

**Division:** Bloxham & Easington. Also of interest to Deddington, Wroxton & Hook Norton

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES  
14 DECEMBER 2015**

**REPORT ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF  
CHRISTOPHER RAWLINS CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
ADDERBURY**

Report by Director for Children's Services

**Introduction**

1. This report follows a public consultation period relating to the governing body's proposal to expand Christopher Rawlins CE (VA) Primary School in Adderbury. The proposal has been supported by Oxfordshire County Council officers working together with Oxford Diocese, and a feasibility report on the proposed physical expansion is well advanced.
2. The school's public consultation ran from 28 September 2015 – 8 November 2015. The consultation leaflet is attached at Annex 1 and was circulated to all parents/carers of pupils at the school, 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.
3. The consultation leaflet contains the detailed reasoning behind the school's proposals, and council officers' support of it, therefore this is not duplicated in this report, being set out in Annex 1. The key information to note is that council officers have identified that an additional half form of entry in primary school capacity is now required in the area.
4. The decision-making power in terms of determining the proposal in this case lies with the Governing Body of Christopher Rawlins CE (VA) Primary School, as this is a school-led proposal, supported by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford Diocese, to meet identified need. Following completion of the consultation, the governors have made their decision to proceed with expansion, but now seek formal support for this from the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families.

**The Plan**

5. The governors' decision is to proceed to expand the school from 1fe to 1.5fe (from a Planned Admission Number of 30 to one of 45) from September 2017. This is to meet demand for primary pupil places both in Adderbury and the immediate surrounding area. Detail on this demand is contained in Annex 1. A key point to note is that Adderbury is identified in Cherwell District Council's Local Plan as a sustainable location for further housing growth.

6. The Governing Body of Christopher Rawlins CE (VA) Primary School wants to be able to meet the needs of the local community. There has been a steady increase in demand for primary school places in this part of Oxfordshire: the school now has very few spare places, and is completely full in most year groups. For September 2015, there were more applications from children living in the school's designated area than the number of Reception places the school could offer.
7. The Governing Body has written a formal statement of its decision following its public consultation, and this is attached at Annex 2. The governors now seek formal support for its decision from Oxfordshire County Council through the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families, to further cement the joint working that is already taking place.

## **Representations**

8. The public consultation generated 6 responses. 5 supported the proposals while 1 was neutral.
9. The main reasons given for support were:
  - Need for more primary pupil places in the village of Adderbury.
  - Christopher Rawlins CE (VA) Primary School is a good school, and more children should have access to the education it provides.

## **Legal background**

10. The expansion of a maintained school is subject to the "*Guidance*", as set out in "*School Organisation: Maintained Schools. Guidance for proposers and decision-makers*" published January 2014. Governing Bodies of all mainstream schools can decide to expand their school without following a formal statutory process.
11. The Guidance states that before implementing any changes governing bodies should ensure that;
  - they have secured any necessary capital funding;
  - they have identified suitable accommodation and sites;
  - they have secured planning permission and/or agreement on the transfer of land where necessary;
  - they have the consent of the site trustees or other land owner where the land is not owned by the governing body;
  - they have consent of the relevant religious authority (as required); and
  - the admissions authority is content for the published admissions number (PAN) to be changed where this forms part of expansion plans, in accordance with the School Admissions Code. [Note that as a Voluntary Aided school, Christopher Rawlins is its own admissions authority but is part of the council's co-ordinated admissions scheme].
12. Governing Bodies are required to adhere to the usual principles of public law: they must act rationally; they must take into account all relevant

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considerations; and they must follow a fair procedure. The DfE expects that governing bodies will:

- liaise with the local authority and trustees/diocese to ensure that where possible a proposal is aligned with wider place planning/organisational arrangements, and that any necessary consents have been gained; and
- ensure effective consultation with parents and other interested parties to gauge demand for their proposed changes and to provide them with sufficient opportunity to give their views.

13. Local authorities have a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places.
14. **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. In considering whether to formally support the governors' decision, the Cabinet Member 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. She 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.
15. **School characteristics.** The Cabinet Member 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. She needs to consider the accessibility of the provision for disadvantaged groups as the provision should not unduly extend journey times or cost.
16. **Need for places.** The Cabinet Member 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 she should ask how it is planned to tackle any consequences for other schools.
17. **Funding and land.** The Cabinet Member should be satisfied that any land, premises and capital required to implement the proposals will be available.

## Financial and Staff Implications

18. The physical expansion of Christopher Rawlins CE (VA) Primary School would be funded using money the council has secured and expects to secure from housing developers, to mitigate the impact of new housing in the local area (known as Section 106 contributions). The Oxford Diocese has been working with the school and Oxfordshire County Council officers on a feasibility study to identify how the physical expansion of the school can be achieved on site.
19. The accommodation requirements will be delivered by the county council. In accordance with OCC Capital Governance requirements this will be the

