

## **REPORT TO THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE OF MEETING: 14 JULY 2016**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: EXPANSION OF WINFORD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, WINFORD**

**TOWN OR PARISH: WINFORD**

**OFFICERS/MEMBER PRESENTING: SHEILA SMITH, DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the CYPS Policy and Scrutiny Panel supports a recommendation to be submitted to the Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services to approve the publication, if appropriate, of a Statutory Notice by the Council to expand the provision at the Winford C of E Primary School from a 140 to a 210-place primary school formally with effect from 1 September 2017.

#### **1. SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- 1.1 There is a projected growth in demand for primary school places in and around the village of Winford. This was confirmed with the demand for places in September 2016 that exceeded supply. Projections from 2017 onwards support this excess in demand for currently available places.
- 1.2 A consultation has taken place seeking the views of local stakeholders to the expansion of the school. Overall, there were 20 formal responses to the consultation of which 13 (65%) support the changes proposed, 5 (25%) oppose the changes and 2 (10%) were undecided. In addition, a further 22 comments were made at the public consultation events that were largely supportive of the scheme.

In most responses, including those in support of the changes, concerns were expressed about the safety for pedestrians walking to and from school both now and in the future due to the existing road infrastructures surrounding the school. Updates to the highways infrastructure in the village of Winford are included in the Highways Capital Programme for the 2016/17 financial year. A scheme will be implemented this financial year (subject to the usual statutory consultation processes).

- 1.3 This report seeks support to permanently increase the capacity of Winford C of E Primary School to meet the projected growth in demand in school places from

September 2017 onwards for the village of Winford and other nearby villages/hamlets in this part of the Churchill cluster.

## **2. POLICY**

- 2.1 The Council's agreed Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2015 – 2018 is the policy base for any local decisions.
- 2.2 Local Authorities (LAs) are under a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places in their area. The Prescribed Alterations Regulations 2016 state that a statutory process must be followed if:
- the proposed enlargement of the premises of a school is permanent (longer than three years) and would increase the capacity of a school by:
    - a. more than 30 pupils; and
    - b. by 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser)
  - The proposal involves making permanent a temporary enlargement that meets the above thresholds.

Governing Bodies of all categories of mainstream schools and LAs can propose smaller expansions that do not meet the above thresholds without the need to follow a formal process. Often this can be achieved solely by increasing the school's published admission number (PAN).

The changes at Winford will increase pupil numbers by 70 pupils (50%). A formal process must be followed by the Council on this occasion.

- 2.3 The Council will not normally expand a popular school that admits a significant percentage of its pupil population from outside of its local area or where significant vacancies exist at neighbouring schools (within 2 miles for a primary school and 3 miles for a secondary school). When reviewing demand for school places it will consider the numbers of pupils in and around the locality of the school as well as demand for school places and act in the interests of all schools and all parents in the community to provide Best Value school places.
- 2.4 Schools are considered for expansion when the following can be shown:
- good or outstanding Ofsted outcomes
  - a proven demand for places
  - that the site can accommodate at least an extra 105 pupils from current published admission levels with the resulting increased buildings and resources
  - where any building works will increase capacity but also enhance the current site and assist to resolve condition issues
  - where the increase fits with the Council's strategic principles as outlined in its commissioning strategy

## **3. DETAILS**

- 3.1 At the time of submitting this report Winford C of E Primary School (Winford School) has 140 school places and 147 pupils on its school roll. The school's Planned

Admission Number (PAN) that sets the numbers of pupils that should join the school in the reception class each year, is officially set at 20 pupils per cohort. At the end of the 2015/16 school year 20 Year 6 pupils will leave the school. In September 2016 it is expected that 24 new reception-aged pupils will enter the school, resulting in an increase to 151 pupils on roll. The school accepted additional reception-aged pupils in 2014 and the increases in 2016 will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 3 years that Winford School 'breached' their PAN.

- 3.2 The Council has been working with senior staff and governors at Winford School to determine whether a permanent increase in provision should be made. The Council's Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2015 – 2018 promotes the aim of local children being able to access a school place at their nearest school. Arrangements are progressing to request the creation of extra spaces at Winford School to enable the school to take up to 10 extra children in September 2016 into their reception-aged class. This would be a 'breach' admission where the school takes additional pupils over and above their PAN of 20 pupils. It is hoped that by providing 2 rather than a single extra class base a permanent increase in the schools capacity to a 210-place school (subject to all approvals) would be possible.
- 3.3 The Council reviews its pupil projections on an annual basis. The latest published projections for new intakes into the two schools in the Churchill East cluster are as below:

	Admission Level	Projections as published in October 2015							
		2016		2017		2018		2019	
		Projected number	+/-	Projected number	+/-	Projected number	+/-	Projected number	+/-
Dundry C of E Primary	15	12	3	12	3	10	5	12	3
Winford C of E Primary	20	34	-14	25	-5	30	-10	28	-8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>-5</b>

- 3.4 Increasing the PAN of Winford Primary to 30 would increase the numbers of permanent available places per year group setting in the cluster to 45. This would enable the cluster to be able to meet demand.
- 3.5 Local Authorities need to balance the need for new places against the over-provision of places in other year group settings. Whilst the Council maintains the duty to provide sufficient school places this no longer comes with guaranteed funding allocations. Overall there are sufficient primary and secondary school places across the district to meet current pupil growth, although the supply of some primary school places is not geographically located within the areas of excess pupil demand.

When aiming to secure external capital resources the DfE and developers will compare the demand for school places against the capacities of schools and academies across the district. Where there are schools/academies with spare capacity it is considered pupils could be transported to these schools. Too much spare capacity, irrespective of whether or not it is in the correct year group setting or location, reduces the Council's ability to attract funds from developers and affects basic need allocations. The Council aspires to have a surplus of around 5% of

places (in line with national audit recommendations) to allow for some capacity for those families who move into an area outside of the normal admissions round. This would relate to 3 places per cohort in this area and provides some resilience without providing over-capacity.

The Council will expect developer funds from nearby housing developments to contribute to this scheme.

- 3.6 Within the Local Authority categorisation of schools Winford School is judged to be good. The school was last inspected by Ofsted on 26 January 2016 and its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- 3.7 Consultations about the Admission Arrangements for the 2017/8 school year commenced in December 2015 and were agreed in March 2016. The changes proposed in this paper were not included in this consultation as only smaller changes are permitted through the School Admissions Consultation process. Details of any change can still be flagged in the Starting School in North Somerset ~ A Guide for Parents, with the caveat that it is subject to full approval.

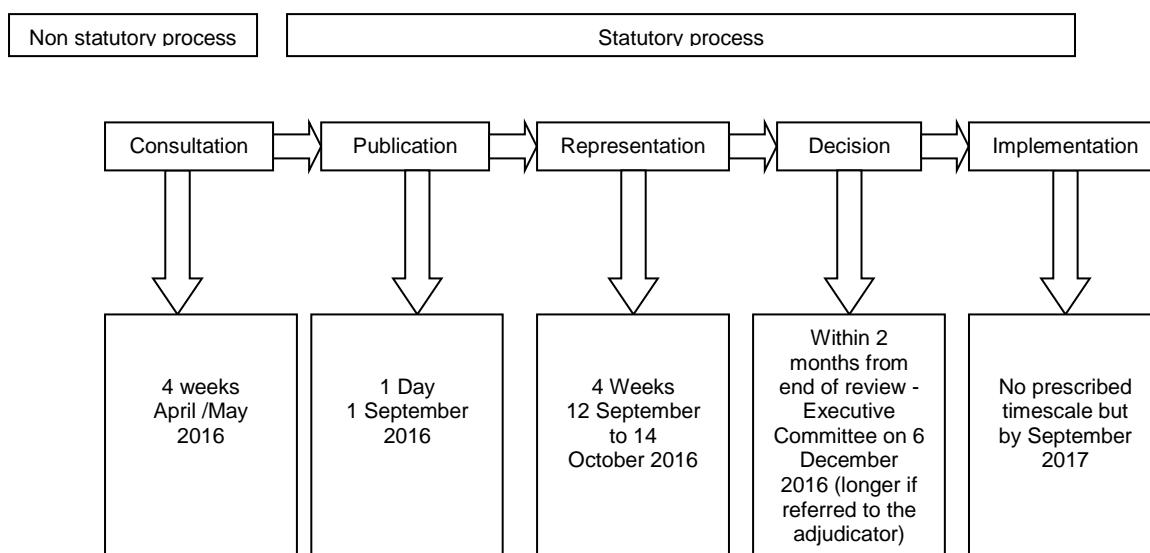
In terms of admissions, it has been agreed with the school, in principle, that any increase in pupil placements will be incremental with a year on year increase as opposed to a wholesale change in capacity (i.e. 30 admissions number for the year of entry to cascade through the school over up to 6 years). This is to support the stability of places across other schools in the town. This could be reviewed subject to demand and the ability of the school to fund whole classes within their revenue allocations.

- 3.8 Winford School is in support of the proposal, stating that “Both the Headteacher and the Governing body have carefully considered the request to expand the school. We are committed to being able to offer local schools for local children and are therefore happy to support the proposal from the Local Authority.”

Nik Gardner, Headteacher, Winford C of E Primary School

#### 4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 To progress the change at Winford School, the following consultation process is being followed:



- 4.2 Consultees throughout will be: Stakeholders of the school i.e. families of children of the school; pupils of the school; any other school affected by the change; the governing body/staff of the school and other schools affected by the change; trade unions; the local MP; Winford Parish Council; the Diocese of Bath & Wells; Diocese of Clifton; Early Years Stakeholders; neighbours of the school and other members of the general public.
- 4.3 A consultation questionnaire was sent to all necessary consultees as part 1 of this statutory process. In addition, consultation documentation was also published on the Council's website and advertised by the school community. The consultation period ran from 25 April to 27 May 2016.

### Public Responses

- 4.4 250 paper questionnaires were made available to stakeholders of the school including close neighbours. Consultees were asked if they were supportive of the proposed change and given the opportunity to provide comments. At the end of the consultation, a total of 13 paper and 6 electronic responses and 1 telephone call (total of 20) were received. Details of the responses are given below:

	Yes	No	No View	Total
Based on the information you have been given, do you agree with the proposals to increase the size of Winford School from its current capacity of 140 pupils to a capacity of 210 pupils with effect from September 2017	13 (65%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	20 (100%)

Full details of the responses received can be found at:

<http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/WinfordSchoolExpansion2017/consultationHome>

Those in favour of the change (mainly parents/carers) cited the need for more local school places and believed that Winford School would benefit greatly from the expansion.

Those against the expansion (mostly members of the local community) expressed concerns about the build design and fears about increased traffic in the village.

A number of options in relation to establishing the best on site location for the proposed 2 classroom expansion were investigated. The site to the south of the existing extension was chosen as the new proposal may be situated behind the building line that adjoins Parsonage Lane, thereby minimising any impact it might have upon the existing streetscape. It has been designed to be viewed as an extension of the school, linking this proposal to the recently (2010) enlarged school and allowing the extension to be added without appearing to be out of context in relation to the existing buildings. The footprint is proposed to be positioned over the existing carpark and maintenance access to the playing fields. The non-educational based use of this land means that the new buildings should not reduce either educational or external play areas. It also means that the current parking for staff can be retained and expanded.

The school is an important and generally welcomed facility within the village and it offers local families the opportunity to attend a local school. The school has developed a good relationship with its neighbours and wishes to maintain this good relationship with the people of Winford. Therefore, these and other concerns and the design proposals have been reviewed in detail and it is hoped the final design is an appropriate addition to the school and the village as a whole.

The architects of the scheme have provided a response to the above concerns which can be seen in the consultation responses located on the Councils website <http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/WinfordSchoolExpansion2017/consultationHome>

Road safety concerns have been discussed with highways officers and a way forward has been established. The highways team have been working with the parish council to develop a scheme to slow traffic in the village centre on the main approaches to the school. These changes will form part of the Highways Capital programme in 2016/17. The scheme will be implemented this financial year (subject to the usual statutory consultation processes).

- 4.5 Two public meetings were held on the afternoon and evening of Tuesday 26 April 2016. The afternoon meeting was attended by 20 people, predominately parents with governors and neighbours. The evening meeting saw 13 people attend from the community.

Overall there was support for the changes caveated with concerns raised (as above) around the implications of traffic around the school site. The comments captured at these meetings are included in the in the consultation responses located on the Councils website.

<http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/WinfordSchoolExpansion2017/consultationHome>

- 4.6 At a stakeholder's request, officers have undertaken a review of the condition of a footpath leading from the Kingston Lane area of the village down to Felton Lane, where the school is sited. Vegetation has since been cut back to provide a clear accessible route from this area to the school. On inspection, the pathway seemed to be in a good state of repair, however a patch of roughly 2m by 1m needs some attention which will be addressed as soon as possible.
- 4.7 Since the public meeting Winford School have developed their own School Travel Plan. The goal of the plan is to promote healthy lifestyles by maintaining and improving the current percentage (39%) of parents and children who walk to school; raising parent and child awareness of benefits of healthy eating linked with active lifestyles including walking, scooting and cycling to school; discouraging the use of cars for travelling to school especially when pupils live within walking thresholds; and promoting the upkeep of safe walking routes – footways and hedge cutbacks.

The school will, in the next 12 months, set up a School Travel Panel with representation from staff, governors, parents and the School Council. They intend to introduce a raising awareness campaign within the school and produce a 'safe routes to school' map with 10 minute walking zones, safe routes and on-street parking areas indicated. This will be included in a 'travel to school' leaflet that will be circulated to all parents, carers and families. Promoting car sharing for staff and +2 car parking bays in the staff car park are also being discussed.

4.8 Residents living adjacent to the school site (around 18 households) were invited to a pre-consultation meeting on 26 April 2016 where draft plans for the expansion of the school were also shared. A number of residents attended the meeting. Plans for the site, options to reduce the traffic concerns, the consultation process and timelines were shared. In general, the expansion was supported with the caveat that traffic and transport matters would continue to need to be considered and, wherever possible, mitigated. There were some concerns raised about the building design in relation to nearby properties.

4.9 Pupils at the school were asked the following questions about proposed expansion of their school:

- What do you like about your school?

“Best bits are the people who work at school, friends, school dinners, the modern building, the play equipment and Fernie (the certified school dog) and Willow (the training dog from Dogs Helping Kids charity).”

- What are your thoughts about having more children attending your school?

“Very happy, we like the idea of a bigger school with more potential for mini mates (our Reception and year 6 buddying system)”

- What do you think about the suggested new classroom building for years 5 and 6 pupils?

“It looks really modern and cool. It is a good idea, and must be the only school on stilts! We are glad that it does not take away play space or our new play equipment. We are also glad that it is not Portakabin type building.”

- Is there anything you feel the people making the decision (about whether your school becomes bigger to take more children) should know to help them make the right decision?

“Slightly sad that the garden will need to be moved, but happy that it will be reinstated. A little worried about the impact of the extra noise of construction upon learning and on the village.”

4.10 All staff were provided with copies of the consultation material and invited to attend the consultation events. As the school is to be expanded there should be opportunities for the changes to offer greater opportunities for professional development and career advancement. In accordance with legislation where changes in staff contracts are necessary, these will only be progressed (if appropriate) following an appropriate period of consultation.

“All members of staff are happy with the proposed school expansion and support it whole heartedly.” Nik Gardner, Headteacher, Winford C of E Primary School

4.11 The community had full opportunities to make its views clear during the consultation process. All responses are available on the Council’s web site at: <http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/WinfordSchoolExpansion2017/consultationHome>

- 4.12 The CYPS School Organisation Group, a sub-group of the CYPS Policy and Scrutiny Panel, met on 20 April 2016 to consider the proposal to commence consultations to formally increase the capacity of Winford School. They were first advised of this possibility on 8 February 2016. The group were supportive of the commencement of consultations to consider an increase in the capacity of this school to meet the extra demand for primary school places within this cluster.
- 4.13 If permission is granted to publish a statutory proposals to expand the school, this will enable stakeholders of the school to provide further comments about the changes proposed. Within 2 months from the end date of the published proposal (if agreed), the Council's Executive will make the final decision as to whether the school should be expanded. The local Diocesan Bodies, School Trustees and the school's Governing Body are the only organisations that have the right to appeal to the School's Adjudicator against the Council's decision.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Additional funding is available to schools that have a significant pupil growth during the financial year. Exceptional Pupil Growth Funding would be available in this case if the school were to satisfy the three following criteria:
- a) The increase has been made at the request of the LA;
  - b) There will be an increase in pupil numbers of 2% or more between the October 2015 and October 2016 headcounts – this means that the school's headcount in October 2015 of 145 would need to increase to be 148 or more pupils by October 2016 (2% increase equals 3 extra pupils); and
  - c) The school's notional class bases would need to increase by one – i.e. the school would need 150 + pupils to trigger the need for 5 classes of 30
- 5.2 This proposal will, due to increasing pupil numbers, have some impact on the individual schools' revenue budgets (as detailed in above) and the overall schools budget, funded by the dedicated schools grant through the strategic schools forum. There are no revenue implications for the Council.
- 5.3 Any recommendations for an increase in the numbers of pupils to attend the school will be subject to appropriate capital funding being made available to support the physical changes needed at the school. Approval was requested at the Executive's meeting on 17 March 2015 for £352,210 to pay for accommodation to meet the need for a single breach class. A further request was made to the Executive on 2 February 2016 for an additional £400,000 to enable a 2-class extension to be funded. A £752,210 capital project at Winford School to progress a 2 classroom expansion is being progressed and pre-planning discussions took place with the local community alongside this school organisational change.
- 5.4 A planning submission to physically expand the school was submitted on 13 May 2016. At the time of writing this report, the outcome of the application is unknown.



- 5.5 Before a statutory proposal to expand the school can be published, funding and approval to expand the school buildings must be in place. Whilst the school expansion and planning application processes are run in parallel, decisions on each application should be made independently.

## **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 If there are no changes made the status quo will be retained. It is likely that some children living in the villages supported by Winford Primary may need to be offered school places at schools some distance from their homes. Such allocations could lead to an increase in the Council's home-to school transport budget as there could be no local school available for these pupils.
- 6.2 The changes at the school are subject to the successful completion of this statutory process and planning permission for any extensions to the site.

Due to the location of the proposed expansion, the risk of not receiving planning permission is deemed to be medium to low, although the logistics of providing new buildings to the side of the site on a 1<sup>st</sup> storey piled build to the side of the site with have its challenges. Local parents will need to show they are committed to walk to school to ensure that undue pressure on the road infrastructures surrounding the site and the need for increases in parking requirements does not detract from the budgets needed to provide education provision. Regardless of this, it cannot be presumed that planning permission will be granted. Officers have worked with the Planning and Highways Authorities to ensure that, as much as possible, any required planning considerations have been incorporated into the scheme.

- 6.3 Whilst schools are able to 'breach' their admission numbers to meet demand, it is good practice to be transparent about future demand and the availability of places. Where the local authority is the admission authority for a school (as is the case with Voluntary Controlled schools such as Winford School), the Council is required to consult with the governing body of the school if it wishes to increase provision and the school's Planned Admission Number (PAN). The school have agreed to exceptionally accommodate additional pupils from September 2016, but would require the provision of extra accommodation as soon as possible thereafter.
- 6.4 It would not be possible to expand the organisation of the classes across the school site without an expanded building. Any such move could compromising education provision and be potentially detrimental to the education provided to current pupils. Whilst it is not possible for the expanded buildings to be in place for September 2016, it is hoped that if planning permission for new buildings is approved, an expanded school site should be available for school use from early in 2017.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The change in school organisation structure should enable more pupils to be able to attend their local schools and therefore enhance equality opportunities. An EIA is available on request.

## **8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Council policy is to support the provision of local schools for local children.

## **9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 None.

### **AUTHOR**

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2015 – 2018
- Decision Sheet P&C82 (2016/17)