

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture
2.	Date:	8th November, 2011
3.	Title:	Potential expansion of Thornhill Primary School
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services Ward 13 Rotherham West

5. Summary

Thornhill Primary School has pressure on the school's accommodation from increasing pupil numbers from within the school's catchment area. Preferences for the school now regularly exceed the number of places (30) available each year. An initial Report and Appendix 'A' was submitted to Cabinet Member and Advisers on the 7th September 2011 and a pre-statutory consultation on the proposal to expand the school was approved at that stage.

Pre-statutory consultations have now been undertaken through separate meetings with Thornhill School Governors, Staff and Parents. Consultation meetings have also been undertaken with the Governing Bodies of Ferham, Kimberworth and Meadow View Primary Schools which are the neighbouring schools to Thornhill School. Copies of the consultation papers have been sent to Ward Members, the MP and the local Parish Council.

Separate meetings have taken place, and shall continue to take place, with the CYPs Capital Team, EDS Architects and Surveyors, Thornhill school staff and Balfour Beatty.

This report details the outcome of these pre-statutory consultations and requests approval to commence the statutory stages of the process.

6. Recommendation:

It is recommended that the statutory consultation process and timetable on the proposal to expand Thornhill Primary School, as set out in Appendix 'A', is begun and that a further report be brought to Members with details of the outcome of that consultation.

7. Proposals and Details

The proposal to be formally consulted on is:-

It is proposed to expand the numbers on roll at Thornhill Primary School from September 2011. The school will be expanded in order to accommodate 45 children per statutory year group (45 x 7 = 315 places) rather than its current capacity (30 x 7 = 210 places). The school would have an amended published admission number (PAN) of 45 per year group. The non-statutory nursery (F1) year group published admission number will also be increased to a published admission number of 26 full time equivalent places.

Appendix 'A' gives further details on births, numbers on roll and admissions preferences. Preferences for placement for entry into the Reception (FS2) year in September 2012 will be confirmed following the closing date in January 2012. After January 2012 the primary offer day is 15th April 2012 and projections will be continually monitored, updated and shared with Thornhill during the process outlined in this report.

Three separate meetings were held on the 4th October, 2011 for the Thornhill Governors; and 11th October for Thornhill Staff and Union representatives; and parents of pupils at Thornhill School. Three further meetings were held on the 11th and 12th October 2011 with the Governing Bodies of Ferham, Kimberworth and Meadow View Primary School.

All meetings were advised of the timetable for the consultation and how concerns/comments can be submitted during the statutory consultation period.

As the number of children attending Thornhill Primary would increase by 50%, it is a statutory requirement for notices on the increase in numbers to be published in the local press and on the school gates, and for any opposition to the expansion declared by 16 December 2011. The notices also advise where to write to in the event of any opposition.

8. Finance

The capital cost of the building project which is currently under way is £0.9M. This building programme will provide two new classrooms and a Foundation Stage Unit. In addition parts of the existing school will be refurbished to provide an SEN and Multi Use area, cloakrooms and toilets. The capital cost will include the provision of a specified and agreed number of new classroom and dining tables and chairs and fixed ICT equipment. Funding for the project is from the Basic Need funding allocated by the DfE for the provision of sufficient school places.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers and consequently, individual school budget funding, are based on estimated projections at a point in time. Over provision at one school could have a negative impact on provision at other schools. Local Authorities have a duty, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

If the Authority 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.

The pre-statutory consultation meetings raised a number of issues and concerns which relevant services within CYPS will discuss and address in consultation with Thornhill senior leaders and Governors. In addition, a detailed and costed report will be submitted to Schools Forum, by January 2012, to request authorisation for DSG funding to be allocated to support the transitional September 2012 – March 2013 period (7/12^{ths}). The additional pupils were not on roll for the 2011 January School Census return and, therefore, the 2011/2012 individual school budget allocation is insufficient to fund additional teaching and support staff required from September 2012.

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 catchment area and first preference school for their child and, therefore, increase that performance indicator.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report to Cabinet Member and Advisers of the 6th September 2011. Report to Cabinet Member and Advisers of the 8th November, 2011 and minutes of the meetings held with relevant School Governors, staff and parents along with a summary of issues and concerns recorded in the minutes of the pre-statutory consultation meetings.

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	=	240
Admission Number	=	30
Number on Roll (2011) (NOR)	=	252
Surplus Places	=	0 (-12)

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							
	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Thornhill	65	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 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 (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 £151,079 will need to be made to the schools 2012/13 budget.

6 Consultation Timetable

Cabinet Member to agree to consultation	7th September 2011
Pre statutory consultation period Including meetings with governors, Staff and families etc.	up to 14th October 2011
Report to the Cabinet Member	9th November 2011
Publication of statutory notices	18 th November 2011
4 week period for representations and objections closes	16 th December 2011
LA decision	18 th January 2012
Implementation	1 st September 2012