

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director of Children & Learning
to
Cabinet
on
8th January 2013

Agenda
Item No.

Report prepared by:
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Provision of Primary Places 2015
Children & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor James Courtenay
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

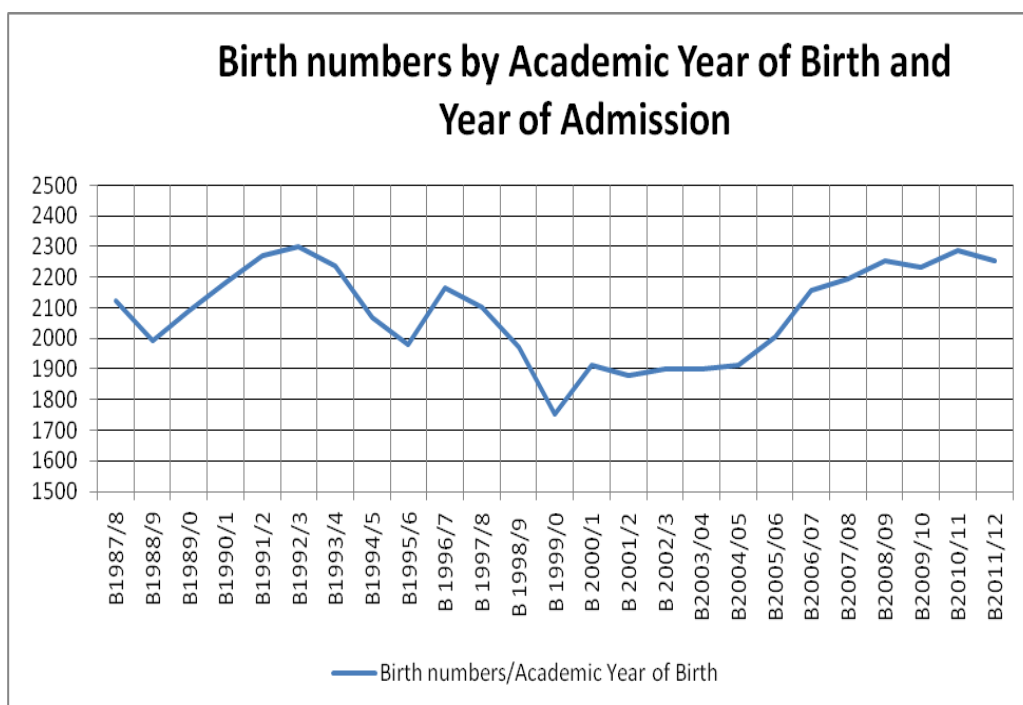
- 1.1 To outline proposals to secure sufficient reception school places across the town for 2015.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That St Mary's C of E Primary School be expanded on the East Street site to provide an additional two forms of entry from September 2015 to September 2017.
- 2.2 That St Helen's Catholic Primary School is pursued as the primary plan to expand providing an additional one form of entry from September 2015.
- 2.3 That should houses in Windermere Road be purchased thereby resolving the deliverability issues at Sacred Heart that the option to expand at the school be reconsidered.
- 2.4 Subject to agreement of the Governing Body and the Diocese, a statutory joint consultation takes place with the Diocese of Brentwood about the significant enlargement of St Helen's Catholic Primary School.

3. Background

- 3.1 The current primary places strategy, agreed in November 2010, sets out how the Council will provide sufficient places for admissions in September 2013 and September 2014. This is based on the completion of works at Milton Hall, Westborough, Temple Sutton, Hamstel, St. Marys, Bournemouth Park, Blenheim, Thorpe Greenways and Friars as agreed in the current capital programme.
- 3.2 The graph overleaf shows that births have been rising steadily for several years. This may now have peaked, although it is too early to be sure.



3.3 The births across the town are as shown below:

	Birth Years							
	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Leigh	513	546	539	569	583	550	582	568
West Central	422	482	532	513	528	504	545	533
North West	165	160	204	190	199	206	186	177
East Central	521	552	601	596	633	676	679	664
Shoebury	293	261	281	327	306	296	297	310
	1914	2001	2157	2195	2249	2232	2289	2252

3.4 The full year of births for 2011/2012 is confirmed at 2252 which indicates a consistent high level of births since 2006/07 with annual variations. The highest increase in births is within the central areas.

3.5 There is no certainty that the current increase in birth numbers will continue in the future and there is a possibility of a similar pattern as the reduction in the 1990s. If this were the case then the increase in capacity at schools could lead to an excess of places and schools will then need to reduce in size and or close. However, recently released projections from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggest that births will remain at a high level.

3.6 Births in 2010/11 for admission in September 2015, together with planning information, give us a potential shortfall of 90 places: 30 in West Central and 60 in East Central.

3.7 The capital programme currently has an indicative allocation of £4m over 2013/14 to 2014/15 to meet primary place demands.

4. Work undertaken so far

4.1 Options agreed at Children and Learning Scrutiny Committee on 9th July 2012 and then confirmed in a SO46 were to investigate:

- Expansion of St. Mary's by two forms of entry (2FE) and expansion of St. Helen's by one form of entry (1 FE);
- Expansion of another primary school using alternative buildings;
- New school in the Library.

4.2 Details of the proposals were examined taking account of: cost, deliverability by June 2015, site issues/location, meeting the need, flexibility of proposals, admissions arrangements, impact on parental choice, stakeholders involvement, legal aspects and school management issues.

4.3 This analysis was shared in a consultation with the Executive Councillor for Children and Learning and Shadow Leads on 11th October 2012 and an all Member briefing attended by 16 Members took place on 16th October 2012.

4.4 As part of the consultation with Members a further option was put forward to explore the expansion of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. The consensus view of the Members was that the options for the expansion of St. Mary's Primary by 2FE and the expansion of St. Helen's or Sacred Heart by 1FE should be taken forward. The options for expansion of another primary school using alternative buildings and a new school in the Library were discounted mainly due to excessive costs, deliverability and admission issues. A map illustrating the location of schools is attached as Appendix 1.

5. Proposals

5.1 St. Mary's Expansion

5.1.1 St. Marys will take an additional form of entry in September 2013 and 2014 to meet place demand and this was agreed at Cabinet in November 2010. This is being accommodated on the existing site.

5.1.2 The proposal is to expand the school with an annexe on the East Street site by 60 pupils in 2015 and for a further two years to September 2017. Should the need arise it would be possible to provide additional accommodation to make a complete two forms of entry school for later years.

5.1.3 The site landlord is The Prittlewell Church of England School Charity (PCESC), a charity that currently rents to South Essex College who are looking to vacate the building. The current tenants are entitled to one year notice. The PCESC wish to continue to receive an income from the site and an agreement in principle has been reached about the terms.

5.1.4 The rental costs would be met through the school's delegated budget however under the new school formula scheme this requires an application to

Department for Education (DfE) as an exceptional factor to the formula. For 2015 an application will not be considered until early 2014. If approved, this would be an ongoing exception to the scheme. Indications are that such exceptions are being approved by DfE in other local authorities for the 2013 scheme. If an exception is not approved the Council would need to consider with the school other ways of meeting the costs.

- 5.1.5 The cost of turning the school into an operational primary school including essential condition works, remodelling and refurbishment is approximately £1.8 million.
- 5.1.6 The Headteacher, Governing Body and the Chelmsford C of E Diocese are in favour of the expansion.
- 5.1.7 Based on parental preferences, providing additional places at St. Mary's Primary will increase the level of parental preference satisfaction and create places at other central schools, such as: Milton Hall, Barons Court, Porters Grange, Bournemouth Park and Westborough schools.
- 5.1.8 The school currently admits pupils from the local area and do not admit solely on the grounds of faith. Of the 139 applications 95% lived in the catchment area of central schools and of the 60 places allocated 93% lived in the central area.
- 5.1.9 The oversubscription criteria in the admissions arrangements for the school gives a higher priority for faith pupils but there are also criteria for children of other families without reference to faith. Of the 79 that did not get a place at St Mary's 86% lived in central catchment areas. Based on the order of preferences expressed by parents, had more places been available 51 would have got a place increasing parental satisfaction.
- 5.1.10 The admission arrangements are determined by the Governing Body of the school and will be the same as the current arrangements subject to a change in definition for parents rather than families.
- 5.1.11 In deciding which pupils would attend the East Street site pupils without older and younger siblings are most likely to attend and distance from home to the school will be taken into account.
- 5.1.12 The annexe at East Street will operate as a self-sufficient school which would be part of the same arrangements for governance, leadership, admissions and curriculum of St. Mary's School.
- 5.1.13 Additional places on the East Street site are deliverable by September 2015. Should the scheme be approved at Cabinet and then Council in March 2013, the PCESC will serve notice on the current tenants and that would allow at least a year for works to take place.
- 5.1.14 The adding of the six class bases for three years of intake is a temporary expansion of the school and would not require a statutory consultation as prescribed by the School Organisation Regulations. Further expansion as

outlined in 5.1.2 would require a statutory consultation as a permanent significant enlargement of the school.

5.2 Expansion of St. Helen's or Sacred Heart

5.2.1 The proposal is to expand one of the schools by 1 FE across the school.

5.2.2 The expansion of St Helen's would require an extension to the existing school with potentially a first floor extension above the existing building. Similar extensions of this nature have been achieved successfully at St. Christopher's and Our Lady of Lourdes schools. The estimated cost of the extension is approximately £2.7 million.

5.2.3 Six houses in Windermere Road separate the two school buildings of Sacred Heart and were identified for purchase in a Cabinet report on 20th April 2008. Two houses are now owned by the Council and one house is owned by the Brentwood Diocese. One house is currently being purchased by the Council leaving two houses still to be purchased. Once purchases are complete the houses would be demolished and an expansion of Sacred Heart could be achieved on the site possibly in a two storey extension. The estimated cost of a new build is approximately £1.7 million.

5.2.4 Admissions for September 2012 indicate a number of central Catholic children did not secure a place at Catholic schools.

5.2.5 There were 115 applications for St Helen's and only 30 places available. Based on parental preferences, providing additional places at St. Helen's Primary will increase the level of parental preference satisfaction and create places at other central schools, such as: Milton Hall, Barons Court, Porters Grange, Bournemouth Park and Westborough schools.

5.2.6 There were 107 applications for Sacred Heart and only 30 places available. Based on parental preferences, providing additional places at Sacred Heart Primary will increase the level of parental preference satisfaction and create places at other central schools, such as: Porters Grange, Bournemouth Park, Thorpe Greenways, Temple Sutton and Milton Hall schools.

5.2.7 Analysis of the admission information indicates that places at St. Helen's would create more places at oversubscribed schools. Whereas expansion at Sacred Heart could create more places where there is slightly less demand.

5.2.8 The size of school sites contrast with St. Helen's being 11,551 square metres and Sacred Heart, including the site area of the houses, measuring 5,937 square metres. St. Helen's has a large playing field with Sacred Heart having a smaller grassed area.

5.2.9 Places could be delivered at St Helen's by September 2015 although there may be practical issues undertaking a build over an operating school although the school has indicated a willingness to accommodate the development. The deliverability of Sacred Heart is entirely dependent on the purchase of the remaining houses.

5.2.10 The permanent expansion of either school would require a statutory consultation as a significant enlargement as prescribed by the School Organisation Regulations.

5.3 Advantages and Disadvantage of the St Helen's proposal

5.3.1 The table below summarises the advantages and disadvantages of the St. Helen's proposal.

St Helen's		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cost		High cost due to complexity of construction
Deliverability	Places available by September 2015	
Site suitability	Good size site with playing field and would cater for larger numbers at the school	
Meeting need	Will free up places in oversubscribed central schools. Will provide additional Catholic places	
Admissions	Arrangements will stay the same. The current demand for catholic places from the central area will ensure admissions from wider area are not an issue.	

5.4 Advantages and Disadvantage of the Sacred Heart proposal

5.4.1 The table below summarises the advantages and disadvantages of the Sacred Heart proposal.

Sacred Heart		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cost	Lower cost as new structure on flat site of former houses	
Deliverability		No guarantee that houses will be purchased
Site suitability		Site small with limited play area. Much of newly acquired site would be used for new building.
Meeting need	Will free up places in central schools. Will provide additional Catholic places	
Admissions	Arrangements will stay the same. The current demand for catholic places from the central area will ensure admissions from wider area are not an issue.	

6. Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The overall aim is to achieve an additional 3 forms of entry by September 2015. The expansion of St. Mary's provides 2 FE with the further form of entry being provided at either St Helen's or Sacred Heart.
- 6.2 The uncertainty of the house purchases in Windermere Road mean that although Sacred Heart is a cheaper option there is a significant risk that these will not be purchased in sufficient time to ensure additional places are available in the Southend central area.
- 6.3 The site sizes make expansion at St. Helen's preferable but realistically in an urban area should places be needed expansion of Sacred Heart would be a necessary solution.
- 6.4 The background detail set out in 5.2 and the advantages and disadvantages outlined in 5.3 and 5.4 indicates the option to expand at St. Helens is on balance more advantageous however the cost difference between Sacred Heart and St. Helen's is significant.
- 6.5 The purchase of the houses in Windermere Road will continue to be pursued as agreed by Cabinet on 20th April 2008 to improve access and safeguarding

issues at Sacred Heart School. The potential school expansion at Sacred Heart remains an option for future consideration.

- 6.6 The costs outlined in the report are approximations based on work carried out to date. At present the estimated costs for the expansion of St. Mary's and St. Helen's total £4.5 million. When more detailed designs and surveys are undertaken this will give a more accurate cost for both schemes.

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The provision of places allows pupils within the Borough to access to quality learning opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children.

7.2 Financial Implications

The allocation of Basic Need funding from DfE to provide additional school places is anticipated to continue at the 2012/13 level. This is unlikely to fully fund the estimated £4.5 million identified in this report as required to provide sufficient places. There will need to be contribution from the Council's Capital Programme and this will be reflected in the 2013/14 Capital Budget proposals. Assuming DfE funding continues at current levels the schools capital projects for 2013/14 would total approximately £8.4m, requiring a Council contribution, of £2.4m. For 2014/15 the projects are estimated to total £5.4 million, requiring Council contribution of £0.6m.

Rental of the site should be achieved through the school's delegated budget, subject to approval by DfE to an exception within the school formula arrangements, and have no direct impact on the Council's revenue budget.

7.3 Legal Implications

The Council has a duty to provide sufficient pupil places.

There will be a need for a statutory consultation under the School Organisation Regulations 2007 for the permanent expansion of St. Helen's Primary School.

7.4 People Implications

None

7.5 Property Implications

The key property implications are: the need for a lease to secure the site at East Street for expansion of St. Mary's; and the purchase of houses in Windermere Road to free up space for expansion at Sacred Heart. The existing sites at St. Mary's, St. Helen's and Sacred Heart are not in the Council's ownership.

7.6 Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the Headteachers and the two Diocesan Bodies over the three proposals. The Governing Bodies at St. Mary's and St. Helen's have been consulted.

Consultation with the Executive Councillor for Children and Learning and Shadow Leads on 11th October 2012 and an all Member briefing attended by 16 Members took place on 16th October 2012.

The proposals were considered at Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on 9th July 2012 and 26th November 2012. At the meeting on the 26th November 2012 it was resolved: 'That the draft report be endorsed for submission to Cabinet for consideration at the meeting on 8th January 2013.

7.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The provision of additional primary places at the schools outlined in the report will provide additional pupil places across the central area of Southend which will enhance access to school places for all groups and increased satisfaction of parental preference.

7.8 Risk Assessment

The option to expand at Sacred Heart is dependent on the purchase of the remaining houses in Windermere Road and is a significant risk in delivering additional primary places in Southend.

7.9 Value for Money

The options proposed represent the best value for money options as other options considered previously by Children and Lifelong Scrutiny Committee were more expensive

7.10 Community Safety Implications

None envisaged.

7.11 Environmental Impact

None envisaged.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Cabinet 2nd November 2010 – “Provision of Primary School Places”.

<http://apps.southend.gov.uk/minutes/>

8.2 Cabinet 20th April 2008 – “Sacred Heart Primary School”

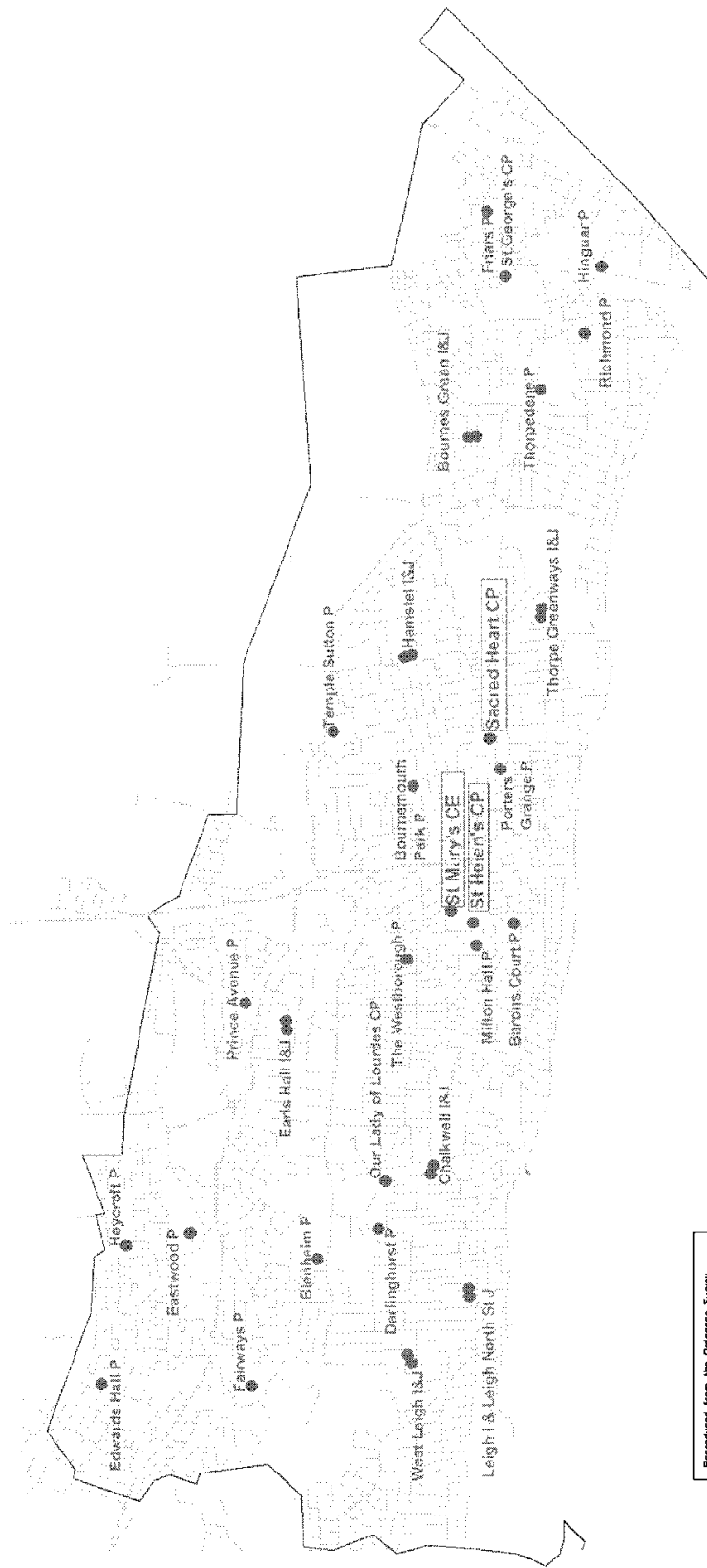
<http://apps.southend.gov.uk/minutes/>

8.3 Children and Lifelong Scrutiny Committee 26th November 2012 – “Provision of Primary Places 2015” <http://apps.southend.gov.uk/minutes/>

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Map of primary schools in Southend

**Southend on Sea Borough Council
Map showing all primary schools including Voluntary Aided**



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