

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills (and Deputy Leader)	Ref No:ES10 (17/18)
The Proposed Expansion of Primary and Secondary Schools in West Sussex from September 2019	Key Decision: Yes
January 2018	Part I
Report by the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Economy, Planning and Place	Electoral Divisions: Bognor Regis East Felpham Rother Valley

Summary

The County Council has a statutory duty to commission sufficient school places for children and young people across the county. In certain areas of the county the demand for school places has been increasing. This report seeks approval for further consultation to take place to expand two West Sussex County Council maintained schools in the Bognor/Felpham area where there has been an increase in demand for places. Guidance for decisions on expanding maintained schools is set out in the Department for Education 'Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers April 2016'.

Recommendations

1. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approves the publication of statutory notices to further consult on the expansion of two schools:
 - Felpham Community College - increase from a Published Admission Number of 8 forms of entry (240 places) per year to 10 forms of entry (300 places) per year; and
 - St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bognor Regis - increase from a Published Admission Number of 1½ forms of entry (45 places) per year to 2 forms of entry (60 places) per year.
2. Should no responses, material or significant in number, be received during the consultation period the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will delegate authority to the Director of Education and Skills in consultation with the Director of Economy, Planning and Place to endorse the proposals. Should representations provide significant new evidence the Cabinet Member will be asked to consider the need to take a further decision. If necessary this is likely to be at the end of February 2018.
3. That the expansion of Easebourne CE Primary School to increase from a Published Admission Number of 1 form of entry (30 places) per year to 2 forms of entry (60 places) per year is not currently progressed. The proposed expansion has generated a number of concerned comments from many of the local schools in the area and the wider community. It is proposed that this requires the investigation of alternative options to cater for demand in this area and that these are reviewed with the involvement of existing education and community stakeholders. This may result in a further consultation on proposals later in 2018.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The County Council has a statutory duty to commission sufficient school places for children and young people across the county. Officers have been closely monitoring the number of children in schools across West Sussex to make sure the schools can meet the demand for places. The County Council has received evidence that the number of children who will need a primary and secondary school place is increasing in certain areas. As a result officers proposed expanding the number of school places in Bognor Regis, Felpham and the Easebourne/Midhurst area to cater for this demand.
- 1.2 The schemes in Bognor Regis and Felpham would see an investment of approximately £12.5m on the two sites by remodelling and extending existing provision. Both schools, and in the case of St Mary's Catholic Primary, the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton, support this approach to expanding numbers and welcome the enhanced facilities given the need to accommodate future rolls. The schemes have not been designed yet, but this will be actioned when there is a Cabinet Member Decision to move forward and business cases have been received with more definitive costs after design and tendering.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approves the publication of statutory notices to further consult on the expansion of two schools:
 - Felpham Community College - increase from a Published Admission Number of 8 forms of entry (240 places) per year to 10 forms of entry (300 places) per year; and
 - St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bognor Regis - increase from a Published Admission Number of 1½ forms of entry (45 places) per year to 2 forms of entry (60 places) per year.
- 2.2 Should no responses, material or significant in number, be received during the consultation period the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will delegate authority to the Director of Education and Skills in consultation with the Director of Economy, Planning and Place to endorse the proposals. Should representations provide significant new evidence the Cabinet Member will be asked to consider the need to take a further decision. If necessary this would be at the end of February 2018.

3. Resources

- 3.1 There are no costs associated with the recommendations in this report. The design fees and subsequent expansion costs will be met by the existing capital budgets.
- 3.2 The enhanced buildings will be more efficient to run because they will meet current building regulations and energy efficiency standards. Internal remodeling, and the extension to the number of classrooms in later phases, will bring further benefits to pupils attending St Mary's Catholic Primary or

Felpham Community College. The project at Felpham Community College in particular will replace poor existing classrooms in huttred accommodation.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

- 4.1 An initial briefing explaining the proposals and the rationale behind the expansion was given to the Cabinet Member, County Local Committee Members, the Chief Executives of the seven District and Borough Councils and the South Downs National Park Authority, the Teaching Associations and Unions and local MPs across the county before the consultation began.
- 4.2 On 31st October 2017 a consultation booklet and response form was made available to the following members of the community: -
- Parents
 - Staff
 - Governors
 - Neighbouring Local Authorities
 - The Dioceses of Chichester, and of Arundel and Brighton
 - Unions and Teaching Associations
 - District and Borough Councils and the South Downs National Park Authority
 - Parish and Town Councils where the schools are located
 - Local MPs
 - Local Members of the County Council
 - Local pre-school providers
 - All maintained schools in Bognor and Felpham and the Rother Valley, both primary and secondary
 - Local libraries
 - County Council E-Panel
 - County Council internal staff groups (Women's, Disability, LGBT and Black and Minority Ethnicities).
- 4.3 A four week public consultation to seek views on the proposals was also undertaken using the County Council's Have Your Say website and via social media. Publicity for the consultation included a press release which received local press coverage. During the period 7 November to 13 November 2017 three local drop-in sessions were held at each of the schools proposed for expansion at which approximately 86 people attended (26 at Felpham Community College, 15 at St Mary's RC Primary and 45 at Easebourne CE Primary). At each session officers from the Admissions Team and School Organisation and Development Teams were available to discuss proposals and notes were taken, where possible, of concerns and issues that parents, staff and local residents raised. Attendees at these sessions were encouraged to participate in the online consultation.
- 4.4 Responses to the consultation were received from the online survey, the response form in the consultation document, by letter and by email. 190 written responses were received in total. The written submissions were included in the online survey database in order to record all responses in one place. No forms were discounted from the overall total although one on-time response forwarded by the local MP from a local resident was received at a later date. This has been included in this total and added to the database.

- 4.5 A summary report of consultation responses is provided at Appendix 1. The spreadsheet analysis 'Consultation on the proposed expansion of primary and secondary schools in West Sussex from September 2019' gives a summary of responses for each school and includes all the individual responses in full in table format.
- 4.6 The majority of responses (65%) referred to the proposed expansion of Easebourne CE Primary, 16% related to the proposed expansion of Felpham Community College and 9% to the proposed expansion of St Mary's Catholic Primary in Bognor Regis. 5% related to more than one school and 4% did not relate to a particular school but commented on housing or other areas of the county where school places may be required such as Angmering, Billingshurst, Horsham and Chichester.
- 4.7 Of the 125 responses to the proposed expansion of Easebourne CE Primary 15 were in support, 21 were neither objecting nor supporting and 91 were objections. There were responses from local residents, parents and staff and from local education and planning bodies such as neighbouring schools, the South Downs National Park Authority, the Diocese of Chichester, the University of Chichester Academy Trust, Easebourne, Midhurst and neighbouring Parish and Town Councils, and the Midhurst Society. There were particular lobbies from consultees supporting the expansion of Midhurst Primary as an alternative to Easebourne CE Primary, and concerns raised by rural village schools in the area, such as Stedham Primary, Fernhurst Primary and Hollycombe Primary, about the impact on numbers and on their viability. There were also a large number of concerns about traffic, parking and safer routes to schools. See Appendix 1 for more details. Therefore as the results of the initial consultation indicate concern from many of the local schools in the area and the wider community it is proposed that the expansion of Easebourne CE Primary School is not progressed. It is suggested that a review of alternative options to cater for demand in this area is carried out with the involvement of existing education and community stakeholders. This may result in a further consultation on proposals later in 2018.
- 4.8 Of the 30 responses to the proposed expansion of Felpham Community College, 14 were in support, 7 were neither objecting nor supporting and 9 were objections. There were 13 responses from local residents, 10 from parents and 4 from staff. Two were from local bodies including the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and Downview Primary School and one was marked 'other' but did not give details of their status. The Diocese objected stating that they would like to see expansion at St Philip Howard RC Secondary in Barnham in addition or as an alternative to an expansion at Felpham Community College. Downview Primary School Governors wrote supporting the expansion as a feeder school to Felpham Community College. The majority of the responses were raising concerns about the increase in traffic, parking and safer routes to schools. See Appendix 1 for more details.
- 4.9 Of the 17 responses for St Mary's Catholic Primary, 7 were in support, 2 were neither objecting nor supporting and 8 were objections. There were 3 responses from local residents, 7 from parents and 3 from staff. Three were also responses from the Head, Governors and a staff member of Bersted Green Primary, a neighbouring school, raising concerns about the negative impact on their numbers. The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton wrote strongly supporting the expansion. Otherwise, the main concerns were regarding the increase in traffic and safer routes to school and also whether

Brexit may reduce the demand for places going forward as some families/children originally from elsewhere in Europe may return to their countries of origin.

- 4.10 Of the 18 responses marked as Other or More Than One School, 12 were in support, 2 were neither objecting nor supporting and 4 were objections. There were 11 responses from local residents, 6 from others and 1 from a parent/carer. These responses were generally related to new housing in West Sussex and the need for new schools instead of expanding existing schools and also other parts of the county that should be considered for expansion of school places.
- 4.11 Should the proposal to expand the schools be approved, the Capital Projects Team and their Building Design Team will invite parents and local residents to view the proposed development plans for the building works prior to the submission of a planning application to the local planning authority.
- 4.12 The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills has been briefed on the proposals.

5. Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 Should there be a delay to the capital build there is a chance that local children will have to travel to other parts of Bognor Regis or beyond to be educated and siblings might be separated. Children of parents with a preference for a Catholic education may not have the opportunity for a faith education.
- 5.2 The Admissions consultation for September 2019 entry takes place between the end of November 2017 and mid-January 2018 (the Admissions Team publishes any proposed revised Published Admission Numbers). This has implications for the timetable for building projects to expand schools. There is a risk, if the statutory consultation on expanding schools is delayed, that the consultation on admissions will also be delayed, and pupils may not be able to attend a local school. This is inconvenient for parents if siblings end up attending different schools.
- 5.3 Funding has not yet been formally allocated to these projects and is dependent in part on the completion of the statutory consultation in early 2018 and the final endorsement of the proposals. There is however Basic Need funding identified to finance these projects. Business cases that meet the needs of the Capital Programme governance process and planning approval will be required to move these projects forward and will be managed by the Capital and Asset Management Team.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 Forecasts of demand for school places are produced twice a year and reviewed at 'Basic Need' meetings made up of education and school planning professionals from West Sussex County Council. These figures and early indications of potential schemes are then shared with Locality Headteachers on an annual cycle and then shared with the West Sussex County Council Planning Places Board. Most schemes are published on the West Sussex County Council website in the Planning School Places document before

informal consultation with the wider public and education stakeholders takes place.

- 6.2 These forecasts indicated that there was a need to expand the number of school places in Bognor Regis and Felpham. Taking no action would result in insufficient places being available locally meaning that children would have to travel to other parts of Bognor Regis or beyond to be educated and siblings might be separated. Therefore to avoid this occurring it is necessary to progress this proposal.
- 6.3 With regard to the Easebourne/Midhurst area, which was also identified as requiring additional places, the initial consultation generated a number of concerns locally and so it is proposed that the expansion of Easebourne CE Primary School is not currently progressed. It is suggested that a review of alternative options to cater for demand in this area is carried out with the involvement of existing education and community stakeholders. This may result in a further consultation on proposals later in 2018.

7. Equality Duty

- 7.1 The consultations on the Have Your Say website are specifically designed to help to gather the correct information so that protected groups, and those with protected characteristics, are identified within the data.
- 7.2 Notifying schools, parents/carers, special interest groups and other interested parties (see 4.2 above) has helped to ensure that there is sufficient data to inform the Cabinet Member Decision specifically regarding those with protected characteristics.
- 7.3 The consultation included gathering information on nine protected characteristics including race, sex, disability and religion or belief and the documentation has taken into account the diverse communication needs of the population.
- 7.4 An equalities analysis of the results of the consultation was undertaken and no significant differences were apparent.

8. Social Value

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. Human Rights Act Implications

- 10.1 Everyone has the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. The impact of any proposed changes on the right to family life will be taken into consideration. Article 1 of the First Protocol is the right to education. No person shall be denied the right to education. The proposals therefore support this right as school places will be available in the local area for all children of school age.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of consultation responses

Background Papers - None