

Cabinet Member for Education and Schools

Proposal to expand Hassocks Infant School, The Windmills Junior School and St Lawrence CE Primary School in Hurstpierpoint.

July 2012

Report by Director of Learning and Head of Capital and Asset Management

ES10 (12.13)
Key Decision: Yes
Part I or Part II: Part I
Electoral Division(s): Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools approves the publication of statutory notices to expand, in a phased approach from September 2013:

- Hassocks Infant School from a 2.5 form entry (225 place) to 3 form entry (270 place) infant school,
- the Windmills Junior School from a 2 form entry (240 place) to a 3 form entry (360 place) junior school, and
- St Lawrence CE Primary School, Hurstpierpoint from a 2 form entry (420 place) to a 3 form entry (630 place) primary school

and should no responses, material or significant in number, be received the proposals proceed.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council and Diocese of Chichester Schools Service have been closely monitoring the number of children at schools in the Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint area to ensure the schools can meet the demand for places. The numbers of pupils has been growing and has been higher than the places available for some time with temporary units being placed on the Hassocks Infants site to cater for the additional demand. As a result officers propose permanently expanding The Windmills Junior School, Hassocks Infants School and St Lawrence CE Primary in Hurstpierpoint to cater for the rising numbers.
- 1.2 It is proposed to expand Hassocks Infants from a two and a half form entry school (225 place school) to a three form of entry school (270 place school); The Windmills Junior School from a 2 form entry (240 place) to a 3 form entry (360 place) school; and St Lawrence CE Primary in Hurstpierpoint from a 2 form entry (420 place) to a 3 form entry (630 place) primary school school. The proposal is to increase the Published Admission Number at Hassocks Infants from the current 75 to 90, at The Windmills Junior School from 60 to 90, and St Lawrence CE Primary, also from 60 to 90. Due to the nature of these particular expansions, being by more than 30 pupils and greater than 25% of the current capacities of the buildings, a full statutory public consultation is required. Full form of entry schools are a preferred model of organisation with no requirement for mixed age teaching. The

schools support this approach to expanding numbers and welcome the enhanced facilities given the need to accommodate future rolls.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 An initial briefing was given to the Cabinet Member, County Local Committee Members, the Chief Executive of Mid Sussex District Council, the Teaching Associations and Unions and the local MP, Rt Hon Nicholas Soames, before consultation began (on 21st May 2012). On 21st May a consultation booklet was sent 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
 - Mid Sussex District Council
 - Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Councils
 - The Local MP
 - Local Members of the County Council
 - All maintained schools in the Hassocks locality, both primary and secondary
 - Early Years providers feeding into the school
 - Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and Haywards Heath Libraries
- 2.2 The booklet was also available online on the Have Your Say pages of the County Council website.
- 2.3 At the close of the consultation, 14 written responses were received relating to Hassocks Infants, 6 responses were received regarding The Windmills Junior School and 17 for St Lawrence CE Primary. The majority of responses were from parents of existing pupils at the schools.
- 2.4 Of the 14 written responses regarding Hassocks Infants, 9 approved of the proposal, 2 were against and 3 did not specify one way or the other. The majority of concerns were about the access to the school and potential traffic congestion/parking issues that might arise due to the extra pupils.
- 2.5 Of the 7 written responses regarding The Windmills Junior School, 6 approved of the proposal, and one did not express whether they were for or against. Comments were raised about making sure facilities were added over and above additional classrooms eg. that the hall was big enough and dining facilities improved. The respondent who did not express approval or disapproval raised a concern about access to the school being difficult.
- 2.6 Of the 17 written responses regarding St Lawrence CE Primary in Hurstpierpoint, 6 were in favour, 9 were against and 2 were neither for or against. The majority of concerns were about the impact of increased traffic movements on the school and the village as a whole, potential loss of playing fields and a small village school ethos. One respondent suggested a new school is built in Sayers Common instead.

- 2.7 A fuller analysis of all consultation responses is attached as part of the Customer Focus Appraisal as Appendix 1.
- 2.8 Separate consultations will begin in the autumn of 2012 to consider site and access issues as a precursor to any planning applications. This will be aimed at residents that live close to the proposed sites who will be directly impacted. It is separate from the current consultation on the principles of expanding education provision in Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint.

3. Customer Focus Appraisal

- 3.1 A Customer Focus Appraisal has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 4.1 The proposals offer value for money and are carefully tailored to the resources available. The County Council's capital programme 2012/13 includes an allocation for capital works at the schools under the heading 'Primary and Secondary Basic Need, Other Schemes'. The budget is based on initial feasibility work completed by architects working for the West Sussex Capital and Asset Management Team and the Diocese of Chichester, in the case of St Lawrence.
- 4.2 The expanded schools will be efficient to run because they will meet current building regulations and energy efficiency standards.

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 Burgess Hill for their education and that siblings would not be able to attend the same school. This could also have a knock on effect on children in Burgess Hill where the number of school places is also beginning to come under pressure and children from the Hassocks locality may have to travel further afield.
- 5.2 There is a possibility that the scheme may cost more than the feasibilities suggest as outlined in the identified risks. WSCC Capital Planning Project Managers will manage these risks carefully with the architects and building contractors employed by the County and by the Diocese.

6. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 6.1 Having sufficient school places for children should reduce potential antisocial behaviour and crime.

7. Human Rights Act Implications

- 7.1 West Sussex County Council must ensure enough school places are available for all children in the area who wish to attend a state school or provide alternative education provision where appropriate. This is in accordance with Article 2, Protocol 1, of the Human Rights Act that there should be no deprivation of the right to education.

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Appendix 1
Customer Focus Appraisal

Background Papers
None