

CABINET

12 JULY 2016

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL SCHOOL CAPACITY IN THE WESTERN PENINSULA

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mike O'Brien, Children's Services

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services

Author: Paul Clarke, School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager

Summary

This report outlines the need for additional primary school provision in the western peninsula area, highlights the options available and makes a recommendation to expand Cliffe Woods Primary Academy for Cabinet to consider.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The proposals, which are in line with the updated School Organisation Plan 2011-16 and its subsequent annual reviews, are consistent with the School Organisation Plan Principles, and with the Council Plan Priority of 'Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential'. The proposals, if approved, will be delivered using available funding from the Education Capital Programme to provide additional school places; therefore this is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 Medway Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficient supply of school places. This coupled with the local and national policy of successful schools expanding means that when deciding which schools to expand consideration must be given to the OFSTED rating of the school, its current known performance, as well as its popularity with parents.
- 2.2 Proposals such as this would usually be presented as part of the annual review of the School Organisation Plan, which will be brought to Cabinet in the autumn 2016. This proposal is being brought to Cabinet in advance of the review due to the emerging need and demand in the area and the need to act speedily to ensure the places are available in good time.
- 2.3 Demand for school places in the peninsula area continues to rise, due in the main to a continued rise in birth rates as well as the inward movement of families into

the area. A number of recently completed, under development and proposed housing schemes will add to the ongoing demand for school places.

- 2.4 For the peninsula area, there are a number of good and outstanding primary schools; therefore, when deciding which sites to expand, the schools' popularity with parents becomes an important factor.
- 2.5 It is anticipated that the additional capacity will need to be available from September 2018. This report outlines the options available in the area to increase primary capacity and makes recommendations for Cabinet's approval.

3. Issues and analysis

- 3.1 For September 2016 all the schools listed in the table below, which serve the Western Peninsula area, are full for reception intake, which has been the case in recent years. Medway Council is in the process of building a new primary facility at the Hundred of Hoo Academy, which will provide 30 additional places per year. As can be seen in the table below, despite this additional capacity the schools are all full and indeed Cliffe Woods was significantly oversubscribed on first preferences, as were Chattenden and High Halstow to a lesser extent. Overall there were more first preferences than places available. It is likely that the nine pupils unable to acquire a place in the area were allocated a place in a Strood school which results in longer travelling patterns and takes children away from their local area and their peers.

School	Current PAN	2016 reception intake	First preferences	Most recent OFSTED rating
Cliffe Woods	45	45	68	Outstanding
St Helen's Cliffe	30	30	20	Good
Hoo St Werburgh	60	60	49	Good
Hundred of Hoo	30	30	23	Good (secondary phase)
Chattenden	30	30	38	Good
High Halstow	30	30	36	Good
Totals	225	225	234	

- 3.2 There are likely to be a number of late applications and in year admission requests, which will add to the level of demand for the area, as well as the number of children unable to acquire a place in their local school. Increasing the capacity in the area will help to alleviate this situation in the future.
- 3.3 The table above shows that there is demand for more places than are available in the area and this is not expected to alter in the coming years with the maturing of recently completed developments together with ongoing housing development and future schemes proposed. In the neighbouring area of Strood the nearest school

with reception places available is Elaine Primary Academy and that is 3.5 miles from Chattenden, the closest peninsula school.

4. Options for the provision of additional capacity

4.1 Chattenden Primary Academy:

Rated 'Good' by Ofsted; Chattenden is a popular and successful school and is one of the more easily accessible schools on the peninsula. However, the current school building does not lend itself to expansion without significant internal reconfiguration, which is not only expensive but would also cause major disruption to the operation of the school. A recent feasibility study has shown that the most efficient way of securing additional capacity here is to build a new 2FE school on the site and then demolish the current school. The cost of this would be prohibitive within current available funding and therefore should be discounted at this stage. Chattenden School has been identified for expansion as part of the Lodge Hill development should it go ahead in the future.

4.2 High Halstow Primary Academy:

Rated 'Good' by Ofsted; whilst oversubscribed on first preferences for 2016 this has not been the usual position in recent years. The location of the school and accessibility of the village means that this is not the most appropriate option for expansion, and others represent a better solution at this time.

4.3 Hoo St Werburgh primary School:

Rated 'Good' by Ofsted and currently undertaking the process to convert to academy status; the site this school sits on is restricted and whilst expansion is possible it would mean a significant increase in the numbers of children accessing the school through a single narrow access as well as a costly project to fit the required accommodation onto the site. This year the school did not fill its reception class on first preferences, but did so upon reallocation of lower preferences.

4.4 Hundred of Hoo Academy:

The secondary element of this school is rated 'Good' by Ofsted; this 1FE school is currently under construction, with temporary accommodation in use in the interim, and whilst the new build allows for future expansion to 2FE based upon the expectation of further development in the immediate area, should that not materialise in the future then a 2FE provision may result in an overprovision in the immediate Hoo village area.

4.5 St Helen's CE Primary School at Cliffe:

Rated 'Good' by Ofsted; whilst full in reception intake for 2016, it did not receive a full complement of first preferences and has most likely filled as a result of Cliffe Woods being significantly oversubscribed. On popularity alone it would be inconsistent to consider this school for expansion at this time.

4.6 Cliffe Woods Primary Academy:

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted; currently this is a 1.5 FE primary school with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 45 which enjoys a good size site. A project to increase the PAN to 60, which increases the overall capacity by 105 places, would only require a comparatively small amount of work and could be achieved relatively inexpensively at less than £600,000. This would provide sufficient places

across this school and its closest neighbour, St Helen's, to meet the expected demand without children having to travel further afield.

This project would provide better value per pupil than typical school expansion projects, as well as the cost of any of the other above options and provides a notable 'quick win' when taken in the wider context. Increasing the PAN from 45 to 60 will provide the school with the opportunity to better organise class sizes providing efficiencies for the school and more flexibility in the delivery of the curriculum, which it is hoped would afford the opportunity for the school to continue to provide positive outcomes for its pupils, which in turn will likely increase the popularity of the school further. The head teacher and governing body at the school are supportive of an expansion.

Whilst a project to provide the additional capacity would not be ready until September 2018, the school have confirmed that they could take 60 pupils into reception in 2017 knowing that the extra accommodation will be delivered by the next intake. This will help to alleviate the pressure on places expected in 2017.

4.7 Conclusion

Whilst a number of the schools in the area provide the opportunity for expansion, not all are so popular that they are oversubscribed; some are more remote than others and the amount of work required at another is prohibitive within current available funding. Therefore officers recommend that the option outlined in section 4.6 to expand capacity at Cliffe Woods Primary Academy, which meets the above criteria, be considered by Cabinet as the preferred option to provide the additional primary school places necessary to meet demand in the Western Peninsula area.

4.8 Diversity

There are no negative equality implications anticipated by expanding one of the schools in the area, however not expanding a school and allowing a shortfall of places to exist could mean that some children have to travel greater distances creating an inequality for some local children.

A Diversity Impact assessment screening form accompanies this report (Appendix A) and Members are asked to consider its contents as part of the decision making process.

5. Risk management

5.1 The following risks arise if the proposals are implemented or not.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
A shortfall of places would undermine the Council's duty to provide sufficient school places.	If no action taken then a shortfall of places in the area would exist and this would result in pupils being allocated a space some miles from their home. This would increase parental dissatisfaction; would increase journeys across Medway and could increase the burden upon the school transport budget.	Provide additional places as set out in this report.
An over provision of places	Should the forecast numbers of pupils not materialise then an over-provision situation could arise. This could affect the viability of less popular schools.	Monitor forecasts continuously during the process to ensure that additional provision continues to be required

6. Consultation

6.1 This type of change to an academy, known as 'a physical expansion of premises' meets the criteria for a 'fast track' significant change and The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) is the decision maker. It is expected that the RSC will approve the majority of fast track requests from academies currently rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' provided that the academy meets the following criteria;

- a fair and open consultation has taken place, including that any consultation relating to admission arrangements which are necessary has been undertaken, the number and percentage in favour of the change has been considered, and if there are any objections, how the issues raised will be (or have been) managed;
- funding has been secured in relation to the proposed change for both capital costs, and that there are no issues with current budget and/or finances. In the case of expansions, academies have sufficient funding for additional pupils, until lagged funding is applied;
- the change is aligned with local pupil place plans and it is unlikely to have a negative impact on educational standards at the academy or at other local schools or colleges; and
- that appropriate planning permissions and other consents required have been secured.

6.2 In these circumstances it is the responsibility of the academy to action the consultation referred to in the first bullet point above. On the basis that the above criteria can be met, the Local Authority would support the Academy in consulting on the changes.

6.3 The Academy will then need to submit formal proposals to the RSC for approval.

7. Financial implications

7.1 The cost of the project to expand Cliffe Woods Primary would be funded through the Children and Adults Basic Need Capital Programme. A feasibility study and indicative costing exercise has outlined a project cost of £577,000. It is expected that with detailed design and value engineering that the cost of the project could reduce closer to £500,000. This is affordable within the current programme when taking account of future years' funding to 2018/19 and with developer contributions included.

8. Legal implications

8.1 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 the Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for all pupils in its area. The DfE has a strong expectation, especially in areas of basic need, that all 'good' and 'outstanding' academies should consider how they can best support their local authority in meeting this duty.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the report and the options outlined and to approve the progression of the proposals to support the expansion of Cliffe Woods Primary Academy, as set out in paragraph 4.6 of the report, via the Council's procurement processes with funding from the Basic Need Capital programme.

10. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

10.1 By approving the recommendations in section 9, the Cabinet is ensuring that The Council meets its statutory duty to ensure sufficient good quality school places.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix A – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

Diversity impact assessment

Appendix A

TITLE <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	The expansion of Cliffe Woods Primary Academy		
DATE <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	14/6/16		
LEAD OFFICER <i>Name of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Paul Clarke – School Organisation Manager		
1 Summary description of the proposed change			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation? 			
<p>To expand the premises at Cliffe Woods Primary Academy to enable the school to admit additional pupils from the area to meet demand. Currently, the school admits 45 pupils per year group but has first preferences from parent of 68 for September 2016. This is a common and recurring theme. By expanding the school more pupils will be able to access their local school and will not therefore be disadvantaged by having to travel further to school away from their community and their peers. In total this will equate to an additional 105 places at the school across the 7 year groups.</p>			
2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc. Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile 			
Formal consultation will follow as part of the processes for 'Making significant changes to an open academy'.			
3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?			
<i>Is it likely to :</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups? Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups? Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't? 			
<i>(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)</i>			
Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age		X	
Disability		X	

Diversity impact assessment

Gender reassignment	NA		
Marriage/civil partnership	NA		
Pregnancy/maternity	NA		
Race	NA		
Religion/belief	NA		
Sex	NA		
Sexual orientation	NA		
Other (eg low income groups)			

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- *Who will be affected?*
- *How will they be affected?*

Parents and their children wanting to attend the school but unable to due to the lack of places at the school will benefit. At any one time up to 105 additional pupils and their parents will benefit from this change.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- *Are there alternative providers?*
- *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
- *Can demand for services be managed differently?*

The change will likely lead to an increase in traffic around the school at dropping off and picking up times, and this may impact upon local residents. However, we would expect that the school will manage the change appropriately and indeed the change will reduce longer journeys out of the village to other areas where school places are available.

6 Action plan

- *Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence*

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
As part of the design process for the expansion we will look at how the traffic flow in and out of the school can be improved to mitigate any negative impact upon local residents.	Paul Clarke	After the consultation period has completed.

Diversity impact assessment

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change implementing action plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

At this stage it is recommended to continue with the proposed change on the basis of the above mitigations.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Date

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC: phone 2443

email annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk

C&A: phone 1031

email paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk

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Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication