressure in Reception year places in the Swanley & Hextable planning area. The Commissioning Plan identified a need to provide additional places in the planning area from September 2016. Hextable Primary School agreed a temporary 1FE expansion for September 2015, admitting 90 children into Reception Year (30 additional children).
- 1.2. 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. Hextable 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 9 October and 16 November 2015. A consultation meeting for parents/carers, governors, members of staff and other stakeholders was held on 20 October 2015.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1. It has been agreed by the Governing Body to permanently enlarge Hextable Primary School, increasing the PAN to 90 (3FE) for the September 2016 intake and eventually a total capacity of 630 places.
  - a. Capital – Kent County Council’s contribution will be £2,650,000. 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 pupils. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will allocated towards the classroom setup costs.
  - c. Human – Hextable 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 the northern part of Sevenoaks District. The Birchwood school site has now been released for housing development, which will mean 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 9 October and 16 November 2015.
- 4.2. A total of 94 written responses were received by the local authority through the prescribed consultation process. 30 respondents supported the proposal. 57 objecting to the proposal. 7 respondents were undecided. A petition to oppose the proposal was also received by the local authority.
- 4.3. A summary of the comments received by the local authority is provided at Appendix 1.

### **5. Views**

#### **5.1. The Local Member**

Mr Robert Brookbank was informed of the proposal. Mr Brookbank discussed the proposal with the Area Education Officer for North Kent and raised questions about local parking and highways issues, and in particular, about a proposal to use part of the old Furness school site for an overspill car park. The AEO advised Mr Brookbank that the use of this was being considered as a solution.

#### **5.2. Headteacher**

“I fully support the proposed expansion. I think it will be a good opportunity for the school to expand and develop further. We have a strong staff who are committed to the school. It will provide further opportunities for professional development and positions of responsibility. We retain staff as it is a happy and supportive environment. Planning in teams of three will ease workload and offer creative opportunities within each year group. Further extracurricular opportunities will be available to all children.”

#### **5.3. Chair of Governors**

As the Chair of Hextable Primary School’s governing body which I have been a long standing member, I have no doubt that the proposed expansion of the primary school is a fantastic opportunity which will have a positive impact on the pupils, staff and the local community.

Traditionally, the large community school has always served the families of both

Hextable and the surrounding area, however the population of the community has gradually increased over recent years and is likely to continue to do so. To ensure that we are able to continue to meet the educational needs of the children in our community, we must expand.

School staff have proven that even within a large setting, they are able to focus on individual children and their needs within a nurturing and supportive environment. I have absolute faith that they will continue to do so under the guidance of a strong leadership team.

Expansion will, inevitably, provide a wider range of improved resources and facilities which will benefit, not only the pupils of the school, but also local community groups and organisations.

It must also be recognised that an increase in opportunities for employment are another positive aspect to the expansion both for existing and new staff. A larger school will require a restructured leadership team, which will enable the school to offer promotion and continued professional development to existing staff, ensuring that ambitious and committed members of staff are retained for many years.

As a local resident, I am very aware of the longstanding traffic and parking difficulties in the vicinity of the school, however I believe that the proposed expansion of the school is a genuine opportunity for these to be addressed and alleviated.

**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 Swanley and Hextable 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 Hextable. Key issues raised are:**

- a. the possible increase in car parking during drop off and pick up,
- b. extra journeys adding to the congestion in the area
- c. proximity of Hextable Primary School to the demand
- d. the feeling that the character or standards of the school would be diminished
- e. the loss of what is perceived to be a village school

**5.6. With regard to the above:**

- a. *Car Parking during drop off an pick up:* Kent County Council is looking to allocate a section of land (approximately 0.25 hectares), across the road to be used as car parking for staff and a drop off area for parents. This area would be fenced off, and the existing mature hedging would be retained where possible to offer continuing privacy for local residents.

- b. *Extra Car Journeys:* The school and KCC will work together to revise, reproduce and review their school travel plan. This will seek to reduce car journeys to a level below that currently seen.
  - c. *Proximity:* KCC acknowledge that while there is forecasted and actual demand locally in the planning area, the demand immediate to Hextable Primary School would not necessitate a full 1FE enlargement . 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 Swanley and Hextable Planning Area, Hextable Primary School was identified as the optimum choice in all these considerations.
  - d. *School Character & Standards:* The head teacher and governors are confident that they can not only maintain the high standards of the school, but with the added flexibility that comes with an expansion, strive to achieve even better results in the future. Similarly the governing body feels that the character of the school would not be compromised by the proposal to expand.
  - e. *Village School:* All schools must be prepared to offer any unused school places to any child whose parents or carers request it. Admission criteria are not defined by geography or proximity, except when there is an oversubscription, so the concept of a village school has not really existed for many years.
- 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 Swanley & Hextable Planning Area is to enlarge Hextable Primary School by 1 form of entry

## **6. Proposal**

- 6.1. The proposed expansion of Hextable 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 Sevenoaks 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. Recommendations**

### **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

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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.

## **10. Background Documents**

10.1. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

10.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015 – 2020

10.3. Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment

## **11. Appendices**

## **Appendix 1 – Summary of Written Responses**

### **12. Contact details**

#### **Report Author:**

Ian Watts

Area Education Officer –North Kent

Tel number: 03000 414302

[ian.watts@kent.gov.uk](mailto:ian.watts@kent.gov.uk)

#### **Relevant Director:**

Keith Abbott

Director of Education Planning and Access

03000 417008

[Keith.Abbott@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Keith.Abbott@kent.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

### Proposal to expand Hextable Primary School, Swanley Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed: 500  
Consultation responses received: 94

A summary of the responses received showed that:

	<b>In Favour</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Opposed</b>
Governors	2		
Staff	21		
Parents	5	2	26
Pupils			
Other	2	5	31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>57</b>

A signed petition with 154 signatures opposing the proposal was received.

#### Comments in favour of the proposal:

- The headteacher, Governors and Staff are in favour of the proposals and wholeheartedly support the local authority
- Expansion will offer opportunities for personal development.
- We are a good school and pride ourselves on delivering an excellent standard of education within a nurturing environment.
- Need to expand to continue to meet the educational needs of the children within community.
- Despite being a large school, staff will be able to focus on individual children and their needs within a nurturing and supportive environment.
- Being a larger school will enable children and local community to benefit from a wide range of improved resources and facilities.
- Staff will retain the nurturing environment no matter how large their class or school is.
- Good leadership which will steer school towards outstanding.
- Proposal of drop off area will mean children can be dropped off safely alleviating concerns.
- Expansion will offer more choice to parents who live in Hextable and surrounding areas.
- Proposed drop off zone will help ease traffic congestion.
- Staff will be able to make a positive difference to the children in school.
- Important that expansion goes ahead to help with ever falling number of places in good schools.



- Expansion will inevitably provide a wider range of improved resources and facilities which will benefit not only the pupils of the school but also local community groups and organisations.
- As a local resident, I am very aware of longstanding traffic and parking difficulties in the vicinity of the school, however, I believe that the proposed expansion of the school is a genuine opportunity for these to be addressed and alleviated.
- Agree to expansion but if road/traffic problems could be addressed it would help with public relations.
- Support head teacher's proposals but think a footbridge would be required to ensure child's safety.
- Extra places desperately needed as local children will not get a place otherwise.
- Class structure will be much improved by expansion.
- Looking forward to making a positive difference to the lives of more young people.

### **Comments against the proposal:**

- Annoyed as a resident I was not given the opportunity to attend drop-in session
- Believe a one way system and drive through policy was looked at previously.
- Understand the need to expand but ask for consideration to local residents – road system needs to be modified to alleviate problems
- Enough space on school site to expand but roads cannot cope with congestion. Need safe place to cross from Claremont Road and St David's Road, possibly one-way.
- Expansion not required for local children. Infrastructure cannot cope with increased traffic as cars mount pavements every day.
- I have a disabled child at the school and am concerned for her safety and wellbeing at such a large school.
- Severely affect access to the parents consortium who use minibuses to help disabled people.
- Swanley has 5 primary schools would it not be easier to spread 30 more pupils per year over those schools? 6 pupils per school would not require any change to existing schools. Hextable does not have secondary school, Wilmington has 3 and a housing development adjacent to the school would that make it more feasible to expand?
- Roads around the school would not allow access for emergency service vehicles which could lead to loss of life.
- Possibility of 'drop-off' zone opposite school site will cause mayhem as most parents won't drop their children in a car park and allow them to cross the road. If so area needs to be policed.
- Hextable is a village, not a town and we want it to remain so.
- Feel extremely strongly that the ethos of the school will change.
- Expansion is to accommodate children who live outside of Hextable not local children.

- Oasis Hextable & Birchwood Primary Schools are closing/have closed, freeing land where schools could be built.
- Wilmington Primary School has larger field and 1 class why are they not being approached?
- Green space will be lost when expanding school.
- Will put pressure on school to remain Good.
- Suggestion of car park in Furness School opposite may help with traffic flows but parents will be unwilling to drop children off there and expect them to walk to school safely.
- Disruption to school while building works undertaken will impact on children's learning and health.
- Parents have chosen to send their children to Hextable because of its good Ofsted report and acceptable class sizes.
- Feel there are neighbouring schools that could be expanded with less impact to the community and road infrastructure.
- Given Hextable borders Sevenoaks, Dartford & Bexley it is incumbent on all councils to work together to address the question of primary school places.
- Congestion on St David's Road and Puddledock Lane is already at breaking point and unless it is the intention of planners to introduce a substantial drive and drop-off zone into the school grounds it will not work. Rowhill Road cannot be widened, St David's Road could but only immediately outside the school. Puddledock Lane can be widened but again only outside the school.
- Impact of such an expansion on a village school.
- Where is the increasing demand for places coming from?
- Do not feel enough information available to allow an informed decision. The information about traffic management is particularly vague.
- Need double yellow lines the whole length of St David's Road.
- I have faith in school's ability to maintain standards but feel the appeal of the school will be lessened by its inability to have whole school assemblies. I note the school hall is not part of the proposed expansion.
- Lunch times are rationed to 20 minutes per child and are staggered to accommodate the pupils they already have so this will get worse.
- Unsure of school's travel plans but feel they will be unable to encourage parents to adopt.
- Told you would put a bus service for children to get to primary school but this would cost money and what parent would put their child on a bus?
- Council have not looked at how this will affect our community as well as the school.
- As the school has got larger, I have witnessed a decline in standards, teaching and the behaviour of pupils and now we are encouraging children from outside the area to attend Hextable.
- Traffic is dangerous, with road rage and language from parents being displayed in front of children.

- Expanding the school by 210 pupils will mean that the school provides places for children from the surrounding areas.
- Due to increases in traffic people will end up parking in our driveway, causing more congestion.
- Speed of vehicles also an issue.
- Not acceptable for present children to lose any of their existing facilities, i.e whole school assemblies, school plays, church services.
- School will have to undertake considerable building work so am concerned re disruption to pupils learning, their safety and loss of outdoor play space.
- Once these additional pupils reach Y6 where do you anticipate them going as Oasis Hextable is closing?
- Feel school is being expanded to accommodate children from developments in neighbouring area and not necessarily for local children.
- I work for emergency services and those vehicles would not be able to gain access to school site due to traffic congestion.
- Concerned children may be transported in by coach as roads cannot take.
- Will After School Club be expanded too as there are waiting lists already for this facility?
- Recently had kitchen refurbished but will this accommodate increased numbers?
- Traffic is an issue but so are the pavements which are narrow and difficult to walk along.
- As a parent I have noticed the decline in teaching standards and behaviour of some children.
- Our drive is regularly blocked but most worrying is the driving on the pavements, parking on the yellow lines on the bend and the constant arguments.
- The proposed parking and traffic assessment will not change the fact that the roads are simply not able to cope with the traffic which already exists, let alone another 210 children's transportation.
- Loss of whole school assemblies and activities.
- Will have to double staff parking on school site.
- Parents with pushchairs are forced onto road as they cannot get passed parking vehicles on pavements.
- Should make top end of St David's Road and Rowhill Road one way to stop clash of traffic.
- Could some of the Oasis school site accommodate primary aged children as it is cheaper to refurbish an existing building than construct new and as the site is unoccupied it would not affect education of any pupils.
- Small grassed area outside our house is often 'churned up' as a result of car wheels, needing repair at our expense!
- Never witnessed any traffic warden patrolling the road, perhaps this should be a consideration?

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,  
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

15/00093(a)

For publication

**Subject: Proposal to permanently expand Hextable Primary School (Community) from 2FE to 3FE**

Decision:

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

- a) Agree that a Public Notice be published to expand Hextable Primary School (Community) from 2FE to 3FE, and following a representation period of four weeks with no statutory objections received, implement the proposal.
- b) Allocate £2,650,000 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 agreed by the Governing Body to permanently enlarge Hextable Primary School, increasing the PAN to 90 (3FE) for the September 2016 intake and eventually a total capacity of 630

places.

- a. Capital – Kent County Council’s contribution will be £2,650,000. 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 pupils. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will allocated towards the classroom setup costs.
- c. Human – Hextable 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 2016-20, which identified a need for additional secondary places in the Sevenoaks District.

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

Recommendations to be added following meeting

Any alternatives considered:

The ‘Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2015-19’ identified a pressure on primary school places in the northern part of Sevenoaks District. The Birchwood school site has now been released for housing development, which will mean increased pressure on primary school places in the planning area. The proposal to permanently expand Hextable Primary School (Community) from 2FE to 3FE to meet the predicted future demand in the Sevenoaks 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**