

Report No.  
ED12027

## London Borough of Bromley

### PART ONE - PUBLIC

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**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 Key

**Title:** **CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: PROPOSAL TO EXPAND RIVERSIDE SCHOOL**

**Contact Officer:** Mary Çava, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability  
Tel: 020 8461 7633 E-mail: mary.cava@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:** Assistant Director (Education)

**Ward:** Cray Valley West – Riverside, St Paul’s Cray Site  
Clock House – Riverside, Beckenham Site

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#### 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 expand Riverside School by one form of entry at the St Paul’s Cray site, admitting 8 additional children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to Year 7 each year 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 Riverside School;
- (iii) offer any comments on the above to the Education Portfolio Holder.

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

- (i) consider any comments arising from the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee;
- (ii) 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 5 of this report).

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £1.2M capital (2012/13) – funded 100% from DfE Basic Capital Need Grant as agreed at Executive 11/4/12.
  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: Basic Need Capital Grant
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## Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 5 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
  2. Call-in: Applicable
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 52 children and their parents/carers.
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: All responding Ward Councillors have stated that they support the Proposal.

### **Cllr John Ince (Cray Valley West)**

Whilst I have no problems with an increase in pupil numbers, per se, I do have reservations about the use of land within the Brooks Way Rec. for a vehicular access. Of course this would depend on the details in a planning officer's report as to where the access is intended, but it must be remembered that the park is designated Urban Open Space, so could be a problem.

### **Cllr Judith Ellis (Cray Valley West)**

Riverside is a valued member of the Cray Community and has always worked closely with residents to ensure minimal disruption either during building works or arrival and departures from the School. I am a governor at the School and have confidence that the leadership team has the capacity to make this expansion a success for the children who attend.

### **Cllr Harry Stranger (Cray Valley West)**

Riverside school does a brilliant job with Challenging youngsters as I have seen on my visits. I am confident the school management will fulfil their responsibilities regarding nearby neighbours and the additional children appropriately.

### **Cllr Nicholas Milner (Clock House)**

I support the proposed expansion of Riverside School.

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Background

- 3.1 The number of children now diagnosed with ASD is growing, and this Proposal will increase places in the London Borough of Bromley for secondary aged pupils with autism in a cost effective manner, which enables children to attend a local Bromley school which provides a high quality education.
- 3.2 Riverside School already caters for a large number of children with autism and has developed a considerable level of expertise in this field. If no action is taken, further places will have to be commissioned outside Bromley at higher cost and this could divert funds away from developing Bromley schools.
- 3.3 The Executive Working Group on Special Educational Needs has been instrumental in developing and supporting this Proposal and the LA has worked closely with Riverside School and its Governors to progress the Proposal.
- 3.4 Please see Report ACS12025 for more detail regarding the background for the Proposal (the electronic link to the Report is provided on the agenda).

#### Consultation

- 3.4 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, local residents, Head Teachers/Principals, Chairmen of Governors, Groups representing Special Educational Needs interests (e.g. Burgess Autistic Trust, Bromley MENCAP, Bromley Parent Voice), neighbouring Local Authorities, Council Members and other interested parties. The letter summarises the reasons for the Proposal, identifies the issues for consideration and explains the arrangements for Consultation. The Consultation was publicised via posters, the Council's website and a News Release. A Consultation meeting for parents/carers was held on 5 July, attracting 4 parents. The children of Riverside School were consulted via the School Council – the School Council came out in favour of expansion; specific points raised by will be addressed by the School. 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. Those that have responded are in support of the Proposal.
- 3.5 The Consultation produced 26 responses - hard copies are available to view in the Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception. Only one of the 26 people who responded was against the Proposal.

**Table 1 - Number of Responses**

Agree	21
Disagree	01
Don't Know/Undecided	04
Total	26

**Table 2 – Category of Respondents**

Category	Agree	Disagree	Do Not Know/ Undecided	Total
Riverside Parent/Carer:				
- St Paul's Cray Site	02	01	02	05
- Beckenham Site	05	-	-	05
Riverside School Council	01	-	-	01
Parents and Grandparents of Autistic Children not attending Riverside School	05	-	-	05
Riverside School:				
- Existing Staff	01	-	-	01
- Retired Staff	-	-	01	01
Local Resident	01	-	-	01
Bromley Parent Voice*	01	-	-	01
Bromley College of Further and Higher Education	01	-	-	01
LBB Council Members <sup>∅</sup>	04	-	-	04
Unclassified	-	-	01	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>26</b>

\* Bromley Parent Voice is an Independent Parent Group representing Bromley Parents/Carers of disabled children and children with special educational needs. The parent/carers membership of the Group stands at 253 as at Aug 2012.

<sup>∅</sup> Councillors: Nicholas Milner, Judi Ellis, John Ince and Harry Stranger

### Key Issues Arising from Consultation

- 3.6 **Key Issue 1:** No play area to be taken from Brooks Way Recreation Ground to facilitate the expansion of the School.

Response - Planning permission has already been obtained for a Performance Hall and a Multi-Games Area, both to be built within the existing footprint of the School. While the proposal is not dependent on any changes to the existing pedestrian access to the School, the School is considering the benefits of a vehicular access for the new pupils. This would involve taking part of the existing access route within the adjoining Brooks Way Recreation Ground and would require a formal planning application. However, this would not entail removing any play area from the Recreation Ground.

- Key Issue 2:** Loss of 'small school' environment/ethos – a calm, small school environment is better for ASD children.

Response – The School will continue to provide a calm environment and will retain the values of a small school environment. While ASD provision will be provided separately for much of the learning, ASD pupils will benefit from larger school facilities.

**Key Issue 3:** Infrastructure of the School cannot sustain the expansion – hall not big enough, lunch-time arrangements, loss of outdoor/social space.

Response – The new Performance Hall will be big enough to accommodate all pupils. It will also be big enough to accommodate parents/carers attending school activities/events. Recreational facilities will be provided by the new Multi-Games Area - opportunities will still exist to utilise outdoor space. Lunch-time arrangements will be carefully organised by the School.

**Key Issue 4:** Sixth-Form provision could be transferred to a College, thereby releasing space on the School site.

Response – The aim is for the School to provide all-through secondary phase provision from Years 7 to 13. The number of places for post-16 students will increase by 12. By 2018/19, the expansion of the School will be providing education for a total of 40 additional secondary-aged pupils (11-16 years old) and 12 Post-16 students (17-19 years old). Bromley College of Further and Higher Education has received £2m government funding to provide further education for 16 to 25 year-olds with complex needs – this work will be completed by Easter 2013. The School and Bromley College will work together to utilise this new facility to the benefit of this cohort of students.

**Key Issue 5:** What about the needs of existing Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) children?

Response – There is no reduction in the provision for PMLD children and their needs would continue to be catered for by Riverside School.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

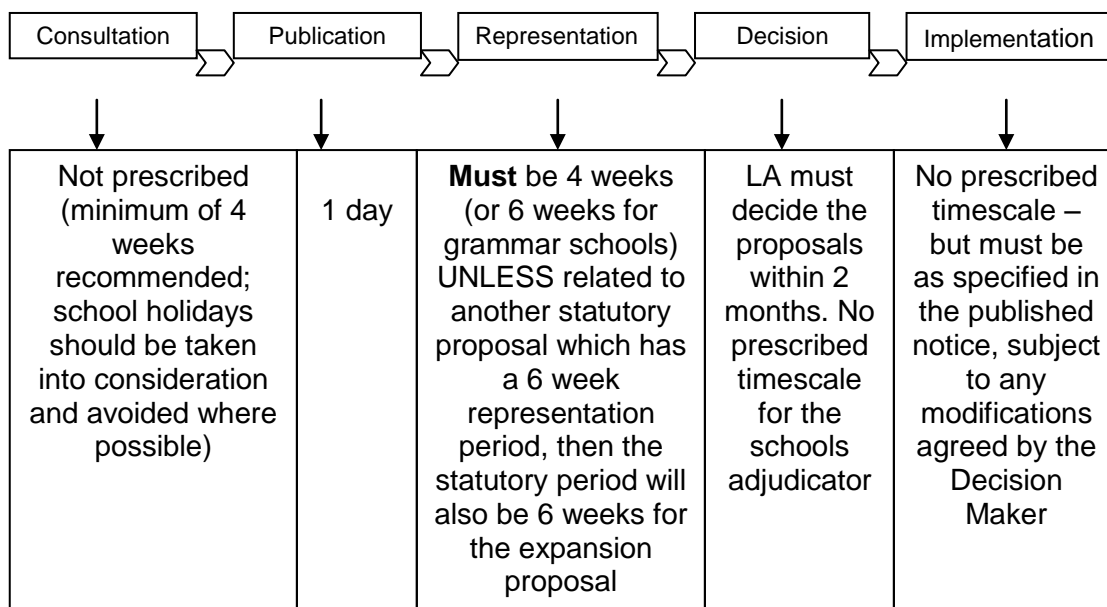
4.1 Bromley Council has an established policy for the review and strategic planning of school places and related school organisation. The need to ensure sufficient school places and efficiency of organisation is a priority within the Council's Strategy 'Building a Better Bromley' and contributes to the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

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 On the 11 April 2012 the Executive agreed capital funding of £1.2m for the Riverside project which will be met from the £9,769,662 DfE Basic Need Capital Grant allocations received in 2011-12 and 2012-13.
- 5.2 The costs of the placements are funded through Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the cost of transport through Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The cumulative savings to the DSG will be £3,052,000 and £462,378 to the RSG over a period of seven years from a £1.2m investment at Riverside. This will help to mitigate future growth pressures in these areas.
- 5.3 In 2012/13, whilst the construction is ongoing a room has been identified at Riverside Beckenham to take the first cohort of children. From 2013/14 these children plus the others that will follow will be taught in the new provision.
- 5.4 Please see Report ACS12025 for more detailed financial information (the link to the Report is provided at the end of this Report under 'Background Documents').

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As part of Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that schools in its area are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide education suitable for the different ages, abilities and aptitudes and Special Educational Needs of pupils of school age.
- 6.2 In accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, statutory consultation must be carried out and considered before an expansion of this size can be carried out.
- 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, Riverside 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.

<b>None Applicable Sections</b>	None
<b>Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Committee Report ACS 12025 – 11/4/12 Executive</li> <li>2. Committee Report DCYP12036 – 20/3/12 CYP PDS</li> <li>3. Consultation Letter to Parents/Staff &amp; Governors – 11/6/12</li> <li>4. Consultation Letter to Local Residents – 11/6/12</li> <li>5. Circular Letter to Other Interested Parties – 11/6/12</li> <li>6. Poster advertising the consultation</li> <li>7. News Release published 29/6/12</li> <li>8. Notes from Parent/Carer Consultation meeting held on 5/7/12</li> <li>9. School Council Response to Consultation</li> <li>10. Consultation Responses (hard copies available to view in Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception)</li> </ol>

The above background documents can be accessed via this link:

<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/b50004657/Supporting%20Documents%20for%20Item%206c%20Consu.pdf?T=9>