

From: Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

Subject: Proposed changes to Harrietsham CEP School (Maidstone)

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Education 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 Harrietsham CEP School (Maidstone)

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to:

Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Expand Harrietsham CEP School, West Street, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1JZ from 210 to 420 increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 30 to 60 for Year R entry for 1 September 2018.

And, subject to no new objections to the public notice

- (ii) Implement the proposals for 1 September 2018.
- (iii) Allocate £3 million from the Basic Needs budget, which over a period of time will be offset by approximately £1 million from developer contributions.
- (iv) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel (Interim) 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.

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.

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.

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 SEN school places across the County, as set out in Kent's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2016-20
- 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 Harrietsham.
- 1.3 Maidstone Borough Council has recently submitted their proposed Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate, setting out the quantity and location of housing development up to 2031. Within the Plan both Harrietsham and Lenham have been designated as Rural Service Centres, regarded as sustainable locations away from the town with infrastructure to support further growth.
- 1.4 Whilst submission of the Local Plan is a significant step forward towards a clear plan for housing in the Borough, a five year housing supply has not existed for a number of years and several developments not within the Plan have been granted consent in addition to those allocated.
- 1.5 Within the Local Plan 242 new dwellings are proposed for Harrietsham across three sites up to 2031. In reality 220 have homes already been consented with a further 141 in the planning system. Approximately 360 new houses would be anticipated to result in more than 100 additional pupils requiring primary aged school provision. This pressure could not be met locally without an increase in the capacity of existing primary schools. KCC's preference is to expand Harrietsham CEP School, which would necessitate the provision of additional land adjacent to the existing school buildings.
- 1.6 Harrietsham CEP School is a popular school judged 'Good' school by Ofsted in November 2013. For September 2016 reception year intake the school received a total of 72 preferences for a PAN of 30. The school's students are the heart of a vibrant and creative learning environment with a Christian ethos. Every child is valued and expected to reach their full potential as a confident and independent learner. This would secure Kent's 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)'.
- 1.7 KCC, with the support of the Governing Body, is proposing to provide additional school places by expanding Harrietsham CEP School from 1 to 2 forms of entry (from 30 to 60 Reception places each year). The expansion of Harrietsham CEP School by 1FE for September 2017 will act as the strategic response to the forecast population growth in Harrietsham village

and neighbouring village of Lenham. Should the proposal proceed additional accommodation would be provided to enable the school to expand.

- 1.8 The expansion of Harrietsham CEPS would require additional land to be secured to provide appropriate facilities. KCC is seeking to acquire land adjacent to the school to facilitate this.
- 1.9 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place from 19 September 2016 until 17 October 2016. An information 'drop-in' session was held on 5 October 2016 at Harrietsham CEP School between 4.00pm and 5.30pm.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 KCC is proposing to relocate and enlarge Harrietsham CEP School by 30 places taking the PAN to 60 (2FE) for the September 2018 intake and eventually a total capacity of 420 places.

Capital –

- a. The proposal is for a new building providing 6 classrooms with associated ancillary facilities and a small group room, additional soft and hard play areas and the provision of additional car parking. The new building will also provide enhanced administration facilities for the School, with the current office space refurbished to provide the second Reception Class. Currently the School Hall and Kitchen are undersized and will be increased to accommodate the 1FE expansion. The total cost is estimated to be in the region of £3m from Basic Need budget, of which approximately £1m is anticipated to be secured from developer contributions over a period of time. The costs are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the cost of the project would be exceeded by more than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate 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.
 - iii Human – Harrietsham 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 5 October 2016 between 4.00 and 5.30pm at Harrietsham CEP School.
- 4.3 The Head Teacher, Linda Oliver, in an Act of Worship on the 10th October 2016 explained 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 7 classes across the schools. Overall 69% of the children were in favour of the proposed expansion with 5% against and 26% undecided. A summary of children's views are attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.4 Following the closure of the consultation period 24 positive responses were received, 13 were negative and 6 were undecided bringing the total to 43 responses. A summary of all written responses are attached at Appendix 2. 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 support expansion of the school by way of a direct agreement with the landowner to acquire the land required. I do not support expansion of the school dependent on a resident application on Tong Meadow being approved.

5.2 The View of the Headteacher and Governing Body of Harrietsham C of E 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. The governors would like you to note that they are agreeing to the proposed expansion of the school not for future housing developments in Harrietsham.

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. Harrietsham CEP 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 Harrietsham CEP School from 210 to 420 for 1 September 2018.

6.2 The proposed alterations to Harrietsham CEP 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 Infrastructure will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. **Conclusions**

8.1 This proposal will create an additional 210 places at Harrietsham CEP 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 Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to:**

Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Expand Harrietsham CEP School, West Street, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1JZ from 210 to 420, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 30 to 60 for Year R entry for 1 September 2018.

And, subject to no new objections to the public notice

- (ii) Implement the proposals for 1 September 2018.

- (iii) Allocate £3 million from the Basic Needs budget, which over a period of time will be offset by up to £1 million from developer contributions.
- (iv) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel (Interim) to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (v) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocated the additional funding.

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.

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 2016-20 http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/56329/Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-in-Kent-2016-2020.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. Report Author

- Jared Nehra, Area Education Officer – West Kent
- Telephone: 03000 412209
- Email: Jared.nehra@kent.gov.uk

12 Relevant Director

- Keith Abbott, Director of Education Planning and Access
- Telephone: 03000 417008
- Email: Keith.abbott@kent.gov.uk

Harrietsham CEP School - Our thoughts on the expansion of the School

Butterfly Class – Year R

- Here are some of the children's responses to our class discussion:
- How are we going to fit in a circle?
- Our school will still be our school
- It's a good thing, we will have a bigger school
- We can have new friends
- New toys to play with!
- Are we going to have a bigger playground?
- More children to play with
- What new classrooms are we going to have?
- Will the computers still be here?
- Where will we go?
- What about our toys to play with? We're going to have more equipment!

Year 1

- I like the school the way it is.
- Brilliant – make more friends
- Love it – classes would be bigger
- Too many people – won't know their names.
- More Year R's to look after and play with.
- Bit scared – won't know everyone
- Bigger library means more books.
- More toys and resources.

Year 2 – Dormice Class

Concerns

- We don't know what it will look like; we discussed that there will be plans and artists impressions drawings to look at.
- It might be confusing – you sometimes get lost in bigger places: we talked about knowing how to get to school field and wildlife area a long way from our classroom and both further away than our new building)
- There will be lots of people on the playground (very pleased to hear there will be more playing space).
- I'm a shy person and I won't know people (discussed that when we first started school didn't know each other and that soon we had lots of friends).

Positives

- There will be more space to play in.
- There will be lots of new friends
- There will be grass to play on in the summertime.
- It will be good for others in the village who have not been able to get into our school.

Year 3

For

- The library will expand this means more books to read.
- We can make more new friends and the playground will get bigger.
- More playing space and grass to play on.
- We can fit more people in our school and have a bigger community.
- More clubs for children to attend.
- More resources and equipment in our classrooms.

Against

- The village will get bigger and become busy.
- There will be less parking.
- Plants and wildlife might be destroyed.
- Playground becoming over crowded.
- Hard for the cooks to cook more food.

Questions:

1. When will the shelter and little playground get bigger?
2. Do we have to get a bigger school?
3. How big will the school become?
4. How long will the building take?
5. Will there be one big library or a few small ones?

Year 5

Many children in Year 5 were very eager to express their sensible views on the school expansion. Most children that spoke seemed to be in favour of expansions.

As a class, Year 5 gave the following explanations as to why they thought the expansion was a good or a bad idea.

Good idea

- The expansion would create more school places for children who live close to the school.
- There would be extra space in the school.
- There would be more rooms to access in a lockdown situation.
- It would create the opportunity for the school to recruit extra staff.

Bad idea

- The expansion may destroy the habitats of some animals, in particular rabbits.
- It could create more traffic, which would make it harder for people to access the school and could cause delays to local buses.
- The extra traffic could make it more dangerous for children crossing or cycling on the roads at the end of the school day.

School Design

- As a class, Year 5 raised the following points that they thought should be borne in mind when designing the new school:

- The design of the new building ought to keep the style of the existing building, so that the new building feels like part of the school.
- The new building ought to have bigger classrooms than the current building.
- Year groups ought to occupy adjacent classrooms, possibly with adjoining doors.
- The expansion of the school hall ought to be bigger than currently planned.

Year 6 – Badgers Class

What is your opinion about the school being expanded?

Very bad idea	Bad	Unsure	Good	Very good
0	0	8	17	1

What benefits would there be to expanding Harrietsham?

- When we go to secondary, already used to a bigger school.
- Children who live near or have friends/siblings here will be able to come.
- Due to housing developments, more children will be need schools in this area.
- More people in the school mean more friends.

Do you have any concerns about the expansion?

- What new classes would be in the new build?
- Will there be another hall?
- Will the playground be expanded?
- If the playgrounds are bigger, would there be more staff or would they stagger break?
- What about eating? There won't be space/time. Wouldn't we need more facilities and resources?
- What would happen about the school field e.g. Sport's Day?

What are your opinions about the plan?

- How would we all fit in the church?
- What would happen with house points?
- Concern – it would be difficult to find your friends?
- Would twins be split?
- What about the staff hiring?
- What would happen about going swimming?

Comments

- Lots of change – unsure how it would all work
- I like the small school atmosphere
- A lot more children overall could lead to more bullying.
- At the beginning, I thought it would be good with more things added but it might affect the amount of time swimming and whole school activities.

Appendix 2

Summary of Written Responses

Proposal to:

- **Expand Harrietsham CEP School, West Street, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1JZ from 210 to 420, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 30 to 60 for Year R entry for 1 September 2018**

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: approximately 400

Responses received: 43

	Support	Undecided/ Not stated	Against	Total
Parents/Carers	12	5	6	23
Pupils	0	0	1	1
Members of Staff	5	0	0	5
Other Interested Parties	7	1	6	14
Total	24	6	13	43

In support of the proposals

Parents/Carers

Agree

- Understand that as the village expands the school will have to increase to meet demand.
- A shame that Harrietsham has been chosen as an area for massive development. A small community turning into an expanse of housing, losing the community feel. However, if the village is to expand then the school must also grow to meet residents' needs.
- Traffic concerns, around West Street and surrounding side streets are dangerously congested. Cars parked inappropriately, no formal crossing, busy people driving without due care.
- The school should get priority for the land over more housing development as a lot of local residents already struggle to get their children into the school and the amount of new housing is only going to increase the problem.
- Local school needs local school places.
- Concerned about the amount of noise/disruption caused by building work during school hours and the amount of playground/field space they will get.
- Concerned about the impact of construction on education and the focus of teaching staff, disruption to external play areas.
- Expect the school and KCC to fully engage pupils re: the build at an early stage.
- Would hope the school hall will either be significantly enlarged or rebuilt elsewhere to create a space where the expanded school can meet, learn and worship.
- Interested to find out what the environmental impact will be as the extension of the school will be on translocated land, which has already been diminished in size following the Hollies housing development.
- Concerned about lack of local school spaces and availability of places at Harrietsham PS if housing continues.

- I think the school and KCC could incorporate a scooter shed along with the bikes which will help with traffic. Many times the children want to scoot but it is difficult to carry the scooters home.
- Concerns around the pick-up and drop-off and traffic management.
- The car park of the school should be one way, as a loop to alleviate drop-off and collection.
- From the plans it appeared that the pre-school and reception would be separated that would be a shame as the transition for the children in the rooms next door currently works really well.
- Agree with the proposal but is this proposal going to be enough- will this eliminate the need for children born and raised in Harrietsham attending primary school of the village?
- Agree for need to expand – hope same consideration is given to secondary.

Member of Staff

Agree

- The expansion is needed due to the population of Harrietsham increasing. The children who live in the village should be able to attend their local primary school.
- Due to the number of disappointed parents whose children did not get offered a place for this current academic year I feel the school expansion is a good idea, especially with the number of new properties being built and young families moving into the area.
- A pedestrian crossing is needed near the school with the amount of cars dropping and collecting as this will increase.
- Without the expansion classes will be forced to exceed their current capacity, which would be problematic for the pupils and the staff.
- Good idea if more reception places can be offered.

Other Interested Parties

Agree

- Agree but if the school has an existing travel plan, clearly it is not working. West Street is already seriously congested. The Parish Council is already very worried about the access to buses and emergency vehicles and the problem of large lorries negotiating the sharp junction at Station Road.
- Perhaps school buses could be used to collect children from designated points around the village and entering and exiting the school campus only from the Parkwood end of West Street.
- The extension of the school should be funded by Kent Education Committee and not as a quid pro quo arrangement which permits the further residential development of the site.
- Supportive of the expansion, however, specific detailed concerns regarding environmental impact around surface water drainage and the impact on the Parkwood Trout Farm and water supply to Leeds Castle. Letter and diagrams have been passed to KCC Property design team.

- It is very important for children of primary school age to attend school where they live. This is not possible at present in Harrietsham due to limited space and recent new housing development.
- In favour of the proposed expansion even if it means developing part of the site adjacent to the East of the school to help finance the works but also to ensure the playground and playing field arrangements are better located to the school buildings.
- Major concern for everyone is the traffic movement in West Street. – Make it one way from West to East which would require adjusting the junctions with the A20 at both ends to allow safe access and egress.
- Support the growth of the school but the proposed expansion is not enough. Lenham and Harrietsham are both planned for many more houses.
- Concerned about the current infrastructure of the school and lack of future proofing.
- Concerned there is no footpath for pupils or pedestrians for pupils or pedestrians from the school west wards to the A20.

Response was received from Harrietsham Parish Council on 13th October 2016

The full response has been passed to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform for consideration. The response broadly supports the expansion of Harrietsham Primary School but has grave concerns about how this is to be achieved. The Parish Council raise concerns about:

- The consultation process. If the proposal is approved by KCC needs to be joined up thinking with the Highways Department on how this expansion can happen without it being detrimental to all road users, pedestrians and surrounding home owners.
- Traffic and congestion issues along West Street and the Hollies, particularly around pick-up and drop-off times.
- How KCC will ensure that children can safely walk to school along a road with very limited footpath.

The Parish Council suggests KCC commences negotiations with the Landowner with a view of purchasing the required land; without there being the need for the land to be held to ransom by the developer. The Parish Council would vigorously oppose any future development of Tongs Meadow.

Response from Maidstone Borough Council

The Borough Council is supportive of the principle of expanding this school to accommodate the additional pupils generated by planned development in Harrietsham. The need for additional primary school capacity is reflected in Policy SP6 Harrietsham Rural Service Centre of the submission version of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031. Significant developer contributions have been secured towards improvements at Harrietsham CEP School through the Council's development management system. The Council would welcome further discussions when more detailed proposals are developed.

Undecided/did not indicate whether in support or against

Parents/Carers

- Understand and accept need to increase the school due to the large expansion of the village. It has been suggested that once the school has been expanded, further housing development will be built taking away the only green space in this part of the village. Strongly oppose further housing.
- Concern about increase in traffic - calming measures should be introduced.
- Current school grounds are too small to effectively double school capacity. Concern about where additional facilities will be located.
- Need understanding on impact to local residents with increased parking/how the school would cope with teaching staff. A lot of change has happened at feel the team is stretched.
- Space is limited with the school now even more students would impact on existing students.
- Concerned the school would lose its village culture and parents/teachers become more distant.
- Will additional monies adequately set class rooms up ready for use or will more money be needed? Where will increased number of teachers come from? How will they be paid? Will additional assistance be given to 'special needs' pupils as increase in pupil numbers may increase those with specific care needs?

Undecided/did not indicate whether in support or against

Other Interested Parties

- Concerned there is not a valid case for additional pupils – approximately 70% will be taken up by children from other villages impacting on traffic issues in West Street.
- KCC should consider expanding other areas where demand comes from. KCC has not provided any evidence why schools such as Lenham can't be expanded as they appear to have plenty of land around the school and much better and quieter access roads.
- Only supportive of expanding Harrietsham PS by three classes to provide places for children from Harrietsham.

Against the proposals

Parents/carers

- Concerned that expanding to 2FE will have a detrimental effect on school standards and will result in loss of community/village feel.
- Do not want education of children compromised by building work in the most important years at Primary School.
- Area needed for expansion has footpaths and is full of wildlife that people love.
- Concern about traffic, West Street congestion, no Zebra crossing and impact on residents.
- Concern about currently quality of education offer - efforts should be focused on quality not quantity.

- Concern about traffic management/safety – consideration of pupils safety and wellbeing must be taken
- Concern about established trees will be cut down.

Pupil

- I don't like this idea because I was going to ride my bike to school but now it will be too dangerous so I don't want this done.

Other Interested Parties Against

- Harrietsham Against Reckless Development (HARD) submitted a full response which has been passed to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform. Comments were documented including:
 - Unsuitability of current site for expansion – will the land required for expansion be purchased with the condition that the whole of Tongs Meadow be developed as a housing development or can it be purchased without a condition.
 - Poor level of communicating the proposal – communication is biased.
 - One FE expansion is more than is required.
 - Current state of traffic in West Street is already chaotic on school days.
 - HARD members believe insufficient thought has been given by KCC in regard to planning the future (total) educational needs of Harrietsham, Lenham and possibly as far afield as Ashford by 2030.
- Not strong enough case to expand to double in size. Concerned that 70% of additional places will be taken up by children from other villages.
- Opposed to expansion that requires the loss of extremely sensitive reptile, amphibian and wildlife habitat (RAW). The original school build and the shorts field has already resulted in the relocation of RAW and the destruction of their habitat.
- KCC had to apply for a European protected species licence for the development of the school's sports field. In its justification for the field's current location, it was stated that should the sports field be located immediately east of the school "it would affect a higher quality herpetofauna habitat." However, KCC is now ignoring the content of this licence application and considering destroying this habitat by building on it. If it was applicable then, it is applicable now.
- Object as Campaign to Protect Rural England, Kent Wildlife Trust and the Kent Downs AONB have all issued robust and compelling objections on Tongs Meadow.
- Concerns about traffic particularly around West Street – it will ruin the village and the quality of life.
- There are not many schools which have such diverse countryside in one meadow, ponds, small wood, boggy area, wild flowers and butterflies, why lose it.
- Where will development stop - no to more houses!
- It would be better if KCC brought the land direct from the landowner.
- KCC should consider looking for an alternative school site off the A20 with land that does not have all the complications of Tong's Meadow and that could allow for future expansion of a 2FE.