

DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN WISBECH AND THE CATCHMENT AREA OF THE ORCHARDS CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL: CONSULTATION PAPER

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to:

- provide information about the expected increase in the numbers of children requiring primary school places in the Town of Wisbech and specifically in the catchment area served by The Orchards Primary School;
- obtain the views of parents and the local community on the Council's proposal for meeting part of this need by expanding The Orchards Primary School from September 2013;
- inform parents of the requirement upon the Council to issue a statutory notice to give effect to the proposal to expand The Orchards Primary School and the timetable for implementation.

2. BACKGROUND

Cambridgeshire County Council has a legal duty to provide a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state funded sector.

The Council has faced significant pressure on primary school places in Wisbech in recent years, as more children have been born in the Town. This increase in the birth rate is not only being experienced in Wisbech, but also in other parts of Cambridgeshire, most notably the other market towns and the City of Cambridge.

In September 2012, it was necessary to provide an additional Reception year class at Elm Road Primary School in a mobile (temporary accommodation) and Peckover Primary School ran an extra combined Reception/Year 1 class. These solutions were for one year only. The extra places they provided are not available for Reception children requiring a school place in September 2013.

The demand for primary school places in Wisbech is increasing and there is no wish on the part of the Council, or the schools in Wisbech, to continue to meet this need through further temporary measures. A permanent solution is required.

The National Health Service (NHS) registration data on children aged 0-4, on which the planning of school places is based, is updated twice a year. The most recent data, which was received in February 2013, includes figures for potential demand for Reception places up to September 2016.

The NHS data indicates that pressure on Reception places will continue to increase year-on-year from September 2013 through to September 2016. An additional 30 Reception places will be required from September 2013. By September 2016 an additional 70 Reception places will be required.

The greatest difference between the level of provision currently available and the future number of Reception-aged children is in The Orchards catchment area. This is closely followed by the Elm Road catchment area.

The aim, therefore, is to provide additional primary school places from September 2013 and to make further increases in primary school provision to meet the forecast demand for places coming through in September 2015 and September 2016.

Table 1 below provides the detailed NHS birth data. The figures calculate the demand for Reception places using an arrival rate of 87% which is the rolling 3 year average for Wisbech.

Table 1

Schools	PANs ¹ / Annual Intake Sept 2013	2013		2014		2015		2016	
		Pupil nos 87%	+/ - PAN	Pupil nos 87%	+/ - PAN	Pupil nos 87%	+/ - PAN	Pupil nos 87%	+/ - PAN
Clarkson Infants	60	42	+16	38	+20	42	+18	51	+9
Elm Road Primary	30	56	-26	57	-27	67	-37	72	-42
Nene Infants	60	67	-7	72	-12	67	-7	70	-10
Orchards Primary	60	96	-36	98	-38	113	-53	107	-47
Peckover Primary	60	36	+24	37	+23	26	+34	40	+20
Total	270/300	297	-27	302	-32	315	-45	340	-70

3. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to expand The Orchards Church of England (VC) Primary School and increase the school's capacity from 420 pupils (2 Form of Entry (FE)) to 630 pupils (3FE). The school's current published admission number (PAN) is 60 and the proposed PAN will be raised to 90 from September 2013. This means the school will be able to admit 90 Reception aged children in September 2013 and every September thereafter.

The proposal will enable a sufficient number of Reception places to be provided in Wisbech in the 2013 and 2014 academic years. The proposal also responds to the demand for additional places originating in the catchment area of The Orchards Primary School.

The Council intends to publish a statutory notice in the local press in the week commencing 15th April announcing its intention to expand The Orchards Primary School to 630 places (3FE) from September 2013. A four week period will follow publication in which any person may comment or object to the proposal. Any comments or objections will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when it considers whether to approve the proposal.

A further increase in the number of primary school places will be required from September 2015. The Council is currently evaluating a number of sites within Wisbech where additional primary school provision could be made. There will be a further consultation on proposals for how these additional places might be provided once the evaluation of sites is completed.

4. PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED

A project is already under development with the school to make some internal alterations which will allow the school to accommodate the additional children it will have on roll over the next two years; 2013 and 2014. It may be possible to achieve this without needing to provide temporary accommodation on the school site.

It is anticipated that a permanent extension to the school to enable it to accommodate up to 630 pupils (3FE) will be completed and ready for occupation in September 2015. Funding for the scheme is provided in the Council's 5 year capital programme.

5. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Orchards Primary School supports an expansion to 630 places (3FE) for the following reasons:

- It will enable it to meet the demand for places from the local community which it serves.
- It occupies a large site which lends itself to expansion and the provision of the additional accommodation and outdoor space required. Other school sites in Wisbech are more restricted.
- (School to supplement)

6. NEXT STEPS

The views expressed during this consultation will be considered prior to the publication of the statutory notice. A comment sheet is attached for your use at **appendix 1**. The deadline for receipt of comments is Monday 8th April 2012.

Appendix 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN WISBECH AND THE CATCHMENT AREA OF THE ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL: COMMENT SHEET ON LOCAL AUTHORITY PROPOSAL

Please **tick** to indicate if you are a:

MEMBER OF SCHOOL STAFF	
GOVERNOR	
PARENT OF A SCHOOL CHILD	
PARENT OF A YOUNGER CHILD	
ELECTED COUNCILLOR	
MEMBER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY	

COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS

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Please comment in the space provided below and continue overleaf if necessary

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*Comments should be sent by Monday 8 April to:
Ian Trafford, Education Officer
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Cambridgeshire County Council
Box CC1209, Castle Court
Castle Hill, Cambridge
CB3 0AP
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Or by e-mail to: ian.trafford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk*