

Division(s): **Banbury Ruscote**
Also affecting: **All Banbury divisions**

CABINET – 16 JULY 2013

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND QUEENSWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL, BANBURY

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. Queensway Primary School is located in Banbury, in the Easington ward. Its published Admission Number until recently was 30. In 2012, the school agreed with the county council's request to admit 60 pupils, to help meet sharp growth in demand for pupil places across Banbury and 60 pupils will also be admitted in September 2013.

Need for pupil places in Banbury

2. The Education Act 1996 (Section 14) places a statutory duty on local authorities to secure sufficient school places in their area. To allow for fluctuation in demand, in-year movement and effective operation of parental preference, it is judged that 8% spare places are required across an urban area.
3. To assess the need for future school places, forecasts of pupil numbers are revised each year, based on ward-level population forecasts, which are calculated from census population data, fertility/mortality data, Census migration data and housing net completions data.
4. There is already a deficiency of Reception places, and given the current capacity of primary schools in Banbury of 4227 places, forecasted demand for school places shows an overall deficiency of places by 2015 unless additional primary school places are provided.. In addition to Queensway, the county council is carrying out feasibility studies at two other primary schools to provide additional space partly to meet demand from the existing population and partly to respond to housing growth.
5. The latest forecast for pupil numbers in Banbury at primary age is as follows:

Banbury	Yr R	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Total
2013-14	712	645	604	570	534	491	544	4100
2014-15	691	691	641	594	546	530	488	4181
2015-16	694	673	690	633	571	541	527	4328
2016-17	696	679	675	685	612	567	538	4453

The proposal

6. The proposal is to expand Queensway Primary School to become a 2 form entry school with an Admission Number of 60 on a permanent basis from 2014. This would bring the number of children on roll at the school up to a maximum of 420 children in the school (Reception to Year 6) by Sept 2018.
7. The class size will remain unchanged, as classes will be limited to 30 children, as now, in Reception and Key Stage 1.
8. To accommodate this growth in pupil numbers, there would need to be adaptation and possible extension of the school's buildings, and a feasibility study will investigate the options for how to achieve this. All options involving the construction of new buildings would be subject to Planning regulations and approval, including those in consideration of traffic and Highways.

Representations

9. During the consultation phase (15 April 2013 – 27 May 2013) an informal drop-in session was held at the school on 17 April to give parents of children at the school the opportunity to raise queries about the proposal with a county council officer. Only one family group attended the session and the discussion around expansion was mainly confined to the potential increase in traffic and parking issues on the site.
10. A consultation leaflet (Annex 1) was sent to parents of children at Queensway Primary School, as well as to local councillors, partnership schools and early years providers including childminders in the area, libraries, local Early Intervention Hub, community groups and other stakeholders. It was also available on the OCC public website, together with full details of the various ways of responding. Additionally, the school highlighted the consultation in its newsletters to parents.
11. Five responses to the consultation were received:
 - Three respondents supported the proposal in principle,
 - Two respondents were opposed to the proposal in principle.
12. The reasons given for supporting the proposal were:
 - Clear need for additional pupil places in the area.
 - It is a good and popular school, and that therefore more children should have the opportunity to attend it, if parents prefer it.
13. The concerns raised in opposition were focused on the increase in traffic resulting from parents who choose to drive their children to school, instead of walking or cycling. Walking routes to the school were assessed in November 2012 by OCC Highways & Transport and found to be safe. Any capital

expansion of the buildings will be subject to the Planning process in the usual way, which includes scrutiny of traffic / highways impact.

14. As objections in relation to the proposal have been raised, the decision on whether to proceed to publish a formal statutory proposal is referred to OCC Cabinet, rather than the Cabinet Member for Education.

Making a Decision

15. 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 whether to proceed to publication of a statutory notice and representation.

16. 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")'.
17. 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 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 15 April 2013 – 27 May 2013, thereby exceeding the four week minimum requirement. The consultation was therefore carried out in accordance with the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.
18. A decision is now required as to whether to publish formal proposals for this proposed expansion. 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 or the Cabinet Member for Education, and a report will be put to Cabinet if objections in principle are received, for a final decision in due course.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

19. Equality Impact Assessment of Oxfordshire's Pupil Place Plan (February 2013) identified that increasing school places at the heart of their communities has a positive impact on equalities through promoting social inclusion and minimising barriers to accessing education.

Financial and Staff Implications

20. The direct financial implication of this report is the cost of undertaking the statutory process recommended, which is planned for and met within the normal Children Education & Families budget provision. There are no significant financial implications or risks at this stage. If the proposal proceeds, following statutory consultation there would be another report to Cabinet in due course seeking a final decision on whether to expand the school.
21. The financial implications of this report are linked to the capital works that will be carried out should the proposal be approved. Publication of a statutory proposal to expand the school requires confirmation from the county council that funds will be made available for the necessary capital costs.
22. There will also be on-costs to the school for additional staff and for increased maintenance requirements. The day to day revenue costs for repair and maintenance and staffing costs must be met through the school's delegated budget as part of the Council's Fair Funding arrangements.
23. Resources for School Budget Shares are provided by government through the Dedicated Schools Grant, which will increase proportionately to increases in overall pupil numbers in Oxfordshire. Additional pupils will be reflected in an adjustment in the school's funding formula which applies numbers of pupils on roll and their characteristics.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Queensway Primary School, Banbury.

JIM LEIVERS
Director for Children's Services

Contact Officer: Diane Cameron, School Organisation Officer, 01865 816445

June 2013

- Annex 1 Consultation leaflet
- Annex 2 List of interested parties consulted