



CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 June 2014 (Special)

Subject Heading:

Requisition of Cabinet Member's Decision regarding Primary School Expansions 2013/14

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

This decision has implications for all schools, located across all wards in the Borough.

In accordance with Paragraph 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Rules, a requisition signed by two Members representing more than one Group (Councillors Keith Darvill and David Durant) has called in an executive decision of a Member for Children and Learning and a Member for Value dated 15 May 2014. The text of the requisition appears at the end of this report:

CABINET MEMBER'S DECISION

At a meeting on 20 November 2013, the Cabinet decided to initiate statutory processes to permanently expand the capacity of primary schools from September 2014. Following the statutory consultation process undertaken in February/March 2014, the Head of Learning and Achievement signed the (Non-Key Executive Decision on 24 March 2014 to proceed to the representation stage.

The representation stage, from 28 March to 25 April 2014, complied with statutory requirements by inviting representations from all interested parties on the proposals to permanently expand nine primary phase schools. A Statutory Notice, that included details of the expansion proposals for all nine schools, was published in the Romford Recorder on 28 March 2014; notices were also fixed to the entrance gates of each school and circulated to all interested parties, including all schools in Havering, neighbouring boroughs, the Diocese of Chelmsford and Dioceses of Brentwood and the Department for Education, as required by legislation. A Notice was also published on the Council's website with a link to further information about the proposals.

During the representation period, a total of 67 objection responses were received relating to 2 of the nine schools.

66 of these were received for Parsonage Farm Primary School of which included 2 petitions totalling 235 signatures from residents in the local area and 190 signatures from parents/carers. The objection comments raised specific concerns relating to:

Road and Traffic Congestion

Parking

Pedestrian Issues

Loss of playground space and overcrowding of existing ancillary facilities

Potential rise in noise levels during school times

The Governing Body fully support the proposal to permanently expand Parsonage Farm School.

1 objection response was received for Hacton Primary School which highlighted the following issues:

Potential increase in traffic in the area surrounding the school

Short sightedness of the Local Authority's decision when schools were closed in the borough due to falling numbers

Allowing establishment of free schools as opposed to expanding existing ones.

The Governing Body of the school fully support the proposal to permanently expand Hacton Primary School.

Seven schools namely; Broadford, Benhurst, Newtons, Schotts, RJ Mitchell, The Mawney and Suttons received no representations.

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION					
1. To approve the statutory proposal to expand the capacity of the following nine schools:					
SCHOOL	CURRENT CAPACITY	PROPOSED CAPACITY AS FROM	NUMBER ON ROLL AS AT JAN 2014	CURRENT PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER	PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBER
BROADFORD PRIMARY	330	420 FROM 1 SEPT 2014	360	45	60 FROM 1 SEPT 2014
BENHURST PRIMARY	315	420 FROM 1 SEPT 2014	311	45	60 FROM 1 SEPT 2014
NEWTONS PRIMARY	315	420 FROM 1 SEPT 2014	303	45	60 FROM 1 SEPT 2014
PARSONAGE FARM PRIMARY	486	840 FROM 1 SEPT 2015	467	90	120 FROM 1 SEPT 2015
SCOTTS PRIMARY	210	420 FROM 1 SEPT 2015	213	30	60 FROM 1 SEPT 2015
THE RJ MITCHELL	210	420 FROM 1 SEPT 2015	217	30	60 FROM 1 SEPT 2015

THE MAWNEY SCHOOL	296	630 FROM 1 SEPT 2016	297	60	90 FROM 1 SEPT 2016
SUTTONS PRIMARY	262	420 FROM 1 SEPT 2016	216	30	60 FROM 1 SEPT 2016
HACTON PRIMARY	378	546 FROM 1 SEPT 2016	371	50	78 FROM 1 SEPT 2016

Reasons for decisions:

To approve the statutory proposal to expand the capacity of the following nine schools: Broadford Primary, Benhurst Primary, Newtons Primary, Parsonage farm Primary, Scotts Primary, the RJ Mitchell Rimary, the Mawney School, Suttons primary Hacton Primary.

Other options considered and rejected:

Do Nothing - this is not practical due to the legal and statutory obligation placed on the council to provide sufficient school places and the pressures currently faced across the borough.

Expansion of Schools - this preferred option has the support of each School's governing Body and local community and forms part of the wider development of the Schools for which funding has been made available within the Capital Programme.

REASONS FOR REQUISITION

The reasons for the requisition were detailed on the formal notification and were detailed as follows:

1. To consider the financial implications of the decision including the wider financial implications for the Council and individual schools arising from increasing admissions.
2. To consider the risks associated with the primary schools expansion programme as identified in the Notice of Key Executive Decision.
3. To consider the implications of the proposal to double the size of Parsonage Farm Primary School particularly the concerns of the parents and local residents over disruption to children's education and the impact of the expansion will have on the local environment.
4. To consider whether the schools identified for expansion will address particular local needs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers the requisition of the decision of the Cabinet Members and determine whether to uphold it.