

CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – 1 March 2011

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN HENLEY

Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 25 January 2011 Cabinet considered a report on proposals to expand primary school places in Henley (Annex 1). A consultation was carried out in Henley (9 June – 21 July 2010) to gather views on whether Trinity or Badgemore should be expanded permanently. Feasibility studies have been carried out at both schools to assess the accommodation requirements and capital implications for each expansion.
2. The Governors of Trinity CE Primary School submitted at short notice an alternative, less expensive scheme to that agreed as part of the feasibility study and made representations to Cabinet.
3. It was **AGREED** to defer decision on this item to either the 1 March 2011 Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement Delegated Decisions meeting or to the next meeting of Cabinet on 15 March 2011, so that further advice could be given by the officers, taking into account consultation with both schools. The outcomes of discussions with both schools are set out in this report to enable a decision on the consultation to be made.
4. 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 for which option we should proceed to publication of a statutory notice and representation.

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5. Each proposal is considered in detail below and then an executive summary of the advantages and disadvantages of both are shown in tabular form for ease of reference.

Alternative scheme put forward by Trinity CE Primary School

6. The scheme previously agreed with the governors of Trinity CE Primary School conformed with the requirements of the Oxfordshire Primary School Brief, and required 5 classrooms (some replacing temporary classrooms currently on site) remodelling to enlarge the hall and alterations to the Foundation Stage accommodation. The total cost was estimated at £3.5m.
7. Officers have now considered the issues raised in the 21 January submission from the governors of Trinity School (attached at Annex 2) and their alternative building solution to accommodate expansion of the school to two forms of entry .
8. The school proposal indicated a willingness to continue with the use of the two double temporary classroom units and Foundation Stage accommodation in their existing form. The scheme offers a different design concept for the provision of the hall and related facilities. The architect acting for the school had estimated the cost of provision at £875k.
9. The scheme has been considered under the following headings.
 - Sufficiency of accommodation offered
 - Suitability of accommodation offered
 - Capital cost considerations

Sufficiency

Overall the school scheme provides only 80% of the space standards required by the Primary School Brief as opposed to the 100% compliance of the original proposal.

The scheme will provide the required 12 classbases but will lose the main SEN/withdrawal space currently used by the school, which is used in conjunction with spaces in wide corridors and ad hoc places as available. This would leave the school with a deficit in this type of facility, particularly as there would be additional pupils to support. The Foundation Stage accommodation is of sufficient size overall but the layout is not ideal. Officers agree therefore that there is sufficient space for a 60 place Foundation Stage Unit.

Suitability

Temporary classrooms are not seen as a long term sustainable solution to the provision of these places. Whilst one unit is relatively new, the other was leased in by the school in 1990s and subsequently bought by them in 2004. There will be an ongoing repair and maintenance issue associated with these units and ultimately they will need to be replaced. It is accepted that although the revised scheme shows a hall space of less than that recommended for this size of school this has been offset by the ability to integrate adjacent corridor space to make up such a shortfall.

As stated in the Cabinet Report of January 2011 (Annex 1), in the initial public consultation, 35% of the 63 responses stated that Trinity should grow only if adequate infrastructure is provided.

There are still outstanding issues which would have to be investigated including:

- The effect of providing two larger lifts for the retained split level hall/kitchen servery (because of the right angle turn and refuge space) on circulation and queuing space for the servery is a concern.
- The movement of children with hot meals down steps is not improved and number of children is increased.
- Height of hall structure may increase the risk of neighbour objections.
- Potential for service vehicles to turn will need to be assessed and could result in loss of car parking spaces on a congested site.
- Fire escape from hall will lead to retaining walls and steps plus refuge places.

Capital cost considerations

The costs of both the OCC and school schemes have been assessed on a comparable basis and generates a notional figure of £904k for the school solution and £1.423k for hall element of the original feasibility study version. If it is accepted that the compromise in space standards against the Primary School brief is acceptable, officers are satisfied that the original feasibility study scheme could also be modified to gain better value through retention of the existing hall and achieve a comparable cost. This could offset some, but not all, of the outstanding issues listed above.

10. Other issues raised by the Governors for consideration by the Cabinet were the effect on revenue finances of the school of managing two 'bulge' years through the school; oversubscription of places at the school, with possible future housing development; and the overall provision of Church of England places in Henley.
11. Revenue considerations: The school has admitted in excess of the published admission number of 45 for two years at the request of the County Council. It has necessitated the creation of two additional classes to offer effective organisation of classes. This has been the case for a number of schools across the county in this time of increased basic need for places. An additional allocation was made to schools to ensure schools were not penalised financially for employing additional members of staff to accommodate this within an existing financial year. As with these other schools there would be organisational challenges to manage these 'bulge' groups through the school.
12. Oversubscription: By May 2010 Trinity CE Primary School had received 56 first preference applications for F1 places in September 2010, against its current admission number of 45.
13. Diversity of Provision: Provision of places in the Henley partnership by type is shown below. There were no representations received as part of the consultation relating to diversity of provision in Henley.

School	Type of Provision	Published Admission Number
Trinity CE	CE controlled	45
Shiplake CE (A)	CE Aided	28
Sacred Heart RC(A)	RC Aided	30
Valley Road	Community	30
Badgemore	Community	15

Alternative proposal from Badgemore Primary School

14. The scheme previously agreed with the governors of Badgemore Primary School conformed with the requirements of the Oxfordshire Primary School Brief, and required an additional classroom, a new hall, internal remodelling and additions to ancillary spaces. The total cost has been estimated at £1.724m.
15. Following the last Cabinet meeting the governors of Badgemore Primary School were also invited to respond to the issues raised at the Cabinet meeting on 25 January 2011. A letter was subsequently received and is attached at Annex 3. It sets out a willingness to reduce the proposed scheme by using existing SEN/withdrawal space as a staff room to reduce the overall footprint of new build on the site. The layout of space means the withdrawal function could be continued elsewhere in the school. The scheme has already reduced non-essential facilities and can only be provided as permanent build as a temporary solution is not feasible on this site. The slightly revised cost is £1,664k.
16. Other issues raised by the Governors for consideration by the Cabinet were the recent improvements at the school which were recognised by Ofsted (the latest Ofsteds at both schools have judged them as "good"; financial constraints and challenges of small schools; proximity to areas identified for housing and mixed use development; opportunities to enhance educational experience at the school.

Summary of advantages and disadvantages associated with each proposal

School	Advantages	Disadvantages
Trinity CE Primary School	<p>Potential capital outlay now reduced to £904k.</p> <p>School of parental choice in this part of Henley.</p> <p>Classes can benefit from single year group classes.</p>	<p>Temporary accommodation left on site will need eventual replacement either with further temporary unit or permanent build. One unit is relatively new, the other was leased by school Governors in 1990s and bought in 2004.</p> <p>Loss of SEN/withdrawal space.</p> <p>Maintaining different levels to hall provision will mean pupils</p>

		<p>continue to climb stairs to servery and carry food back to the eating area. There would be up to 105 more pupils using this area.</p> <p>If Trinity CE Primary school is expanded to two forms of entry at this stage it is likely that school will attract the full 60 pupils per year and Badgemore Primary will once more revert to intakes well below 15 pupils per year which is unsustainable economically.</p> <p>Badgemore Primary could become so unsustainable it would not be able to remain open. This would mean that there would be insufficient places in Henley to meet demand but no prospect of further expansion of any other school in the town to accommodate it.</p>
<p>Badgemore Primary School</p>	<p>Solution is entirely in permanent build as it is not feasible to put temporary accommodation on this site. There should be no need to replace this accommodation in the foreseeable future.</p> <p>New accommodation will be fully accessible.</p> <p>Classes can benefit from single year group classes.</p> <p>School has improved long term sustainability and opportunity to build on recent rising of educational standards.</p> <p>If pupil numbers within Henley continue to grow, the option of extending Trinity as well in the future is retained.</p>	<p>Overall capital outlay is in excess of that of the alternative Trinity scheme.</p>

Consultation

17. During the Stage 1 consultation phase (9 June – 21 July 2010) a meeting was held at Gillotts School for parents, governors and local residents to discuss the options for growth with a County Council School Organisation officer.
18. A consultation document was sent to parents of children at all the schools in the Henley partnership, as well as to: early years providers; local county and district councillors; the local library; the Catholic and Anglican dioceses; and other interested parties as represented on the OCC School Organisation Stakeholder Group. It was also available on the OCC website. 63 written responses were received, mostly from parents of children at one of the Henley schools – the highest response rate (44% of responses) was from parents of children at Trinity Primary School.
19. No major objections to the expansion of either school were received, although a few respondents felt that Trinity was already a large school, and raised some concern about further growth, including loss of playground to new buildings and increased traffic.

Making a Decision

20. 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”). 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 9th June until 21st July 2010, thereby meeting the four week minimum requirement.
21. 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 consultation was carried out in accordance with the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.
22. A decision is now required as to which expansion option to publish formal proposals for. 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, 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.

Financial and Staff Implications

23. The estimated capital costs, if the new classroom block and remodelled FS area are omitted, for expanding Trinity CE Primary School are as follows:

Phased building works	Estimated costs (£m)
New Hall Studio and refurbishment	0.904
Total	0.904

The school would reach full capacity as a two form entry school in 2016.

24. The estimated capital costs for expanding Badgemore Primary School are as follows:

Phased building works	Estimated costs (£m)
New Foundation stage classroom	0.300
New hall, kitchen, ancillary offices and internal remodel to provide two additional classrooms, remodel car park.	1.364
Total	1.664

25. Initially if the school admits a foundation year of 30 the first additional class space will be required the next academic year (earliest September 2012). After that the next additional space would need to be provided two years after this. Expansion of this school to the standard one form entry model would support educational delivery, attainment and school improvement in a school which has clearly already raised its standards.
26. Approximately £120k has been secured in developer contributions to infrastructure which could be used for either scheme.
27. Publication of a statutory proposal to expand either school requires confirmation from the local authority that funds will be made available for the necessary capital costs.
28. A further paper for decision will follow the statutory process, as normal where capital works are required and subject to the capital policies and processes laid down.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement is RECOMMENDED to either:

- (a) **approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Badgemore Primary School, Henley to 1 form entry, confirming that funds will be made available for the capital costs identified in paragraph 24 above; or**
- (b) **approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Trinity Primary School, Henley to 2 form entry, confirming that**

funds will be made available for the capital costs identified in paragraph 23 above.

MEERA SPILLETT
Director for Children, Young People & Families

Background Papers:

Contact Officer: Allyson Milward, Service Manager School Organisation,
Commissioning, Performance and Quality Assurance,
Tel: 01865 816447

February 2011