

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture
2.	Date:	6th September 2011
3.	Title:	Potential expansion of Thornhill Primary School
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services Ward 13 Rotherham West

5. Summary

Pupil numbers are increasing in the Rotherham West area of the Authority. There is increasing pressure on school places due to the numbers of pupils and it is necessary to increase the number of school places in the area. There is particular pressure on places at Thornhill Primary School and the number of pupils in the catchment area exceeds the places available in the school. This report seeks permission to enter a pre-statutory consultation phase for the expansion of Thornhill Primary School.

6. Recommendation:

Members are asked to agree that pre-statutory consultation on a proposal to expand Thornhill Primary School is begun and that a further report be brought to Members with details of the outcome of that consultation.

7. Proposals and Details

Pupil numbers are increasing in the Rotherham West area of the Authority. There is increasing pressure on school places due to the numbers of pupils and it is necessary to increase the number of primary school places in the area. There is particular pressure on places at Thornhill Primary School and the number of pupils in the catchment area exceeds the places available in the school.

The proposal to be consulted on is:-

It is proposed to expand the numbers on roll at Thornhill Primary School from September 2012. The school will be expanded in order to accommodate 45 children per year group ($45 \times 7 = 315$ places) rather than its current capacity of $30 \times 7 = 210$ places. The school would have a published admission number (PAN) of 45.

Appendix 'A' gives further details on births, numbers on roll and admissions preferences.

8. Finance

The capital cost of the building project is currently estimated at £900,000. This will provide two new classrooms, a Foundation Stage Unit, SEN and Multi Use area, cloakrooms and toilets. Funding for the project is from the Basic Need funding allocated to the Authority from the DFE. Basic needs funding is provided for the provision of sufficient school places.

The school will be expanded with effect from September 2012 in every year group and will operate with four more classes than it currently does. It is anticipated that parents will apply for places prior to the expansion and that numbers on roll will increase substantially from September 2012. The school will need to plan for the expansion and appoint additional teaching and non teaching staff. Funding for the additional staffing will come from the additional pupils on roll (awpu) and will be part of the school's annual budget. However, in the first year of operation, as the pupils will not be on roll in time for the schools budget to be allocated for 2012/13 additional funding from the Authority's overall schools budgets (Dedicated Schools Grant) will need to be made to the school. Based on current awpu's additional funding of £158,121 will need to be allocated to Thornhill school's 2012/13 budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on estimations. Over provision at one school could threaten the viability at other schools. LA's are obliged, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

If the LA moves on to the statutory phase, then formal objections may be lodged during the representation period following the publication of the statutory notice. A final decision should be determined by the Cabinet Member within 2 months from the end of the representation period. If this fails to be done, then the matter is referred to the Schools Adjudicator for decision.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the proposal is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. It is likely that the expansion would enable more parents to access their first preference school for their child and, therefore, increase that performance indicator.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Appendix 'A' gives full details to the background to this proposal. Consultation meetings should be undertaken with the following: The Governing Body for Thornhill school, Staff and Trade Unions, Pupils and Parents (families), local Councillors, the Parish Council and local MP.

Additionally: Consultation meetings will also need to be undertaken with Governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected plus the Diocese of any school likely to be affected. (Ferham Primary, Kimberworth Primary and Meadowview Primary Schools will need to be consulted).

If the proposal was to progress to the statutory phase then the timetable would be as shown at Appendix 'A'.

12. Contact Name

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**Proposal to expand Thornhill Primary School****1 The Proposal**

It is proposed to expand the numbers on roll at Thornhill Primary School from September 2012. The school will be expanded in order to accommodate 45 children per year group (45 x 7 = 315 places) rather than its current capacity of 30 x 7 = 210 places. The school would have an admission number of 45.

The school would have an admission number of 45 (rather than 30) for each year group.

The school currently accommodates 30 FS1 pupils part-time and this will also need to be increased to 45 FS1 part-time pupils.

2 Existing Situation: Numbers on roll and Capacity

Net Capacity	=	210
Admission Number	=	30
Number on Roll (2011) (NOR)	=	213
Surplus Places	=	0 (-3)

3 Development of Numbers on Roll

YEAR	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
NOR	196	192	208	212	222	270	290	300

The school has been operating at around its maximum number of places for a number of years. There has been increasing pressure to accommodate more pupils, particularly those born within the catchment area and a number of pupils have gained places at appeal.

The above figures for 12/13 onwards are an estimate of the likely numbers that will gain entry to the school.

The position in terms of catchment area births is as follows:

Birth figures	Admission Year						
	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Thornhill	62	71	58	52	61	51	75

The number of preferences for entry to Reception in the last 3 years has been as follows:

09/10 entry = 44

10/11 entry = 43

11/12 entry = 42

4 Potential Advantages and Disadvantages

The main potential disadvantage of expanding a school is that it has a knock on effect on the numbers on roll at nearby schools and could, in the worst case scenario threaten the viability of one or more schools. Notwithstanding this, the LA is obliged to provide **sufficient places**, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

The potential advantages are that more parents will be able to access their first preference school and will gain a place without having to go through the appeals process. The admission number of 30 and class size legislation currently restricts the number of pupils entering the school and some families are in the position of having older brothers and sisters split from their younger siblings and who have to attend alternative neighbouring schools, Currently appeals are being held for the school but parents are still unsuccessful at appeal due to the restrictions imposed by the class size legislation

The expansion from 30 to 45 places per year is seen as the best way forward in that it will provide the best scenario for Thornhill School, a better scenario for local parents whilst creating a minimal threat to the viability of other local schools.

5 Financial Implications

The capital cost of the building project is currently estimated at £900,000. This will provide two new classrooms, a Foundation Stage Unit, SEN and Multi Use area, cloakrooms and toilets. Funding for the project is from the Basic Need funding allocated to the Authority from the DFE. Basic needs funding is provided for the provision of sufficient school places.

The school will be expanded with effect from September 2012 in every year group and will operate with four more classes than it currently does. It is anticipated that parents will apply for places prior to the expansion and that numbers on roll will increase substantially from September 2012. The school will

need to plan for the expansion and appoint additional teaching and non teaching staff. Funding for the additional staffing will come from the additional pupils on roll (age weighted pupil unit (awpu) allocation) and will be part of the school's annual budget. However, in the first year of operation, as the pupils will not be on roll in time for the schools budget to be allocated for 2012/13 additional funding from the Authority's overall schools budgets (Dedicated Schools Grant) will need to be made to the school. Based on current awpu's, additional funding of £158,121 will need to be made to the schools 2012/13 budget.

6 Consultation Timetable

Cabinet Member to agree to consultation	6th September 2011
Pre statutory consultation period Including meetings with governors, Staff and families etc.	up to 14th October 2011
Report to the Cabinet Member	8th November 2011
Publication of statutory notices	18 th November 2011
4 week period for representations and objections closes	16 th December 2011
LA decision	17 th January 2012
Implementation	1 st September 2012