

CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT 05 JULY 2011

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF CHARLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, WANTAGE

Report by Children, Education & Families

Introduction

1. At the meeting on 19 April 2011 the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement agreed to the publication of formal proposals to expand Charlton Primary 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 Wantage Herald on 11 May 2011 and expired following 4 weeks of formal consultation on 08 June 2011. In accordance with legislation the notice was also posted at the school gate, main entrances to the school, the co-located pre-school and the 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 (if there have been no objections). 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. The Cabinet decision must be made within 2 months of the close of the notice period; as a consequence, it is necessary for the Chairman of the Council to determine that the decision cannot be subject to 'call-in' as this would, in most cases, prevent a decision being finalised within the required timescale and mean that the Cabinet's role would be negated by referral to the Schools' Adjudicator.
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 45 to 60 children, on a permanent basis from September 2012. This will eventually increase the school's total roll from 265 children in Years 1-6 (January 2011 pupil census) to a maximum of 360.

6. To accommodate this growth in pupil numbers, Charlton Primary School will be remodelled and extended to provide 12 classrooms for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, as well as a new Foundation Stage Unit block.

Representations

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

Legal Background

8. School expansions are 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). 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', ("the Guidance"). When reaching a decision, Cabinet must have regard to The Guidance. Cabinet is referred in particular to pages 19 to 40 of The Guidance.
9. 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 Decision Maker should consider the views of all those affected by the proposals. The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement, as Decision Maker, 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 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.
10. **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.
11. **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.

12. **Need for places.** The Decision Maker should consider whether there is a need for the expansion and should consider the evidence presented for the expansion. There is a strong presumption that proposals to expand popular and successful schools should be approved. If surplus capacity exists in neighbouring schools the Decision Maker should ask how it is planned to tackle any consequences for other schools.
13. **Funding and land.** The Decision Maker should be satisfied that any land, premises and capital required to implement the proposals will be available.

Financial and Staff Implications

14. 14. The financial implications of this report are linked to the capital works that will be carried out should the proposal be approved. The feasibility study carried out at the school has identified the need for additional classrooms, a new small hall and some internal remodelling. The estimated cost of providing the all of the additional spaces in permanent buildings is in the region of £2m. The feasibility study has identified the preferred solution, costs and options for a phased delivery. These capital works will be the subject of a separate detailed project approval, and a further paper for decision will follow in due course, subject to the capital policies and processes laid down
15. 15. Oxfordshire County Council capital funding forward plans include funds to assist with demographic issues on school places. Funding will be allocated from the relevant CE&F capital programmes from 2011/12 onwards, to reflect the phasing of building works identified during the detailed design stage. Funding will also be sought from developer contributions secured to provide education infrastructure.
16. The school will need to meet the costs of additional staffing, curriculum resources and maintenance costs from its delegated budget share. The funding formula on which the budget share is based will allocate additional resources based on increased pupil numbers and increased floor area. Due to increasing numbers of pupils across the county, the Dedicated Schools Grant is expected to include sufficient additional resources to fund the increased budget share for the school. It is anticipated that moving to 2 forms of entry will, over time, enable the school to achieve increased efficiency by amending its internal organisation.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

17. There are not considered to be any significant equality and inclusion implications arising from this proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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, Education & Families

Background papers: Initial consultation document

Annexes: Annex 1: Cabinet Member report April 2011
Annex 2: Statutory notice
Annex 3: Statutory proposal

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