

**LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES****CABINET****DATE: 23 FEBRUARY 2009****REPORT OF: LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR  
STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WHITFIELD, DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES****SUBJECT: PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSIONS STRATEGY****WARDS: ALL****KEY DECISION?: YES  
IF YES, IN FORWARD PLAN?: YES****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's approval of the proposed strategy to provide sufficient primary school places to meet forecast demand.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The report outlines the proposed primary school expansions strategy.

**2. RECOMMENDATION****That Cabinet formally approves the strategy.****3 Details**

- 3.1 Demand for reception class places increased by 20% from 2006 to 2007 and increased further in 2008 and in 2009. It is forecast to increase further in subsequent years, due largely to increased birth rates and mobility. Prolonged economic recession is likely to add to the demand for places. The additional demand since 2006 has been not just in the traditional high-demand areas – Teddington, St Margaret's/East Twickenham and Richmond/East Sheen – but also in areas such as Whitton, where the authority has traditionally had some spare capacity.
- 3.2 To meet some of this increased demand, supply of reception class places has increased over recent years. 220 extra permanent reception class places were provided from 2000 to 2002 (30 at Barnes, 30 at Kew Riverside, 60 at Marshgate, 30 at St James's, 30 at St Mary's, 30 at St Mary's and St Peter's, and 10 at Trafalgar) under targeted capital bids and a PFI scheme and 30 at Collis in 2005. However, as a consequence of further increases in demand, few

infant and primary schools in the borough have had any vacancies in reception class in the last three years.

3.3 In December 2007, Cabinet agreed to fund the expansion of Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School.

3.4 The authority has, until very recently, been unable to expand any more infant or primary schools on a permanent basis, as it has not had any opportunities to bid for Government funding. However, in 2008 the Authority made a successful bid – one of only four bids that were approved in England – for Basic Need Safety Valve, to the value of £8.9 million. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) also approved the authority's Primary Strategy for Change in 2008, which enabled the release of a further £8.4 million in Primary Capital Programme funding to cover the financial years from 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 inclusive. The authority is also able to draw upon other sources of funding, such as Modernisation funds.

3.5 The authority's proposed strategy was subject to consultation with schools, neighbouring local authorities, diocesan boards of education and other stakeholders, from 5 January until 2 February 2009. It was also available on the Council's website throughout that period. Responses to the consultation, together with the Authority's comments on the responses, are attached as **Appendix A**.

3.6 The schools which will be expanded, subject to consideration of consultation responses, Cabinet approval, the formal statutory proposal process and planning permission, are as follows:-

- Holy Trinity C/E Primary : from 1-form entry to 2-form entry;
- St Mary's and St Peter's C/E Primary : from 2-form entry to 3-form entry;
- Orleans Infant and St Stephen's Junior: conversions from 3-form entry infant and 3-form entry junior respectively to 2-form entry primaries. This adds in total one extra form of entry;
- Stanley Infant and Stanley Junior : from 3-form entry to 4-form entry, as an amalgamated primary school;
- Chase Bridge Primary: from 2-form entry to 3-form entry.

This will be the first phase of planned expansions, with all due to be completed by September 2012. Some schools will benefit from a phased release of buildings before that date.

3.7 The proposed expansions also take account of the authority's strategy for special educational needs and its proposals for enhancing the use of information technology in schools.

3.8 Due to forecast demand in 2010/2011 and subsequent years, the Local Authority will continue to require additional temporary reception classes in other schools to supplement these proposed permanent expansions. Governing Bodies of schools which are not being permanently expanded have therefore been requested to consider putting their schools forward to host additional temporary classes in order to meet the extraordinary demand for places.

3.9 It is also highly likely that the authority will require a second phase of further permanent expansions of schools in due course, subject to further successful

bids for Government funding as and when the opportunity arises. We will therefore be talking with schools to identify which schools would best be expanded in that phase.

- 3.10 If Cabinet approves the Strategy, statutory proposals will be published for the schools in accordance with Regulations, with a six-week period of consultation. After the consultation period, all responses will be considered by Cabinet, which would act as the local decision-maker. Under the Regulations, there would be a presumption that expansions of some of the schools would be approved due to the fact that they would meet the DCSF threshold of being “popular and successful” schools.

#### 4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation on the authority’s proposed strategy was carried out with headteachers, schools’ governing bodies, neighbouring local authorities, Richmond upon Thames Admissions Forum, elected members, diocesan boards of education, the Ethnic Minorities Advocacy Group, and other stakeholders, from 5 January until 2 February 2009. It was also available on the Council’s website throughout that period. Responses to the consultation are attached as **Appendix A**.
- 4.2 Meetings have been, or will be, held with parents and local residents of each school concerned in order to address any concerns that they may have.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Authority is able to draw upon the following sources of funding:

<u>Capital Grant funding</u>	£
Basic Need Safety Valve	8,897,708
Modernisation *	1,000,000
Primary Capital Programme *	8,378,000
SEN budget	1,450,000
Other budgets (inc. LCVAP, Devolved Formula Capital)	100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,825,708</b>

<u>Council funds</u>	£
Basic Need (SCER Borrowing)*	2,991,483
Modernisation (SCER Borrowing)*	1,207,362
Access Initiative (SCER Borrowing)*	346,275
Section 106	1,700,000
Council allocation to Primary Expansions (Prudential Borrowing)	6,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,245,120</b>

Note: SCER = Supported Capital Expenditure revenue.

- 5.2 The total funding available is £32,070,828. It is a condition of receiving the Basic Need Safety Valve allocation that the authority must commit the sources of funding marked by an asterisk above.

5.3 The indicative budgets for the school expansion projects are as follows:

	£
Holy Trinity C/E Primary	6,450,000
St Mary's and St Peter's C/E Primary	6,000,000
Orleans Infant	3,100,000
St Stephen's C/E Junior	2,000,000
'Stanley Primary'	8,000,000
Chase Bridge Primary	6,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,550,000</b>

It is important to note that these do only represent early indicative budgets. As schemes develop, the estimated costs reflect the level of detail available at each stage, and it is not uncommon for +/-10% variance(s) to occur.

5.4 Subsequent to the original proposed funding sources, the Local Authority has received confirmation that it may have access to a further £2.4m Targeted Capital Fund subject to the approval of statutory proposals for St Mary's and St Peter's and 'Stanley Primary'. Should approval not be forthcoming then this funding would not be transferable to other school expansion projects. However, this does provide an element of contingency, together with on-going Section 106 receipts available for School expansion; these tend to be in the region of £250,000 per annum.

5.5 The use of Council funds for this expansion programme has an impact on the revenue budget due to loss of interest on balances used, and cost of borrowing. The estimated revenue costs range from £176,000 in 2009/10 to £482,000 in 2011/12. The estimated impact on Council Tax is an extra 0.1% (or £2.00) in 2009/10 increasing to an extra 0.4% (or £5.46) in 2011/12.

## 6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

This report addresses a key Council priority, as outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan, of increasing the number of high quality school places.

## 7. RISK ASSESSMENT

If the Council does not implement the proposed strategy, it would largely continue to be reliant upon temporary additional classes. The Council could also eventually run out of viable options for temporary additional classes.

This proposed strategy addresses the pupil numbers that have been projected based upon birth rates and recent admissions trends, which have to date enabled accurate forecasts. However, if the economic recession causes further increases in the number of children whose parents require state school places then even more places would be required. There is therefore a high risk that if this strategy were not implemented, the authority could find it very difficult to meet its statutory duty to provide school places in future years.

The indicative budgets detailed in this report have been determined using the information currently available, which is limited, in respect of many of these projects. There is therefore a risk of cost variance(s) against these budgetary estimates as the schemes develop, as described earlier in this report. It is anticipated that such variances will be managed from within the programme contingency.

A number of these sites have planning and other regulatory issues attached to them, which will require more detailed exploration and in some instances permission from the DCSF, e.g. to derogate from some aspects of the external space area guidelines for schools.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT / CONSIDERATIONS**

The provision of additional school places will meet the Local Authority's statutory duty and the wishes of all residents who would like their children to be educated in Richmond upon Thames borough schools. The provision of high quality school places is a key focus in the Children and Young People's Plan. An EINA was undertaken in December 2007 on the authority's school place planning policy and procedures.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council has a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure that sufficient schools are available for their area for providing primary and secondary education.

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The authority aims to undertake new school build in accordance with the BREEAM assessment criteria for sustainable design and construction, and to achieve the BREEAM 'Excellent' or 'Outstanding' rating on each project. Providing additional school places enables children to access school places within a 'walkable' distance from their homes, rather than having to travel by car or bus to schools further afield.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Primary Strategy for Change.](#)

[Report to Cabinet, 10 October 2005.](#)

[Report to Cabinet, 20 March 2006.](#)

[Report to Cabinet, 3 December 2007.](#)

[Director's Report to Governors](#), Autumn 2005, Spring 2006, Summer 2006, Spring 2007, Spring 2008, Summer and Autumn 2008.

[Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009.](#)

[Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2010/11 entry](#)

[Richmond upon Thames Admission Forum Minutes.](#)

## **12. CONTACTS**

Councillor Serge Lourie, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Partnerships, email: [cllr.slourie@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.slourie@richmond.gov.uk)

Nick Whitfield, Director of Education and Children's Services, email [nick.whitfield@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:nick.whitfield@richmond.gov.uk), 020 8891 7507

Matthew Paul, Deputy Head of Commissioning, Delivery and Service Improvement, email: [m.paul@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:m.paul@richmond.gov.uk), 020 8891 7588

This page is intentionally left blank