

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 9TH JULY 2009

EXECUTIVE – 20TH JULY 2009

Report by the Director of Children's Services on the proposals to provide additional
Primary School Places

SUMMARY

Background

Previous reports to Committee have identified the need to provide additional temporary places in primary school as a result of increased demand. This report recommends investment in schemes at a number of schools in order to provide permanent places.

Policy

The Council has a duty to ensure it provides sufficient places in primary schools to meet demand.

Issues / Proposals

The report proposes funding for schemes to add permanent places at Hotham, SW15 (Thamesfield) St Michael's, SW18 (East Putney) and Beatrix Potter, SW18 (Wandsworth Common) schools and to provide an additional classroom at Brandlehow School, SW15 (Thamesfield). It also proposes further development of the scheme to add places at Belleville School, SW11 (Northcote) subject to the necessary finance becoming available.

Director of Finance Comments

The Council has received £12.395m from the Primary Capital Programme and Targeted Grant Funding. Proposals in this report will require capital budget variations totalling £10.911m. Approval of any further expansion schemes would be subject to the necessary finance being identified.

Supporting Information: N/A

Conclusion

The approval of building schemes to provide permanent places in primary schools will help the Council to meet the rising demand for places.

GLOSSARY

BESD	Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
GOL	Government Office for London
MOL	Metropolitan Open Land
PCP	Primary Capital Programme
PSfC	Primary Strategy for Change

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Children and Young People's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to support the recommendations in this report as set out in paragraph 3 below.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or additional recommendations on the report, these will be submitted to the Executive for consideration.
3. The Executive is recommended to approve: -
 - (a) a capital budget variation of £10.587m to develop schemes at St Michael's, Hotham and Beatrix Potter schools and add a new classroom at Brandlehow School;
 - (b) a capital budget variation of £324,000 to develop a scheme for expanding Belleville School; and
 - (c) the publication of notices to expand the four schools in paragraph 39(a).

INTRODUCTION

4. The Special Executive of 6th April 2009 received a report (Paper No. 09-330) which set out the need for additional Primary school places as a result of the rising birth rate within the Borough. The Executive approved the proposals in the paper to add 135 extra temporary primary school places for September 2009. The Executive also agreed to receive a further report on the longer term solutions, including the results of feasibility studies being undertaken on West Hill School, SW18 (Southfields), Granard School, SW15 (West Putney), Alderbrook School, SW12 (Balham), Beatrix Potter School, SW18 (Wandsworth Common) and following discussions with the school governors, Belleville School, SW11 (Northcote).
5. In addition, the Executive of 2nd February 2009 (Paper No. 09-107) agreed that planning permission should be sought for schemes to expand St Michael's School, SW18 (East Putney) and Hotham School, SW15 (Thamesfield).
6. Paper No. 09-330 also referred to the fact that Brandlehow School, SW15 (Thamesfield) has taken additional 15 pupils into its reception class for the last three years. In order to continue to do that, the school needs to replace a temporary classroom with more appropriate permanent accommodation. A feasibility study to undertake that work has also been completed.
7. A brief description of each of these schemes and the current estimated cost is set out below:-

Alderbrook – Expansion from 1 FE to 2 FE

8. Alderbrook Primary School is a three-storey board school with one hall only on the ground floor. Although the total floor area of the school is 2,905m², which suggests that it would be possible to increase the size of the school to 2FE the feasibility study has demonstrated that due to inadequate circulation space and minimal playground

space, otherwise possible solutions fail either because the school would have to be re-located during construction or there would be no playground space available during construction. Budget estimates suggest that the cost of these solutions would be £6.50m. It is not considered either practical or particularly good value for money to expand Alderbrook Primary School to 2FE.

Beatrix Potter – Expansion from 1 FE to 2FE

9. Beatrix Potter Primary School is located on Metropolitan Open Land. The feasibility study investigated four options for providing the accommodation in different locations on the site, in both single and double storeys. One of these options has been developed following discussions with the planners. The estimate for this option is £1.97m.
10. Although the location of the school on Metropolitan Open Land makes the expansion of Beatrix Potter to 2FE a potentially sensitive planning issue, it appears to represent good value for money.

Belleville – Expansion from 3FE to 4FE

11. There are four buildings on the Belleville Primary School site; the nursery, the art room the schoolkeeper's house and the main building. The feasibility study demonstrates that it would be possible to extend the main building (3 storey extension) onto the car park area and into the area occupied by the schoolkeeper's house, which would be demolished, without loss of playground and for a cost of £6.72m. If the existing nursery is demolished and the accommodation incorporated into the new build additional playground space could be obtained. Discussions have taken place with the school regarding the provision of playground facilities given the proposed increase of 210 pupils. The school would implement a staggered timetable to maximise the space for all the pupils. While the project is relatively expensive, this is a popular school in an area of high demand.

Brandlehow – Replacement of temporary classroom

12. Brandlehow Primary School is a Grade 2 listed building. The building has already been extended by one classroom and by careful design and consultation with English Heritage it should be possible to extend the building again to provide permanent accommodation to replace the existing temporary classroom. The Feasibility Study indicates that this can be done at a cost of approximately £313,000.

Granard – Expansion from 1½ FE to 2FE

13. Granard Primary School was originally built as a 2FE school and currently operates as a 1½ FE school with children's centre and swimming pool. It would be possible to expand Granard to 2FE on a temporary basis with the addition of an extra classroom at minimum cost. However if the intention is to bring the school up to modern standards the inaccessibility of the school and its poor thermal performance would need to be addressed. A refurbishment of this scale is not recommended since an estimate of £8.13m compares unfavourably with a new build option with an estimate of £8.70m. It is not recommended to proceed with this permanent expansion scheme.

Additional Primary School Places

Hotham – Expansion from 1½ FE to 2 FE

14. On 2nd February 2009 the Executive approved the proposal to progress the plan to expand Hotham Primary School to 2 FE up to submission of a planning application. The appointment of the Design Service to carry out this work was approved by SO83(A) on 12th March 2009.
15. Consultation with the school community has been undertaken through:-
 - (a) questionnaires sent out to governors, staff, parents and pupils;
 - (b) workshop involving governors, staff and parents; and
 - (c) exhibition of three options and a presentation of the preferred option to the Governing Body.
16. Consultation with the Borough Planner has been undertaken and an ‘in principle’ agreement that the proposed new building is broadly acceptable in planning terms has been reached.
17. Preliminary budget costs confirm that the proposals are within the overall cost budget of £3.5m identified in the January 2009 committee report. The Design Service are preparing a full planning application, which is expected to be considered by the Planning Applications Committee in September 2009.

St Michael’s – Expansion from 1½ to 2 FE

18. Following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20th January 2009, the Executive made a decision on 2nd February 2009 to progress the proposal to expand St Michael's Primary School to 2 FE, up to submission of a planning application. The appointment of Wilby and Burnett to carry out this work was approved by SO83 on 12th March 2009.
19. Consultation with the school community has been undertaken in the following way:-
 - (a) questionnaires sent out to governors, staff, parents and pupils;
 - (b) workshop involving governors, staff and parents; and
 - (c) exhibition of three options and a presentation of the preferred option to the Governing Body.
20. Preliminary budget costs confirm that the proposals are within the overall budget of £4.8m identified in the January 2009 committee report.
21. Following consultation with local residents, the owners of the property closest to the proposed development have written to the Council objecting to the fact that the development will be close to their property. The current plans will be revised to increase the distance of the new building from the objector's property.

22. Wilby and Burnett are now preparing the scheme for the submission of a planning application in September.

West Hill School

23. West Hill Primary School is a four-storey board school capable of expansion to 2FE. The School has agreed to provide an additional 30 places for the 2009 reception intake. At present, the take up of these places has been slow. Until it is clearer that parents would take up any additional permanent places, it is not proposed to develop a full permanent expansion scheme.

FUNDING FOR EXPANSION SCHEMES

24. The main source of funding for these expansion schemes is expected to be the Primary Capital Programme. This was intended as the Government's 15 year strategy for improving primary schools. Funding for the first 2 years of the programme was announced in October 2007. The Council's allocation was £3.808m in 2009/10 and £6.187m in 2010/11 (a total of £9.995m). Approval was subject to the DCSF receiving a satisfactory 'Primary Strategy for Change' (PSfC) document from the Council.
25. The Executive approved the Council's PSfC document in June 2008 (Paper No.08-454) and approval was received from the DCSF on 6th March 2009.
26. The Council has also received approval for its bid for 'Targeted Capital Grant' funding for expanding popular schools for the schemes at St Michael's (£1.2m) and Hotham (£1.2m). Currently, the DCSF is not accepting any further applications for this funding. If this source of funding was to become available again, then it is likely schemes at Beatrix Potter and Belleville schools would qualify under the current criteria.
27. The need to provide additional places in Wandsworth primary schools has been caused by an increase in the birth rate. This increase in the birth rate has occurred across much of London and as a result, many other London boroughs are facing similar shortages of places. London Councils have produced a report entitled 'Do the Maths – Tackling Shortages of Primary School Places' and submitted this to the DCSF as a case for obtaining further funding for all the London boroughs that are projecting a shortage of places. The DCSF has responded to this by saying that they expect to have a clear idea about the level of funding available for London boroughs to meet this need within the next few weeks.
28. At present, the only available resources to finance a programme of expansion of places is £12.395m (£9.995m from the PCP and £2.4m from Targeted Capital). Clearly, the Council can only firmly commit to expansion schemes when the required finance is available. It is important however, to set out and consult on a full programme of expansions which are required so they can be started if and when the funding becomes available.
29. The schemes which are recommended for immediate implementation or further detailed investigations, are set out below:-

Additional Primary School Places

School	New Reception Places	Total Number of places	Cost £m	Potential Funding Targeted Capital £m	Potential Funding PCP £m
Beatrix Potter	30	210	1.97	Possible	1.97
Belleville	30	210	6.72	Possible	6.72
Brandlehow	15	N/A	0.31	-	0.31
St Michael's	15	105	4.80	1.2	3.6
Hotham	15	105	3.50	1.2	2.3
<u>Total</u>	105	630	17.30	2.4	14.90

30. In total, these schemes will add 105 reception places i.e. 3½ Forms of Entry.
31. Paper No. 09-107 suggested that the Council would need to add at least 8 Forms of Entry and possibly more if more parents choose the public rather than the private sector. Latest birth rate figures for the Borough show that the birth rate is continuing to rise and that further forms of entry are likely to be required.
32. Given the fluctuating nature of demand and the potential lack of resources, it will be necessary to meet any further demand at least initially, by further temporary expansions of schools. Temporary expansions will allow the Council time to identify more clearly those areas where permanent places can be added successfully.
33. Any further expansion of demand generated by new housing developments will also need to be considered during the statutory planning process and the use of Section 106 agreements requiring developers to meet the cost of providing additional places is recommended for all future significant new developments, such as the Springfield Hospital site, SW17 (Wandsworth Common).

STATUTORY NOTICES

34. The significant expansion of a maintained school requires the publication of Statutory Notices. Statutory proposals are required for a proposed enlargement of the premises of the school which would increase the physical capacity of the school by more than 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser). Statutory proposals are also required for a proposed increase in the number of pupils in the school's admission number by 27 or more. Proposals are not required for any temporary increases (i.e. which will be in place for no more than a year). Statutory Notices will therefore be required for all the schemes listed in paragraph 30 with the exception of Brandlehow, where a permanent expansion of the whole school is not planned.

PCP FUNDING

35. The Council's Primary Strategy for Change submission set out details of how the Council would use its PCP allocation. Funding for some of the proposals in the overall PCP were to be met from other sources of funding, such as the Council's existing capital programme and extended schools funding but the following schemes were also to be financed from the PCP.

	<u>£000's</u>
Addressing building issues in schools below the floor targets	500
“ “ “ from OFSTED reports	200
Establishing a permanent Primary BESD school	3,200
Upgrading IT structures	<u>35</u>
	3,935

36. A feasibility study for the relocation of Elsley Primary School to the Nightingale School site is currently being undertaken. Nightingale School, SW17 (Wandsworth Common) is situated on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and the feasibility study will enable the Council to submit a planning application to the Government Office for London (GOL). This will enable the Council to see if the move of the Primary BESD facility to the Nightingale site is feasible.
37. Clearly, at this stage, there is no scheme to relocate permanently Elsley School, SW11 (Shaftesbury) and the options for funding this scheme can be determined within later phases of the PCP.
38. In order to demonstrate that more than just a few schools will benefit from the PCP funding, it is proposed that an amount of £750,000 is set aside to fund building improvement schemes at those schools which are currently below the floor targets or have building issues identified in OFSTED reports. Any schemes approved in these categories would require matching funding to be provided by the schools themselves from either devolved capital or other sources of funding. The approval of any schemes using this funding would take place as part of the Council's normal capital programme arrangements.

RECOMMENDED PROPOSALS

39. It is recommended that:-

- (a) Consultation is undertaken with a view to publishing Notices on plans to permanently expand the following schools from September 2010:-
St Michael's
Hotham
Beatrix Potter
Belleville

(b) The following schemes are added to the Council's capital programme.

St Michael's
Hotham
Beatrix Potter
Bramblehow

The total cost of these schemes is estimated to be £10.587m of which £2.4m will be funded from Targeted Capital and £8.187m from the PCP. Contributions to the cost of these schemes will also be sought from each of the schools. These contributions will reduce the demand on the resources available in the Primary Capital Programme.

Additional Primary School Places

- (c) Planning permission is sought for the schemes at Beatrix Potter, Belleville and Brandlehow, including listed building consent for the latter. Developing the scheme for Belleville to planning permission stage will require the appointment of consultants. The estimated cost of taking this scheme to this stage is £324,000.
- (d) Consultation is undertaken with all schools so that the options can be reported to the Committee in the autumn on potential temporary additions of places in September 2010 and further permanent additions should demand arise.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE COMMENTS

40. The Director of Children's Services has highlighted that the total cost of all the proposed schemes to meet initial demand for Primary school places is £ 19.83 million. This excludes the potential cost of the permanent relocation of the Primary BESD facility from Elsley Special School is estimated at £3.2 million. Targeted Capital and Primary School (PCP) grant will provide total funding of £12.395 million for the period up to March 2011. This may be supplemented by the use of devolved capital funding and schools' balances where appropriate.
41. The proposals within the report can be met from the specific grant and would require the following capital budget variations.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	LATER YEARS	TOTAL
School	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Beatrix Potter		150	1,060	764	1,974
Brandlehow	24	279	10		313
St Michael's	370	2,260	2,110	60	4,800
Hotham	240	1,620	1,570	70	3,500
Belleville (fees)		324			324
Total	634	4,633	4,750	894	10,911

42. The approval of the above budget variations would leave £1.484m of the available grant and this would be utilised for either the matched funding of building improvement schemes as set out in paragraph 38 of the report or would contribute towards the costs of the other expansion schemes. It should be noted that failure to commit contractually to the PCP and targeted grant by April 2011 could result in grant funding being reclaimed and any delay in progressing these schemes will result in there being a significant risk in this occurring.
43. There are no revenue effects of the above proposals as costs will be met by grant.

HEAD OF PROPERTY AUDIT COMMENTS

44. The shortage of primary school places is a London wide problem as stated earlier in this report and it has proven difficult to identify schools that may be suitable for expansion. All the construction proposals have been independently checked and discussed with officers from the Department of Children's Services. The feasibility

studies have been prepared using DCSF guidance that specifies standards for construction, services and spatial requirements, etc. The cost estimates are based on current costs for similar projects. There is, therefore, little scope for reducing the content or costs of specific schemes. Other alternatives, such as temporary or prefabricated buildings have been considered for some sites, but this would either be impractical or unsustainable in the longer term for permanent expansions, so the studies are mainly based on traditional construction. The cost estimates have all been adjusted to ensure that they are priced on a similar basis and include allowances for fees and on-costs. It will be important for the relevant planning applications to be made as soon as is reasonably possible. In addition, Sustainability Impact Appraisals will be carried out for all schemes as the initial design work progresses.

CONCLUSION

45. The Council is facing an increase in demand for primary school places mainly as a result of a rising birth rate. The approval of building schemes to provide permanent additional places will help to meet the demand.

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1st July 2009

Background Papers

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/moderngov) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary, Ms R Williamson (020 8871 7857) rwilliamson@wandsworth.gov.uk can supply if required.

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