

CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT 7 April 2010

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF WOOD FARM SCHOOL, OXFORD

Report by Children, Young People & Families

Introduction

1. At the meeting on 1 December 2009 the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement agreed to the publication of formal proposals to expand Wood Farm School from 1.5-form entry to 2-form entry. The report outlining the basis for this decision is attached at Annex 1.
2. The statutory notice (attached at Annex 2) was published by the Authority in the Oxford Mail on 19 January 2010 and expired following 4 weeks of formal consultation on 16 February 2010. In accordance with legislation the notice was also posted at the school gate and local library. A copy of the proposal (attached at Annex 3) and the notices were sent to the governing body and the Secretary of State and additionally made available on the Oxfordshire County Council website.
3. The decision-making power in terms of determining the notice lies with the Cabinet or can be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement. This follows decisions taken by the Cabinet in July 2007 under new legislation encompassed in the Education & Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) whereby School Organisation Committees were abolished and arrangements became the responsibility of the relevant local authority. In meeting as 'decision-maker' the Cabinet or Cabinet Member must have regard to government guidance and statutory timescales otherwise a decision can be referred to the independent Schools' Adjudicator for reconsideration. Also at its meeting in July 2007 the Cabinet confirmed that in considering notices as 'Decision-maker' it was necessary for the Chairman of the Council to determine that the decision could not be subject to 'call-in' as this would, in most cases, mean that the Cabinet's role would be negated by referral to the Schools' Adjudicator. The Cabinet decision must be made within 2 months of the close of the notice period.
4. As no representations in relation to the proposal have been received the decision is referred to the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement. The proposed implementation date for the proposal is 1 September 2012.

The Proposal

5. The proposal is to increase the admission number from 40 to 60 children, on a permanent basis from September 2012. This will eventually increase the

school's total roll from 252 children in Years 1-6 (September 2009 pupil census) to a maximum of 360.

6. To accommodate this growth in pupil numbers, Wood Farm School will be rebuilt with 12 classrooms for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, as well as Foundation Stage rooms and more places at the Slade Nursery School.

Representations

7. No representations have been received in relation to this notice during the statutory consultation process.

Making a Decision

8. In terms of reaching a decision all proposals should be considered on their merits but the following factors should be borne in mind but are not considered to be exhaustive. The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement must be satisfied that the statutory consultation has been carried out prior to the publication of the notice. Details of the consultation should be included in the proposals. The Decision Maker must be satisfied that the consultation meets statutory requirements. If some parties submit objections on the basis that consultation was not adequate, the Decision Maker may wish to take legal advice on the points raised. If the requirements have not been met, the Decision Maker may judge the proposals to be invalid and should consider whether they can make a decision on the proposals. Alternatively the Decision Maker may take into account the sufficiency and quality of the consultation as part of their overall judgement of the proposals as a whole.
9. **The effect on standards, school improvement and diversity.** The government aims to create a dynamic system shaped by parents that delivers excellence and equality, closing weak schools, encouraging new providers and popular schools to expand. Decision Makers should be satisfied that the proposals will contribute to raising local standards of provision and improved attainment and consider the impact on choice and diversity. They should pay particular attention to the effect on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic minorities and deprived backgrounds. The decision-maker should consider how the proposals will help deliver the 'Every Child Matters' principles.
10. **School characteristics.** The decision-maker should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise and whether there is supporting evidence to support the extension and take into account the existence of capacity elsewhere. The decision-maker needs to consider the accessibility of the provision for disadvantaged groups as the provision should not unduly extend journey times or cost.
11. **Funding and land.** The decision-maker should be satisfied that any capital required to implement the proposals will be available.

Financial and Staff Implications

12. The financial implications of this report are linked to the capital works that will be carried out should the proposal be approved. A detailed project approval for this work was approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2010, showing a total estimated cost of the project, inclusive of professional fees and client contingency of £11,750,000.
13. The project is included in the forward capital plan. A variety of funding sources including DCSF Primary Capital programme, Sure Start Children's Centre and Extended School Funding have been combined to make the best use of the available resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. **The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement is RECOMMENDED to either:**
 - (a) **reject the proposals;**
 - (b) **approve the proposals;**
 - (c) **approve the proposals with a modification (e.g. the proposal implementation date); or**
 - (d) **approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition.**

MEERA SPILLET
Director for Children, Young People & Families

Background papers: Initial consultation document

Annexes: Annex 1: Cabinet Member report 1 December 2009
Annex 2: Statutory notice
Annex 3: Statutory proposal

Contact Officer: Barbara Chillman, Principal Officer School Organisation,
Commissioning, Performance and Quality Assurance,
01865 816459

April 2010

Division(s): Barton & Churchill

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT
1 DECEMBER 2009**

**PROPOSAL TO EXPAND WOOD FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL,
OXFORD**

Report by Children, Young People & Families

Introduction

1. Wood Farm Primary School has a published admission number of 40 children. Due to rising numbers across Oxford City, 45 places were allocated to the school for September 2009. Primary Care Trust records and the annual census of local children in early years settings show that the demand for primary school places in Oxford is rising, and schools in this area will not have enough room in future years.
2. A report (Annex 1) submitted to Cabinet on 20th May 2008 identified Wood Farm Primary School/Slade Nursery School as one of the first two schools in Oxfordshire to be rebuilt as part of the government-funded Primary Capital Programme. A revised version of the Primary Capital Programme Strategy for Change, including Wood Farm Primary School as a priority investment project, was approved by the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement on 10th June 2008 (Annexes 2-4). The cost of rebuilding Wood Farm Primary School has been included in subsequent copies of the CYP&F forward capital plan.
3. The new proposal is to use this opportunity to also expand the school to help meet the growing demand for school places in Oxford.

The Proposal

4. The proposal is to increase the admission number from 40 to 60 children, on a permanent basis from September 2010. This will eventually increase the school's total roll from its current 252 children in Years 1-6 (September 2009 pupil census) to a maximum of 360.
5. To accommodate this growth in pupil numbers, Wood Farm School will be rebuilt with 12 classrooms for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, as well as Foundation Stage rooms and more places at the Slade Nursery School.

Representations

6. During the informal consultation phase (10 September 2009 – 22 October 2009) a meeting was held at the school for parents to discuss the plans with the headteacher and County Council officers.
7. A consultation document (Annex 5) was sent to parents of children at Wood Farm Primary School, as well as to local councillors, other primary schools and early years providers in the Wood Farm area; it was also available on the OCC website. Six responses were received, none of which objected to the proposal. The only concerns expressed were for the school to be supported through this period of major change, and for adequate parking to be provided.
8. As no objections in relation to the proposal have been received, the decision on whether to publish a formal statutory proposal is referred to the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement rather than the Cabinet.

Making a Decision

9. As this is a proposal to increase the size of the school by more than 25%, it is subject to statutory procedures, as established by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendments)(England) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 21 January 2008).
10. A decision is now required as to whether to publish formal proposals for this expansion. If approved, a statutory notice would be published, followed by a formal consultation 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.
11. The Cabinet must be satisfied that the statutory consultation has been carried out prior to the publication of the notice.

Financial and Staff Implications

12. The August 2009 forward capital plan, as approved by Cabinet on 20th October 2009 (Annex 6) shows an allocation of £11,500,000 to rebuild Wood Farm Primary School.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. **The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement is RECOMMENDED to approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Wood Farm Primary School, Oxford.**

JIM CROOK

Interim Director for Children, Young People & Families

Background papers: Annex 1 - Report to Cabinet, May 2008; Annex 2 – Report to Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement, June 2008; Annex 3 - Investment priorities approved by Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement June 2008; Annex 4 - Statement of Decision by Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement, June 2008; Annex 5 - consultation document; Annex 6: Capital programme August 2009

Contact Officer: Barbara Chillman, Principal Officer School Organisation, Commissioning, Performance and Quality Assurance, 01865 816459

November 2009