

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & EDUCATION - 25 APRIL 2018

REPORT ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF ST ANDREW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHINNOR

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. This report follows a public consultation and Statutory Notice period relating to the county council's proposal to expand St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor. The proposal is made with the support of the school's Governing Body.
2. An initial public consultation ran from 8 January – 19 February 2018. The consultation document is attached at Annex 1 and was circulated to all parents/carers of pupils at the school, staff and governors, appropriate county council teams, District, Council and Parish councillors, the local library and others. It was also available on the county council consultations webpages through its "current consultations" listing and via the school's website, in addition to being signposted to in the school's newsletters.
3. The consultation leaflet (Annex 1) sets out the reasoning behind the proposal, therefore this is not duplicated in this report. The key point is that St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor has worked with the county council in admitting above its Admission Number in 2016 to meet local demand for places. The latest pupil forecasts indicate that St Andrew's Primary School will exceed its current capacity of 315 places by 2020. At the time of consulting on the proposal, pupil forecasts indicate that making a permanent increase to an Admission Number of 60 would ensure sufficient school places for the increasing pupil numbers in the area.
4. Following completion of the consultation, a Public Notice was published (Annex 2). The Public Notice was published in the Thame Gazette on 2nd March 2018 and was also posted on the county council website. The Notice period ran until the 30th March 2018. It was accompanied by a Full Proposal document (Annex 3), which was available to read online at the Oxfordshire County Council public website, or by request.
5. The decision-making power in terms of determining the proposal in this case lies with the Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education.

The Proposal

6. The proposal is to expand St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor from its previous Planned Admission Number of 45 to one of 60 (i.e. to become a

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standard 2 form entry school) on a permanent basis from 1 September 2019.

7. The latest available pupil forecasts, calculated in 2017, show that pupil numbers are expected to continue their recent rise, which would result in a shortage of places in Chinnor if St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor remained at its previous admission number of 45. The actual pupil numbers for 2017 (September pupil census) have proved slightly higher than forecast, supporting the need for expansion. The table below shows the actual and forecast pupil numbers for the school that this proposal is based on.

St Andrews CE Primary School	R	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Total
2016 actual	49	44	39	31	44	38	51	296
2017 forecast	43	50	45	39	31	44	38	290
2017 actual	44	50	44	40	32	43	40	293
2018 forecast	46	44	50	45	40	32	45	302
2019 forecast	42	48	46	51	46	41	33	307
2020 forecast	45	43	49	46	52	47	42	324
2021 forecast	46	45	44	49	47	53	47	331
2022 forecast	47	47	46	44	49	47	53	333
2023 forecast	50	48	47	46	45	50	47	333
2024 forecast	52	50	48	47	47	45	50	339

8. South Oxfordshire District Council's latest published housing supply data (May 2017) shows that, in addition to over 100 homes built in Chinnor in the last 5 years, nearly 400 are permitted and expected to be built in the next five years, with housing building continuing beyond this period. This scale of housing growth would sustain St Andrew's CE primary School at 2 form entry, without detriment to other local schools.
9. The Governing Body of St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor fully supports the proposed school expansion.

Representations

10. The initial public consultation that ran between 8 January and 19 February 2018 received eleven responses. Of these 7 clearly supported the expansion, 2 objected and 2 raised concerns about specific aspects, without clearly either supporting or objecting to the proposal. The two objections were on the basis that a new school should be built instead, either to replace St Andrew's or as a third school for the village. The expected population growth would not support a third school, and there is not sufficient funding available to rebuild the school; the county council therefore remained of the view that an expansion of St Andrew's CE Primary School is the appropriate solution to providing sufficient school capacity in Chinnor, and moved ahead with publication of a statutory notice to expand the school.
11. The Statutory Notice generated no representations.

Legal background

12. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure sufficiency of school places. This duty will be met with the expansion of St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor, as forecasts show there will be insufficient places existing in Chinnor unless this expansion occurs.
13. Expansion of schools is covered by *The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013* ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations') which should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 and Schedule 3 of the *Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006* (as amended by the *Education Act (EA) 2011*) and *the Prescribed Alterations Regulations*.
14. The expansion of a maintained school is subject to the "Guidance", as set out in "*Making Prescribed Alterations to Mainstream Schools*" published April 2016. The Guidance states that the statutory proposal must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change. The proposal should be accessible to all interested parties and should therefore use 'plain English'. The full proposal must be published on a website (e.g. the school or LA's website) along with a statement setting out:
 - a. how copies of the proposal may be obtained;
 - b. that anybody can object to, or comment on, the proposal;
 - c. the date that the representation period ends;
 - d. and the address to which objections or comments should be submitted.

A brief notice (including details on how the full proposal can be accessed e.g. the website address) must be published in a local newspaper. Within one week of the date of publication on the website, the proposer must send a copy of the proposal and the information set out in the paragraph above to the governing body and any other body or person that the proposer thinks is appropriate.

15. The county council confirms that it has adhered to the above Guidance.
16. The *Guidance for Decision-makers* sets out factors which should be considered in deciding this proposal. Of specific relevance to this proposal are the following factors:
17. **Education standards and diversity of provision:** Decision-makers should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the relevant area and whether the proposal will meet or affect the needs of parents; raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.
18. St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor is an Ofsted-rated "Outstanding" school, performing at a higher level than the average for Oxfordshire or England. The expansion will be supportive of high educational standards and parental choice and would increase the number of places available at outstanding schools.

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19. **Demand v. need:** In assessing the demand for new school places the decision-maker should consider the evidence presented for any projected increase in pupil population (such as planned housing developments) and any new provision opening in the area. The decision-maker should consider the quality and popularity of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for places in the school proposed for expansion.
20. The permanent expansion of the school is necessary to meet the needs of both population growth and permitted housing developments in Chinnor. The consequence of refusing this proposed expansion would be that the school's admission number remains at 45, with forecasts indicating the school will exceed its current maximum capacity of 315 by 2020. The only other primary school in Chinnor, Mill Lane Primary School, is also forecast to be full. As well as meeting *demand* (i.e. parental preferences) this expansion therefore would also meet *need* (i.e. population growth).
21. **School size:** Decision-makers should not make blanket assumptions that schools should be of a certain size to be good schools, although the viability and cost-effectiveness of a proposal is an important factor for consideration.
22. Permanent expansion of the school would be expected to eventually increase the revenue cost-effectiveness of its operation, but must be balanced against the capital cost of the proposed expansion. Funding for this capital cost is covered in paragraph 29.
23. **Proposed admissions arrangements:** in order to comply with the Admissions Code, there will be a separate consultation on the new admission number as part of the annual admissions consultation.
24. **Community cohesion:** expansion of this school would enable all children in Chinnor to attend a school in their local community.
25. **Travel and accessibility:** Decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly considered and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. The decision-maker should bear in mind that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes.
26. Expansion of this school would prevent the need for children to be transported to schools further afield, and help to minimise journey times and vehicular transport.
27. **Funding and land:** The decision-maker should be satisfied that any land, premises or necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees or religious authority) have given their agreement.
28. No further land is required to necessitate the expansion of the school. The school will however require 2 additional classrooms and associated infrastructure (small group room, storage, toilets etc.) to be able to operate as a

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2-form entry Primary School. The detailed design of the new accommodation is in the process of being finalised prior to a planning application being submitted.

29. It is expected that the cost of providing the additional accommodation to meet this expansion will be met from "Section 106" funding held or secured by the Council from housing developers to mitigate the impact of their development on the need for school places in the local area.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

30. There are not considered to be any equality and inclusion implications of this decision.

Decision

31. In considering the proposals for a school expansion, the Cabinet Member can decide to:
- reject the proposals;
 - approve the proposals without modifications;
 - approve the proposals with such modifications as the local authority thinks desirable, having consulted the governing body;
 - approve the proposal – with or without modification – subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.

RECOMMENDATION

32. **The Cabinet Member for Public Health & finance is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed expansion of St Andrew's CE Primary School, Chinnor.**

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Annexes: Annex 1: Consultation leaflet
 Annex 2: Public Notice
 Annex 3: Full Proposal document

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