

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

To: Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee, 11 May 2016

Subject: Proposed changes to Headcorn Primary School

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 15 December 2015

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Divisions: Maidstone Rural East, (Jenny Whittle)

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation of the proposed changes to Headcorn Primary School (Maidstone)

Recommendation(s): The Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to:

Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Expand Headcorn Primary School, Kings Road, Headcorn, Kent TN27 9QT from 210 to 420 increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 30 to 60 for Year R entry for 1 September 2017.

And, subject to no new objections to the public notice

- (ii) Implement the proposals for 1 September 2017.
- (iii) Allocate £2.7 million from the Basic Needs budget, which over a period of time is expected to be offset by up to £2.6 million from developer contributions.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) 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.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent. These proposals reflect KCC's aspirations to increase the number of school places across the County, as set out in Kent's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015-19.

- 1.2 The identified housing need for Maidstone Borough is 18,560 dwellings for the period 2011-31. In the past year a number of significant development sites have been granted planning consent. A significant amount of housing has been proposed in the Rural Service Centres which includes Headcorn.
- 1.3 Headcorn Primary School is a popular and successful school and for September 2015 entry, 41 applicants selected the school as their preferred first choice with 59 preferences in total. There are currently 30 places available, which provides limited scope to meet parental preference. Additionally, KCC's latest forecast data as set out in the 2016-20 Kent Commissioning Plan predicts a deficit of school places peaking at -11.7% for the planning group of schools. These figures do not account for pressures arising from new housing developments.
- 1.4 KCC, with the support of the Governing Body, is proposing to provide additional school places by expanding Headcorn Primary School from 1 to 2 forms of entry (from 30 to 60 Reception places each year). The expansion of Headcorn Primary School by 1FE for September 2017 will act as the strategic response to the forecast population growth in Headcorn village and neighbouring Staplehurst. Should the proposal proceed additional accommodation would be provided to enable the school to expand.
- 1.5 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place From 25 February 2016 until 24 March 2016. An information 'drop-in' session was held on 7 March 2016 at Headcorn Primary School between 4.00pm and 5.30pm.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 KCC is proposing to relocate and enlarge Headcorn Primary School by 30 places taking the PAN to 60 (2FE) for the September 2017 intake and eventually a total capacity of 420 places.
 - a. Capital – The proposal is for a new six classroom building with associated ancillary facilities and studio hall, additional soft and hard play areas and the provision of additional car parking. The total cost is estimated to be in the region of £2.7 million to be allocated from the Basic Need Capital Budget which will be offset by approximately £2.6 million in developer contributions which will be secured over a period of time. The costs are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the excess cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocated the additional funding.
 - b. Revenue
 - i. The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget on a 'per pupil' basis.
 - ii. Growth funding will be provided annually for the new Reception Year class for three years. This will include a £6,000 contribution towards the set up costs of each class.
 - c. Human – Headcorn Primary School will appoint additional teachers and support staff, as the school size increases and the need arises.

3. Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020) Policy Framework

- 3.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure that Kent’s young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy” as set out in ‘Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council’s Strategic Statement (2015-2020)’

4. Consultation Outcomes

- 4.1 Approximately 400 hard copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. The consultation document was distributed to parents/carers, staff and governors of both schools, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local libraries, Parish Councils, Maidstone Borough Council, and others. The consultation document was posted on the KCC website and the link to the website widely circulated. An opportunity to send in written responses using the response form, email and online was also provided.
- 4.2 A drop-in session was organised on 7 March between 4.00 and 5.30pm at Headcorn Primary School.
- 4.3 The Headteacher, Miss Symonds, gave an assembly to explain to the children about the proposed expansion of the school. Following this the children were given the opportunity for discussion in classes and then a vote was taken to establish whether the children supported the proposal or not. Views were taken from the classes across the school. Overall 72% of the children were in favour of the proposed expansion with 16% against and 12% undecided. In addition a school learning council meeting was held which included a range of pupil groups, including boys, girls, disadvantaged children, children with SEND, children with a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with English as an Additional Language. Overall 75% of these children were in favour of the proposed expansion with 12% against and 13% undecided. A summary of children’s views and School Council Meeting is attached in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.4 Following the closure of the consultation period 15 positive responses were received, 6 were negative and 4 were undecided bringing the total to 25 responses. A summary of all written responses are attached at **Appendix 1**. The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform has been passed a copy of the full set of responses for his consideration.

5. Views

5.1 The View of the Local Member for Maidstone Rural East

I wholeheartedly support the proposed expansion in order to meet existing demand as well as future growth emanating from the number of new homes planned for Headcorn. It has achieved a "good" Ofsted rating and is popular with local parents. I await further details on the new school layout etc. in due course.

5.2 The View of the Headteacher and Governing Body of Headcorn Primary School

We feel the proposed expansion of the school is absolutely necessary in an attempt to serve the needs of the current community together with its proposed growth. The proposal has already met with the approval of the majority who attend and work at the school and the wider community during a consultation period. Therefore we endorse without reservation the proposed plan.

5.4 The View of the Area Education Officer

The Area Education Officer for West Kent fully supports this proposal and, having considered other commissioning options, is of the belief that this is the most sustainable solution. Headcorn Primary School is a good school with an inclusive and welcoming ethos.

6. Proposal

6.1 These proposals are set out in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Kent County Council intends to make prescribed alterations to expand Headcorn Primary School from 210 to 420 for 1 September 2017.

6.2 The proposed alterations to Headcorn Primary School are subject to KCC statutory decision making process and planning.

6.3 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.

6.4 There will be an impact on KCC's property portfolio with the value increased.

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 This proposal will create an additional 210 places at Headcorn Primary School for primary aged children in line with Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020 Policy Framework' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent' (2015 – 2019).

9. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): The Education and Young People’s Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to:

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10. Background Documents

- 10.1 Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council’s Strategic Statement 2015-2020
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>
- 10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19
http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/16236/Commissioningplan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf
- 10.3 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment
www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations
- 10.4 Strategy for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/childrensocial-care-and-families-policies>

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1– Summary of Written Responses
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Summary of the views of the student body at Headcorn Primary School
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Proposed Record of Decision

12. Contact Details

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Summary of Written Responses

Proposal to:

- **Expand Headcorn Primary School, Kings Road, Headcorn from 210 to 420, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 30 to 60 for Year R entry for 1 September 2017**

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: approximately 400
Responses received: 25

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers	8	5	4	
Governors	2			
Members of Staff	1			
Other Interested Parties	4	1		
Total	15	6	4	25

In support of the proposals

Parents/Carers

Agree

- Agree with the expansion of Headcorn Primary School as its popularity is increasing and people who live within walking distance of the school do not always gain entry.
- The expansion will need to take into account traffic issues that will arise along with access.
- The school is over-subscribed, more property is being built and there is a need for more places to become available for parents to send their children to the school.
- It seems totally reasonable to expand the school if there are not enough places for all children in Headcorn to get in. Having been to the consultation, I was impressed with the draft plans – in particular the two story building on land that is mostly not used at present. I am glad that there will be no significant loss of playing field space, and also that the swimming pool will remain. I was also glad to hear that the building work is planned to minimise disruption to children already at the school.
- Agree should definitely go ahead. Residents all our lives and did not receive a place for child despite living ½ a mile away
- The estate road, Forge Meadows is used by numerous cars which make many problems for residents with cars parked on pavements, blocking driveways, parked on grassed areas, this urgently needs to be addressed.
- Querying if space big enough to accommodate all the children for assemblies etc. Will the field remain the same size?
- Whilst happy that the school is being expanded to address the need of the community - do not consider that adequate provision for additional traffic has been addressed.

Member of Staff

Agree

- Agree with expansion of the school but believe it would have made more sense to build an entirely new school elsewhere on the current site and then flatten the existing school for car parking/playground.
- Concern about parental/child/staff access to the school. Teachers have many bags of marking and resources so trust that distance of staff car park and school building is taken in consideration.
- Associated increase in admin needs to be accommodated adequately.
- Concern about seating area for parents.
- Currently finding space for intervention groups is already a problem and concern that the expansion will exacerbate this.
- Concern about current size of KS1 playground.
- Concern that the KS2 playground will also not meet the needs of 240 children.
- Would welcome anything that could be done to the building to make it aesthetically fit in better with such a beautiful village as it is very much looks like a temporary prefabricated building already.
- Concern about interim arrangements whilst work is being carried out in terms of existing intervention/music hub – this classroom will have no outside access and the toilets are in serious need of upgrading.

Governors

Agree

- There is no doubt in my mind that this further primary education provision is required in this community. With the forecast growth of the village and the popularity of the school, this addition will not be too soon.
- Headcorn Primary is a very good school and has built a solid reputation for being so. Have experienced that the beauty of Headcorn Village is the community and generations of families have attended the primary school. It is very sad when a family lives in the village and is unable to send their child due to over subscription. A larger school would therefore be desirable but it is imperative that the school maintains its personality and ability to cater for the individual child.

Other Interested Parties

Agree

- Yes, I agree with the proposal. I am an other interested party, my dental practice is across the road. There is a need for more school places for the current local population and there are plans to build more houses, thereby increasing the already existing need.
- Understand the need for a larger school in Headcorn. However, there must be provision for parents to drop off and collect their children. The estate road Forge Meadows Close is used by numerous cars which is making problems for residents with parents cars parked on pavements, blocking driveways, parked on grassed areas. This urgently needs to be addressed.
- Agree with the need for more primary school places to cope with the growth in housing but concerned about public access to the school with the increased numbers. There are currently two accesses to the school on mornings and afternoons. These are from Kings Road and Brooklands. There are often neighbour conflicts due to inconsiderate parking especially when the weather is inclement. Brooklands is a small cul de sac and should not be used when the

school is increased in size as it will be impossible to control numbers. Brooklands should not also be used for the construction phase as it a narrow road, entirely unsuitable for heaving traffic. The road is already in an appalling state.

- Totally agree that the school needs to expand to accommodate the ever increasing number of children of primary school age. Understand that the proposed area for such buildings is on the site where the memorial tree is situated. Appreciate finance is a huge factor in any expansion programme, but would suggest a more prudent option would be to extend the existing one story building to two stories, leaving the other site an option for future development where necessary. However, if the original site is that preferred one would ask that extreme care should be taken if memorial tree is to be re-sited.

Undecided/did not indicate whether in support or against

Parents

- A positive step for both school and the village but plans must include the common sense approach that has been sadly lacking in recent planning decisions in Headcorn.
- The road/traffic flow and parking situation must be addressed. The parking situation at the school at school drop off and pick up is already dangerous – if there were to be an incident emergency vehicles would struggle to access – against any plans that do not address these issues.
- We almost did not receive a space for our child despite living in the village and therefore understand the need for expansion.
- Would like to understand how and when building work will be taken place and how overall facilities for the school would be improved.
- I feel my child has benefitted from the current size of the school (neither too large or too small) and it is with a certain amount of sadness that I feel that if not carefully managed, could take the school beyond its optimum capacity and lose the caring and close-knit sense of community that it now thrives under.
- Concerns about outside space. Whilst I understand it is in the guidelines for a 2FE allowance, the amount of land gifted isn't in correlation with the expected number of new pupils, compared to the green space the school already has for its 210 pupils.
- Concerned the ethos of the village school will be lost. Currently there are whole school assemblies where achievements across the school can be shared. This will be lost which is a massive shame. The current school hall is not big enough to accommodate 420 pupils. How will the whole school feel as a community if it is unable to socialise as one?
- Ultimately MBC has crucified Kent with far too many houses for the available amenities. This is what is happening to Headcorn. The infrastructure will not be able to cope and this is also not considered within this plan for Headcorn School. There will be significant congestion on Kings Street impacting on the main road and crossroad. Kings Street can barely cope with the traffic created at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Whilst I accept that Headcorn School needs to expand, I find MBC's local plan (draft) particularly regarding infrastructure wholly disagreeable.

- I hope the building work is undertaken in a non-disruptive way for the pupils. The current school is successful and a good school, I hope this won't change.

Undecided/did not indicate whether in support or against

Staff

- Accept there does seem to be need for the provision of more school places locally, and if it is Headcorn School that is to grow, feel the opportunity should be taken to look long-term and instead of botching together a short-term solution a much healthier and more imaginative building could be put together.
- I feel the school is fortunate to have a caring and strong team of staff, whom I very much enjoy working with and learning from and there is the risk that that might be lost with an expansion and the repercussions that would have upon the pupil body and staff morale.
- Environmental degradation is the most important issue facing this and future generations and education should be at the heart of preparing for this. Need to take this opportunity to clear the school of asbestos and build a sustainable environment that is warm in the winter, cool in the summer and has school's carbon footprint, reducing long-term energy and maintenance costs and having a positive effect on the health of pupils and staff. Bike sheds and an Air Quality Index monitor could be installed by the entrance to the school to increase awareness of exposure to car exhaust pollutants and hopefully lead to a reduction in traffic to and from the school.

Against the proposals

Parents/carers

- This is a small school with an amazing school spirit that will be destroyed by expansion.
- Sad that small village will lose the feeling of intimacy that it is so proud of currently.
- Our village is being ruined and our children are suffering.
- Concern about location of new classes in terms of loss of sports field and playground
- Concerned about no school assemblies due to lack of space.
- Also resident of Brooklands, the road is already swarming with vehicles at drop off and collection.
- Against expanding Headcorn village and the school in general.
- At present Headcorn Primary School is lovely to be involved with, it is friendly, the teachers know all the children and its lovely when whole school celebration assemblies and church services take place. By expanding the school these things won't and can't happen because buildings like the church can't accommodate that many people.
- Concern about problems with pupils and their behaviour if expansion takes place, which will have a negative effect on the school and its reputation.
- It is a village not a town.

Other Interested Parties Against

- It would be helpful to view the plans and supporting documentation.
- **Water infrastructure:** over the last 6 years at least Kings Rod has suffered a number of burst water mains. It would be helpful to know that an expanded school would lessen the chance of burst water mains affecting Kings Road in general. An outlet in Moat Road not far from the school overflows with sewage after rain. It would be helpful to know that an expanded school would mean less sewage in Headcorn's roads.
- **Surface run off:** After rain Headcorn's roads contain large amounts of water which does not drain away quickly. Passing traffic then sprays water over pedestrians. It would be helpful to know that an expanded school would result in rain water in Kings Road draining away more quickly.
- **Flood plain:** Parts of the school are either in the flood plain or next to it. It would be helpful to know that an expanded school would not extend the flood plain into Kings Road and Brooklands resulting in homes being in the flood plain that were not before. It is not possible to overestimate the stress caused by flood water in the home.
- **Traffic Pollution/Volume:** It would be helpful to know that an expanded school would not result in higher amounts of traffic in Kings Road at any time of the day.
- **Maidstone Borough Council supported housing developments:** It would be helpful to know how KCC intend to deal with the proposed increased primary school age population engendered by MBC supported housing developments in Headcorn. Some of these proposals have the potential to affect Headcorn's watertable and flood map. How would a school expanded further to incorporate additional population prevent flooding in Kings Road, Brooklands, Moat Road and Millbank.
- When KCC is able to confirm that an expanded school shall further improve the existing Kings Road/Brooklands environment, or at the very least, shall not harm it further for local residents, I will be happy to support the proposal.

Summary of Views of the Student Body of Headcorn Primary School - April 2016

All Pupils were fully briefed, given time to look at the proposed site plans and to ask questions. They were then led in a discussion by their Learning Council representatives facilitated by staff members. The School Learning Council have spent a great deal of time discussing the pros and cons of expanding the school. Recently they have also studied the proposed site plans and discussed at depth to be able to lead class discussions confidently.

Positive views from the EYFS/KS1 Pupils (aged 5-7yrs):

- Lots more space
- Another playground
- Additional small hall
- Making new friends
- All my friends can come here and learn with me
- Lots more teachers to help us
- A new building will look really smart
- New spaces to use

Concerns from the EYFS/KS1 Pupils (aged 5-7yrs):

- Young children finding their way around a larger site
- Is the small hall big enough for a whole class to use?
- New playground seems quite small
- More cars on site very close to our KS2 playground and one of the gates we use
- Worried that the school is too split up (between 3 separate buildings)
- Quite a lot of walking to some areas of site for younger shorter legs
- Will the building site be safe

Positive views from the KS2 Pupils (aged 7-11yrs):

- The school will have more influence in the community and with nearby schools
- Be able to mix up classes rather than all be together for 7 years
- More of our local families and friends will get places at their nearest school
- Nice to have more people to play with and the possibility of swapping classes if unhappy
- More friends and my friends from where I live can also come here and not have to travel to a school far away
- More people to create winning sports teams
- A wide variety of adults and staff to help us learn in lots of different ways
- More teachers and TAs who will bring lots of different talents and skills to share with us
- More teachers and adults to help out our current staff who have to do a lot of different things
- Appreciate the mixture of the modern and the traditional in buildings
- Like the range of materials used for the new building as long as it is good quality

- Like how the new building fits in, blending the old and our current newer building
- Like that there is an upstairs in the new building
- Elevator is great for access and getting around for disabled pupils, staff and parents
- 3 separate playgrounds will enable pupils to be split for different types of activities

Concerns from the KS2 Pupils (aged 7-11yrs):

- Sharing of resources with double the number of children, such as the hall for indoor PE, swimming pool, ICT Suite, will mean children will have less time to access these areas
- We will lose our spare classroom which is currently used regularly for music and other creative activities, clubs, interventions, pupil meetings
- We might lose our family feel.
- Noise level around site will increase with more pupils
- More pupils might mean more behaviour issues to deal with at playtimes if not enough space
- Security of the overall site could be a worry
- Concerned that children won't all know each other as they do at the moment
- Will all children know all staff if there is going to be at least 40+ adults
- Won't be able to easily meet together as a whole school for Celebration Assemblies
- Parents won't be able to attend events all together unless multiple events put on e.g. Harvest, Easter church service, Nativity play, Leavers' Performances
- Will be split from friends if classes are mixed as the move between year groups
- Smaller KS2 playground but double the pupils
- Cars parked very close to where children walk and play and do sports
- How will lunchtimes work as it is difficult to get everyone through now
- Will balls from the playground hit teacher's cars with the carpark so close to KS2 playground
- We won't be a little community school any more

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,

Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

16/00031

For publication

Subject: Proposed Expansion of Headcorn Primary School (Maidstone)

Decision:

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

Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Expand Headcorn Primary School, Kings Road, Headcorn from 210 to 420, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 30 to 60 for Year R entry for 1 September 2017

And, subject to no new objections to the public notice

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Implement the proposals according to the dates identified above.

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.

Reason(s) for decision:

In reaching this decision I have taken into account;

- the views expressed by those put in writing in response to the consultation;
- the views of the District, Borough and Parish Councils, the local County Councillor; the local MP Governing Bodies of the schools, Staff and Pupils; schools from the surrounding area
- the Equalities Impact Assessment and comments received regarding this; and
- the views of the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

15 December 2015**14 October 2014**

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

Any alternatives considered:

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 and 2016-20 explored all options and the

expansion of this school was deemed the suitable option.

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

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Signed

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Date