

CABINET

4 APRIL 2017

OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION FOR THE PROPOSED PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS AT HALLING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Andrew Mackness, Children's Services (Lead Member) Councillor Martin Potter, Educational Attainment and Improvement
Report from:	Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services
Author:	Paul Clarke, Programme lead School Organisation and Capital Services

Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of the informal consultation period on the Council's proposals to enlarge the premises and change the lower age limit at Halling Primary School, by way of statutory prescribed alterations.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. The proposals to make prescribed alterations to Halling Primary School are consistent with the provisions of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16, and with the Council Plan outcome of 'All children achieving their potential in schools' and are within budget. This would therefore be a matter for the Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1. On 27 September 2016, the annual review of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 highlighted the forecasted need for additional capacity in the Halling and Cuxton area. Under decision 115/2016, the Cabinet approved the expansion proposals to provide sufficient additional primary places in Halling.
- 2.2. At the same meeting, under decision 117/2016, the Cabinet authorised officers to commence the consultation, detailed design and procurement processes (in relation to Halling Primary School).
- 2.3. The first stage in the process comprised of a four week informal public consultation, this took place over a four-week period between 9 January and

5 February 2017, and the results of this are set out in sections 4 and 5 of this report.

3. The Proposals

- 3.1. The proposal is, by way of statutory prescribed alterations; The 'Enlargement of the Premises at Halling Primary School' to provide adequate accommodation for the additional children who will attend the school as a result of an increase in the Published Admission number (PAN) from 40 to 60.
- 3.2. It is proposed, subject to the outcome of the consultation period and subsequent period of statutory representation, to formally implement the changes on 1 September 2018.
- 3.3. The consultation also included proposals to lower the age limit from four to three to enable the school to operate a nursery class. Whilst this does not require a formal statutory process to implement, there is an expectation that views will be considered and it was considered good practice to incorporate the proposals into the main consultation to gauge views

4. Results of the Consultation

- 4.1. As part of the statutory consultation process, there is an expectation that local authorities will conduct an informal consultation where the views of all interested parties can be expressed, and all views taken into consideration prior to formal publication of proposals.
- 4.2. The period of informal public consultation ran for four weeks from 9 January to 5 February 2017. The process included;
 - public consultation documents circulated to the stakeholders and organisations listed in Appendix 1;
 - publication of the consultation document on Medway Council's website, on the Halling Primary School website, and on the schools' forum website;
 - a press notice placed in the local newspaper to notify the public of the consultation period.
 - a public meeting held at the school on 11 January 2017. (Transcript attached as Appendix 4).
 - hand delivery of the consultation document to all local residents shown on the map at Appendix 5
- 4.3. There were six written responses in total to the consultations in the form of reply slips and emails, which were broken down as indicated below.

5. Proposal to 'Enlarge the Premises' to accommodate the additional pupils and to extend the lower age limit at Halling Primary School

- 5.1. The public consultation document (attached as Appendix 3) asked for a ticked response to one or other of the following statements:

- “ I approve of the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at Halling Primary School” or
- “ I object to the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at Halling Primary School”

- 5.2. Six responses were received to this consultation of which four supported the proposal, two objected.
- 5.3. Of the responses that supported the proposal, one was from a parent or guardian, one from a parent who was also a local resident, one from a local resident, and one from Medway’s Youth Parliament.
- 5.4. Of the responses that objected to the proposal, two came from local residents.
- 5.5. The response form also provided space for further comment. The comments have been summarised against a series of categories matching the comments and concerns of the respondents in the tables below. Some respondents offered more than one comment, and some reasons were included in more than one response, which has resulted in there being a higher number of reasons shown, in the tables below, than actual response sheets received.

Comments from respondents who approved (4 respondents)

Comment	Number of respondents
Expansion will meet the need of the local community	1
Financially, running a school with a PAN of 60 is easier than one of 40.	1
Will increase the number of school places	1
A drop off point inside the school should be included	1
Introduce a 20 mph speed limit through Halling High Street and Howlsmere Close	1
Nursery could increase traffic outside of school hours and in school holidays	1
Parents park on pavements and across driveways	1
Increasing the school capacity will increase traffic	1
Create a car park using land to south of school site	1
Will the council include plans for access and minimising traffic and noise impact on the village as part of the planning application?	1
Will the planning application cover the whole expansion, or will there be several as the expansion is phased?	1
Will the council guarantee that the playground, field, swimming pool, and forest school areas are not adversely affected?	1
The school has a village community feel, and it would be detrimental to the pupils and Halling community if this is lost through expansion.	1
Years R-3, and Year 6 are already over capacity, will the expansion allow these to switch to 2FE, or will the 2FE only	1

be phased in as the 2018 Year R intake move through the school, and will the school budget be increased to allow for the extra staff?	
Are the council planning provision of secondary places for when these extra primary pupils reach that age?	1

Comments from respondents who objected (2 respondents)

Comment	Number of respondents
Difficult for residents for get in and out of the area during school start and end times	2
Too many cars when parents could walk	1
Pathways and residents drives are blocked by parked cars	2
Worried about road safety for children	1
Worried about access for emergency vehicles due to parking	1
Parking restrictions in Howlsmere Close would push parking problems further into nearby roads	1
Use land at end of Howlsmere Close to widen road	1
Use school hard play area for pick-up/drop-off	1
Create a car park using land to south of school site	1
House builders should consider impact on infrastructure	1
St Andrews Park and Peters Village should contribute to solution as they create traffic	1
My property is regularly vandalised by school children	1
They need at least 50 extra parking spaces inside the school	1

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. Halling Primary School is a community primary school, which currently provides education for pupils aged 4 to 11. The school is popular with parents, and at the last full Ofsted inspection in July 2015 the school was rated as 'good' overall with 'behaviour and safety of pupils' and 'early years provision' rated as 'Outstanding'.
- 6.2. Under its current admissions arrangements (PAN 40), the school was oversubscribed for the reception intake in September 2016 receiving 47 first preferences for the 40 places available.
- 6.3. The proposals to expand the provision at Halling Primary School are demand led, and the popularity of the school is likely to continue, due in the main to an increasing local population, with ongoing housing developments likely to continue to produce future demand.
- 6.4. Consultation will take place as part of the school admissions consultation process at the appropriate time to ensure that the PAN has formally increased to 60 in time to take effect from September 2018.
- 6.5. National policy emphasises that the Local Authority has a key role to support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools and should focus on supplying enough good spaces rather than reducing surplus

places. Medway's School Organisation Plan principles state that popular and successful schools should expand.

- 6.6. It is not expected that the proposals will have a detrimental impact upon the numbers or standards at the other primary schools in the area. Forecasts indicate that without expansion of provision in the area, there will most likely be a shortage of spaces in reception classes from September 2018, and the expansion of Halling Primary School will help to alleviate that pressure.
- 6.7. The remainder of this section sets out officer responses to the issues and concerns raised during the consultation period and highlighted in section 5 above; not only from the written responses received but also from the public meeting.
- 6.8. Four respondents commented on current parking and traffic issues around the school site, or how parking and traffic could be made worse by the school expanding. **Officer response** – As part of the expansion project to provide additional buildings, parking and traffic management will be considered and the Council's Safer Journeys team will be involved as part of the planning consultation, and will continue to have input as the project develops, as will officers from Highways and Transport. In partnership with the school, officers will explore opportunities to alleviate residents concerns including providing walking buses and extended out of hours provision, as well as the arrangements for parents to pick up and drop off their children.
- 6.9. A respondent asked if there would be a single planning application for the expansion, or if there would be separate applications for different phases of the build. Another respondent asked if plans regarding traffic and access would be included in the planning application. **Officer response** – There would be a single application for the whole project, which would include school site access, and traffic considerations. However, the project may be delivered in phases. The plans will be available for the public to view and comment on, as with any planning application, through the Medway Council website, or at the council offices.
- 6.10. A member of staff at the public meeting asked if the expansion was necessary in part due to housing developments in the local area, then do those developments not require their own school. **Officer response** – Housing developers make a financial contribution towards infrastructure, including schools. The size of the education contribution is based on a formula which estimates the number of pupils which will come from the new houses. If a single housing development is large enough to produce enough pupils to justify a new school, then the developer may choose to build a school instead of paying the financial contribution. Smaller developments do not produce enough children to justify a whole school, and so the Council uses the contribution to expand existing ones. In this case, the development at St Andrews Park was not large enough to warrant a new school, the developer did however provide a sizeable contribution towards improved local infrastructure
- 6.11. A local resident at the public meeting asked if the expansion would put pressure on the current school facilities. **Officer response** – The expansion at Halling Primary will provide both extra classroom space, and an

appropriate increase in supporting facilities. The requirements for these will be developed from a combination of consultation with the school and government recommendations

- 6.12. A parent at the public meeting asked how the Council would ensure that the extra accommodation would be ready in time for September 2018. **Officer response** – As part of the feasibility study, an example programme was produced to show that September 2018 could be met. The initial requirement is for reception classes, and so these would be built first. The other classrooms would not be required until the larger year R reaches the higher years, and so this would give more time to complete the build. However, the expectation is that the project will be complete by September 2018.
- 6.13. A local resident at the public meeting asked if part of the playground or playing field would be lost due to the expansion. **Officer response** – We would want to expand the school in the most cost effective and efficient way, but we also want to provide a school with the necessary outdoor space. There is government guidance on the amount of outdoor space required for a 2FE primary school. Therefore, we would refer to this guidance and make sure that if we need to extend onto a play area, it would be replaced elsewhere on the site.
- 6.14. A member of staff at the public meeting said the Peter's Village development, over the river in Kent, is closer to Halling Primary than Upper Halling is. They asked if Medway children would get priority over those from Kent. **Officer response** – One of the oversubscription criteria is distance from home to school, but the admission policy gives first priority to children in Upper Halling.
- 6.15. A parent at the public meeting asked if the expansion would allow years 1,2 and 3 to split into separate classes in 2018, or if mixed classes would gradually be phased out as the 2018 Year R intake feeds through the school. **Officer response** – The intention is to provide two extra classrooms for 2018, which would free up classrooms for higher year groups and so allow other year groups to be reorganised at the same time. There is a demographic growth fund which provides funding in the initial stages, so the school can take on the extra staff required.
- 6.16. The headteacher Wendy Donnelly, and the Governing Body are together fully supportive of the proposed expansion. This is highlighted by their recorded comments at the public consultation meeting on 11 January 2017 (see appendix 4), including the chair of governors stating "From the school's perspective...it is something that we very much welcome. ... we are a 'good' school working towards 'outstanding'. Hopefully this will benefit all of the potential new children that we get, especially in our outstanding Early Years Foundation Department right through to the secondary school transition".

7. Public consultation meeting

- 7.1. The public meeting was held at the school on the evening of 11 January 2017, where interested stakeholders were invited to listen to the proposals and then to ask any questions and raise concerns. The meeting was chaired

by Councillor Martin Potter, with an officer panel comprising of; Jacqui Moore (Head of School Organisation and Commissioning), Paul Clarke (Programme Lead School Organisation and Capital Services), and Sarah Hall (School Challenge and Improvement Lead). A Listening Panel was in attendance.

- 7.2. The Listening Panel comprised of Members from political groups represented on the Council. These were Councillors Mackness, Fearn, and Freshwater. The role of the Listening Panel was to ensure that all the points and concerns raised at the meeting, and the responses given, are accurately reflected in this report.
- 7.3. A transcript of the meeting is available as Appendix 4.

8. Diversity Impact Assessment

- 8.1. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) screening form is attached as Appendix 2. The DIA looks at how the proposed changes could impact upon various groups. The report shows that there could potentially be some impact upon certain groups; however it shows that any impacts are expected to be positive ones. The screening form indicates that a full DIA is not necessary.

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

- 9.1. 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 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 and as such includes Halling Primary School.

10. Publication of a statutory notice

- 10.1. If Cabinet accepts the recommendation to progress the proposals further, it would be necessary to publish a statutory notice and formal proposals of the proposed changes to Halling Primary School, by way of prescribed alterations, to provide an opportunity for formal objection. This would run for a four-week period from 24 April to 21 May 2017. The process would follow the guidelines set out in "Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools (A guide for proposers and decision makers) April 2016", and "The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013".
- 10.2. Cabinet are also requested to approve that, should no objections be raised during the statutory period, the determination on the proposals be delegated to the Director of Children and Adults Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children's Services (Lead Member) and Educational Attainment and Improvement. However, if any formal objections are received during that time then the decision will revert to Cabinet.

11. Risk management

11.1. The following risks arise if the proposals as stated in this report are not implemented. These are:

- A risk that it could undermine the Council's need to ensure the most effective use of resources, and in turn, the aim to raise standards across all schools.
- 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 Halling area.
- That by not increasing the provision at Halling Primary School, more parents will be required to transport their children to schools further afield, which would mean increased traffic in the wider Medway area.
- Parents dissatisfied at not being able to access their local school, potentially leading to parents having children at different schools and the logistical problems that this would bring.

11.2. The following risks could arise if the proposals are implemented:

- If the expected numbers of additional pupils do not materialise, then the school may find itself having a surplus places as well as larger buildings to maintain without the funding to do so. Current forecasts based upon roll numbers, birth rates and inward migration together with Halling Primary School being a good and popular school indicate that this risk is likely to be minimal.

12. Financial and Legal implications

12.1. Medway maintained schools are funded from central Government via the local authority in the form of the dedicated schools grant. This is a ring-fenced grant for the provision of education across Medway and must be used to fund schools (and certain specified services to schools), and cannot be used to fund other Council services.

12.2. The expansion of Halling Primary School will be funded via the Children and Adults Basic Need Capital Programme, which is mainly funded by Government grants, targeted grants and section 106 developer contributions.

12.3. The Council has the power under sections 18 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make "prescribed alterations" to a maintained school. The procedure for making prescribed alterations is set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

12.4. From 24 January 2014 there is no longer a prescribed 'pre-publication' (informal) consultation period for prescribed alterations, there is however a strong expectation on Local Authorities to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to formal publication as part of their duty

under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations. This consultation satisfies that expectation.

- 12.5. The Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places.

13. Recommendations

- 13.1. The Cabinet is requested to note the responses to the informal consultation together with the advice and analysis from officers and to instruct the Director of Children and Adults Services to commence the period of statutory representation for the proposed changes to Halling Primary School, as set out in paragraph 10.1 of the report, when statutory notices and full proposals will be published.
- 13.2. The Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Director of Children and Adults Services, in consultation with Portfolio Holders for Children's Services (Lead Member) and Educational Attainment and Improvement, to determine whether to approve the proposals at the end of the statutory consultation period if no objections are received. However, if any objections are received during that time then a report will be prepared and presented to Cabinet for determination.

14. Suggested reasons for decision

- 14.1. Approval to proceed to a period of statutory representation will ensure the Council complies with its duty to follow the full consultation process when proposing changes to school organisation.

Lead officer contact

Paul Clarke, Programme lead - School Organisation and Capital Services

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Email paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

- 1) List of consultees
- 2) Diversity Impact Assessment screening form
- 3) Consultation document
- 4) Transcript of Public Meeting
- 5) Map of residents consultation document drop

Background papers

- 1) Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools (A guide for proposers and decision makers) April 2016.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514548/16-04-06_FINAL_SO_Guidance_PA_Regs.pdf

- 2) The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3110/contents/made>

3) Medway's School Organisation Plan 2011 - 2016

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

Appendix 1

List of Consultees for Public Consultation Documents	
All Councillors	Councillors via email address in address book
Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny members	Email Teri Reynolds to distribute
Medway Youth Parliament	Email Angela Cox to distribute
Kelly Tolhurst MP	MP via email distribution list
Rehman Chishti MP	MP via email distribution list
Tracey Crouch MP	MP via email distribution list
Patrick Leeson, Director of Educational Services, KCC	Kent LA via email distribution list
Alex Tear, Director of Education	Diocese & O&S via email distribution list
Professor Anne Bamford, Director of Education	Diocese of Southwark via email distribution list
Lesley Dwyer, Chief Executive (PA – Mandy Cordwell)	Medway NHS Trust via email distribution list
Dr Peter Green, Shadow Accountable Officer for Medway Clinical Commissioning Group	Medway PCT via email distribution list
Neil Davies, Chief Executive	Medway Council via email in address book
Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture	Medway Council via email in address book
Ian Sutherland, Interim Director of Children's & Adult Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Mark Holmes, Early Years (cc Caroline Webber)	Medway Council via email in address book
Helen M Jones, AD Commissioning & Strategy	Medway Council via email in address book
Pauline Maddison, AD Inclusion (SEN)	Medway Council via email in address book
Ruth Dulieu, AD Frontline Services (BCC Mark Johnson)	Medway Council via email in address book
Perry Holmes, AD Legal & Corporate Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer	Medway Council via email in address book
Carrie McKenzie, Head of Organisational Change	Medway Council via email in address book
Anne Robinson, Governor Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Norman Gregory, Insurance Officer	Medway Council via email in address book
Tracey Barefoot, Health & Safety Adviser	Medway Council via email in address book
Jan Guylar, Head of Legal Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Dave Harris, Head of Planning	Medway Council via email in address book
Jill King, Section 106 Monitoring Officer	Medway Council via email in address book
Customer Contact Seniors	Medway Council via email in address book
Simon Harrington, Student Services Manager	Medway Council via email in address book
Shelley Marsh, Student Services Operations Manager	Medway Council via email in address book
Jacqui Moore, School's Commissioning & Traded Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Rochester Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Gillingham Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Rainham Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Strood Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Black Lion Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Splashes Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Deangate Ridge Sports Complex	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Hundred of Hoo Swimming Pool	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Kings Rochester Sports Centre (formerly Sterling Centre)	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list

Appendix 1

Strood Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Chatham Library	Library – via email distribution list
Cuxton Library	Library – via email distribution list
Gillingham Library	Library – via email distribution list
Grain Library	Library – via email distribution list
Hempstead Library	Library – via email distribution list
Hoo Library	Library – via email distribution list
Lordswood Library	Library – via email distribution list
Luton Library	Library – via email distribution list
Rainham Library	Library – via email distribution list
Rochester Library	Library – via email distribution list
Thomas Aveling School Community Library	Library – via email distribution list
Twydall Library	Library – via email distribution list
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	Library – via email distribution list
Walderslade Village Library	Library – via email distribution list
Wigmore Library	Library – via email distribution list
Mr Mike Ongley	GMB via email distribution list
Karen White – Delce Junior	NAHT via email distribution list
Ms Julia Harris	NASUWT via email distribution list
Nicola Brocklesby	ATL via email distribution list
Mr Nick Childs	NUT via email distribution list
Mr Michael Barton	Voice via post – 38 Arden Street, Gillingham, Kent. ME7 1HR
Kim Gunn	ASCL via email distribution list
Assistant Branch Secretary Medway Towns LG Tania Earnshaw	UNISON via email distribution list
Ms Sharon Wentworth & Malcolm Bonnet	UNITE via email distribution list
Baha'I Community of Gillingham – Mr F Forghani	faran.forghani@blueyonder.co.uk - BCC field
Bangall Language School Shishu Kishor Club – Nilufar Chowdhury	niluchy@hotmail.co.uk - BCC field
Community Interpreting Service – Elizabeth Bird	cis@medway.gov.uk - BCC field
Hindu Sabha – Mr Ajay Attra	ajayattra@hotmail.com - BCC field
Kent Muslim Welfare Association - Dr Craig Kennett AKA Azeem Nader General Secretary	anwarkhan1987@hotmail.com - BCC field
Kent Ramgarhia Darbar Sikh Temple & Community Centre – Mr M S Paddom	jasmissan@hotmail.com - BCC field
KUT O Chinese Association	enquiries@kut-o.com - BCC field
Medway English Training Community Interest Company – Cathy Rahmanzadeh	cathy@metcic.co.uk - BCC field
Medway Town Gurdwara Sabha – Parminder Singh Upple	psupple@hotmail.co.uk - BCC field
Siri Guru Ravidass Bhawan	info@ravidassia-medway.co.uk - BCC field
Swarah Arts Foundation – B Balagopal	balagopalkent@gmail.com - BCC field
Medway Human Rights & Equality Council	emcap@hotmail.com - BCC field
Polish Saturday School – Monika Limanowska	mlimanowska@yahoo.com - BCC field
Czechoslovak Society in Medway – Lenka Wyatt	lenka.wyatt@medway.gov.uk - BCC field
All Playgroups, Pre schools & Nurseries within Medway	Email addresses in consultation folder on w drive – BCC field
Medway Parents and Carers Forum	medwaypcf@googlemail.com
Medway Community Healthcare	Via email distribution list
Adjacent Residents to school	Paul Clarke

Appendix 1

All Governors, staff & students	Paul Clarke
Chairs of Governors	All Medway Schools – via email to Governor Services
All Headteachers (schools forum & SIB)	All Medway Schools
Medway Website	via Alterian web publisher
Local press	Paul Clarke

Diversity impact assessment

Appendix 2

TITLE <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	Enlargement of physical premises and extension of the lower age limit at Halling Primary School
DATE <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	16/02/2017
LEAD OFFICER <i>Name of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Paul Clarke

1 Summary description of the proposed change

- *What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- *How does it compare with the current situation?*

The proposals are to enlarge the premises in order to accommodate extra pupils at Halling Primary School; there will also be an extension of the lower age limit from 4 to 3, which will enable the school to admit a nursery class. This is to meet forecast demand for more primary school places in the Halling area. The proposals are in line with the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 and its subsequent reviews. The school is popular and therefore there will be a greater percentage of first preference satisfaction amongst parents. In recent years the school has been oversubscribed in reception and these proposals will cater for that level of demand. The enlarged buildings will be designed to improve the learning environment for pupils.

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- *Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- *Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

A public consultation has been carried out over a 4-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding issues could have been raised. Of a number of concerns raised and comments made, none related to the potential for any impact on any protected characteristic groups.

Diversity impact assessment

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- 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?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age		✓	
Disabilty		✓	
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race			
Religion/belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Other (eg low income groups)			

4 Summary of the likely impacts

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

None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced and there will be no reduction to staff numbers made as part of this proposal. There is however expected to be an increase in the number of pupils who attend the school and it is possible that there could be an increase in the number of pupils with disabilities. It is expected that these extra pupils will benefit from the improved facilities that will come as part of the enlargement of the premises, and as such it is expected that the outcomes for these pupils will be positive. A public consultation has been carried out over a 4-week period when views were expressed and comments received however none relating to this issue were raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.

Diversity impact assessment

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?*

There are no alternative schools in the area. The nearest Medway school is Cuxton and this also has been expanded recently to meet demand. Other schools within a mile radius are in Kent, and these schools are full too.

Expanding schools in another area would require pupils to travel further, and therefore would disadvantage lower income families, and the Council could incur transport costs.

Parking issues were raised at the public meeting and through written consultation responses. As part of the design and planning process work will be undertaken to minimise any impact of extra school traffic due to the increased number of pupils.

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
Involve the Council's integrated transport and Safer Journey's Team as part of the design process to ensure parking and road safety issues are addressed	Paul Clarke	Sept 2018

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.

To proceed with the change

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

BSD: phone 2472 or 1490 email: corppi@medway.gov.uk

PH: phone 2636 email: david.whiting@medway.gov.uk

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

Consultation on the expansion of Halling Primary School

9 January to 5 February 2017



Raising achievement through quality learning environments

Enlargement of the premises and extension of the age range at Halling Primary School, Howlsmere Close, Halling, ME2 1ER

This document is designed to:

- **Notify you of Medway Council's proposals to make statutory prescribed alterations at Halling Primary School with effect from 1 September 2018, which will result in the enlargement of the premises and the extension of the lower age range at the school to allow for the expected increase in pupil numbers**
- **Explain why these changes are being proposed**
- **Invite your comments on these proposals**
- **Inform you of, and invite you to, a public meeting to be held at Halling Primary School on Wednesday 11 January 2017 at 6.00pm where this proposal will be discussed and questions answered.**

The statutory process

The Department for Education (DFE) has set out the requirements and processes for making changes to the governance arrangements in maintained schools in the guidance 'Making prescribed alterations to maintained schools'.

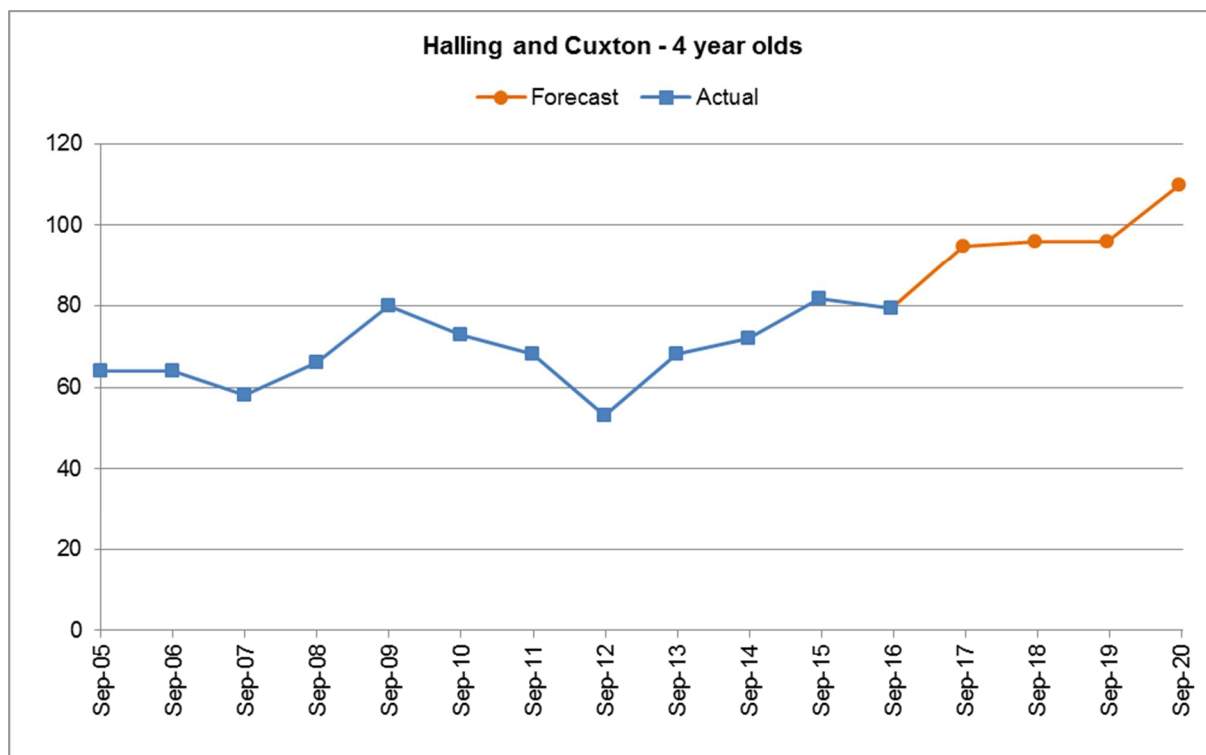
The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that additional good quality school places can be provided quickly where they are needed; that local authorities do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area, and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. It is also expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.

With this in mind, Medway Council is confident that the proposals set out within this document to expand provision at Halling Primary School meet these criteria.

The guidance also sets out the processes required to implement these enlargement proposals, and this consultation period is the first stage in that process.

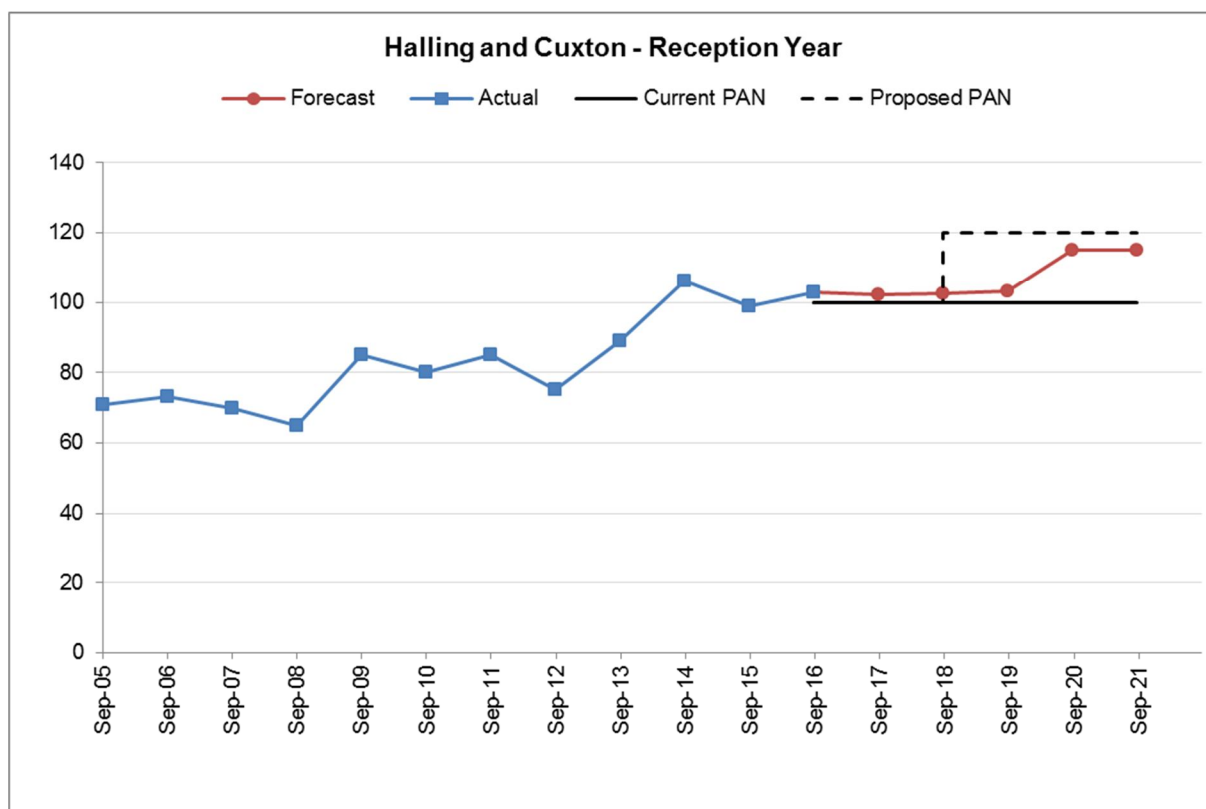
Why is there a need to expand schools in the Halling area?

In the Halling and Cuxton area, as the graph below shows, the past four years have seen increasing numbers of 4 year old children. The birth rate over the same period has also been increasing, and so the number of 4 year olds is forecasted to continue rising. In recent years, the number of children requiring a reception place has been higher than the number of 4 year olds in the area.



Actual and forecast Year R – Halling

The graph below shows the actual and expected numbers of children requiring a reception place in the Halling and Cuxton area, with the dotted line showing the current number of available places. These forecasts take account of expected numbers of children who will move into the area prior to requiring a school place. As these increased numbers progress through the schools, they will replace the smaller year groups in the older primary years.



The uncertainty surrounding future births and inward movement of families with children means that the council needs to be cautious when deciding how much, and when, additional provision is required. However, the recent

trend of higher birth rates, together with ongoing new housing developments in the area, does suggest that the increase in children requiring a reception place will continue for the foreseeable future.

The proposed expansion of Halling is one of the measures planned to address the expected pressure on primary school places in the area. Further provision in addition to that proposed at Halling has already been provided at Cuxton to ensure sufficient places are available to meet demand.

Why is the enlargement of the premises to Halling Primary School being proposed?

Halling Primary School currently provides Key Stage 1 and 2 education for children from the age of four until they transfer into secondary schools at age 11. It has been one of the most popular primary phase schools in Medway in recent years.

The school currently operates to a published admission number of 40. This means that the school admits 40 pupils into the reception year group each year. For 2016's intake there were 47 first preferences stated by parents for the 40 places available. Currently, due to demand, the school is over its PAN in reception and years 1, 2 and 3.

Following the proposed formal expansion in September 2018, the school will admit 60 pupils into the reception year group. The school will then grow year on year, although some capacity will be available to meet in year demand from other year groups as required and as available.

The pupil capacity is currently 280 and as a 2FE primary school pupil numbers could rise to 420, plus the nursery children, when all year groups are full.

In June 2015 Ofsted carried out an inspection and gave an overall rating of 'good', with 'behaviour and safety of pupils' and 'early years provision' rated as 'Outstanding'. This is likely to maintain the popularity of the school. The proposals are, therefore, in line with current local and national policy, which allows good and outstanding schools to expand to meet the preferences of parents.

We are consulting on the proposal, by way of a statutory prescribed alteration, to enlarge the premises to give the school sufficient capacity to provide for the additional pupils. A feasibility study to explore the options for the physical expansion of the school is underway. The feasibility study will consider the requirements for the additional accommodation, the suitability of existing accommodation, and the access arrangements to the site, including the management arrangements for additional staff, pupils and parents. To minimise disruption to the education of pupils it is likely that the building works will be phased in line with expected demand.

The project to expand the premises will be financed using the Central Government basic need grant, which is a fund for the creation of additional school capacity to ensure that sufficient school places are available in each local area. Further funding as required will come from developer contributions from new housing schemes in the area. This is where developers of new housing schemes pay a contribution to the Council to assist in the enhancement and expansion of essential community facilities.

There will be a separate consultation period as part of the formal planning process specifically focussing on the physical expansion of the school as well as traffic management and road safety.

Why is the 'extension of the age range' being proposed?

With the increase in pupils numbers highlighted above, there will also be an increase in demand for nursery places. Currently, the school does not offer nursery places, which results in local children having to attend a nursery outside of the school environment. By extending the lower age range from four to three the school will be able to offer a full early years foundation stage. The 'enlargement of the premises' will incorporate suitable buildings for the nursery provision on site.

It is Medway's policy that where possible and practical a nursery stage will be included within expanded primary school provision in Medway.

The next stages

Following the four-week consultation period, Medway Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee may ask to see a report on the responses and comments to this proposal, which would be presented to them on 9 March 2017.

On 4 April 2017 Medway Council's Cabinet will consider the responses to this consultation and the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They may then decide not to proceed with the proposal, or to authorise a four-week period of statutory representation when formal notices will be published to give interested stakeholders the opportunity to formally object or comment.

If there are no objections to the statutory notice period in the late spring of 2017, Medway Council can decide to go ahead with the proposals. If there are one or more objections Medway Council, as Schools Commissioner under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, will consider the objections before determining the outcome.

Consultation timetable

Four week Public Consultation period	9 January to 5 February 2017
Public Consultation meeting in Halling Primary School Hall	Wednesday 11 January 2017 at 6.00pm
Report to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Outcomes of Consultation	9 March 2017 (TBC)
Report Outcome of Consultation to Cabinet	4 April 2017
Four week Statutory Notice period	24 April to 21 May 2017
Council decision on proposals	June 2017
Formal Implementation of expansion proposals if approved	1 September 2018

No decisions will be made until the consultation has been completed and local views have been carefully considered.

How to make comments

We would like to hear your views on these proposals.

Email your comments to **prim.reorg@medway.gov.uk**

Alternatively you can hand the form below to the school office at Halling Primary School or send it to: **FREEPOST RRUY-ZBTJ-CZZC, School Organisation, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR**

Unfortunately it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt.

All responses must be received by **Sunday 5 February 2017.**

It would be helpful to have the following information:

Name
Address

I am (please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/ guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above (please specify)	

With regard to the proposal to enlarge the premises at Halling Primary School to enable the school to increase its numbers in line with demand for places;

Please tick one box

<input type="checkbox"/>	I approve of the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at Halling Primary School
<input type="checkbox"/>	I object to the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at Halling Primary School

Comments

Please give your reasons as fully as possible to help us build the arguments for and against the proposals.

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This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring 01634 335577

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中文 331781	हिंदी 331783	Polski 332373	ଏଓଡ଼ିଆ 331786	فارسی 331840	Lietuviškai 332372

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

HALLING PRIMARY SCHOOL

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH JANUARY 2017

- Chaired by: Cllr Martin Potter
- Listening Panel: Cllr Matt Fearn, Ward Councillor for Cuxton and Halling
Cllr Roy Freshwater, Ward Councillor for Peninsula
- Officers: Paul Clarke School Organisation Manager – (responsible for ensuring sufficient school places)
- Jacqui Moore, Head of School Organisation and Commissioning, (manages the team Paul sits in to ensure sufficient school places)
- Sarah Hall, School Challenge Improvement Lead, linked to Halling Primary School, (works with the Head and governing body on school standards)

Welcome by Cllr Potter who chaired the proceedings.

Good evening, thank you very much everybody. The running order for tonight is we are going to have a presentation from the officers on the proposed expansion. At the end of that, a contribution from the Chair of Governors and will then open the floor.

Jacqui Moore

To start with we would like to set out the purpose of the meeting this evening, so that we are all clear what we are trying to achieve. First of all we want to explain what is being proposed. To invite questions and comments from yourselves here, and then to go through and explain what happens next. To start with what I will ask Paul to do is go through some of the background, the concepts and some of the detail of why we are doing this.

Before I do that though, just to clarify the principles that we are working to. In ensuring that we can meet our statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of school places, we are required to adhere to the School Organisation Principles and those are, promoting high standards, ensuring schools are viable and ensuring that successful and popular schools expand. With that, I'll hand over to Paul to go through some of the details.

Paul Clarke

Good evening. As you are probably aware, I am assuming most of you are resident in and around the Halling area, that births in Medway and in the Halling area included have risen consistently over the last few years. Coupled with the inward movement of families into new development, I am thinking particularly the Redrow Homes development at the cement works, you have got Holborough Lakes the other way and some smaller ones dotted around, and more housing is planned across the river, you have now got the bridge, which will make getting from one side to the other much easier, and all these things together will lead to increased demand for school places.

That graph there, probably makes it easier to understand. That is the number of four year olds in the area, and that area is Halling and Cuxton, so it is basically from the motorway bridge through to here. The number of 4 year olds that wouldn't necessarily ask for a place at Halling or Cuxton, but could, require a place in one of those schools. As you can see, it has been a bit erratic, it has dropped at

2012, but since 2012 it has risen to where we are today and is forecast to continue to rise, due in the main to known births and inward movement of families with children.

This next graph highlights reception, actual children who will actually want to come to a school in this area, and as you can see the black line there is the current amount of spaces that we have available for reception children. The blue line is actuals, so you can see that it has been sort of steady and then rising. We are now a little bit steady again but we do know from the increased numbers of four year olds, there will be increased demand for reception places, following that line there. The dotted black line is what the available places would look like should Halling expand. An expanding Halling would provide a sufficient capacity within the area to meet demand.

This next graph shows the inward movement. One of the factors is children moving into the area. As you can see in previous years, it was up and down, some gains, some losses. But in the last three years we have seen a net gain of children moving into the area, and that during this current year is not expected to alter. So that will be four years in a row where we will have seen an increase in the numbers of pre-school aged children, so these are the children who arrive after birth but before reception class and they could be 1, 2, 3 or 4 but will require a school place in the not too distant future.

As you can see one year there, 2015, we had well over 60 additional children arrive in the area, I suspect that is mostly into housing developments in the area but could have been into houses where people have moved out, but it could be all sorts of things.

I think you probably know some of those. These are the housing developments that are currently either underway, recently finished or about to start. We have put the most relevant ones to the top there. We have included Temple Waterfront which is in Strood and have included Medway gate because what tends to happen is there is a domino effect. As more people move into those areas, people on the edges of those areas get pushed out further so the people push into Cuxton and people on this side of Cuxton push further this way to come to school. It is a knock on effect out of Strood creating more of a demand along the line.

Strood Riverside, that is likely to start within the next 2 to 3 years but that is potentially 1000 dwellings. It is in Strood so it will impact on Strood in the main but it does all filter out and has a knock on effect on other areas.

So why Halling? Why do we want to expand Halling? Apart from the fact that we have shown the demand is there, Halling meets the criteria for a school to expand. It is a good school, rated 'good' by OFSTED and during its recent visit in June as you can see, not only was it rated 'good' overall but it was rated 'outstanding' for the behaviour and safety of pupils and for early years provision. The last sentence says it, therefore this proposal supports the national and local policy that successful schools should be the ones that we look to expand and in the main, that's what we do, we look at schools that are doing well.

This slide just highlights a little bit of the numbers involved. Currently Halling offers 40 places in reception. This year there were 47 first preferences, which means that there were 7 children who were not able to get into this school locally and would have had to have been pushed out further to find a school place. That is expected to continue with the number of houses that are coming through, the number of births and the number of inward movements of families with children.

As you can see, in Reception, years 1 and 2 and 3, the school are currently over the allocated 40 pupils in those year groups, which means they have taken additional pupils as demand has dictated., But obviously there is a limited amount of capacity that the school can admit, so a lot of disappointed parents and pupils that aren't able to get into the school.

The proposal is that the published admission number, which is the 40 children that they take each year, will increase to 60, which is known as full 2FE. For those of you who don't know, a FE is 30 children per class. If you are 2FE you would have two classes in each year group of the expected 30. Currently Halling don't have that, they are 40, which means they have to organise their classes in another way which can make it difficult for the school to get the best from the curriculum.

The proposal is that pupil numbers will increase by 20 in reception in 2018, and then by 20 year on year for 6 more years. In effect reception will become 60 but the rest of the school will be 40, then Reception and Year 1 will be 60, and so on until all of the year groups are 60. What that will mean over time is the current capacity of the school, which is 280 when full, will be 420 through the whole seven years plus, the nursery. A further element of the proposal is to incorporate a nursery provision into the school.

The formal proposal there is to expand the physical size of the school premises by what is known as enlargement of the premises and by extension of the age range. Now these are technical terms that by law we are required to consult upon. Enlargement of the premises is pretty much what it says it is, it is making the premises bigger to cater for the children who want to come here. The extension of the lower age range is to take it from four, which it currently is, to extend that down to three so that we can incorporate the nursery class within the school.

A statutory process is required to put these proposals into effect and this is part of that statutory process.

This part of the process is about the legal right for the school to expand. There will be further consultation on the proposed building works as the scheme develops and the planning process later in the year. So far, we have had an early feasibility study done for the school to scope that it is possible to expand the school physically. But beyond that we have not progressed plans and will not do so obviously until later in the process, because this is the first stage of that process. We will explore options during that process of the planning of how we would manage the traffic and how we would manage children and parents coming into the school and leaving the school grounds, because obviously that is something which is important in this aspect. I will hand back to Jackie to finish the statutory part.

Jacqui Moore

Paul's explained about some of the contents of the proposal what we are proposing to do. I am now going to talk a little bit about the next steps. Each year we review the School Organisation Plan, and last year when we went through it we identified the need to expand the number of places at Halling. That need was agreed by Cabinet on 27th September last year and that allowed us to this four-week informal consultation period.

All the responses from this informal period will be collated and that includes the transcript from this meeting today. It may be that Overview and Scrutiny, the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Group will want to review those. Then it will be taken forward to Cabinet to decide whether they want to stop the proposal at that point or whether to move forward. If Cabinet agree we move forward, based on all the responses that come in and comments we've received, then we go to the four-week statutory representation period. That is the formal consultation if you like, the period when people can make formal objections to the proposals. Following that four-week period, if no objections are received, then Cabinet can delegate to the Portfolio Holder for Children Services, Cllr Mackness and the Director for Children Services to make the decision on the outcome on whether the proposals go forward. If there are objections, then it is a decision for Cabinet, so it will be referred to Cabinet to decide whether the proposal is taken forward.

On that last slide, there is an overview of all the relevant dates. You can see that the statutory notice period is from 24 April to May, we are looking for final decisions around about June.

Mark Tickner - Chair of Governors

First of all thank you very much ladies and gentlemen for coming tonight, it is nice to see some representation from the village as well as parents as well for the proposals that are in place.

For those of you that don't know me, I am Mark Tickner. I am the chair of governor of the school. I have been associated with the school for many, many years. It is quite an exciting phase to be involved with at the moment. You have heard all of the data that has been driving forward the

proposals, and the infrastructure that has been going on around the village, which is one of the reasons why we have been put up for expansion in the first place. From the school's perspective and obviously from a governor's perspective, it is something that we very much welcome. Some of the reasons for that, which might help in your understanding of the whole process is obviously it provides much needed capacity for our own children in Halling, as well as those that live quite close to us in St Andrews park in particular as well as the Holborough and indeed, Peter's Village which will come very close to us now that the bridge is open.

We also have the capacity or the facility to expand without any detrimental effect to the surroundings. So basically all of the expansion that we propose that will take place will be within the existing school boundary, so we are not going to building anything outside that may affect local residents.

Basically, as highlighted before, we are a 'good' school working towards 'outstanding'. We are already 'outstanding' in two areas. Hopefully this will benefit all of the potential new children that we get, especially in our outstanding Early Years Foundation Department right through to the secondary school transition. I think the village recognise the school as one of the focal points of the village. We try to maintain our village identity and it could be argued that the more children we take and the more people that move into the village we will lose that. One of the main focusses of the senior leadership team, as well as the governors, is to try and maintain our village identity. I think we do that currently and all steps will continue to ensure that continues as well.

Although we have enough classrooms at the moment, basically the school is not big enough for the children we have got now. We constantly find it difficult to try and have space available for all the activities we want pupils to participate in. They range from things like pupil behaviour, our out of school activities, storage, dedicated rooms for key functional areas within the school. Hopefully if the proposals go through we will be working quite closely with the architects to make sure that any buildings or anything that is going to be made as an addition will actually be something we would want as well, so we are very much involved in the architect's plans for the future of any proposals which is a good thing.

It will also allow us, as Paul said, to eradicate our mixed year groups. We have been on the receiving end of many concerned parents in the past about mixed year groups. It is something unfortunately we simply cannot avoid under the current way that we have our children admitted. Hopefully when it comes to our 60 per year, eventually over a period of years that will mean we will have our 2FE, 30 in a class and we won't have the need for mixed year groups which hopefully will please many parents.

Obviously, any expansion that happened we would hope would be in keeping with the existing building so hopefully it wouldn't be an eyesore that would look very much out of place. That is how the governors feel, how we envisage the expansion. As I say, it is an exciting time for us but obviously I appreciate it will be of concern, to residents probably more so than parents, and this is your opportunity to ask questions. I do please urge you, if there is anything you need to know or is concerning you, then raise it at this stage. It is very much an informal consultation and your ideas or your concerns if there are any, will be looked into. It is not a foregone conclusion by any means. It is your opportunity now to voice your concerns. Thank you very much.

Cllr Potter

Thank you Mark. Before I open the floor to questions, I did mention earlier that we had a listening panel and an officer panel. The purpose of the listening panel is to ensure that this meeting is an accurate representation of what is being presented and also, in terms of the reports and the meeting and the process going forward, that what has been discussed here tonight is also fairly and accurately represented .

Another member of the council, Cllr Mackness has arrived. So as I am now chairing the meeting, Cllr Mackness will be the Cabinet representative alongside the other two representatives we have here. This is your chance to ask your questions regarding these proposals. If you have a question, this is your opportunity to ask officers about the proposals.

Parent of Yr 5 and Yr 6 – (also works at the school)

My question is, the housing developments you have talked about that will require children to maybe come here, if they are over a certain number of dwellings, do they not require their own school?

Paul Clarke

Yes, it depends on the size of the development. For example, Rochester Riverside is 1400 dwellings and that will come with its own primary school. It is that sort of sized development that would generally come with a primary school. These developments tending to be sort of 300, 600, they tend to come with a developer contribution rather than a school. Now that means that the developer, whoever that may be, Redrow Homes in the case of St Andrew's Park, will make a financial contribution towards community infrastructure. Redrow Homes have made a contribution towards additional school places and others will as well. That tends to be how it works, the bigger developments have a school and the smaller ones and by small, I tend to mean under that 400/500...

Parent (as above)

Strood Riverside, what would that be?

Paul Clarke

It will eventually be 1000, but Strood Riverside is not one development, it is the Civic Centre, Canal Road, Commissioners Road.

Parent (as above)

If they split it into two or three do they get away without building a school?

Paul Clarke

I wouldn't say it's getting away with it. I think its different developers and they will meet their commitments, and they will meet them either by a school or by a financial contribution. If it's a financial contribution, it comes through to the Council to utilise in creating additional school spaces.

Parent (as above)

If there were say three developments within Medway, do the Council not add the three developments together and realise that they might need another school or two?

Paul Clarke

When we were planning the school provision, we would look at those developments. For example we are looking at the Strood developments in considering what action we are going to take in that area. Similarly, in Gillingham, around St Mary's Island and Victory Pier, around the Asda supermarket there. We are looking at proposals there for that. In eastern Rainham there as well, we are looking at that. Initially, we looked at Cuxton here, that was a PAN of 50 not 60 and we have increased that to 60, made that more beneficial to the school, also created some additional capacity. We would wish to do the same here, create additional capacity to cater for demand in this area from some of those developments. Now Peter's Village across the way, across the river will come with a school eventually but it won't be for a number of years. Holborough Lakes similarly now has a school but didn't initially. But even though Holborough Lakes has got the school, Halling has still continued to see a rise in demand from local children, particularly from St Andrew's Park. When we look at where the children are coming from for Halling, there are lots of dots on the map towards the east of the village where there wouldn't have been some years ago, when St Andrew's Park wasn't there.

We look at the bigger picture, we don't just look at one area in isolation. We take Medway as a whole and sub-divide that into certain areas, north of the river, south of the river, and then plan accordingly as to where we need additional capacity. We have created very nearly 3000 additional primary school places in Medway since 2012 with expansions and new schools, and we will continue to provide additional places going forward. We have got a programme to take us up to 2019, with proposals such as this one, to make sure that we do meet our duty, which is to provide enough school places for everyone that wants one.

Parent (as above)

Just one last question. Do the Medway children, being that we live in Medway, get priority over Maidstone and Tonbridge? Because Holborough and Peter's Village aren't even in Medway. Realistically as the crow flies, Upper Halling you could be further away than someone who lives in Peter's Village, are you still within the village? Or St Andrew's Park is even further away, but it is not our Council. Where do we stand on that?

Paul Clarke

That is an issue. The school admissions practice doesn't see the line on the map.

Parent (as above)

What, council wise?

Paul Clarke

Yes.

Cllr Potter

Perhaps at this stage Jackie you can give more detail on the school admissions side.

Jacqui Moore

So, the school admission side will work on the over-subscription criteria of the school, so there isn't a line drawn on the boundary between say Kent and Medway. It would be on the over-subscription criteria, which might be on distance, or siblings and so forth, and pretty much it is down to parents expressing a preference for which school they would wish to choose for the child and applying for that school. So the Kent / Medway boundary doesn't come into that.

Parent (as above)

I can understand that to a certain degree, but you are realistically saying that a child from Halling could maybe not get their village school, but someone over there could, and they are not even in the same council? That could cause problems....

Jacqui Moore

Children from Kent can go to Medway schools

Parent (as above)

I know they can, but what I am saying is that there is still no priority of a Medway child first into a Medway school. So you would, if they were closer, let a Kent child come over a Medway child?

Jacqui Moore

It would go on the over-subscription criteria of the school and if that meant that a child came higher in that ranking, then yes.....

Local resident

I am hoping my daughter will be able to come to the school in 2019 so I am obviously keen for places to be available. Am I correct in saying that the previous site for the school has priority for places at this school, rather than us who live more or less on the doorstep? Or is that something I misunderstood? Someone said that the previous site, Upper Halling, the people who live there, or in the middle of Halling.....

Paul Clarke

I missed the second third of that?

Local resident (as above)

The previous Halling school was obviously slightly further away from here, and I was told people who live there have got priority to come here rather than those on the doorstep, or is it the same for wherever you live. I may have got that wrong....

Cllr Potter

That is an admissions criteria question again. I don't think we heard what Miss Donnelly said through the microphone, I think it went off so I think we will have that point again.

Miss Donnelly - Headteacher

I was just going to say that Upper Halling children take priority. It is part of the school admission policy that upper Halling children do take priority over children from Snodland or wherever. In fact they have first choice, or they are the first people that are in, other than siblings into the school anyway, so it is not the actual school site, it is upper Halling.

Local Resident (as above)

Why is it Upper Halling and not here? That is my point, why do people in Upper Halling have preference over me who lives literally on the doorstep?

Miss Donnelly

Because there are schools in Snodland that are quite close to here but Upper Halling is further away and they need to be guaranteed a school somewhere.

Jacqui Moore

The numbers of children in Upper Halling are probably less than the children here. So by the time you have admitted the children from Upper Halling, then there are still places for children in the village is the theory.....

Cllr Potter

Miss Donnelly did make a point earlier on the school criteria but I don't think everybody heard it, the microphone had gone off at that point....

Miss Donnelly

It was exactly what Jacqui just said. Children in Upper Halling get priority over everyone else. Even though places across the river may be nearer as the crow flies, children in Upper Halling still get priority.

Cllr Potter

Thank you, any more questions?

Parent - son is in reception in Halling.

The gentleman over there spoke about the size and how the children are actually too big for the school at the moment and it is in need of development. But is that not going to take into account the fact that yes, if we developed that might be ok now for the amount of space, but we are going to be bringing in another 50% of children. The extra space, is that not going to be swallowed up by the new children coming into the school? So in effect we could potentially be in exactly the same situation as we are now not having enough space, because the space that has been created has been taken up by another 140 children?

Cllr Potter

Mark, do you want to take an opportunity to answer that before I refer to the panel?

Mark Tickner

We had the right number of classrooms for the children to be educated in a classroom environment. It was the other ancillary stuff that we feel that we need to help manage better our children. We have children on our roll who need some additional support, and sometimes we find it difficult to provide that support in a tailor-made environment that is going to be beneficial to them. It is not right that we have two key office staff sharing the same office, especially when we are maybe trying to interview parents. We have a headteacher's office that is very small and when we need to discuss things in a confidential environment, it is all these bolt on ancillary things that we are having difficulty to manage.

The actual physical aspect of educating the children in classrooms wouldn't be a problem because that is what they are actually building, they are building four new classrooms. The proposal is the two reception classes will be outside, in the foundation stage. It will just be a case of putting two more classrooms in the existing building. But the wish list from the school's perspective is - all the other things we think we have been lacking in the past years will hopefully be included in the expansion.

Paul Clarke

Just to add to that, that is exactly right. Providing additional classrooms is the easy bit if you like, it is providing, as Mark says, the ancillary space. We would employ an architect to look at what the school required. It may be that it is some reconfiguration within the current school, which as Mark says, the headteacher's office is very tight, some of the other offices are very small, group rooms aren't really suitable. It maybe that we open up walls and create better spaces, as well as providing the classrooms. The classrooms, they are straightforward, we need 4 new classrooms to make it work as a 2FE but it is the other little bits that can make a difference and we will be looking at those.

Parent of child in Year 2

Looking at the timeframe, final approval with Cabinet for June this year with the first part of a phased expansion beginning presumably with the nursery as well from September 2018, that is a very tight timeframe to go through the process of architectural planning, approval and then build start given that we know there will be time lag through that process. What thought will be given to ensuring that there is appropriate accommodation for Sept 2018?

Paul Clarke

As part of the initial feasibility study just to make sure we could do this, an indicative programme has been put forward that meets 2018. The initial requirement for classrooms is for additional reception classes, because they will be taking those children in 2018, so there is ample time to create the space for the reception children. Then the other two classes can follow beyond that because they won't actually be needed for another 3 or 4 years, until the school grows further. So we are looking

at the phasing and we are pretty confident that because of that, we won't have to do the whole thing in one go. We can phase it and that will help with minimising disruption because we can use school holidays

The intent is, if we get approval from Cabinet in the late spring, to go through the tendering process in the early summer, and hopefully start some of the work on site during the summer holidays to minimise disruption to the children. That would hopefully certainly get some of the reception and nursery areas virtually complete before the children came back, and then the other two classes which would be somewhere within this building would then follow towards around June the next year.

Local resident

My concern is about the parking and the children getting in and out of the cars. There are going to be yellow lines at the end of Scholey Close, which will stop the parking there but just move it down the road. If you are going to get these children from further afield I assume they won't be walking, they will be coming by car. Can you not put something in where they can just come into the school, drop them off and go? Not park all along Howlsmere close, because apart from everything else, it is dangerous, it is actually dangerous. We have a lollypop lady who does a good job. The neighbours I've spoken to who haven't got children, who live a few hundred yards away, their main concern is the parking. If it could be coupled with a 20mph speed limit through the village, because once they start coming through the village, you can't go the other way. So it could all be put together in one planning application.

Cllr Potter

I think you hit it on the head, it will be part of the planning consideration, I think Paul did touch on it earlier during the presentation.

Jacqui Moore

Cllr Potter is quite right, as part of the formal planning process, all of the transport, parking, all of that will need to be looked at and go in as part of the planning consultation. Obviously we work closely with our transport highways team and also the Safer Journeys team, whose work is specifically around making school sites safe, making journeys to school safe. At this stage, as Paul says, we have looked at the feasibility, being able to make it happen. The formal consultation to get your comments and as we move into the formal planning process then all of that will actually, as you quite rightly say, will need to be looked at in detail.

Mark Tickner

Parking historically is something that the school does have issues with, as well as residents outside. In discussions with the architects to come up with some sort of idea of how we want to facilitate the expansion, car parking and dropping off was high on the agenda, as well as new classrooms. We are looking at ways to try and ease the situation, we can't as a school stop people from parking outside. We try and encourage parents who live closer to walk, to cycle, we have cycling proficiencies, 'bikeability', things to try and encourage children to cycle. We don't bar dogs from our school, so if you want to walk your dog to school to pick your children up. We try and actively encourage parents to walk to school but unfortunately that isn't always the case. And yes, I take your point that there will be more parents coming in with cars. Something the architects are looking at is to make a one-way system, so two lots of cars aren't coming in and out of the same place. The sky is the limit in terms of infrastructure within the school to determine the traffic layout but obviously once everything is finalised, they are the sort of things we will look into in much more detail. From the school's point of view we are conscious of child safety, we always have and we always will be, That is one of the things we want to ensure, that we try and build into maximise the safety impact on the children. As well as trying to please the residents. We do appreciate people do live here that don't have children at the school, but again I would just reiterate we actively encourage parents to walk but we can't be responsible for where they park unfortunately.

Miss Donnelly

Just to say that we do share your concerns about parking and safety for the children as Mark has said. I believe there has been some money earmarked from Redrow to build a safe cycle route from the Redrow estate as far as the school. When that starts coming to planning we would be aiming to work with them to try to get more children to walk and cycle to school. We do share your concerns and I know the roads around here are busier than they have ever been over the last few months.

Local resident, vice chair

I share the concerns about parking but it is more the safety of the pupils here. When we moved here, we knew the school was here, you have got to accept that there is going to be parking. Has the council got any money earmarked to improve the parking? Maybe off site slightly, so maybe up here outside of the school, where you could have a separate car park with safe access for parents to be able to walk in. Then maybe they could get straight out onto the A228? I have seen countless times where parents with their pushchairs, and they are not getting knocked off, but not too far apart people are parked up on the sidewalks, there is nothing you can do. It is really a 'no go area' probably from 2.50 until 3.30. Really it's more about whether there is an alternative. Rather than actually coming to school, find somewhere else, encourage walking, more healthy living, especially when they are coming from Peter's Village, where I think we should have priority first, to be honest.

Cllr Potter

Certainly a valid point and a consideration for the project. Officers, would you like to respond on that point there?

Paul Clarke

As part of the design process, we will be working with the Safer Journeys to School Team, Highways and Transport departments, and we are open to any option that is possible. So we will look at all options that are available to come up with the best one. At this stage, we don't know what that is, but we are acutely aware, as we are around many schools, not just in Medway but nationally that parking and road safety is one of the biggest issues. When we do these consultations around Medway that is quite often the concern that local residents have. We do listen and take on board what you are saying and we do try to come up with a solution that is satisfactory. At this stage I can't tell you what that will be as we haven't got that far yet.

Local resident (as above)

If we are not going on a bigger boundary as such, it's all within the school, does that mean we may be losing part of the playground or field?

Paul Clarke

That's not the intention, no. Obviously with the more children that you have, the more play space you will need. We will look at ways of creating the additional classrooms that don't impact on the playing field. We can't extend the school beyond the end of the building anyway. There is a planning condition in the area that we can't go that way.

Local Resident (as above)

Can you go upwards?

Paul Clarke

We can potentially go upwards, or we could go outwards that way, which isn't impacting upon and recreate different parking in that area. Potentially go a little bit out that way, into that car park a little bit, and redefine the roads. There is quite a bit of space between the end of the building this side and the car park which you could potentially get. It isn't all about getting all the classrooms out there, it's about internal reconfiguration as well, so we would look at how best to provide those classrooms.

We are very conscious of not building on playing fields and maintaining outside space for children. Can't guarantee that there won't be some but where we would take playground away, we will try to replace it somewhere else.

Local Resident (as above)

How about the hall and the kitchen?

Paul Clarke

There is something called the Building Bulletin 103, which defines the sizes and requirements for a school building. It is the Government baseline designs if you like. We would look at size of hall, size of kitchen, size of various things, to see if they fit with those current guidelines. If they don't, we would need to look at addressing that.

Parent - Son in Reception

I have heard a couple of times by yourselves that Redrow will be making a contribution to this and a contribution to that. Would it not have been better spent for them to build a new school at St Andrew's Park or at another area? To me, making a contribution is taking the fact away that they didn't want a school on St Andrew's Park in the first place. And a way of pushing it to one side is to make a contribution, make everyone think they are the saviour. Would the money they are offering not have been better spent in making a new school when the actual numbers are going up? There is going to come the point when the new development.... this school won't be big enough in a few years' time? Before it was developed, was that not looked into, to put a school there?

Paul Clarke

The financial contribution that Redrow Homes made would not have been enough to build a new school. The number of houses that they had, 380ish, provides significantly less, it would not come anywhere close to what we would need to build a new school. As a developer they have rights if you like, the number of houses they build determines what they have to provide under Medway Council's developer contributions. For that many houses the money that comes with, we would never have stood a chance to build a new school. Asking them to build a new school for 385 would have cost them a lot more as well and they would not have wanted to play ball with that at all. It would not have been viable.

Parent (as above)

That is 385 if you are only taking into account the St Andrew's development, but as the lady said earlier, there are other developments that could have gone there as well. I'm not just saying St Andrew's, I'm saying you have got the one coming over from the bridge, as you said, the Holborough Lakes and you've got St Andrew's. My point being is, I understand what you are saying that the contribution is not enough to build a new school with the 380 places, but if you take into account the others that would surely fill the school.

Paul Clarke

Potentially it could have done but Holborough Lakes and Peter's Village, well Holborough Lakes already has a school and Peter's Village will come with a school. So the developer's contribution in those developments towards education is the new school in those developments, because they are of a bigger size. Around 600 or 1000 or whatever they are. Because we are dictated to really by the number of dwellings in Medway Council's border line. With both of those being in Kent, it was Kent's decision to allow them to build a school, because of the size of the development being much larger than the Redrow Homes one. Has that answered the question?

Cllr Potter

Paul, you have talked about the need for school places based on the developments in the different areas around here. In terms of the single developments, which adds to many of the points that are being raised, what sort of size of the developments would you expect to come with the school?

Paul Clarke

The developer contributions allowance that we are allowed to ask for is based around numbers of children per dwelling from a development. A development of 775 houses would provide, if you like, additional children for 1FE. So for every 775 houses we need a 1FE expansion of a school, or a new school for 1FE. Unfortunately, Redrow Homes is not that big, so they would be providing in effect half a FE in actual fact. Which is another reason why they wouldn't have built a school in their development, because they weren't going to provide enough for a whole school, potentially half a school.

Peter's Village and Holborough Lakes were both of a size which was bigger, Holborough Lakes around 1000 and Peters Village over 600. Kent determined they required a school and the developer agreed rather than paying any money. They will pay less money to the Council, but will build a school. Redrow Homes paid more money, but they didn't build a school.

Parent – son in Year 1 / 2 class

How long do you envisage it taking to do the first two classrooms? And then the other question is, once the planning has been arranged by the architect, do we have any kind of say in that? Or is that something that you do by yourselves and once it's gone through, it's up to you to do that? Or do we get to look at the plans once they've been finalised?

Paul Clarke

Yes you will. There will be a planning application that will go in once the designs have been developed. They will go into planning hopefully later in the late spring, early summer, once this process is coming to a close, and that is open to the public. Local residents will be sent notification, it will be on the website, there will be opportunity for you to comment on that as well. There will be indicative designs, there will be indicative programmes so that you can see the sort of timeframe that will be expected.

Parent (as above)

And the question I asked before, how long do you envisage it taking to build those first two extra classrooms?

Paul Clarke

Until we get the final design, it is difficult to put a precise time on it. We would hope that if we can get on site over the summer holidays we would like to do the bulk of it. Certainly the dirty work and the noisy work would be done during the summer and the buildings would be kitted out. We would actually envisage that those buildings for the initial phase would be ready much before September 2018. Probably in the early part of next year. The style of building that the school would ideally like, is relatively easy to build. They would be stand alone and, providing all the services are in place, they wouldn't take too long.

Parent - son in Year 1

I think we have heard a lot about your ideas for planning and extending the school. My concern, as you have mentioned on your slide already, is that there are already a lot of children in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, so we are having to combine classes. Is there going to be any scope within your budget to be able to address that for the children already in the school, not just for the ones coming in?

Paul Clarke

Yes, the intention to provide the two reception classes first would free up two classes within the school, which would enable the school to organise their current classes over more rooms without any extra children being there. So they would have two extra classes for those Years, 1 2 and 3 so yes the school would then....

Parent (as above)

So that would include teaching?

Miss Donnelly

First of all we are village school, so have always had mixed aged classes and dealt very well with those and got the results that we have, despite having those mixed aged classes. Even though we will have empty classrooms it will depend on having the finance, the budget that comes with expansion to be able to put teachers in classrooms. So next year, 2017 we are still going to be looking at organising our classes as they are I believe.

Paul Clarke

It will be from 2018 that the classes will be able to be reorganised. There is a Demographic Growth Fund which caters for schools that are expanding, to ensure that they have sufficient funding at the initial stages to fund the staff, the additional staff that are required, usually on a basis of 1 extra per year in this case, to enable them to reorganise better.

Cllr Potter

Thank you very much for your questions tonight. Key questions around admissions, but also a lot of questions about the planning process itself, in terms of the building here, and also about the impact on the wider area.

I'm just going to ask the listening panel if they have got anything to add before we come to a close this evening.

Just handing over to Cllr Freshwater.

Cllr Freshwater

We have had the same process go through at Hoo, we were very worried about parking. I think you ought to be concerned about parking. I think you want some answers to the parking because you don't want parking to be a major issue and to be of concern to residents. I think you should have all your questions ready and be ready for answers.

Cllr Potter

The consultation itself runs until 5th February and that is accessed via the Medway Council website.

Paul Clarke

There are a number of ways to respond, there is the school website, the Medway Council website. My colleague Tom here has some spare hard-copies of the consultation document, which you can fill in and back send to us either directly or to the school. We will accept emails and letters as well if you don't have or want to write on the consultation form. We would welcome as many responses as possible. All responses are collated and a whole section of the Cabinet report that will go in on 4th April will have every question that is asked and every response that is given, so that the full picture can be provided.

Cllr Potter closed the meeting



Halling delivery area - 

Leaflets delivered on Friday 6th January between 1pm and 3pm