

The Future Pattern of Primary School Provision in Histon and Impington

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 17 January 2017

From: Interim Executive Director: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn
Children, Families and Adults Services

Electoral division(s): Histon and Impington

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

Purpose: To advise the Committee of the identified basic need requirement for additional primary school places in Histon and Impington and seek the Committee's endorsement of the strategy for securing those places in permanent accommodation by September 2019.

Recommendation: To:

- a) endorse the strategy for securing the expansion of primary school places in Histon and Impington in permanent accommodation by September 2019, the elements of which are:
 - i. The relocation of the current Infant School to a new site and expansion of its age range to serve children aged 4-11 to provide a total of 420 places (two forms of entry (FE)); and
 - ii. The expansion of the Junior School on its current site and expansion of its age range to serve children aged 4-11 to provide a total of 420 places (2FE), with the accommodation necessary to provide 630 places (3FE) to meet future demand.
- b) give approval to progress work on a formal proposal to relocate Histon and Impington Infant School from its current site to the Buxhall Farm site and extend its age range to become an all-through primary school in consultation with the Cambridge Primary Education Trust (CPET); and
- c) Note and endorse the identified need for an additional £10m capital investment to secure the delivery of the education strategy, resulting in a total allocation in the Council's capital programme of £16m.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places local authorities under a general duty to provide a school place for every child living in their areas of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents want them educated in the state funded sector.
- 1.2 The villages of Histon and Impington are served by a 3 Form Entry (FE) (270 place) Infant school and a 3FE (360 place) Junior school, both of which are academies run and managed by Cambridge Primary Education Trust (CPET).
- 1.3 In recent years, due to a combination of small scale infill housing development and demographic changes, pressure on primary school places in the two villages has increased. These have been such that, on occasion, it has not been possible to secure a Reception place at the Infant school for all children living in the catchment area whose parents have wanted their child to attend the school.
- 1.4 In 2014 in discussion with CPET, the Authority began the process of developing a strategy to meet the current and future need for primary school places in the catchment area.
- 1.5 The resulting two-stage strategy comprises:
1. The creation of additional temporary capacity in September 2015 to increase the Reception intake to the Infant School from 90 (3FE) to 120 (4FE). Following consultation with the Head teachers, four mobile classrooms were installed on the Junior School site to enable Year 2 children to be educated there rather than on the Infant School site.
 2. The permanent expansion of provision from 3FE to 4FE with flexibility to respond to any future changes in demand for places in the villages.
- 1.6 A public consultation was undertaken in May 2016 seeking views on four possible options for delivering Phase 2 of the strategy. The responses proved inconclusive; no one option received significantly greater support than the others. The feedback was shared with the schools and local Member, Councillor David Jenkins at a meeting held on 8 July 2016. At the request of the Head teachers, a further assessment of the potential to co-locate the Infant School with the Junior School on the same site and extend them both to 4FE, was undertaken. The conclusion subsequently reached and shared with the schools was that site constraints and access issues were such that this option should not be pursued further.
- 1.7 As a result, work has focused on achieving expansion of both the Infant and Junior schools to provide a total of 4FE (840 places) with capacity for further expansion. It is proposed to achieve this by extending both schools' age range to become 2 FE (420 place) primary schools serving children aged 4-11. This is line with the Council's long-held policy preference for all-through primary schools in place of separate Infant and Junior schools. To achieve this and a balance of provision across the two villages will require the relocation of the Infant School to an alternative site in order to avoid over-development of the current site. This strategy and policy approach is supported by CPET.
- 1.8 Following analysis and assessment of possible site options, including co-

location on the Impington Village College site, in consultation with the schools' Headteachers and respective academy trusts, the conclusion reached is that County-Council owned-land at the northern edge of the villages known as Buxhall Farm would provide the most suitable location for the replacement Infant School.

The map attached as **Appendix 1** shows this site together with those of the Infant and Junior schools, Impington Village College and another site, Bypass Farm, which is also in the Council's ownership.

- 1.9 Further details of the consultation options and the feedback received are provided in **Appendix 2**. **Appendix 3** provides an analysis of the alternative site options.

2.0 Main Issues

2.1 Basic Need Requirement

- 2.1.1 Catchment forecasts for the next four years indicate demand for places will remain above the current 90 place intake capacity of the Infant School.

Table 1: Forecast number of 4 year olds in Histon and Impington catchment area (Cambridge Research Team, Primary Forecasts, January 2016)

September intake year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of children in catchment	98	103	102	108	106

- 2.1.2 Based on this forecast demand, the mobile accommodation provided as Phase 1 of the strategy should provide sufficient capacity up to and including Reception entry in 2018. It is possible, however, that further interim measures may be required in advance of permanent accommodation being built. The Council needs to ensure, therefore, that there is a permanent solution in place by September 2019 at the latest. To achieve this requires decisions from the Committee on the endorsement of the education strategy and selection of the Buxhall Farm site for the replacement Infant School to enable the detailed work necessary for the preparation of the two stage pre-planning consultation to progress. The first stage of that process would need to be undertaken no later than May 2017. The purpose of this would be to establish the principles behind the proposed changes and the preferred location. The second, more detailed consultation on the design would then need to be undertaken in Autumn 2017.

2.2 Site Considerations

2.2.1 Buxhall Farm

The site is in the greenbelt. It has not been identified as a potential development site in the current South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan. The next review of the Local Plan is due to be undertaken in 2018/19. In order to secure approval for a school on the site in advance of this review, the Council would need to secure the District Council's agreement to a departure to the current plan. Key to this will be the need to be able to demonstrate that there are "very exceptional circumstances" the main one being that there is no suitable alternative option for delivering the educational

requirement. As stated above, other options have been considered but ruled out.

As a greenfield site there would be a need to invest in highways infrastructure, including safe walking and cycling routes. In addition, work would be needed to address identified issues which include a permissive right of way, surface water drainage and potential archaeological interest. Advice from independent planning consultants is that securing planning permission to develop a school on the site would be easier if it was located as close to the existing infrastructure and community as possible.

2.2.2 Given these circumstances, work will need to progress at pace in order to secure delivery of the permanent capacity required in time for September 2019.

2.4 **Capital Investment**

2.4.1 The capital programme approved by full Council in February 2016 includes an allocation of £6m to increase primary school capacity in Histon and Impington. The revised cost estimate for delivering the educational strategy developed in consultation with CPET is £16m. This would provide for a purpose-built 2FE primary school on the Buxhall Farm site as a replacement for the current Infant School and significant remodelling of the current Junior School together with additional accommodation to convert it into a 2FE primary school. One of the schools will need to be provided with the accommodation necessary to support expansion to 3FE should future demand in the catchment area require a school of this size. Following a meeting with CPET on Monday 19 December 2016, it was agreed that the current Junior School was the preferred choice for development as a 3FE primary school.

2.4.2 Member approval will be required at Full Council in February 2017 for the additional investment of £10m in the future of primary provision in the two villages.

3.0 **ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

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

3.1.1 Providing access to local and high quality education and associated children's services will enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

3.2 **Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

3.2.1 If pupils have access to local schools and associated children's services, they are more likely to attend them by either cycling or walking rather than through local authority-provided transport or car. They will also be able to access more readily out of school activities such as sport and homework clubs and develop friendship groups within their own community. This will contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 3.3.1 Providing local school places will ensure that services can be accessed by families in greatest need within its designated area.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

- 4.1.1 As set out in section 2.4.1, a capital investment of around £16m would be required to deliver the education strategy of two all-through primary schools each providing 420 places (2FE), with the potential for one of the schools to be expanded to 3FE (630 places) in due course. The majority of the cost would result from providing a purpose-built primary school on a new site as a replacement for the current Infant School.
- 4.1.2 There would be revenue benefit to the educational strategy which has been developed as unlike in the case of a new school, there would be no requirement on the Council to meet the start-up and post-opening costs, including diseconomy of scale costs until that school reached its operational capacity.
- 4.1.3 There will, however, be a revenue cost to the Growth Fund for the additional forms of entry to be created whilst the schools fill to capacity. The recently published Government school funding formula consultation raises some questions over how this funding will be allocated in future. Until details are known it is difficult to predict what impact this will have on Cambridgeshire schools.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 4.2.1 CPET would require the approval of the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Secretary of State for Education to extend the age range of the Infant and Junior Schools to enable them to educate children aged 4-11. This would require a variation to both schools' funding agreements.
- 4.2.2 The decision on whether the Infant School site, once vacant, would revert to the Council to determine its future use would also rest with the Secretary of State for Education. There is a risk that there could be local opposition should the site be declared surplus to the Council's educational requirements given that it has a long history as serving as the village's Infant School. It can be expected that the community would wish to see the site and the current school building retained for the benefit of that community.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are able to attend their local mainstream school where possible, with only those children with the most complex and challenging needs requiring places at specialist provision. The design specification will reflect this commitment.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 4.4.1 As set out in section 1.6, public consultation was undertaken in May 2016 to

seek views on the possible future configuration of primary provision in Histon and Impington. The responses received were fairly evenly balanced. Two further stages of pre-planning consultation will be required in 2017. Prior to this, further meetings need to be held with CPET to agree the transition plan and the details on which the consultation will be undertaken.

- 4.4.2 The education strategy has been developed in consultation with the Head teachers of the Infant and Junior schools, CPET and has been shared with and received the support of the Principal Impington Village College and the school's Academy Trust. Councillor David Jenkins is a member of that Trust.
- 4.4.3 Further meetings will be scheduled with all of the local education providers to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with the development and implementation of the strategy. In addition, the Parish Council will be provided with regular updates.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 4.5.1 Councillor David Jenkins, one of the two local members, has been an active participant in a number of the meetings held with the schools.

4.6 Public Health Implications

- 4.6.1 The Council seeks to ensure that, where possible, children and young people are able to walk or cycle to school. The need for sufficient and suitable safe access arrangements will form part of the design and build specification for the re-provision and expansion of the Infant School on a new site.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE

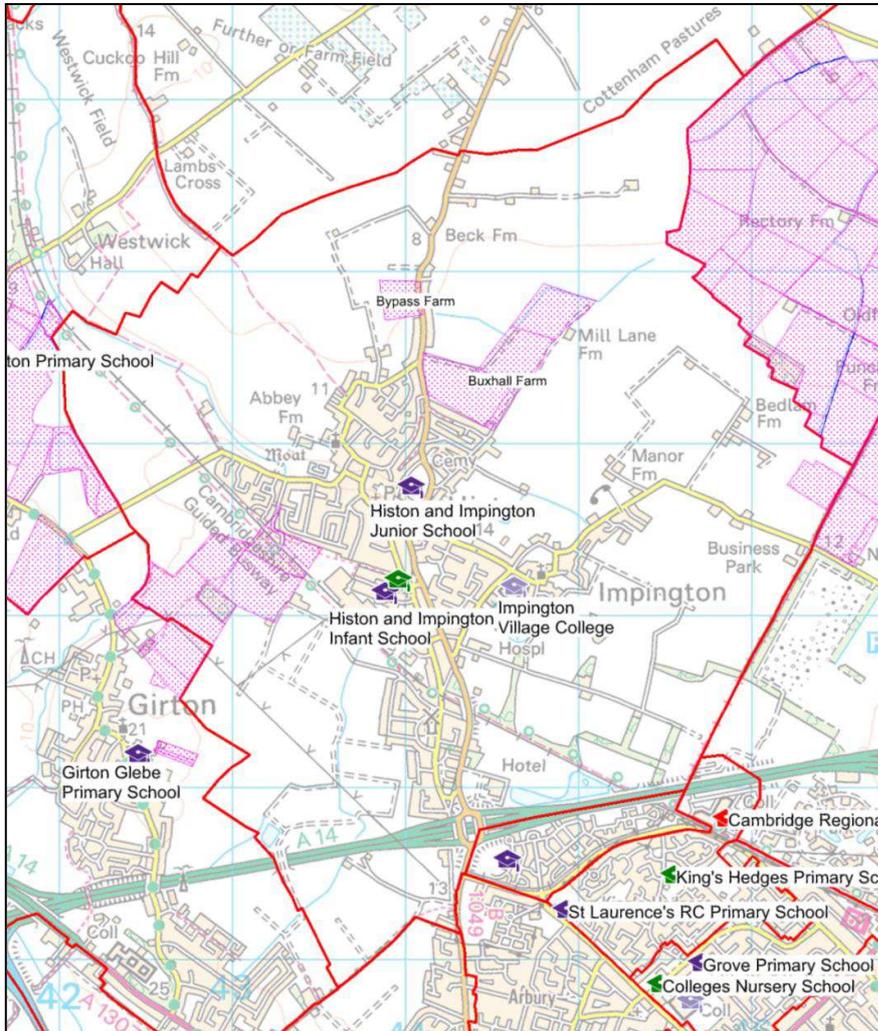
Source Documents	Location
Public consultation document and responses Pupil forecast data Site plans and feasibility studies	2nd Floor Octagon Shire Hall Cambridge CB3 0AP

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: M Wade (CYP) 16/12/2016
Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Requested but not yet received Name of Legal Officer: Lynne Owen
Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?	Yes Name of Officer: CFA Service Director
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Simon Cobby (16/12/2016)
Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?	Yes Name of Officer: CFA Service Director
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell

APPENDIX 1

Map of Histon and Impington and the surrounding local area with areas shaded pink indicating Cambridgeshire County Council owned assets.

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APPENDIX 2 – CONSULTATION OPTIONS AND FEEDBACK

The following is a summary of the four options presented in the four week consultation:

Option 1

The permanent expansion of both Infant and Junior School sites to 4FE.

Option 2

Expansion of the Junior School to 4FE on its current site and expansion of the Infant School to 4FE but across two sites, with 180 places available on the current site and the same number on a new site.

Option 3

Relocation of the Infant School to a new site and change of age range at both schools to provide two all-through primaries both operating as 2FE schools each providing 420 places.

Option 4

To establish a new 210 place (1FE) all-through primary school on a new site with the capacity to provide up to a 630 place (3FE) school subject to future demand, with no changes being made to the Infant and Junior Schools.

Stakeholders were also asked to suggest any other options they felt should Number of classrooms required in each year group as a 4 Forms of Entry intake ages through the Infant and Junior school be considered along with any general comments they would like to make.

A total of 93 responses were received during the consultation period. Of these, 86 identified a preferred option from the four options described.

Option 1 and 3 received most support even though they offer quite different educational solutions. However, there was only a difference of 9 votes separating the first and fourth placed preference.

Appendix 3 ASSESSMENT OF SITE OPTIONS

Site Option	Advantages	Disadvantages/Constraints
Re-development of the Infant School from a 3FE (270 place) Infant to a 2FE (420 place) Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the Council's policy preference for all-through primary schools • Retains educational provision on the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is very constrained, offering limited potential for development • Age of existing building and cost of adaptation and extension • Access is poor and congested and increased numbers of children and staff would exacerbate further the existing traffic and parking problems • No capacity for further expansion to provide flexibility to meet future needs • Potential for significant disruption to teaching and learning whilst building work takes place
Re-development of the Junior School from a 3FE (340 place) Junior to a 2FE (420 place) Primary School with capacity to extend to 3FE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the Council's policy preference for all-through primary schools • Retains educational provision on the site which is central to the two villages • Site has capacity for expansion and offers flexibility to meet future need • Limited need for additional classroom accommodation as school operates with 12 classes (14 required for a 2FE Primary School) • Potential to limit disruption to teaching and learning as site has capacity for additional mobile accommodation to be used whilst building work takes place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to address suitability of some of the existing accommodation and invest in refurbishment and replacement • Access is constrained and increased numbers of children and staff would exacerbate further the existing parking problems
Bypass Farm site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County-Council owned • Offers greenfield site for development • Current Infant School could continue to operate without any disruption whilst building work takes place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Greenbelt and not identified for development in the current South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan – it would be a departure application • Any school established on the site would be separated from the community it would serve • Would require investment in highways infrastructure and access arrangements and to ensure suitable and safe walking and cycling routes are available • Site better suited to community or housing development than for educational use
Buxhall Farm site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County-Council owned • Offers greenfield site for development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Greenbelt and not identified for development in the current South Cambridgeshire District

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large site, providing flexibility to respond to changing demographic needs • Abuts the existing community and would offer better linkages to this than Bypass Farm • Has the support of both CPET and the Impington Village College Academy Trust • Current Infant School could continue to operate without any disruption whilst building work takes place 	<p>Local Plan – it would be a departure application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require investment in highways infrastructure and access arrangements and to ensure suitable and safe walking and cycling routes are available
Impington Village College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-location with the secondary school and the new free special school the Academy Trust is seeking to establish on the site • Centrally located • Current Infant School could continue to operate without any disruption whilst building work takes place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land has transferred to the Academy Trust making any proposed development subject to the agreement of the Trust • The Trust have stated their support for development of primary provision on the Buxhall Farm site • The establishment of the new free special school will limit the potential for further development of educational provision on the site • No flexibility to respond to future demographic changes • The total number of children and staff who would be moving on to and off the site each day and the associated logistics around managing access and safeguarding • Part of the site falls within the Greenbelt • Need to invest in improvements to access and highways infrastructure • No financial advantage over Buxhall Farm site.