

## **Cabinet – 16 July 2008**

### **Proposal to significantly enlarge Birchills CE Primary School**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services

**Service:** Education Walsall

**Wards:** St Matthew's

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

#### **1. Summary of report**

- 1.1 The report provides details of a proposal to significantly enlarge Birchills CE Primary School in order to meet an increased demand for primary school places as a result of housing developments in the area.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve consultation on the proposal to significantly enlarge Birchills CE Primary School from 1.5 FE (Forms of Entry) to 2 FE by increasing the intake from 45 to 60 places from 1 September 2011.

#### **3. Background information**

- 3.1 Birchills CE Primary School is a controlled school with 45 places in each year group and places for a total of 315 pupils excluding the nursery class.
- 3.2 Additional primary school places are needed in order to meet an increasing demand for primary school places in the local area as a result of recent and planned residential developments. Some smaller developments have already received planning approval and major developments which are planned along the A34 corridor (including the Reedswood, Caparo and Birch Street sites) would, based on the standard method of estimating pupil yield, result in further increased demand. In order to meet this and increased pupil numbers associated with other residential developments on the northern side of the town centre, it is proposed to significantly enlarge Birchills CE Primary School and increase the intake with effect from 1 September 2011.
- 3.3 The proposal to increase the admission number from 45 to 60 from September 2011 would enable the school to operate with two classes in each year group, commencing with the reception admissions in the 2011/2012 school year and then progressing up through the school.

- 3.4 There are 52 part-time places in the nursery class and as this is the usual number of nursery places in a 2 FE primary school, it is not proposed to increase this.

#### **4. Resource considerations**

##### **4.1 Financial:**

- 4.1.1 If the proposal goes ahead, there would be a requirement for significant capital investment at the school in order to provide additional teaching accommodation. At the same time, it is proposed to undertake other improvements including reorganisation of the existing accommodation to create infant and junior areas and circulation, accessibility and staff accommodation would also be improved. Significant investment is planned to address structural problems with the building and there would be cost efficiencies from undertaking some of this work as part of a larger scheme. However, the feasibility of undertaking some of this structural work in the shorter term is being explored.

- 4.1.2 The cost of the works which would be required should the proposed enlargement be agreed would be met by funding from section 106 developer contributions, formulaic allocations (Basic Need) from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and from the funding to be made available to Walsall through the Primary Capital Programme.

##### **4.2 Legal:**

- 4.2.1 The proposed increase in the number of places at Birchills CE Primary School is subject to statutory procedures. These specify that there must be a period of consultation before the proposing authority decides whether it wishes to proceed with the proposal. It is proposed to consult on the proposal from 5 September 2008 and to report to Cabinet on the outcome of consultation at the meeting to be held on 22 October 2008. Subject to approval by Cabinet to proceed, a statutory proposal would then be published following which there would be a representation period of six weeks during which objections could be made. A further report would be brought to Cabinet so that the final decision could be made in the light of any responses received and the proposal be 'determined'. It is expected that the final decision would be taken in January 2009.

- 4.2.2 Subject to completion of the statutory processes detailed above, the admission number for the school would be increased to 60 from 1 September 2011.

##### **4.3 Staffing:**

- 4.3.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report. If the school is enlarged as proposed, the school would require additional teachers on a phased basis and these would be funded through the school's revenue budget.

#### **5. Citizen impact**

- 5.1 Local residents would have improved access to a place at a local primary school for their child.

## **6. Community safety**

- 6.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

## **7. Environmental impact**

- 7.1 Should the proposal be implemented, the associated scheme would incorporate the use of sustainable resources wherever possible and the design would incorporate developments to reduce the impact on the environment.
- 7.2 The proposed provision of additional primary school places in this area would contribute to reducing car journeys to school in future years.

## **8. Performance and risk management issues**

- 8.1 **Risk:**  
If the proposed additional primary school places are not provided, there is a risk that parents will not be able to secure a place for their child at a local primary school.
- 8.2 **Performance management:**  
The adequacy of the supply of school places is assessed by the DCSF through an annual return.

## **9. Equality implications**

- 9.1 If the proposal is implemented, the accessibility of the school building would be improved as part of the alterations to the school building.

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1 Consultees include the school, the Church of England (Lichfield Diocesan Education Board) and the Regeneration and Property Services Teams.

## **Background papers**

Planning applications and other communications from the Regeneration Directorate - Planning and Building Control.

## **Author**

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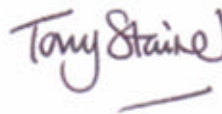
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Signed:

Executive Director: David Brown

Date: 7 July 2008



Signed:

Managing Director, Education Walsall

Date: 7 July 2008



Signed:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Zahid Ali

Date: 7 July 2008

