

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **26 September 2017**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Proposed expansion of Polegate School**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices in respect of a proposal to expand Polegate School.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Authorise the publication of a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to expand Polegate School from 420 places to 630 places, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 90 with effect from 1 September 2019; and**
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.**
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1. Background

1.1 In recent years demand for school places in Polegate has increased as a result of new housing developments in the area. Latest birth and GP registration data indicates that in-area demand for places will continue to exceed the number of places available at the school in the coming years. Polegate School is a popular and successful school and has for the last two years admitted bulge Reception intakes to provide more places. For the September 2017 intake, 96 parents/carers selected the school as a first preference. The current PAN of 60 provides limited scope to meet parental preference.

1.2 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet demand and is therefore proposing to expand Polegate School to create additional permanent capacity.

2. Supporting information

2.1 In accordance with the prescribed process established by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 the Council consulted over a 4 week period between 23 June and 21 July 2017 on a proposal to expand Polegate School from 420 places to 630 places, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 90 with effect from 1 September 2019.

2.2 The consultation document was available on the County Council's website and interested parties including: pupils, parents and carers, staff, the governing body, local schools, the local member, the district and town councils, the dioceses and the local MP were sent a link to the consultation. The Council issued a press release and used social media to inform the local community of the consultation. Details of the consultation were also included on Polegate School's website and in their newsletter. A paper copy of the consultation document was available on request. A copy of the consultation document can be viewed within the consultation report at **Appendix 1** of this report (see 2.5 below).

2.3 By the end of the consultation period 100 responses had been received either via the online questionnaire or by email. Of the responses:

- 53 (53%) support the proposal
- 26 (26%) do not support the proposal
- 19 (19%) were undecided
- 2 (2%) did not answer this part of the consultation

2.4 In summary there was a mixed response to the consultation. Those in favour of the proposal recognise the need for additional school places in the Polegate area linked to an increased demand due to a combination of rising birth rates and housing developments and the benefits it would bring to an ever growing community. Those who raised concerns about the proposal did so generally for the following reasons:

- Traffic congestion and parking
- Loss of playing field and facilities
- School hall requires enlargement
- Need for a new school

2.5 Please refer to the consultation report at **Appendix 1** which sets out the consultation process, an analysis of the responses received and the Council's response to the concerns raised.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 The Lead Member is required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty, 'PSED') in determining these proposals. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken to identify the equality implications of this proposal and to identify any appropriate mitigations. A copy of the EqIA is appended at **Appendix 2**. The Lead Member must read the EqIA and take its findings into consideration when determining these proposals.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 In conclusion the Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet demand and is therefore proposing to expand Polegate School to create additional capacity to serve the new housing developments in the area.

4.2 The majority of respondents to the consultation support the proposal to expand Polegate School. Concerns raised during the consultation relate largely to traffic and parking, loss of playing field and facilities and the requirement to enlarge the school hall. These issues would be addressed through the detailed design process undertaken before planning permission for the expansion was granted.

4.3 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to:

1) Authorise the publication of a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to expand Polegate School from 420 places to 630 places, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 90 with effect from 1 September 2019; and

2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.

4.4 Publication of the statutory notice would trigger a further 4 week period of consultation, known as the representation period, when interested parties can comment on, or object, to the proposal. Within two months of the end of the representation period, the Lead Member must make a final decision taking into account the views of all those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in it.

4.5 It is anticipated that a final decision on the proposal would be taken by the Lead Member in December 2017.

STUART GALLIMORE

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Daniel Shing

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Consultation report

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment