

CABINET

13 MAY 2014

EXPANSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN HOO ST WERBURGH VILLAGE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mike O'Brien, Children's Services (Lead Member)

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults

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Summary

This report is to request authorisation from Cabinet for the establishment of an all-through academy in partnership with the Williamson Trust on the Hundred of Hoo Academy site, in order to provide sufficient primary school places in Hoo St Werburgh from September 2015.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1 The proposal to increase the primary age provision in Hoo St Werburgh village is consistent with proposals set out in the School Organisation Plan 2011-16. This supports the Council Plan priority of 'Children and young people having the best start in life'. The education capital programme includes funding to support the development of additional primary age provision.

2. Background

- 2.1 Cabinet was presented with a report reviewing the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 in July 2013. The report outlined actions to address the need for additional primary school places in Medway and highlighted areas of emerging need, one of which was for additional primary school places in Hoo St Werburgh village.
- 2.2 The updated action plan, which accompanied the School Organisation Plan review and was approved by Cabinet, included the action to provide additional primary places in Hoo St Werburgh village for September 2015.
- 2.3 To facilitate the expansion of capacity in Hoo, the PAN at the current primary school was proposed for increase from 60 to 75 as part of the normal round of admissions and approved by Cabinet at the 11 February 2014 meeting. This was based upon the exploration of options available at the time to provide the additional places at the current primary school.

- 2.4 Discussions have been ongoing with Hoo St Werburgh Primary School since that decision to explore options for the development of additional accommodation on the Primary school site.
- 2.5 In addition, discussions have taken place with the Williamson Trust, which sponsors the neighbouring Hundred of Hoo Secondary Academy, regarding the potential to establish an all-through academy on their site, which would admit children from age 3 and provide education through to 19. The Trust, being mindful of the need for additional primary school places in Hoo, is keen to develop all-through provision and wishes to involve, and work in partnership with, the Council.
- 2.6 This paper considers both options and presents recommendations to take forward the development of additional primary age provision from September 2015.
- 2.7 The significant amount of new housing developed and planned for Hoo St Werburgh village has produced projected demand for up to one additional form of entry (210 children). If the Council were to expand Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and the Williamson Trust continued with plans to establish the all-through academy taking primary students there would likely be an over provision of places in the short term, although this may be needed in the longer term.

3. Advice and analysis

- 3.1 Demand for primary school places in Hoo St Werburgh is increasing, and expected to continue to do so over the coming years. This is due in the main to increases in the population in Hoo because of a number of recent housing schemes. Further development is planned for the future, which will further increase demand for school places.
- 3.2 The following chart shows the overall roll numbers and forecasts for Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and other primary schools in the vicinity made up of Chattenden, High Halstow and Cliffe Woods Primary Schools. It shows that without the new provision there would be a significant shortage of places when compared to expected demand.

Overall primary capacity without new provision	Actual January 2014	Forecast demand 2014/15	Forecast demand 2015/16	Forecast demand 2016/17	Forecast demand 2017/18	Forecast demand 2018/19
1155	1163	1167	1191	1210	1233	1247
Deficit without new provision	N/A	-12	-36	-55	-73	-92

- 3.3 The requirement to provide an additional 1FE of primary school places in Hoo is based upon known developments and forecasts. Should additional development be granted permission to build then it could be that further school places are required in the future. The current primary school would not be able to support further expansion over the 1FE under discussion in this report. The Hundred of Hoo Academy site could and it is expected that any accommodation built for the initial demand would be planned to enable further future expansion should it be necessary.

- 3.4 This chart shows the position for reception intakes if no additional provision is made available in the area. This area forecast includes Chattenden, High Halstow and Cliffe Woods Primary Schools as well as Hoo St Werburgh Primary School. It shows a deficit of places, which the new provision will cover.

Reception class PAN without new provision	Actual January 2014	Offers for Sept 2014	Forecast demand 2015/16	Forecast demand 2016/17	Forecast demand 2017/18	Forecast demand 2018/19
165	168	165	186	184	182	182
Deficit without new provision	-3	0	-21	-19	-17	-17

- 3.5 The additional capacity will be provided on a phased basis to meet demand. This means that the new 1FE will start with reception intake and expand annually for seven years into reception until the school is full.
- 3.6 The current primary school is 2 Form Entry, which means that it admits 60 pupils into each year group. The school is currently full, and first preference applications for places in the September 2014 intake into reception class exceeds the number of places available, although a number of these preferences are from parents living outside of Hoo.
- 3.7 The Marlborough Centre is also sited at Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and provides education for 60 children with ASD. Expanding to a 3FE school will mean that 690 primary aged children would need to be accommodated on the restricted site.

4 Options

- 4.1 The options are;
- 1) to expand the current primary school, or
 - 2) to support the establishment of an all-through academy on the Hundred of Hoo Academy site in partnership with the Williamson Trust.

5. Officers' recommendations

- 5.1 Officers recommend option 2 to support the establishment of an all-through academy on the Hundred of Hoo site for the following reasons.
- 5.2 Government policy is to support the expansion of good or outstanding schools. Section 1.32 of Medway Council's School Organisation Plan 2011-16 sets out the School Organisation Plan principles, stating... "to enable popular and successful schools to expand". The Hundred of Hoo Academy is currently an OfSTED rated 'good' secondary school. The Williamson Trust has experience of operating primary education with four of Medway's primary schools that have converted to become an academy joining the Trust. OfSTED rates Hoo St Werburgh Primary School as 'requires improvement'. A project to expand the premises at the current primary school would not therefore be consistent with national and local policy of good schools expanding.
- 5.3 Expanding the physical capacity on the primary school site is not without challenges given the size, contours and current arrangement of buildings. The

Hundred of Hoo Academy site is much larger, spacious and affords flexibility to assist the planning of building the necessary accommodation.

- 5.4 It is recommended that temporary accommodation be utilised initially at the Hundred of Hoo Academy site to provide the additional capacity required. This provides flexibility and enables the Council to work with the Trust to develop a more permanent solution, which meets the needs of the school and the community.
- 5.5 The Secretary of State for Education would be the decision maker on the Williamson Trust's proposal to establish the all-through academy. The Secretary of State's decision will take into consideration the Local Authority's position and level of support for the proposals as well as the demand for places. Initial discussions with the EFA have indicated their support for the principle of the proposals.
- 5.6 Should the Cabinet approve officers' recommendations to proceed with the establishment of an all-through academy, the Williamson Trust will be responsible for community engagement and consultation with key stakeholders. It would be prudent for the Council to be supportive of, and included in, this consultation process.
- 5.7 Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the recommendation to support the expansion of the Hundred of Hoo Academy to provide additional places, officers will be required to request an in-year variation from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to change the proposed PAN at Hoo St Werburgh Primary back to 60 from September 2015. Officers will need to demonstrate a material change in circumstances since the higher PAN was determined. The material change of circumstances in this case, would be the lack of available accommodation to support the increase.
- 5.8 Should the Cabinet decide not to approve officers' recommendations then a statutory consultation process would be required to effect prescribed alterations at Hoo St Werburgh Primary School for the 'Enlargement of the Premises' to ensure sufficient accommodation is available from September 2015.
- 5.9 The proposals are intended to provide additional primary school capacity to ensure sufficient places are available for the demand in Hoo. It is intended that the current primary school will maintain a strong presence in the community and will retain its present published admission number of 60 pupils.

6. Diversity Impact Assessment

- 6.1 Whilst it is not necessary for a Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) to accompany this report, any specific proposals presented to Cabinet following public consultation and engagement will be accompanied by a DIA.

7. Impact of the proposal on arrangements for looked after children

- 7.1 Looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to all Medway schools. If necessary, the Admissions Code allows the council to place looked after children in schools that would otherwise be deemed to be full. This ensures that the council can secure appropriate provision for children that are looked

after by the local authority. This strategy covers both mainstream and special schools.

8. Risk Management

8.1 The following risks arise if the recommendations in this report are not implemented. These are principally:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Statutory duty may be at risk	The Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places will be at risk if additional provision is not made available in the Hoo area	Expand primary provision in Hoo village	Low
That by not increasing primary aged school provision in the Hoo more parents will be required to transport their children to schools further a field	Would mean increased journeys and traffic in the wider Medway area	Expand provision in Hoo village	Low
Parental dissatisfaction at not being able to access a local school, potentially leading to parents having children at different schools and the logistical problems this could bring	Spaces may be available in some year groups but not others when families with more than one child move into the area	Expand provision in Hoo village.	Low
Should the expected numbers of pupils not materialise, the funding committed to the establishment of additional primary places could have been better directed elsewhere	Current forecasts based upon roll numbers, birth rates and inward migration mean that this risk is likely to be minimal	Phase expansion in Hoo village to ensure provision is provided inline with demand and funding	Low

8.2 The Council has both a moral and statutory duty to promote high standards and to ensure the sustained viability of its schools.

9 Financial and legal implications

9.1 Funding for Medway's maintained schools comes from central Government via the local authority in the form of the dedicated schools grant, which is a ring-fenced sum of money for the provision of education across all of our schools. This money can only be used for schools (and certain specified services to schools), and cannot be used to fund other Council services.

9.2 The Council is responsible for funding any project to provide the additional primary places in Hoo village regardless of whether the expansion takes place at the current school or on the academy's site as this is a basic need issue. It is intended that the project to provide the additional primary school places in Hoo will be financed through the Children and Adults' Capital Programme using a combination of central Government basic need grant and developer contributions from local schemes.

9.3 Feasibility work is being undertaken to ascertain indicative funding requirements

10. Recommendation

10.1 Cabinet are asked to instruct the Director of Children and Adults Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), to proceed with supporting the establishment of an all-through academy, working in partnership with the Williamson Trust, to provide the additional primary school places required in Hoo St Werburgh, to be implemented in readiness for 1 September 2015 and therefore to authorise officers to request an in-year variation from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to enable the PAN at Hoo St Werburgh Primary School to revert to 60.

10.2 However, should the Cabinet disagree with officers' recommendations and prefer to progress the expansion of the current primary school, then it is requested that Cabinet authorise the Director of Children and Adults Services to commence the necessary statutory consultation process at the appropriate time.

11 Suggested reasons for decision

11.1 To ensure the council meets its duty to provide sufficient good school places.

11.2 To comply with the actions in the approved School Organisation Plan 2011-16 and its review in July 2013, which highlight the need for additional places in the Hoo St Werburgh village area for September 2015.

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Background papers

Medway's School Organisation Plan 2011 - 2016

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/School%20Organisation%20Plan%202011-2016%20revised.pdf>

Review of School Organisation Plan (July 2013)

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=20666>