

## **CABINET – 25 January 2011**

### **PROPOSAL TO EXPAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN HENLEY**

#### **Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families**

#### **Introduction**

1. Henley currently has 4 state primary schools, with another primary school just outside the town in Shiplake. The number of 4-year-olds needing school places has risen over the last few years, and is forecast to peak in 2012 before again falling. This has led to increasing pressure on primary school places across the town.
2. In September 2009 a shortage of places was met by Trinity CE Primary School agreeing to admit 60 children instead of 45.
3. For September 2010 the four primary schools within Henley town received 144 first preference applications by the application deadline, for 119 reception places. To accommodate all the children seeking places, Trinity CE Primary School agreed to admit 50 pupils instead of 45, and Badgemore Community Primary School agreed to admit up to 40 instead of 15, creating a total of 149 places. As is commonly observed, the number of initial applications and allocations exceeded the number of children who took up places in state schools. At the October pupil census, the four Henley town schools shared 122 F1 children, with 50 at Trinity and 13 at Badgemore.
4. A consultation was carried out in Henley (9 June – 21 July 2010) to gather views on whether Trinity or Badgemore should be expanded permanently. Feasibility studies have been carried out at both schools to assess the accommodation requirements and capital implications for each expansion.
5. There are five statutory stages for a proposal to expand a school:
  - i. consultation;
  - ii. publication of a statutory notice;
  - iii. representation;
  - iv. decision;
  - v. implementation.

This proposal has completed the first consultation stage, and a decision is now sought as to which option we should proceed to publication of a statutory notice and representation.

#### **The need for extra primary school places in Henley**

6. On current data, it is believed that an additional 15 places per year (0.5 forms of entry) within the town would allow allocations to be made to all applicants, and thus enable OCC to meet its statutory duty.

7. However, restricting the expansion to an additional 15 places would leave the town very close to, or at, full capacity. There is a risk that small fluctuations in demand would not be able to be accommodated within the town. It is OCC policy to aim to maintain 12% spare capacity across rural areas to allow for fluctuations in population and parental choice. To maintain this level of spare capacity across the Henley partnership would require an increase of approximately 25 places.
8. The South Oxfordshire District Council core strategy (proposed submission version currently under final consultation) allocates 400 homes to Henley, but does not identify any sites – these will be identified in the Site Allocation DPDs. It indicates an expected timescale of post-2017. This level of housing could be expected to increase demand for primary schools places equivalent to approximately 0.5 forms of entry. Henley, Wallingford and Thame will also share 560 homes on unallocated sites post 2017.
9. Based on this, there is an urgent and essential basic need for an additional 15 places per year group. While an additional 30 places may be desirable to allow for fluctuations in population and parental choice, as the allocation of housing growth will not occur until after 2017, sustained demand for expansion on this higher scale is not confirmed at this stage.

## **The Options**

10. Two alternative ways have been identified to increase the number of primary school places in Henley quickly enough to meet the current rise in numbers:
  - Expand Badgemore Community Primary School from 0.5 form entry to 1 form entry. This means an increase in its admission number from 15 to 30.
  - Expand Trinity CE Primary School from 1.5 form entry to 2 form entry. This means an increase in its admission number from 45 to 60.
11. In the short term, one of these expansions is expected to be sufficient. In the longer term, should all the possible housing growth be achieved, both expansions could then be required if the other current demographic pressures continue.
12. At Badgemore this would require an additional classroom, a new hall, internal remodelling and additions to ancillary spaces. The total cost has been estimated at £1.7m. Expansion of this school to the standard one form entry model would support educational delivery, attainment and school improvement in a school which has clearly already raised its standards.
13. At Trinity this would require 5 classrooms (some replacing temporary classrooms currently on site) and remodelling to enlarge the hall. The total cost has been estimated at £3.5m. Expansion of this school would be in line with the current pattern of parental preference. Trinity is clearly the school which receives more parental preferences at the moment. However, the demand for places is finely balanced and if demand levels off in future the impact of an expansion of this school will need to be balanced with the likely detrimental impact on Badgemore and its long term sustainability.

14. The latest Ofsted inspections at both schools judged provision to be good.

### **Consultation**

15. During the Stage 1 consultation phase (9 June – 21 July 2010) a meeting was held at Gillotts School for parents, governors and local residents to discuss the options for growth with a County Council School Organisation officer.
16. A consultation document (Annex 1) was sent to parents of children at all the schools in the Henley partnership, as well as to: early years providers; local county and district councillors; the local library; the Catholic and Anglican dioceses; and other interested parties as represented on the OCC School Organisation Stakeholder Group. It was also available on the OCC website. 63 written responses were received, mostly from parents of children at one of the Henley schools – the highest response rate (44% of responses) was from parents of children at Trinity Primary School.
17. No major objections to the expansion of either school were received, although a few respondents felt that Trinity was already a large school, and raised some concern about further growth, including loss of playground to new buildings and increased traffic.
18. 16% of respondents stated that, although they thought Badgemore was a good school, it had a poor image locally and needed to improve its reputation. It was suggested that a larger Badgemore might encourage parents to view it equally to the other schools, and would provide a better balance of schools across the town (Badgemore is the only school smaller than 1 form entry).
19. 35% of respondents said that Trinity should grow only if adequate infrastructure is provided. It was stated that, as Trinity is the more popular of the two schools, expanding Trinity would allow more parents to get their first choice. There was also a suggestion that Trinity's more central location meant it was better located for community access.
20. The consultation also asked for views on whether a longer term option of including a primary school within the Gillotts site should be pursued. 30% of respondents identified advantages in this, and 43% identified disadvantages.

### **Making a Decision**

21. Sections 18 to 24 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) ["the Prescribed Alterations Regulations"] establish the procedures that must be followed when enlarging school premises. Local authorities also have a duty to have regard to statutory guidance, in this particular case 'Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School by Enlargement or Adding a Sixth Form: A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies ("the Guidance"). The period of consultation is not prescribed by legislation, although the Guidance recommends a minimum of 4 weeks. The consultation period was in line with the Guidance having run from

9<sup>th</sup> June until 21st July 2010, thereby meeting the four week minimum requirement.

22. The Prescribed Alterations Regulations require proposers to consult interested parties and the Guidance lists these at paragraph 1.3. The Cabinet must be satisfied that the statutory consultation has been properly carried out prior to the publication of the notice. Annex 2 provides details of the County Council's consultation with interested parties that are required to be consulted with under the Prescribed Alterations Regulations. The consultation was carried out in accordance with the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.
23. A decision is now required as to which expansion option to publish formal proposals for. If approved, a statutory notice would be published, followed by a formal representation period of four weeks. The decision-making power in terms of determining the notice will lie with the Cabinet, and a report will be put to the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement if no representations are received, or to Cabinet if representations are received, for a final decision in due course.

### Financial and Staff Implications

24. The estimated capital costs for expanding Trinity CE Primary School are as follows:

<b>Phased building works</b>	<b>Estimated costs (£m)</b>
New Hall Studio and refurbishment	1.674
New 5 classroom block	1.855
Remodel FS area	0.200
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.529</b>

The first priority would be to ensure the hall refurbishment which would improve circulation through the school and make the existing space fully usable to larger number of pupils. A new double temporary classroom was installed on the site this summer to add capacity in the short term. It is adjacent to an older double temporary classroom already on site. This would give some additional time before more classrooms will be needed on a permanent basis if the school were admitting 60 in each year group but will ultimately be required in full by September 2014. There is no further scope for additional temporary classrooms on site. The last phase is the least vital in ensuring the school can manage with year groups of this size.

25. The estimated capital costs for expanding Badgemore Primary School are as follows:

<b>Phased building works</b>	<b>Estimated costs (£m)</b>
New Foundation stage classroom	0.300
New hall, kitchen, ancillary offices and internal remodel to provide two additional classrooms, remodel car park.	1.424
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.724</b>

Initially if the school admits a foundation year of 30 the first additional class space will be required the next academic year (earliest September 2012). After that the additional space will need to be provided two years after this. Expansion of this school to the standard one form entry model would support educational delivery, attainment and school improvement in a school which has clearly already raised its standards.

26. Publication of a statutory proposal to expand either school requires confirmation from the local authority that funds will be made available for the necessary capital costs.
27. A further paper for decision will follow the statutory process, as normal where capital works are required and subject to the capital policies and processes laid down.
28. In terms of revenue funding, the two schools would receive the same per pupil amount for additional pupils, but enhanced by their own specific special need index (SNI) for special educational needs. Badgemore's SNI percentage is 9.32% and Trinity's is 4.05%. If Badgemore is expanded instead of Trinity, the additional pupil funding would, therefore, be slightly higher. There may also be a small difference in premises allocations between the two alternative expansions, if the proposed adaptations to each school result in different increases in the overall floor area. Increased funding would be around £25/m2 for the increased area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to either:**

- (a) approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Badgemore Primary School, Henley to 1 form entry, confirming that funds will be made available for the capital costs identified in paragraph 25 above; or**
- (b) approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Trinity Primary School, Henley to 2 form entry, confirming that funds will be made available for the capital costs identified in paragraph 24 above.**

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January 2011