

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) to Cabinet on 19th June 2018

**Agenda
Item No.**

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Manager

Consultation on St Mary's Prittlewell Cof E Primary School Permanent Expansion following a period of Temporary Expansion People Scrutiny Committee Cabinet Member: Councillor Helen Boyd A Part 1 Public Agenda item.

1. Purpose of Report

To gain Cabinet agreement to go out to formal consultation to change the currently temporary expansion of pupil admission numbers at St Mary's Prittlewell CofE Primary School to a permanent arrangement.

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet approves a formal consultation process to gauge stake holder and public opinion on making the current temporary expansion at St Mary's Prittlewell Church of England Primary School permanent by setting their admission number at 90 per year group.

3. Background

In 2004/05 the registered births for Southend Borough were 1914. From 2005/06 this started to increase significantly year on year peaking in 2010/11 at 2289. Forecasts of demand for places indicated a shortage of reception places in Southend primary schools from September 2010.

A program of expansion was agreed and available reception places were increased from 2005 places in September 2009 up to 2315 places in September 2017. These 310 places were created across ten schools on a permanent basis and two schools as temporary bulges. Whilst the birth rate has now stabilised, demand in the central north/south corridor of Southend has remained.

In September 2013 as part of the early Primary Expansion Plan it was agreed that St Mary's would expand on a temporary basis from 60 per year group to 90 per year group starting from the reception class and incrementing yearly for two years. Accommodation was funded to allow this expansion.

In September 2015 as part of the second phase of the Primary Expansion Plan it was agreed that St Mary's would further expand, along with six other primary schools, from 90 per year group up to 120 per year group for four years starting

from the reception class and incrementing yearly for four years. Accommodation was funded for this expansion by re-opening the old school site at East Street.

The central north/south corridor of Southend has also seen a significant level of new housing being created, particularly down Victoria Avenue as the older office blocks are converted to flats and these properties are now slowly starting to be occupied. The ECKO brown field site is also near completion and pupils are now resident on this estate. There are also increasing numbers of smaller shops being converted to self-contained flats, especially in the central area of the town, thus adding to the housing stock and increasing the potential source of pupils, especially in the early primary year groups.

Although St Mary's was expected to return to their original admission number of 60 from September 2019 the school governing body have requested to set their admission number at a higher admission number on a permanent basis. The DfE states that once a school has been expanded across all year groups it is considered a permanent expansion and must be formally set as such.

Following discussions with the school it was agreed that setting the admission number at 120 was not rational as demand for places could not be demonstrated and that the school would also have a shortage of accommodation if all year groups were full at 120.

Setting the permanent admission number at 90 would allow the school to stay in their current accommodation format of Reception and Year One being taught mainly in the East Street Annex and Years Two to Six being taught on the Boston Avenue site. The governing body have agreed this.

School pupil numbers and their forecast pupil numbers for the next four years show that setting the admission number at 90 would give the school stability for the future and provide a surplus of vacant places for in year admissions where required. The school's previous admission numbers and forecast future numbers are shown on the next page:

Year of Admission	R	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	TOTAL
13/14	89	60	58	60	60	60	58	445
14/15	88	90	60	58	59	55	59	469
15/16	102	90	91	59	58	57	59	516
16/17	96	103	85	89	60	60	60	553
17/18	88	97	103	90	91	59	64	592
18/19	80	88	97	103	90	91	59	608
19/20	72	80	88	97	103	90	91	621
20/21	90	72	80	88	97	103	90	620

21/22	60	90	72	80	88	97	103	590
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Consideration is also required to ensure that any permanent expansion does not undermine the quality of education provided or the financial viability of other 'good' and 'outstanding' schools in the local area. Neither does it create additional places in a local planning area where there is already surplus capacity in schools rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'. Previous admission and forecast numbers for the central north/south corridor can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The Dept for Education requires all Local Authorities to carry a surplus of places to allow parent choice and to meet in year demand as new residents move into the area. Southend aims for 5% evenly spread across the borough and not just concentrated in only a few schools. Setting St Marys at 90 instead of returning them to 60 would assist with this aim.

The central north/south corridor sees a pupil mobility rate (the percentage of whole school population that join and leave a school other than at reception, year three and year six) of 9%. This mobility requires a surplus of places to ensure parent demand can be met as they move in or out of Southend Schools.

Consultation Process:

If the consultation is agreed, all stakeholders including parents and local residents will be notified of the intention to publish a statutory notice to allow an open and fair consultation to gauge their views on the proposal. This notification will be by the most appropriate method for the recipient including individual letter, e-mail and school website.

The formal notice stage will run for a minimum of four weeks during the 2018 Autumn School term. Once completed the results will be brought back to Cabinet for discussion and formal decision on the proposal in January 2019.

4. Other Options

The school could return to an admission number of 60 or increase to a higher admission number of 120. The later would require capital investment to increase the school's accommodation.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

Returning to 60 could leave a shortage of places in the north/south corridor once all the current new housing developments are completed. Forecasts indicate that agreeing to 90 will allow Southend Local Authority to meet is surplus margin of 5% to give parental choice across a wider selection of schools.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

Supports the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places to residents that request one.

6.2 Financial Implications

No cost will be incurred by setting an admission number of 90. The higher number of 120 would require capital investment to increase the schools accommodation.

6.3 Legal Implications

A statutory process as prescribed by the Dept for Education states that all permanent changes to a schools pupil numbers that have involved expansion of their accommodation must be followed.

6.4 People Implications

Setting the admission number at 90 will give greater parental choice of a school place across the central area of the town.

6.5 Property Implications

None

6.6 Consultation

Discussions between the Local Authority and the School's Governing Body, that also includes representation from the Diocese of Chelmsford, have taken place to agree the proposed permanent admission number of 90, not 120, for the reasons stated above.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

St Mary's is the only Church of England School within the borough. The school takes applications from all who apply and will accept any pupil as long as they have a space available and the application sits within their published admission criteria. By setting the future admission number at 90, instead of returning the admission number to 60, parents looking for a place at a Church of England school will have a greater possibility of gaining one. The school is accessible to all disabilities.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Stakeholder disapproval – open meetings with Stakeholders to explain reasons for consultation.

Risk of future insufficient places in Central Area if not agreed – critical watch of pupil numbers in the area to ensure demand can be matched with places available.

6.9 Value for Money

The consultation will be mostly electronic contact with stakeholders thus minimising cost.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

No implications.

6.11 Environmental Impact

No impact.

7. Background Papers

- Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>
- Report to Cabinet 2nd November 2010 – Provision of School Places
- Report to Cabinet 7th January 2014 – Provision of Primary Places
- Report to Cabinet 11th November 2014 – Outcome of Consultation on the Permanent Expansion of Primary Places in Southend

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Central North / South Corridor primary forecasts