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## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER DELEGATED DECISION**

Councillor Lin Davies will be taking a decision using her delegated authority on the matter detailed below on Wednesday, 3 June 2009

### **AGENDA**

- 1. Informal Consultation on Expansion of Primary School Provision in Chiswick** **(Pages 1 - 6)**

#### **DECLARING INTERESTS**

*Committee members are reminded that if they have a personal interest in any matter being discussed at the meeting they must declare the interest and if the interest is also a prejudicial interest then they may not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter.*

Mark Gilks  
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Published on: **26 May 2009**

## **SINGLE MEMBER DECISION**

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**Decision taker:** Cllr Linda Davies, Lead Member for Children's Services and Family

**Decision date:** 3 June 2009

### **Informal Consultation on Expansion of Primary School Provision in Chiswick**

**Report by:** Judith Pettersen, Director of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

#### **Summary**

This paper seeks agreement to the content and format of an informal public consultation exercise on expanding primary school places to meet the growth in demand in Chiswick. This follows the Executive's request to undertake a strategic review of provision to ensure effective and efficient delivery of primary education.

#### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 That the Lead Member approves plans outlined in this report for carrying out the first of a two-part public consultation on a permanent increase to primary school admission numbers in Chiswick from September 2011 to meet the predicted rise in demand for school places.
- 1.2 That authority is delegated to the Director of Children's Services and the Borough Solicitor to negotiate a variation of the lease with the Hogarth Charitable Trust if this is required.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 As part of the response to rising demand for primary school places, Executive on 4 November 2008 required officers to ensure that any proposals were consistent with providing an effective and efficient pattern of provision. Chiswick was identified as requiring further consideration before proposals were ready for public consultation and this was confirmed in the Lead Member paper approved on 12 January 2009.
- 2.2 At its meeting of 4 November 2008 the Executive agreed to undertake a two-stage consultation process with stakeholders to consider how the increased numbers of children seeking primary places in Hounslow can be best accommodated and to delegate to the Lead Member for Children's Services and Education the decision

about the format of the initial consultation. This paper recommends undertaking the first stage between mid-June and the end of the summer term in July. This will be followed by a report to the Executive in September 2009 to present the outcomes of the informal consultation with specific proposals, including any necessary request to issue statutory notices.

- 2.3 As previously advised to Members, the expansion of provision in Chiswick will take effect for the Reception year group who start school in September 2011. It is anticipated that bulge classes will be required in September 2009 and 2010, and these will be managed in the same way as those classes implemented in September 2008.

### **3. Predicted Increase in Primary Pupil Numbers**

- 3.1 Members have previously been advised of the increase in demand for primary school places, which is the result of rising birth rates and the impact of housing developments. While it is difficult to be certain how long the higher birth rate trend will continue, and whether it will reverse in the future, the indications are that the higher level will continue for the medium term.
- 3.2 The projections suggest that the requirement for additional places in the Chiswick area is up to 2 forms of entry (each form of entry being 30 places) of Reception places. This increased demand has required additional Reception places to be created through 'bulge classes' in September 2008 and 2009.
- 3.3 As Members are aware, it is important to recognise that future projections are influenced by a series of variables that can affect levels of demand for provision. Of particular relevance to Chiswick is the comparatively high number of local children who are educated at independent schools and the potential for parents to select places in neighbouring local authorities. The impact of the recession on the number of pupils choosing independent education is difficult to quantify, although it may be reasonable to assume that the number of Reception age-children attending private provision is unlikely to increase in the short-term. Cross-border pupil movement may be restricted by the increasing demand for Reception places in our neighbouring boroughs, which has the general impact of reducing the size of catchment areas and reducing the ability of parents to successfully select schools further away.
- 3.4 For these reasons the proposal is to provide an additional two forms of entry in Chiswick to reflect birth rate increases as well as increasing local demand for local state education.

### **4. Developing Options for Expansion**

- 4.1 Based on projected future demand, birth data, information regarding admissions and pupil distribution attention has focussed on area north of the A4 in particular, where there are two community primary schools (Belmont, which admits 60 pupils a year, and William Hogarth, which admits 30 a year and took a bulge class in September 2008) and a Catholic primary school (St Mary's, which admits 30 pupils a year).

- 4.2 In accordance with the Executive's requirement that 'a properly strategic approach [is taken] to address any issues in the quality of schools, both in terms of standards and buildings', the proposal has been informed by viability studies that considered what could be achieved on existing Belmont School site and on the overall site that includes William Hogarth School, St Mary's Catholic School, the Hogarth Youth Trust provision, Adult Education and the Children's Centre. This has considered legal issues regarding land ownership, the amount of work required to each building to expand provision, and the potential planning and highways considerations. The outcomes of these site feasibility assessments will be made available to Members.
- 4.3 Information on other factors relevant to the issue of expansion has also been collated for each of the schools, including details of pupil attainment, standards of education offered and school performance trends, the degree of parental demand for places, and the geographical locations from which pupil intake is predominantly derived.
- 4.4 The proposal is to consult on the expansion of
- William Hogarth Primary School from 30 Reception places a year to 60 Reception places a year with effect from September 2011 and the
  - St Mary's Catholic Primary School from 30 Reception places a year to 60 Reception places a year with effect from September 2012.
- 4.5 The William Hogarth School is a rapidly improving school, as shown by the substantial improvement in KS2 results in 2008. Expansion to 2FE would provide additional resources to sustain this upward trend. The William Hogarth School is appropriately located for increased provision to serve its own catchment area (where there are more Reception pupils than the school can provide places for) and for the broader Chiswick community. A permanent expansion builds on the bulge class that was implemented in September 2008 and the additional bulge that will be provided in September 2009.
- 4.6 For St Mary's, the proposed expansion reflects the popularity of the school within the local catholic community. In recent years the catchment area of the school reduced to 900m and the Governors introduced a 'random allocation' process for admissions over-subscription for the 2009 entry year. As part of the expansion the Council and Westminster Diocese would strongly encourage the Governors to consult on reverting to a distance-based criteria for over-subscription. St Mary's is proposed for permanent expansion a year later than William Hogarth because of a need to ensure the achievability of expansion on the site prior to the publication of the Statutory Notice.
- 4.7 The overall site that includes William Hogarth and St Mary's schools also accommodates adult education, a children's centre, and the Hogarth Charitable Trust. There is the opportunity to share and improve facilities and enhance the external environment for all site users through closer 'campus management', and this may include developing external facilities in partnership with the Hogarth Charitable Trust (which has the lease for the Youth Centre). These opportunities will be considered as the capital project is developed. The proposed expansion of St Mary's in particular requires further development prior to the publication of any

Statutory Notices to ensure that the capital project is achievable in respect of planning and legal considerations. It is possible that these projects could require a variation to the lease between the Council and the Hogarth Charitable Trust and it is recommended that authority is delegated to the Director of Children's Services and the Borough Solicitor to negotiate this variation if it is required.

- 4.8 The capital project required to expand these schools would be developed in partnership with the Governing Body of each school, Westminster Diocese and other users of the overall site. The cost of the overall capital project will depend on the detailed solution that is developed.
- 4.9 In relation to the expansion of St Mary's, as a Voluntary Aided School the Governing Body of St Mary's is liable for 10% of the costs of any expansion. As this is part of the Council's strategic response to the need to increase places, the Council is able to contribute to this requirement in the event that the Governing Body is unable to provide 10% of the project costs. Discussions are ongoing with the Diocese and the Governing Body and these would need to be resolved prior to any commitment to a capital project. Westminster Diocese has indicated a willingness to use £0.5m from the 2011/12 LCVAP allocation (subject to confirmation of the LCVAP budget) and in common with normal Westminster Diocese practice the school would be expected to contribute all available Governor's funds and significant funds from their Devolved Formula Capital. Further detail about the financial commitment of the Council will be provided to the Executive as the project is developed.
- 4.10 The expectation of Westminster Diocese is that any Statutory Notice for the expansion of St Mary's would be published by the Governing Body of the school. The Executive of the Council would be the body who would determine this Statutory Notice. It is noted that the Statutory Notice could not be approved without capital funding from the Council.

## **5. Format of Informal Consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation on significant changes to the nature and size of schools must be carried out in accordance with DCSF guidance on 'Expanding a maintained mainstream school or adding a sixth form'. There is a requirement to ensure that all interested parties have been consulted, that sufficient information has been provided to allow stakeholders to form a considered view, and that appropriate consultation methods have been used. There is also a prescribed list of those deemed to be interested parties, which in addition to school staff and current and prospective parents of children attending the affected schools, must include the governing bodies, staff and families associated with other schools on which there could be an impact, neighbouring local authorities and diocesan authorities.
- 5.2 This consultation will be undertaken jointly by the Council (in relation to William Hogarth) and by the Governing Body of St Mary's and the Diocese of Westminster (in relation to St Mary's). A joint approach ensures that we provide the community with a clear and integrated proposal.
- 5.3 The consultation is planned to commence on 15 June and remain open for 6 weeks, closing on 24 July 2009. During this time, a number of opportunities will be provided

for those who are likely to be affected by the proposals to make their views known. Consultation documents setting out the options for each planning area will be published on the Council's website, with the facility to respond to an on-line questionnaire, and copies will be distributed widely to parents via schools, local libraries and early years settings. This documentation will also be made available to staff at both schools and sent to other key stakeholders, for example Members and neighbouring authorities.

- 5.4 Information sessions will be held at William Hogarth and St Mary's schools for staff, parents and the local community to explain the proposals, seek views and address any questions.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

- 6.1 As stated in the report there will be a requirement to provide additional capacity within primary schools to meet the growth in pupil numbers in Chiswick from September 2011. It is also anticipated that there will be a requirement in September 2009 and September 2010; however this additional requirement will be managed in the short term through additional bulge classes funded from the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant).

- 6.2 There is a requirement to undertake an informal public consultation exercise and at this stage there are no additional resource implications. However the report does not address the financial issues and implications of any capital works that may require to be undertaken. A further report following the consultation exercise will need to discuss the financial implications and obviously no building works to increase capacity within the schools can be started or contractually committed until the funding required has been identified.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

- 7.1 The Borough Solicitor is satisfied that the statutory consultation requirements in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) are being followed with reference to this consultation.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1 The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that high quality primary education is available to all pupils in Chiswick. This is an essential requirement for all families and communities regardless of their background.
- 8.2 Issues of accessibility have been considered in drawing up plans for the consultation, which will include opportunities for respondents to put forward views either in writing or in person. Face to face meetings with parents and community members are intended to reach a broader audience than would be the case if distributing written documents alone. Consultation documents will be made available in different languages and formats on request if required.

## 9. SIGNATURES AND AGREEMENT

Using the authority delegated to me as the relevant Executive Member, I agree to the recommendation

.....  
Councillor Linda Davies, Lead Executive Member for Children's Services and Family

Dated: .....  
This should be the same date at the top of the report

### **Notes:**

*This decision cannot be implemented until after seven working days have elapsed from the advertised decision date to allow for call in by scrutiny. It may only be exempted from this using the appropriate process as detailed in the Constitution.*

*A copy of this document will need to be provided to Democratic Services in advance of the decision to be taken, so that it can be published five working days beforehand in accordance with legal requirements on access to information. To fail to do so will invalidate the decision. Please alert Democratic Services of the decision to be taken in good time. If the decision is exempt from publication, you will still need to provide a copy but clearly marked*

*If the decision is a key one, you will need to speak to your Forward Plan Co-ordinator to ensure that this is recorded in advance of the decision being published. To fail to do so, may make the decision challengeable.*

### **Background Papers:**

Reports to Executive on Consultation on the Primary Strategy for Change/Expansion of Primary Places (including the report of 4 November 2008)  
Report to Lead Member for Children's Services regarding informal consultation on other expansions in Hounslow (12 January 2009)

### **This report has been or is due to be considered by:**

Lead Member for Children's Services and Family

### **This report is relevant to the following wards/areas:**

Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside, Turnham Green