

**PREScribed ALTERATION TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THONGSLEY FIELDS
PRIMARY SCHOOL, HUNTINGDON**

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **6th March 2012**

From: **Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning,
Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)**

Electoral division(s): **Huntingdon**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To seek Cabinet's approval to proceed with plans to increase the size of Thongsley Fields Community Primary and Nursery School to provide a total of 420 places, by increasing its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 45 to 60 with effect from 1st September 2012.**

Recommendation: **Members are asked to:**

- a) Note the demographic forecast for Reception places for September 2012 and beyond**
- b) Note the fact that two responses were received to the statutory notice published on 4th January 2012**
- c) Approve the prescribed alteration to increase the size of Thongsley Fields Community Primary and Nursery School to provide a total of 420 places (by the addition of three permanent classrooms) with effect from 1st September 2012.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory 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's policy is to admit children into the Reception year in the September following their fourth birthday; children become of school age once they reach the age of five.
- 1.2 There are seven schools in Huntingdon serving the primary age range: one infant school (serving the 4-7 age range), one junior school (serving the 7-11 age range) and five all-through primary schools (serving the 4-11 age range).
- 1.3 Thongsley Fields Community Primary and Nursery School (Thongsley Fields) is one of the five all-through primary schools in the town. The Published Admission Number (PAN) of the school is 45, and it has an operational capacity of 315 places. The total number of children on roll at the school has been steadily rising, with numbers increasing to 268 in September 2011, 47 places below full capacity.
- 1.4 The Council has developed plans to increase the size of Thongsley Fields to provide 60 places for pupils entering Reception and a total of 420 places across all seven year groups on a permanent basis through the provision of three new classrooms. This change, if approved, would be effective from 1st September 2012.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 Forecasting

- 2.1.1 Based on forecasts stemming from NHS live-birth data within the catchment area for 2010/11, the Council had agreed with the governing body of Thongsley Fields to over-admit pupils into Reception for one year only up to 75, with a plan to increase the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) to 60 for 2011/12.
- 2.1.2 The predicted numbers did not materialise. Therefore, the proposal to increase the PAN in 2011/12 was deferred.
- 2.1.3 Forecasting numbers on roll for towns is more difficult than for rural schools as parents have a greater range of options available to them. In Huntingdon there is a typically urban pattern of exchange across the catchment areas. Where there are pressures from high in-catchment numbers this makes the exchange of pupils to other catchments harder. The Council's Research and Performance Team were asked to analyse the actual take up rate by catchment children of Reception places in Huntingdon over the last three years and from it indicate an average pupil arrival rate. This has been calculated as 86% and is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.1.4 Even taking account of established trends for fewer than 100% of children born in the town to take up places at one of the various schools, forecast data indicates that there will be shortfall on Reception places in Huntingdon in September 2013, 2014 and 2015. This forecast already takes account of the proposed increase in the PAN at Thongsley Fields.

2.2 Developments in Huntingdon Town

- 2.2.1 There are a number of developments taking place in Huntingdon, the largest of which, 200 units, is located west of the town centre. Given their town centre location, the likelihood is that they will consist of a high proportion of flats and apartments. As such, they could yield 50 children of primary school age.
- 2.2.2 Other town sites where building is underway or planning permission has been granted total a further 547 units. These are forecast to yield between 137 and 191 children of primary age. The impact of these developments on pupil numbers will be spread across several primary schools.
- 2.2.3 The cumulative effect of the developments described in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, indicates a need of between 0.9 and 1.24 additional forms of entry (FE) in Huntingdon.
- 2.2.4 The map at **Appendix 2** shows the location of these developments.
- 2.2.5 There are further small sites in the town totalling 235 units which are yet to be built which could yield between between 59 and 82 primary children (0.28 to 0.39 FE).
- 2.2.6 Although there is current capacity in the school and demand for places from within its catchment is not forecast to exceed the proposed new capacity at Thongsley Fields until 2016, the demand for places within Huntingdon overall will exceed the capacity of the town's primary schools in 2012, by the equivalent of 0.5FE if the expansion of Thongsley Fields' PAN does not take place as proposed. This is illustrated in the chart at **Appendix 1**.

3. **ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING**

3.1 **Supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most**

- 3.1.1 There are no significant implications for this priority. The proposal is aimed at meeting a basic need for school places.

3.2 **Helping people live healthy and independent lives in their communities**

- 3.2.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 **Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- 3.3.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 **Ways of working**

- 3.4.1 The Council has worked in partnership with the schools in Huntingdon to put forward a proposal that would address the need for increased school capacity in the town.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource and Performance Implications

- 4.1.1 The Council has developed proposals to provide additional accommodation at Thongsley Fields Community Primary and Nursery School. The total capital cost will be met from the basic need allocation made to the Council by the Department for Education. The scheme is included in the Children and Young People's capital programme for 2012/2013.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 4.2.1 A statutory notice to make the prescribed alteration described above was published in the appropriate local newspaper, The Hunts Post, on 4th January 2012, and the statutory notice period expired on 3rd February 2012 (**see Appendix 3**). Two responses to the published proposals were received.
- 4.2.2 Jonathan Djanogly MP, responded to the statutory notice querying the proposed expansion when the numbers of pupils currently on roll at Thongsley Fields is within the capacity of the school. This is covered in section 2.2.6 of this report.
- 4.2.3 A response from a Mrs Sally Davies concurred with the proposal to expand Thongsley Fields.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.3.1 A duty of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 is that local authorities should take account of the needs of all communities when planning educational provision.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation

- 4.4.1 Discussions have taken place over an extended period of time with the headteacher and governing body of Thongsley Fields. In particular, officers attended meetings of the full governing body specifically with regard to this matter on 4th February 2010 and 16th May 2011. The headteacher and governing body are committed to the proposal to expand the school.
- 4.4.2 The Council has complied with all the statutory requirements in respect of consultation in relation to these proposals. This included the publication of notices in a local newspaper, and for the notices to be placed on public display at the school and in at least one other venue in the local area. Copies of the notices were sent to the following:
- Member of Parliament
 - Local County Councillors and Huntingdonshire District Councillors
 - Trade Unions
 - Local primary and secondary schools
 - Church of England Diocesan Board
 - Department for Education: School Collaboration, Organisation and Fair Access Division (formerly the Department for Children Schools and Families, School Organisation Unit).

Source Documents	Location
Prescribed Alteration documents	Children And Young People's Services Strategy and Commissioning: Infrastructure Box No: CC1209 2nd Floor B Wing Castle Court Castle Hill Cambridge CB3 0AP