

Decision Maker: Education Portfolio Holder

Date: For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 11 September 2012

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: PROPOSAL TO EXPAND CHURCHFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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Chief Officer: Tessa Moore, Assistant Director (Education)

Ward: Clock House Ward

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council Members with the outcomes from consultation on a proposal to permanently expand Churchfields Primary School from 30 to 60 pupils at Year Reception (the year children start school) from September 2013. The report seeks Education Portfolio Holder approval to progress the expansion.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 **Members of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:**

- (i) review the outcomes from consultation;
- (ii) consider the case for the expansion of Churchfields Primary School;
- (iii) offer any comments on the above to the Education Portfolio Holder.

2.2 **The Education Portfolio Holder is asked to:**

- (iv) consider any comments arising from the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee;
- (v) agree the expansion proposal to take effect from 1 September 2013 and authorise officers to undertake the formal statutory processes (these are outlined in section 6 of this report).

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Primary Schools' Development Plan
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost:£600,000 capital allocated from the Basic Need Programme 2011-13
 2. Ongoing costs: Non-Recurring Cost:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Basic Need Capital Grant
 4. Total current budget for this head: £9,769,662
 5. Source of funding: DfE Basic Need Capital Grant – 100% capital grant for 2011-13
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 4 staff from the ECS Department, together with 2 staff from other Departments, are involved in the consultation process to varying degrees
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: approx 50 staff hours in total
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement: The Education and Inspections Act 2006, The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007. The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009.
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Additional places will eventually expand Churchfields Primary School from 210 to 420 places. The pupils filling these places and their families will be the beneficiaries.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Cllr Nicholas Milner has responded in favour of the proposed permanent expansion of Churchfields Primary School.

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 The school has been a two forms of entry (a form of entry equates to 30 children) in the past. Because the school could not fill its 60 places it created problems with the school budget (school funding is pupil driven) which resulted in difficult decisions having to be taken e.g. mixed age classes. Given that the school was unable to attract 60 pupils at Reception, the Local Authority (LA) agreed to reduce the school to one form of entry (30 pupils at Reception).
- 3.2 The birth rate has since increased with the consequent need for additional primary school places. The LA is seeking to expand provision across a range of schools including Churchfields
- 3.3 In 2010 Churchfields agreed to accept a 'bulge year' (an increase of one form of entry at Reception), but the decision was made not to make the increase permanent at that time, as Governors wished to review the situation with the LA in spring 2012. The school has been subsequently full at two forms of entry for the past two years, with pupils drawn from close proximity to the school.
- 3.4 The LA's 2012 review of Bromley primary school places identified the need to increase the number of Reception places available to children at a number of schools across the Borough, one of them being Churchfields Primary. It is the LA's view that increased pupil numbers at Churchfields will be sustained for the foreseeable future. The LA is committed to financing building development at the school to help make it a successful two form of entry school.
- 3.5 The LA believes that the Proposal is the best practical way to provide additional school places of high quality for children within the area of the school.

Consultation

- 3.6 The Consultation ran from 11 June to 20 July 2012. A consultation letter about the proposal was distributed as a basis for consulting parents/carers, staff, school governors, Head Teachers/Principals, Chairmen of Governors, neighbouring Local Authorities, Council Members and other interested parties. The letter summarised the reasons for the Proposal, identified the issues for consideration and explained the arrangements for Consultation. The Consultation was publicised via the Council's website. A Consultation meeting for parents/carers was held on 12 July, attracting 10 parents/carers and 2 school governors. Ward Council Members have been made fully aware of the Proposal and, where received, their views have been summarised in the 'Ward Councillor Views' section of this Report.
- 3.7 The Consultation produced 8 responses. Hard copies are available to view in the Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception. While this is a low response, it can be concluded that there is no concerted opposition to the Proposal. The Proposal was generally well received at the Consultation meeting, which was fairly well attended.

Table 1 - Number of Responses

Agree	4
Disagree	2
Don't Know/Undecided	2
Total	8

Table 2 – Category of Respondents

Category	Agree	Disagree	Do Not Know/ Undecided	Total
Churchfields Parent/Carer	-	2	1	3
Prospective Parent of Churchfields Primary School	1	-	-	1
Other LAs ⁺	2	-	-	2
Council Members*	1	-	-	1
School Governors [∅]	-	-	1	1
Total	4	2	2	8

+	The London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark responded to the Consultation.
*	Cllr Nicholas Milner (Ward Cllr for Clock House Ward - this is the Ward in which Churchfields Primary School is located)
∅	School Governor - St Anthony's Catholic Primary School (this school is located in the same School Planning Area as Churchfields Primary School - Planning Area 1)

Key Issues Arising from Consultation

3.8 Key Issue 1: Small school ethos would be damaged by expansion.

Response – It is acknowledged that within a one-form entry (f/e) school teachers have a good knowledge of children. However, there are many examples in Bromley of larger schools where this is also the case. Bromley has a wide range of effective primary phase schools spanning 1 to 6 f/e. Expansion of the School would take place over time, as the additional pupils moved through the year groups from Reception to Year 6 (one class of 30 pupils is added at Reception every September). There are many examples of two f/e schools in the Borough that manage the greater number of pupils very effectively.

Key Issue 2: The School and grounds are not large enough to accommodate additional pupils.

Response – The School has been 2 f/e in the past, so the overall site area is sufficient for a school of 2 f/e. £600k has been allocated from the LA's budget to fund the necessary building and adaption works, should expansion be approved. This includes provision for a new Reception classroom, two new Year 1 classrooms and a Nursery building. The management and organisation of pupils on a day-to-day basis e.g. assembly and lunch-time arrangements, is a matter for the Governing Body and Head Teacher of the School and will be handled sensitively and in the best interests of the pupils and the School. There will be only a very minor impact on outdoor play space.

Key Issue 3: Disruption to pupils as a result of building works.

Response – Building works will be carefully managed to keep disruption to a minimum. Building work will be phased (to be completed by summer 2014) so that it is less intrusive for children and staff. All work is planned for holiday periods, except for spring 2014. There will be no need to use temporary buildings or decant children from the site. The Authority has a very successful track record of undertaking buildings developments on occupied school sites with minimal disruption to the pupils' education. Building work will be carried out in a sensitive fashion to ensure health and safety requirements are met fully. Health and safety and child protection will be of paramount importance and will be handled as such between the LA and the School.

Key Issue 4: Volatility of pupil projections in planning area 1 (the planning area in which the School is located) impacting adversely on other schools in the planning area i.e. projected increase in the number of children might not materialise.

Response - This continues to be a volatile area in pupil place planning terms. The numbers of 4 year olds in this area remains above that of the total admissions numbers for the schools. The analysis indicates a history of migration to schools in the neighbouring planning area 2 and a high percentage take up of primary places in two of the authorities which border this area, ie Croydon and Lewisham. This area is currently showing a projected shortfall of places of approximately two f/e. To meet the demand for additional places Churchfields Primary School accepted an additional 30 pupils for the 2010/11 and 2011/12 Reception admission rounds and Malcolm and Royston Primary Schools each accepted an additional 30 Reception pupils in 2011/12. The current shortfall of places could increase if fewer places are available out-of-borough and if parents are unable to secure places in Planning Area 2.

Key Issue 5: The School's standards are slipping, evidenced by the 2011 Ofsted inspection report. The focus should be on improving standards and not expansion.

Response – There is no reason why an expansion of the School should have a detrimental impact on the standards achieved by the pupils. The LA has a very successful track record in undertaking school organisational changes to ensure both an increase in school capacity and sustaining standards of education and overall performance. The Head Teacher, School Governors and LA want the School to become outstanding again and they are working very hard towards achieving this goal. At the Consultation meeting for parents/carers, both the School Governor representative and the Head Teacher assured the audience that expansion would not detract from the quality of teaching in the School. The LA is committed to supporting the School to ensure that expansion is achieved as smoothly as possible.

Key Issue 6: Expenditure on building work must not be allowed to cause cash-flow problems that disrupt the School's activities.

Response – The LA will be responsible for managing building work payments from money allocated from its and not the School's budget.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

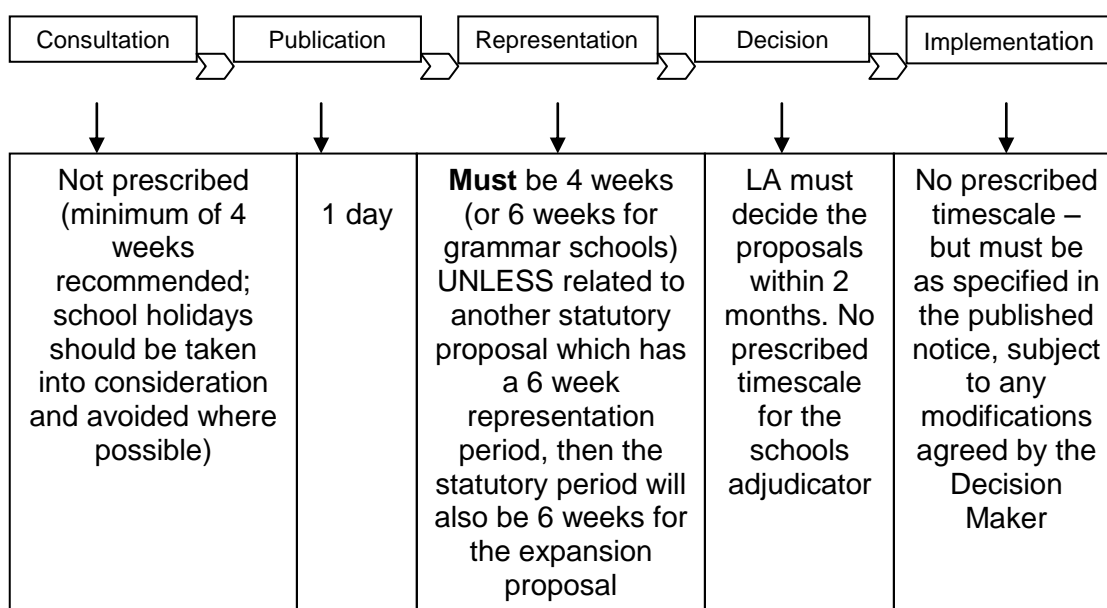
- 4.1 Bromley Council has an established policy for the review and strategic planning of school places and related school organisation. The need to ensure sufficient school places and efficiency of organisation is a priority within the Council's Strategy 'Building a Better Bromley' and contributes to the strategy to achieve the status of an Excellent Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Changes in pupil numbers within an individual school are reflected in the school's delegated budget share funded from the Dedicated Schools' Grant. Consultation with the Schools' Forum would take place before any changes to school funding were implemented.
- 5.2 The capital implications for the permanent expansion of places at Churchfields Primary School based on space planning and development of outline design and phasing options have been quantified as £600k, with the money being allocated from the DfE Basic Need Capital Grant 2011-13.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Any proposed permanent expansion of a school is subject to a formal statutory process. Proposed changes that are of a temporary nature do not constitute a school reorganisation that triggers the statutory process for consultation. However if at a later stage any temporary changes were to become permanent then the designated process would need to be complied with.
- 6.2 In considering the establishment of a new school provision, expanding existing provision or changing the nature of maintained schools the LA is required to publish Public Notices and undertake formal consultation. This consultation must include parents, teachers, professional associations, neighbouring LAs and other interested agencies. Outcomes from consultation are considered for a formal decision by the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder and the Executive of the Council.
- 6.3 There are 5 statutory stages for a statutory proposal for an excepted expansion:



7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no immediate implications for staffing arising from this report. Should the proposal for changes to school size and organisation be progressed, Churchfields Primary School will require support on an individual basis tailored to its specific staffing structure. Implications may include the grading for the Head Teacher as the Individual School Range may be affected, the number of teaching Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff required to facilitate the curriculum and support the infrastructure.

Non-Applicable Sections:	None
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Committee Report DCYP12025: Review of Primary Schools' Development Plan, Outcomes – 21/2/12 CYP PDS Committee 2. Committee Report DCYP12036: Basic Need Programme Update Report 3 – 20/3/12 CYP PDS Committee 3. Consultation Letter to Parents/Staff & Governors – 11/6/12 4. Circular Letter to Other Interested Parties – 11/6/12 5. Notes from Parent/Carer Consultation meeting held on 12/7/12 6. Consultation Responses (hard copies available to view in Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception)

The above background documents can be accessed via this link:

<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/b50004656/Supporting%20Documents%20for%20Item%206c%20Consul.pdf?T=9>