

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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| Date of Meeting: | 27 January 2014 |
| Report of: | Tony Crane, Director of Children's Services |
| Subject/Title: | Proposed Expansion of Mobberley CE Primary, Knutsford |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Rachel Bailey |

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 Knutsford area of 166 pupil places by 2018, which the Local Authority is seeking to address by expanding existing schools. Detail is provided later in this report and attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 This decision paper sets out an expansion proposal, as set out below, for Knutsford in response to this anticipated shortfall:
 - **Mobberley CE Primary** from 140 to 210 pupil places providing an additional 70 pupil places for implementation from **September 2014**.
- 1.4 The proposed expansion of Mobberley CE Primary is conditional on the acquisition of additional land and the necessary planning permissions.
- 1.5 Statutory consultation procedures would be required for the proposed expansion as the 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%.
- 1.6 Informal consultation meetings with headteachers of the primary schools in this planning area were held on 31 October 2012, 20 December 2012, 10 May 2013 and 8 October 2013.

2.0 Decision Requested

That approval is given to commence statutory consultation on the proposed expansion of

- Mobberley CE Primary School from 140 to 210 pupil places for implementation from September 2014.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The rationale for change is set out in the consultation document attached as **Appendix 2** to this report.
- 3.2 The proposal has the full support of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school (**Appendix 3**).
- 3.3 There are 7 primary schools located in the Knutsford Planning Area, with 4 of these located in and around the town centre (Bexton, Egerton, St Vincent's Catholic and Manor Park primary schools) and 3 located in the nearby villages of Mobberley, High Legh and Little Bollington. The combined capacity across all 7 schools is 1442 school places.
- 3.4 Based on the October 2012 School Census, pupil forecasts for the Knutsford Planning Area indicate that there will be a significant shortfall of places across the 7 schools of 166 places by 2018. This indicated shortfall excludes any level of operational surplus, which is the 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:

| Knutsford Planning Area | Number on Roll Oct'12 | Forecasts | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 |
| 1442 pupil places | 1373 | 1422 | 1454 | 1498 | 1531 | 1572 | 1608 |
| Forecast Shortfall | | 20 | -12 | -56 | -89 | -130 | -166 |
| % Spare Places | | 1% | -1% | -4% | -6% | -9% | -11% |

- 3.5 In order to ensure that there are sufficient places for families seeking places at local schools, additional places are needed in this area from 2014 when there is forecast to be insufficient pupil places to meet anticipated demand.
- 3.6 This proposal is one of two possible expansions proposed for the Knutsford area which, if approved, would provide a total of 175 additional pupil places. The additional accommodation planned for Mobberley CE of 70 pupil places would be mainly phased in at the normal point of entry to the school, which is the reception class. On this basis, the school would be operating as a 1 form of entry primary school (210 places) with 30 pupil places per year group by 2021. This would increase capacity for this planning area to 1512 pupil places which; when phased in at the normal point of entry, would still require an additional 96 places by the same period based on current forecasts. Consultation on a separate proposal to provide an additional 105 pupil places in Manor Park Primary and Nursery to meet this shortfall will be undertaken between 14 January and 11 February 2014. The positive impact of these proposals is set out in the following table:

| Academic Year | Unused Places/ Shortfall in Places | Expansion of Mobberley CE - cumulative impact | Additional places still required | Expansion of Manor Park - cumulative impact | Unused Places/ Shortfall in Places |
|---------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| 13/14 | 20 | | | | |
| 14/15 | 12 | 10 | 2 | | |
| 15/16 | 56 | 20 | 36 | 15 | 21 |
| 16/17 | 89 | 30 | 59 | 30 | 29 |
| 17/18 | 130 | 40 | 90 | 45 | 45 |
| 18/19 | 166 | 50 | 116 | 60 | 56 |
| 19/20 | 166 | 60 | 106 | 75 | 31 |
| 20/21 | 166 | 70 | 96 | 90 | 6 |
| 21/22 | 166 | 70 | 96 | 105 | 9 |

October 2012 School Census data provide forecasts up to 2018/19 therefore the forecast figure of -166 has been assumed for subsequent years.

4.0 Background Information

- 4.1 In response to previous pupil forecasts, a review of provision was undertaken resulting in a proposal to increase the capacity at Mobberley CE Primary School from 140 to 210 pupil places for implementation from September 2013. This proposal was subject to the acquisition of land adjacent to the school to compensate for the loss of playground.
- 4.2 Consultation on the proposal to expand Mobberley CE was undertaken between 22 October 2012 to 23 November 2012 and in light of the responses received permission was given to progress to the next stage, which involved the publication of a statutory notice followed by a 4 week representation period from 10 January 2013 to 7 February 2013. During the representation period negotiations on the acquisition of the adjacent land were ended and the conditional proposal, which was to have been considered by the School Organisation Sub Committee on 21 March 2013, was withdrawn on 13 March 2013.
- 4.3 The expansion of Mobberley CE has nevertheless remained a priority for the Local Authority, Headteacher and Governing Body of the school and local families. Officers have therefore continued to work with the school and governors to investigate alternative solutions.
- 4.4 The proposed expansion of Mobberley CE. Primary School from 140 to 210 pupil places would require additional classrooms together with associated storage, circulation and cloak areas. Due to the restricted nature of the school's existing site, additional land is required to facilitate this. The acquisition of the adjacent Mode Cottage has therefore been investigated for this purpose as this would provide a site of sufficient size to facilitate this expansion.
- 4.5 At the Local Authority's Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting held on 12 September 2013 a report detailing 4 possible alternative solutions was

presented. Option 1, which included the purchase of Mode Cottage and presented as the preferred solution, was approved as this presented a more timely solution and allowed for consideration of future demand and long term strategy for this area if new housing is approved. Option 1 is set out below:

“Provision of a 2 classroom temporary building inclusive of pupil toilets, accessible wc and additional hard-standing play area in the grounds of Mode Cottage”

- 4.6 Consideration is to be given to a request for permission to proceed with the purchase of Mode Cottage at the meeting of the Portfolio Holder for Finance on 23 January 2014. The outcome of this meeting will be presented orally at the meeting.
- 4.7 An increase in the capacity of Mobberley CE Primary is necessary to meet the growing demand in the village. It is considered that this proposed increase; together with the additional proposal to expand Manor Park School and Nursery, will provide sufficient school places to meet the demographic basic need forecast for the Knutsford planning area based on October 2012 School Census forecasts.
- 4.8 As aforementioned, the rationale for change is set out in the consultation document attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

5.0 Wards Affected

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

High Legh
Knutsford
Chelford
Wilmslow West & Chorley

6.0 Local Ward Members

Jamie Macrae - Mobberley
Steve Wilkinson – High Legh
Stewart Gardiner – Knutsford
Olivia Hunter – Knutsford
Peter Raynes - Knutsford
George Walton – Chelford
Gary Barton – Wilmslow West and Chorley
Wesley Fitzgerald – Wilmslow West & Chorley

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

- 7.1 The total approved Capital budget for the Mobberley CE Primary School Scheme was originally allocated to the project from the 2012-13 Children and Families Capital Programme. If approved, the purchase cost of Mode Cottage

will be met from this existing approved budget. Further budget required to complete the capital scheme over and above this budget will be funded by Basic Need Grant funding, approval for which will be sought through the Council's Financial Approval Process in due course.

- 7.2 All Capital projects greater than £250,000 are subject to Cheshire East Council's Capital Programme approval and monitoring process
- 7.3 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) income received by Cheshire East will only increase if any additional pupils are new to the LA, i.e. have not been included in the DSG allocation previously.
- 7.4 The DSG delegated to individual schools is based on the funding formula used in Cheshire East, and currently over 80% of that funding formula is pupil led, i.e. based on the number of pupils on roll at the October Census date. This means that the number of pupils on roll in October will inform the funding formula for the following financial year. For schools admitting additional pupils from a September intake, this will therefore be reflected in the schools budget from the following April. Where there are a significant number of additional pupils at a September intake and the school requires additional financial support prior to the new financial year, the school can apply to the Local Authority's Growth Fund.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 Statutory consultation would be required for the proposed expansion Mobberley CE Primary as the change, if approved, would increase the capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils and by more than 25%. Although statutory procedures have already been undertaken previously in respect of Mobberley CE, the proposal was withdrawn and consequently further consultation and representation procedures need to be undertaken.
- 8.2 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).
- 8.3 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:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 27 January 2014 | Portfolio Holder's Decision to formally consult on expansions |
| 4 February 2014 till 11 March 2014 | Consultation Period |
| 14 April 2014 | Portfolio Holder's Decision on Public Notices |
| 30 April 2014 till 28 May 2014 | Representation Period (4 weeks statutory) |
| 8 July 2014 TBC | Cabinet decision (School Organisation Sub Committee if objections are received.) |
| September 2014 | Proposed implementation |

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Disruption to pupils, staff and the community must be kept to a minimum during the consultation period, and any subsequent building programme, to ensure that standards continue to improve
- 9.2 The proposed expansion was identified to address a Basic Need in the area. This is in order to ensure that the Authority meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in this area.
- 9.3 The Local Authority cannot enter into a contract to provide the further accommodation until there is a site of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed expansion. The purchase of Mode Cottage therefore represents a risk to the delivery of this proposal and the proposed timescales as set out in paragraph 8.3 above, which includes a planned implementation date of September 2014.
- 9.4 In addition, the planning application will need to be submitted and the design will need to be developed "at risk", i.e. in advance of approval to proceed following the statutory consultation process. If the proposal is not subsequently approved and the scheme cannot proceed, the abortive costs would have to be found from revenue.
- 9.5 Implementation of the proposal will be subject to the necessary planning permissions.
- 9.6 Equality Impact Assessment is attached. **(Appendix 4)**

10.0 Access to Information

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