

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services

Date of Meeting:	15 th October 2012
Report of:	Lorraine Butcher
Subject/Title:	Proposed Expansion of Pebble Brook Primary, Wheelock Primary and Mobberley CE Primary
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Hilda Gaddum

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 As the Strategic Commissioner of School Places, Cheshire East Council has a statutory duty to commission sufficient school places for children resident in its area.
- 1.2 This Decision Paper requests approval to consult on the proposed expansion of
 - **Pebble Brook Primary**, to expand the school from 210 to 315 pupil places (from 1 form of entry to 1.5 forms of entry) with a proposed completion date of September 2013:
 - **Wheelock Primary**, to expand the school from 210 to 315 pupil places (from 1 form of entry to 1.5 forms of entry) with a proposed completion date of September 2013:
 - **Mobberley CE Primary** to expand the school from 140 to 210 pupil places (from an intake of 20 pupils to 30 pupils) and creating a 1 form of entry primary school) with a proposed completion date of September 2013.
- 1.3 As the Strategic Commissioner of School Places, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to review provision within its area and to establish future demands.
- 1.4 Pupil forecasts indicate a shortfall in the number of primary school places due to changing populations and increasing demand in some areas of the Borough resulting in a forecast of only 8 spaces across all year groups and all primary schools by 2017. Proposals are therefore being made for the Sandbach, Crewe and Knutsford areas of the Borough to expand existing accommodation to meet the increasing demand in these areas and to ensure a level of operational surplus; which is a level of spare capacity intended to accommodate reasonable journey times to school, some degree of parental choice, and flexibility to allow for mid-year entrants.

	Unused (Surplus) Places (January 2012 School Census Forecasts)									
	12/13		13/14		14/15		15/16		16/17	
Crewe	-18	0%	-172	-3%	-255	-5%	-316	-6%	-405	-8%
Knutsford	-5	0%	-57	-4%	-117	-8%	-164	-11%	-227	-16%
Sandbach	31	2%	-28	-1%	-68	-4%	-119	-6%	-151	-8%
All Primary Schools	1121	4%	752	3%	452	2%	208	1%	8	0%

- 1.5 In making this recommendation officers have given consideration to a number of issues including the number of pupils in each school's catchment area, the number of first preferences received for each school, the current size of the school together with the school sites and those suitable for expansion and the likely costs of extension. Suitable schools need to be central to the areas where the extra places are required. **Full details of the rationale for these proposals are included in the consultation documents presented with this report.**

Pebble Brook Primary, Crewe

- 1.6 Pebble Brook Primary School is a popular and successful school with a published admission number (PAN) of 30 pupil places and overall accommodation for 210 pupils across the 7 year groups. The Local Authority is proposing an increase in the school's net capacity, which indicates the number of pupils that can be accommodated in the school. The proposal, if agreed, will increase the school from 210 pupil places (1 form of entry) to 315 (1.5 forms of entry) with an intake each year of 45 pupils into the reception class.
- 1.7 For the past two years, the Local Authority and the school have agreed the admission of additional pupils above the published admission number to ensure that local children can access school places within a reasonable distance from their home address. If the Local Authority had not been able to admit additional pupils to Pebble Brook as their local school, the general shortage of places in the Crewe area would have resulted in parents of some children being offered places in schools at an unreasonable distance.
- 1.8 Due to the popularity of the school and increasing demand in this area, the number of preferences for the school has been steadily increasing. For the last 4 years applications have exceeded the 30 places available in the reception class. For 2011 the Local Authority, in agreement with the school, admitted 40 pupils to meet the demand from families resident in the school's catchment area; for 2012 45 pupils were admitted on the same basis.
- 1.9 Forecasts using January 2012 school census data indicate that across the Crewe Local Area Partnership there will be a shortfall of 416 pupil places by 2017 based on current intakes. For the 14 primary schools located in the Crewe town area (including Pebble Brook Primary), which currently provide 4936 pupil places increasing to 5185 due to changes agreed for implementation in September 2013, forecasts indicate a shortfall of 156 pupil

places by 2017. Although the Local Authority has already taken measures to alleviate the shortfall in school places in this area, further measures are necessary to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand due to population growth within the Crewe area and to ensure a level of operational surplus.

- 1.10 The Headteacher and Governors have confirmed their support for the proposal to expand the school to 1.5 form of entry to accommodate local children at a school within a reasonable distance, as far as possible.

Wheelock Primary School, Sandbach

- 1.11 Wheelock Primary School is a popular and successful school with a published admission number (PAN) of 30 pupil places and overall accommodation for 210 pupils across the 7 year groups. The Local Authority is proposing an increase in the school's current capacity of 210 pupils to provide 315 pupil places with a proposed implementation date of September 2013. This increase, if approved, will provide sufficient accommodation for an intake at the normal point of entry to the school (the reception class) of 45 pupils with the school operating in the longer term as a 1.5 form of entry primary school.
- 1.12 The number of children in the school's catchment area has increased steadily over recent years and for 2012 admissions there were 61 children resident in the area.
- 1.13 The total capacity across the 8 Sandbach primary schools (including Haslington) is currently 1915 pupil places. Forecasts indicate that there will be a shortfall of 151 pupil places in this area by 2017. Pupil forecasts for the Sandbach town area (excluding the 2 Haslington primary schools) indicate that there will be a significant shortfall of places across the 6 schools by 2017 with an overall shortfall of 11% (144 pupil places). The number of spare pupil places is forecast to fall to 0% in September 2013. This absence of any operational surplus from this time will impact on choice for local residents if additional accommodation is not provided for this area.
- 1.14 For admission in September 2012, the Local Authority received 212 (applications for the 6 Sandbach town primary schools. This exceeded the 185 reception class places available in the area. To accommodate these additional children, 2 of the 6 schools, which included Wheelock Primary, agreed admissions above their Published Admission Numbers to ensure that children were accommodated in schools within a reasonable distance from their home address. The general shortage of places in the Sandbach area for 2012 would have resulted in parents of some children being offered schools over 4 miles away, as the next nearest schools with places available.
- 1.15 The Headteacher and Governors have been consulted and fully support the proposed expansion of the school to accommodate the growing population and increasing demand for school places.

Mobberley CE Primary School, Knutsford.

- 1.16 Mobberley CE Primary is a popular and successful school resulting in the number of preferences for the school exceeding the 20 places available in the reception class for 3 of the last 4 years. For 2012 the school received 33 first preferences against a published admission number (PAN) of 20.
- 1.17 The distance to other nearby schools will seem unreasonable to local families. Many will qualify for transport assistance being over the statutory walking distance of 2 miles if unable to secure a place at their local school.
- 1.18 Pupil forecasts for the Knutsford LAP indicate that there will be a significant shortfall of places across a number of the schools reaching a forecast shortfall of 9% (215 places) by 2017. In order to ensure that there are sufficient places for families seeking places at their local schools, additional places are needed in this area from 2013 when the number of unused places is forecast to fall to only 6 places across all schools and all year groups.
- 1.19 Forecasts for Mobberley CE Primary indicate that from 2012 there will be insufficient places at the school with more children on roll than places available. This trend is forecast to continue reaching a shortfall of 60 pupil places, based on current admission patterns, by 2017.
- 1.20 The Headteacher and Governors have confirmed their support for the proposed expansion of the school to a 1 Form of Entry primary school (30 places per year group) in order that accommodation is suitable for existing pupils on roll and to accommodate the growing population and demand for places from local families now and in the future.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Portfolio Holder give permission to commence statutory consultation on 8 October 2012 on the proposed expansions of three schools:
 - **Pebble Brook Primary**, from the 210 school places (1FE) to 315 school places (1.5 FE) thus providing an additional 105 school places with effect from September 2013:
 - **Wheelock Primary**, from the 210 school places (1FE) to 315 school places (1.5FE) thus providing an additional 105 school places with effect from September 2013:
 - **Mobberley CE Primary** from the current Published Admission Number (20) providing 140 school places to a PAN of 30 (1FE) thus providing an additional 70 school places with effect from September 2013.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 In making this recommendation the authority has given consideration to a number of issues including the number of pupils in each school's catchment area, the number of first preferences received for each school, the current size of the school together with the school sites and those suitable for expansion and the likely costs of extension. Suitable schools also needed to be central to the areas where the extra places are required
- 3.2 Pebble Brook Primary School was established in 1988 following the amalgamation of Bedford Street Infants and Pebble Brook Junior School. Originally developed to accommodate a one and a half form entry primary school with 315 pupil places following a decline in the need for places in the area the school was reduced to a one form entry school with 210 school places and a Children's Centre was established on site. However the site remains sufficient to expand to accommodate 315 pupil places retaining adequate playground and playing field provision. It is envisaged that the proposed extension would require 3 additional classrooms,
- 3.3 Wheelock Primary is situated on the outskirts of Sandbach Town the school was originally developed to accommodate 5 classrooms and later extended to a one form entry primary school with 210 pupil places. However the site is sufficient to expand to accommodate 315 pupil places retaining adequate playground and playing field provision. It is envisaged that the proposed extension would require 4 additional classrooms,
- 3.4 Mobberley CE Primary is situated in the rural village of Mobberley on the outskirts of Knustford. The school was originally built in 1858 and consisted of 2 classrooms. Extensions and refurbishments have taken place over a number of years and following the closure of Ashley CE Primary School in 2004 the school was further developed and the accommodation now consists of 5 classrooms, 2 practical areas, hall, staffroom and office accommodation. It is envisaged that the proposed expansion would require 2 additional classrooms.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Pebble Brook Primary School is situated in Crewe South Ward. However, consultation would be undertaken with neighbouring wards:-

Crewe Central
Crewe East
Crewe West
Crewe North
Crewe South
Crewe St Barnabas

- 4.2 Wheelock Primary School is situated in Sandbach Ettiley Heath and Wheelock Ward. However consultation will be undertaken with neighbouring wards:-

Brereton Rural
Sandbach Elworth
Sandbach Town
Sandbach Ettiley Heath and Wheelock
Sandbach Heath and East
Haslington

- 4.3 Mobberley CE Primary is situated in Mobberley Ward. However consultation would be undertaken with neighbouring wards.

High Legh
Mobberley
Knutsford
Chelford
Wilmslow West & Chorley

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Pebble Brook Primary

Irene Fasey – Crewe Central
Peggy Martin - Crewe East
David Newton – Crewe East
Chris Thorley – Crewe East
Peter Nurse – Crewe West
Michelle Sherratt– Crewe West
Mo Grant – Crewe North
Dorothy Flude – Crewe South
Steven Hogben – Crewe South
Roy Cartlidge – Crewe St Barnabas

5.2 Wheelock Primary

John Wray – Brereton Rural
Gill Merry – Sandbach Elworth
Barry Moran – Sandbach Town
Gail Wait – Sandbach Ettiley Heath & East
Sam Corcoran – Sandbach Heath & East
David Marren – Haslington
John Hammond – Haslington.

5.3 Mobberley CE Primary

George Walton – Chelford
Steve Wilkinson – High Legh
Stewart Gardiner – Knutsford
Olivia Hunter – Knutsford

Peter Raynes - Knutsford
Jamie Macrae - Mobberley
Gary Barton – Wilmslow West and Chorley
Wesley Fitzgerald – Wilmslow West & Chorley

6.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)

6.1 All the proposed expansions are part of an approved block budget (grant) set aside for Basic Need. The block budget was formally approved at Council on 23 February 2012.

6.2 The building work would be funded from the Council's 2012/2013 Capital Programme for Basic Needs. The capital investments required are estimated at:

- Pebble Brook Primary £1.105,000
- Wheelock Primary £1,765,758
- Mobberley CE Primary £796,000

6.3 Although the Local Authority is proposing an expansion to Mobberley CE Primary this would be subject to the acquisition of land adjacent to the school, agreed costs would be in addition to the estimated £796,000 quoted above.

7.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

7.1 Statutory consultation is required for this proposal as the changes, if approved, will fall within the category of a significant enlargement. The additional accommodation proposed for Pebble Brook Primary, Wheelock Primary and Mobberley CE Primary School would increase the capacity by more than 30 pupils and by more than 25%.

7.2 This would ensure that the Local Authority is compliant with statutory requirements as set out in The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 21 January 2008 and The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2009 which came into force on 1 September 2009).

7.3 The 5 statutory stages to expanding a school are:-

1. Consultation
2. Publication
3. Representation
4. Decision
5. Implementation.

Proposed timescales for the statutory process are:

15 October 2012	Portfolio Holder's Decision to formally consult on expansion
22 October 2012	5 day call in period
22 October 2012 to 23 November 2012	Consultation Period
3 December 2012	Portfolio Holder's Decision on Public Notices
10 December 2012	5 day call in period
10 December 2012 to 4 January 2013	Representation Period (4 weeks statutory)
4 February 2013	Cabinet decision
11 February	5 day call in period
11 February 2013	Implementation
September 2013	Proposed Completion date

8.0 Risk Management

- 8.1 Disruption to pupils, staff and the community must be kept a minimum during the consultation period, and any subsequent building programme, to ensure that standards continue to improve
- 8.2 The proposed expansions were identified to address a Basic Need in the individual areas. This is in order to ensure that the Authority meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in this area. In order to complete these scheme by September 2013 the construction phase would need to commence by late February 2013. There is therefore a key risk resulting from the very tight timetable leading up to this.
- 8.3 The Authority cannot enter into a contract to provide the further accommodation until additional land to be used for hard-standing area has been acquired, and approval to the building scheme, including the proposed use of the additional land for hard-standing area, has been approved by the Planning Authority. If additional land cannot be acquired, then the Authority will have to investigate alternative provision in the Knutsford area.
- 8.4 If the land-owner is not willing to sell, the only other option on the Mobberley site would be to consider converting the existing playing field to form a synthetic pitch that could be used by pupils at break-times etc. in addition to meeting the school sporting requirements. This would increase the capital cost of the project and also cause the school some organisational difficulties of having to supervise pupils across a farm track which is used regularly. Sport England have been consulted on this and offered the following comments "*The Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) would need to meet the following exception to the playing field policy replicated in paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework*":
- 8.5 Implementation of these proposals will be subject to the necessary planning permissions.

9.0 Access to Information

Attached :

Draft Consultation Documents for Pebble Brook, Wheelock, Mobberley CE
Draft consultation Response Forms for Pebble Brook, Wheelock, Mobberley CE
Equality Impact Assessments for Pebble Brook, Wheelock, Mobberley CE

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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