



CABINET

11 JUNE 2013

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, CUSTOMERS & EDUCATION: ALEX HOPKINS

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
EDUCATION: COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOARDMAN**

Subject:	Goulsbra Road: new primary school for Rushden
Recommendations:	<p>Cabinet approval is sought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To authorise the acquisition of the school site and to delegate authority to the Director of Finance to agree the final terms of acquisition within the budget constraints for the school project; • To include the capital funding arrangements for the new school in the capital programme and authorise contract award following the OJEU procurement process; • To authorise the Director of Children, Customers and Education in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders to approve, accept, award and appoint the preferred bidders and to execute or authorise the execution of all the necessary documentation to facilitate the capital scheme; • To proceed with the construction of the new school as a two form entry primary with an opening date of September 2015; and • To notify the Department for Education that the authority will be seeking proposals to establish an Academy / Free School under the new 'Academy presumption' regulations and undertake the necessary processes and consultation.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 Additional primary capacity is required in Rushden to serve new housing development and rising primary pupil numbers. A new two form of entry primary school (total of 420 pupils) is proposed for opening on September 2015 to be located on a new site adjacent to the Goulsbra Road housing development to the south of Maye Dicks Road.

2. Relevant Priority Outcomes

The content of this report supports the delivery of the following corporate outcomes:

Perspective	Outcome
Customers & Community - to achieve our vision, what will our customers see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cleaner, greener and more prosperous county • Active, safe and sustainable communities • Ambitious Young People

<p>Process - to satisfy our customers, what processes must we excel at?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commissioning outcomes ● Building social capital & community wellbeing ● Shaping our growing county ● Managing customer expectations ● Using business intelligence to segment customers and predict demand
<p>Finance – to finance our vision, what must we do efficiently, effectively and economically?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximised income and new funding mechanisms ● Exploited fixed assets ● Targeted spend and investments

3. Background

3.1 Cabinet gave approval in May 2011 to commence negotiations regarding the acquisition of a new school site and to include in principle a new primary school for Rushden in the capital programme. Opening a new primary school for Rushden South had previously been deferred in 2006 when the Barrington Road housing was built, due to existing surplus capacity in the town. Current pupil projections and the anticipated rate of housing completions indicate that this provision is now required. The Goulsbra Road development has planning consent for 73 dwellings and construction is expected to start on site by Barratts in the autumn of this year. A site of 1.948 hectares has been reserved for the school and the Council's acquisition of this is underway. Negotiations have addressed land values, boundary treatments, drainage, service connections, acoustics, highways and access obligations, and the Council is now in a position to complete the acquisition subject to final legal agreements.

3.2 A review of active housing plans for Rushden indicates that 870 houses will be completed by 2021 and more are likely to come forward longer term. A two form entry primary school is planned for the following reasons:

- The likely pupil yield is more than one form of entry (210 pupils)
- More housing is expected to sustain the demand beyond 2021
- Extra capacity is needed in the town, as the existing schools are full
- There needs to be more choice and diversity for parents
- Two form entry is the Council's minimum size for new schools and provides financial and educational stability

3.3 An important consideration in deciding when to open up a new school is the need to avoid any detrimental impact on the existing primary schools. Numbers have been growing in recent years across Rushden and Higham Ferrers associated with the rising birth rate, high levels of in-migration and a small amount of new house building. The table below summarises the pupil roll at all the primary schools across the area, as of April 2013. This demonstrates current pressures and the need to bring extra capacity into the system. The final admission arrangements for the new school will be confirmed nearer the time of opening, but it is unlikely that the new school would open with a full 420 pupils from day one. There is continued liaison with East Northamptonshire Council on the rate of house-building, which will inform how the intakes into each year group are phased.

School(s)	Published Admission Number	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Totals
Henry Chichele	30	30	30	29	25	30	25	29	198
Higham Ferrers Infants and Juniors	90	90	91	90	86	90	80	80	607
Denfield Park	60	60	60	60	60	60	55	56	411
Tennynson Road Infants and Alfred Street Juniors	60	60	60	53	42	45	43	30	333
Newton Road	45	47	33	59	37	30	27	28	261
Whitefriars Infants and Juniors	60	60	58	60	60	60	58	60	416
South End Infants and Juniors	90	90	90	90	91	91	90	85	627
	435	437	422	441	401	406	378	368	2,853

3.4 Detailed design work of the new school is largely complete (RIBA¹ Stage E) and tender documents are being prepared. The procurement route will be OJEU² due to the value of the contract sum, with an estimated start on site in the spring of 2014. The school has been designed by Gotch, Saunders and SurrIDGE (Kettering office) to the Council's specification that is based on Building Bulletin 99 standards for a two form entry primary school. The new building is single-storey and includes sprinklers throughout, solar photo-voltaic panels and gas-fired boilers. A planning application has been submitted and is awaiting validation following confirmation of additional ecology surveys.

3.5 Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places in their area. Where this need is identified, Section 6A of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 places the authority under a duty to seek proposals to establish that school as an Academy or Free school, known as "the Academy presumption". Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on the Targeted Basic Need programme advises Local Authorities to seek proposals that will provide high quality places. Proposers are expected to demonstrate that they will use their Academy freedoms to innovate and drive continued improvement. The County Council has a role in assessing the proposals and can make a recommendation on its preferred operator for the new school, but the final decision is made by the Secretary of State, who will also enter into the funding agreement.

4. Consultation and Scrutiny

4.1 Consultation sessions were held in May for Headteachers in Rushden and for the local County Councillors to review the pupil projections and anticipated housing

¹ Royal Institute of British Architects

² Official Journal of the European Union

completions, and to provide a briefing on the processes associated with the Academy presumption and the likely timescale for the new school.

- 4.2 The County Council must ensure that groups or organisations that might be interested in establishing the new school are aware of the opportunity and the Department for Education publishes on its website when authorities are seeking proposals. It is also expected that there will be consultation on the proposed new school and the proposals that have been received.
- 4.3 There has been considerable consultation with statutory consultees prior to planning, to finalise the design and layout aspects of the new school. This has involved Sport England, the Highways Authority, the Environment Agency, Ecology, and planning officers from East Northants Council and the Joint Planning Unit. There will be formal statutory consultation as part of the planning process.

5. Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 Additional capacity at existing schools is not the preferred option due to site and school organisation constraints. A new school also provides increased choice and diversity for parents, which is a key Government objective.
- 5.2 The proposed site in Rushden is the preferred geographic location in the vicinity of new housing planned at Goulsbra Road and the former hospital site to the south of the town.
- 5.3 The feasibility study for the initial design of the new school considered various options and the current layout has come forward after ongoing design discussions.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The capital implications of this new school are £8.15m, which includes the site acquisition costs and the design, procurement and construction costs of the new school. The financial arrangements are the subject of a detailed business case for the Capital Investment Board and are being considered at the meeting of 7 June 2013. The funding is a combination of grant allocation from the Department for Education (DfE) and some Section 106 developer contributions associated with housing completions in Rushden.
- 6.2 The Council's capital strategy runs until 2017-18 and identifies the pressure on school place planning that is a result of the growth in the county. Future allocations are unknown, but it is unlikely that current levels of DfE capital grant will cover all needs. A new Targetted Basic Need Programme (TBNP) was announced in March 2013 to allow local authorities to bid for additional capital grant to fund new high quality pupil places where there is demographic pressure. A bid has been made for the new primary school in Rushden and, if successful, may contribute up to 50% of the costs based on the standard DfE allocation of £4m for a 2FE primary school. DfE decisions are expected in June; if successful, allocations for new schools will be provisional subject to the Secretary of State's approval of the Academy presumption process. Bids for additional funding for eight school projects have been made to the TBN Programme. The outcome will influence how future school expansions are funded, as

if DfE grant is not sufficient in future years, the Council may need to consider borrowing.

6.3 As an Academy, the ongoing revenue costs of the new school will be funded directly by Government via a Funding Agreement with the Education Funding Agency. The Council is required to make provision in its growth fund to support increases in pupil numbers related to basic need, in addition to the pre and post opening costs of the new school. The new Academy will be funded on a recoupment basis, as detailed in full in the 2013-14 School Finance Regulations which were published in December 2012. This means the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Northamptonshire will increase to reflect the additional pupil numbers attending the Academy, the Northamptonshire school funding formula will apply to the new Academy and an equivalent amount of the DSG will be recouped from the authority to fund the Academy. Furthermore it is also expected that by the time the new Academy opens the DfE will have consulted on and potentially implemented a national funding formula for schools and academies. This will clearly have an impact, which will need to be considered

	Current year	Forecast		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 & beyond
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Investment				
Costs	237	2,500	4,426	987
Funded by	DfE grant and Section 106 developer contributions			
On-going costs (revenue)				
Costs - Staffing				
Other				
Total on-going costs (revenue)				
Funded by	Funding Agreement with Education Funding Agency			

What benefits will the proposal deliver?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of 420 new primary school places • Increased choice and diversity for parents • New school facilities for the wider community • Delivery of Section 106 obligations • 21st century school building
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7. Risk and Business Continuity Management

a) Risk(s) associated with the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Planning permission not granted	Pre-planning consultation	Amber
Onerous ecology requirements causing cost increase and / or delay to programme	Completion of surveys and ongoing dialogue through planning process	Red
Insufficient take up of new places	Regular monitoring of pupil projections and housing completions	Amber

Proposals do not come forward from Academy providers	Working with existing providers and groups of schools	Amber
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b) Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Risk Rating
Council does not meet statutory obligation for sufficiency of school places in Rushden	Red
Opportunity for site acquisition and future asset is lost	Red
Abortive costs up to RIBA Design Stage E	Red

8. List of Appendices

Author:	Name: Kay Ringwood Team: Strategic Planning
Contact details:	Tel: 01604 366892 Fax: 01604 367011 Email: kringwood@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Background Papers:	Cabinet 10.5.11 "New primary schools and site acquisitions" Cabinet 14.8.06 "Schools Service Capital Programme 2006 - 10"
Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	YES
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	YES
Will further decisions be required? If so, please outline the timetable here	NO
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	YES
Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)? Have any capital spend implications been cleared by the Capital Investment Board (CIB)	YES Name of SFM: Jon Lee CIB meeting 7 June 2013
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	YES Name of Director: Alex Hopkins
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	YES Cabinet Member: Councillor Catherine Boardman
Has the relevant scrutiny committee been consulted?	NO
Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	YES Name of solicitor: Duncan Bisatt Solicitor's comments:
Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	YES Name of officer: Eva Duffy
Have any property issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	YES Name of officer: Susan Carmichael

Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been carried out in relation to this report?	YES http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/equalities/Documents/PDF%20Documents/School%20Site%20Acquisition%20EIA.pdf
Are there any community safety implications?	These are considered as part of the design of the new school and the layout of the site, and form part of the planning process.
Are there any environmental implications:	These are considered as part of the design process and governed by statutory planning and building control regulations.
Are there any Health & Safety Implications:	YES Health & Safety during construction is the responsibility of the contractor and considered at the tendering stage. It is monitored throughout by NCC / Lend Lease project managers.
Are there any Human Resources Implications:	YES The Academy provider will be responsible for all staff recruitment and governance arrangements.
Are there any human rights implications:	NO
Constituency Interest:	Rushden South: Councillor Andy Mercer; Rushden Pemberton West: Councillor Michael Tye; Higham Ferrers: Councillor Derek Lawson

