

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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**Date of Meeting:** 2 December 2013  
**Report of:** Tony Crane, Director of Children's Services  
**Subject/Title:** Proposed Expansion of Offley Primary School ,  
Sandbach and Elworth Church of England Primary  
School, Sandbach  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Rachel Bailey

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### 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 in accordance with Section 14 of the Education Act 1996.
- 1.2 The latest pupil forecasts indicate a shortfall in capacity in the Sandbach area of 258 pupil places by 2018 which the Local Authority is seeking to address by expanding existing schools. This forecast includes Haslington. For the 6 schools in Sandbach, the forecasts indicate a shortfall of 227 pupil places for the same period. These forecasts take into account the potential pupil yield from 2 new housing developments in Sandbach calculated at yielding 61 primary aged pupils by 2018. Detail is provided later in this report and attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 This decision paper sets out two expansion proposals for Sandbach in response to this anticipated shortfall:
  - i. **Offley Primary School** from 315 (1.5 forms of entry/FE) to 420 pupil places (2FE) for implementation from September 2015.
  - ii. **Elworth CE Primary School** from 280 to 315 pupil places providing an additional 35 pupil places for implementation from September 2015
- 1.4 Statutory consultation procedures are required for the proposed expansion of Offley Primary as this proposal, if approved, would fall within the category of a significant enlargement by increasing the school by more than 30 pupil places and by more than 25%.
- 1.5 The proposal for Elworth CE Primary being less than 25% growth does not require statutory consultation. Service approval was received on 7 November 2013 to implement procedures for the expansion of the school from 280 to 315 pupil places for September 2015, which includes obtaining the necessary funding and planning approvals. Cabinet approval will be required as part of the internal financial approval process.

- 1.6 Informal consultation has been undertaken with headteachers of the primary schools in this planning area. During the formal consultation process undertaken regarding the expansion of Wheelock Primary from 210 to 315 places and one since September 2013 several meetings with primary headteachers were held. :-
- **30 October 2012** – Presentation of primary pupil forecasts for the Sandbach area, together with proposed housing developments and potential pupil yields. **(Appendix 2.1)**
  - **9 November 2012** – Further discussion about pupil forecasts and solutions for the area, including Elworth CE and Offley. **(Appendix 2.2)**
  - **14 January 2013** – Outcomes of consultation on Wheelock proposal shared. Long term strategy discussed. Data presented supported further school expansions. **(Appendix 2.3)**
  - **25 September 2013** – Review and agree options involving Offley Primary expansion to 2FE and Elworth CE to 1.5 FE providing a combined total of a further 140 places. **(Appendix 2.4)**

1.7 The rationale for change in Sandbach is set out in the Offley consultation document, attached as **Appendix 3** to this report.

1.8 At the meeting held on 25 September it was agreed that the proposed expansions of the two schools should be progressed. The proposals also have the full support of the headteachers and governing bodies of these two schools. **(Appendix 4)**

## **2.0 Decision Requested**

- Approval to commence statutory consultation on the proposed expansion of Offley Primary School from 315 (1.5 forms of entry/FE) to 420 pupil places (2FE) for implementation from September 2015;
- Acknowledgement of the need to expand Elworth CE Primary School from 280 to 315 pupil places providing an additional 35 pupil places for implementation from September 2015, subject to the necessary funding and planning approvals.

## **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 There are 8 primary schools located in the Sandbach Planning Area, with 6 of these located in and around the town centre and 2 located in the nearby village of Haslington. The combined capacity is 1915 school places in all 8 primary schools and 1295 in the 6 Sandbach town primary schools.

3.2 The latest forecasts (October 2012) shown in the table below indicate a 258 shortfall in the primary school places in the Sandbach Planning Area by 2018 and for the 6 schools located in Sandbach itself, these forecasts indicate a shortfall of 227 places for the same period.

<b>Sandbach Planning Area</b> (8 primary schools)	<b>13/14</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
Unused places	4	-65	-116	-166	-210	-258
% unused places	0%	-3%	-6%	-9%	-11%	-13%
<b>Sandbach</b> (6 primary schools)	<b>13/14</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
Unused places	-23	-82	-117	-152	-185	-227
% unused places	-2%	-6%	-9%	-12%	-14%	-18%

- 3.3 In response to previous forecasts a review of provision was undertaken, resulting in a proposal to increase the capacity at Wheelock Primary from 210 to 315 pupil places with implementation from September 2014. This proposal received final approval at the meeting of the School Organisation Sub Committee held on 26 April 2013. Temporary accommodation has been utilised to facilitate the admission of 45 pupils into the reception class for 2012 and 2013.
- 3.4 The permanent additional accommodation at Wheelock Primary school will increase the overall combined capacity for this planning area to 2020 pupil places, which includes 1400 pupil places for the 6 town schools. Taking into account the 6 primary schools, this additional accommodation when phased in at the normal point of entry to the school would leave a remaining shortfall of 122 pupil places by 2019, as set out in the table below.

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Shortfall in places</b>	<b>Wheelock expansion cumulative impact</b>	<b>Additional places still needed</b>
<b>13/14</b>	<b>23</b>	15	<b>8</b>
<b>14/15</b>	<b>82</b>	30	<b>52</b>
<b>15/16</b>	<b>117</b>	45	<b>72</b>
<b>16/17</b>	<b>152</b>	60	<b>92</b>
<b>17/18</b>	<b>185</b>	75	<b>110</b>
<b>18/19</b>	<b>227</b>	90	<b>137</b>
<b>19/20</b>	<b>227</b>	105	<b>122</b>

- 3.5 In addition to the pupil forecasts, consideration has been given to the possibility of additional pupils in the area in future years due to new housing. For the purpose of this analysis, four developments have been considered which together could yield 124 primary aged pupils on completion. These developments include 3 which have already commenced and one development that has received planning approval and is expected to commence during 2013-2014. **(Appendix 1)**.
- 3.6 When assessing the potential impact of new housing development, phasing is applied to determine an estimate of the number of additional pupils to the area each year based on an anticipated 40 new dwellings per year per developer.

The anticipated impact of the two additional developments (Hind Heath Road and Foden's Test Track) on current forecasts is set out in the table below:

Academic Year	Forecast Shortfall in Places	Cumulative Pupil Yield from New Housing	Additional Places Needed	
			Before Wheelock Expansion	After Wheelock Expansion
13/14	23		23	8
14/15	82	14	96	66
15/16	117	28	145	100
16/17	152	40	192	132
17/18	185	48	233	158
18/19	227	56	283	193
19/20	227	63	290	185

- 3.7 In order to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for children resident in its area, it is proposed that a further 140 pupil places should be provided in Sandbach, mainly phased in from September 2015 through admission to the reception class at the normal point of entry to the school. The overall increase including Wheelock Primary School would be 245 additional pupil places by 2021.
- 3.8 The positive impact of expanding Offley Primary by 105 pupil places, Elworth CE Primary by 35 pupil places and including the additional 105 pupil places at Wheelock Primary School is set out in **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 3.9 The additional 35 pupil places proposed at Elworth CE Primary are in relation to the pupil numbers (para. 3.5) generated by the housing developments only. It should also be noted that this proposal is presented as the first part of a phased expansion, the first phase being the expansion of the school to 1.5 forms of entry (FE) and the second phase at a future date to be determined being expansion to 2 FE. In so doing, this provides some security should further housing developments not commence in the shorter term. Further analysis will be necessary to consider the timing of phase 2 of this expansion.
- 3.10 Further analysis will also be necessary to consider the remaining demographic shortfall in capacity forecast for 2021 taking into account revised annual forecasts and increased school capacity, where relevant.

#### 4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Elworth CE Primary School is located in Sandbach Elworth Ward. Offley Primary is located in the Sandbach Town Ward. However, if approved, consultation will be undertaken with neighbouring wards:

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

Sandbach Town  
Haslington

## 5.0 Local Ward Members

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

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

- 6.1 The proposed expansion of **Offley Primary School** to increase the school's capacity to 420 pupil places and 2 forms of entry (FE) is being funded under the Government's Targeted Basic Need Programme. A successful bid has already secured £922k which will be ring fenced against the proposed expansion of Offley Primary School. Should the expansion not be approved the funding will have to be returned to the Funding Agency.
- 6.2 A feasibility study for Offley Primary School has been commissioned to identify more accurately the costs of implementation and this should be received during November. This detail will be included within the outline business which will be submitted for consideration and approval through the TEG/EMB process.
- 6.3 The proposed expansion of **Elworth CE Primary School** to increase the school's capacity to 315 pupil places and 1.5 forms of entry (FE) is being funded through Section 106 Developer Contributions.
- 6.4 A feasibility study for Elworth CE Primary School was commissioned approximately 18 months ago, at the outset of the housing proposals. The costing of this will therefore need updating. However, using this as a basis, phase 1 of this scheme is expected to be in the region of £712k.
- 6.5 Section 106 Developer contributions are paid at varying trigger points to the authority, these trigger points differ between the individual Section 106 agreements.
- 6.6 Using the same phasing principle as paragraph 3.6, it is anticipated that the funding for the Elworth CE scheme will be as follows:

	£'000
Total Developer contributions anticipated from all four sites over the period 2013 to 2022	1,254
Developer contributions received to date	174
Developer contributions anticipated before works commence	60

(April 2015)	
Developer contributions expected whilst work in progress (August 2015)	123
<b>Funding Received prior to completion</b>	<b>357</b>
Funding to be supported from a CEC source whilst awaiting Developer contributions - anticipated by 2018	355
<b>Total Funding required</b>	<b>712</b>

Notes:

- The total income anticipated includes an outline planning application and therefore the actual level of contributions may vary.
- The figures quoted in table 6.6 assume that all of the proposed development is completed.
- Not all Section 106 contributions will be received if the developments are not completed.

Further detail of the costs and funding profile/source for the Elworth CE Primary School Scheme will be included in the outline business case which will be submitted for consideration and approval through the TEG/EMB process.

- 6.7 All Capital projects greater than £250k are subject to Cheshire East Council's Capital Programme approval and monitoring process.
- 6.8 In respect of revenue implications, based on the current maximum level of pupils to the proposed maximum level of pupils, the additional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) each school would attract would be £428,000 for Offley Primary and £143,000 for Elworth CE. This includes an element for the LA support of the schools. The additional DSG income is only on the assumption that all new pupils are new to the LA, i.e. have not been included in the DSG allocation previously.
- 6.9 The delegated funding schools receive in any financial year, is based on the pupils in the school in October of the previous financial year. For schools admitting additional pupils from a September intake, this will impact in the April of the following financial year. Where there is a significant number of additional pupils at a September intake, the school would require additional financial support in the financial year the pupils are admitted.
- 6.10 The amounts of DSG are based on the 2013-14 formula and a change from current full capacity to proposed full capacity. There will be changes to this formula in 2014-15 (figures not yet available) and the Schools Finance team have been advised that the DfE are planning the introduction of a National Funding Formula from April 2015.

## **7.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

- 7.1 Statutory consultation would be required for the proposed expansion of Offley Primary School as the changes, if approved, would increase the capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils and by more than 25%. Statutory consultation would not be required to expand Elworth CE Primary School from its current

capacity of 280 to 315 pupil places as the growth of the school would not be in the category of a significant enlargement being below 25%.

7.2 The regulations that apply are 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:

2 December 2013	Portfolio Holder's Decision to formally consult on expansion
10 December 2013 to 21 January 2014	Consultation Period
17 March 2014	Portfolio Holder's Decision on Public Notices
3 April 2014 to 30 April 2014	Representation Period ( 4 weeks statutory)
June (date to be confirmed)	Cabinet decision
June 2014	Implementation
September 2015	Proposed Completion date

## 8.0 Risk Management

8.1 Forecasts indicate additional capacity may still be needed above the proposed 145 additional pupil places and taking into account the 105 pupil places already agreed for Wheelock Primary School. As there is an element of risk in forecasting future demand, it is considered appropriate that further analysis is undertaken to take into account the actual impact of new housing in the area together with revised forecasts for this planning area to ensure that any risk to existing provision is assessed regularly and informs school organisation proposals.

8.2 These proposed expansions are intended to address increasing demand in the area, including new housing developments. .

8.3 Informal consultation with the Sandbach Schools partnership has been undertaken to take into account the views of headteachers before requesting permission to undertake formal statutory consultation.

- 8.4 Implementation of both proposals will be subject to the necessary planning permissions.
- 8.5 3 of the 4 Section 106 agreements relating to the Elworth CE Primary School scheme are phased payments. The payments are expected over a period of time triggered by points which are linked to progress of the developments. It cannot be guaranteed that the developments will complete and therefore not all funding may be received.
- 8.6 A phased approach has been proposed in relation to Elworth CE Primary School to mitigate the level of risk associated with the Section 106 Developer contributions.
- 8.7 An Equality Impact Assessment is attached for the proposed significant enlargement of Offley Primary School (**Appendix 5**)

**9.0 Access to Information**

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