

Cabinet
19 February 2009



**School Organisation: The Outcomes of
Consultation with Murton Community
Primary School on the Proposal to
Increase the Size of the School From 1
September 2009**

**Report of David Williams, Corporate Director, Children
and Young People's Services**

**[Cabinet Portfolio Member for Children's Services, Councillor C
Vasey]**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present the outcomes of consultation on the proposal to increase the size of Murton Community Primary School by 60 places from 1 September 2009, to comment on these responses in the context of statutory guidance, and to recommend the next steps.

Background

- 2 Murton Community Primary School was opened in September 2006 following the reorganisation of Murton Nursery School, Murton Primary School and Jubilee Primary School into one new build primary school.
- 3 The school was built with a capacity of 420 pupils aged 4-11 and this capacity has, to date, been of sufficient size to accommodate all pupils living in Murton whose parents expressed a preference for a place(s) for their child(ren) there. A school of this size appears to be too small now for the local area of Murton. Recent data shows an increase in birth rates over earlier predictions in some parts of the County. For Murton specifically, there were 33 more births than previously predicted.
- 4 The Local Authority has received 67 applications from parents in Murton expressing a preference for a place in the Reception Class at Murton for September 2009. The current admission limit for the school is for 60 pupils. It is anticipated that for September 2010, 65 pupils could apply for a place and for September 2011, 62 could apply for a place. If the size of the school is not increased, some pupils living in Murton may not gain a place at their local school.

- 5 Admission Authorities have the flexibility to increase admission limits to take account of specific circumstances, but if the County Council agreed to increase the admission limit at Murton Community Primary School without increasing its overall size the school would eventually become overcrowded.

The Proposal for Murton

- 6 The proposal is to increase the capacity of the school from 420 to 480 pupils aged 4-11. The increase in capacity will be achieved by converting the existing Library/ICT suite into two teaching areas and to provide new accommodation for the Library/ICT suite. In addition, 14 additional car parking spaces and an associated footpath will be provided. The additional accommodation would be in place by 1 September 2009 with the new build Library/ICT suite due for completion by February 2010. The Head Teacher is aware of these timescales.
- 7 A feasibility study has been carried out and the cost of this scheme is estimated to be £511,000 to be paid for from the School Modernisation Budget.

Consultation

- 8 When Local Authorities propose to increase the size of a school by more than 30 places, formal consultation has to take place. Guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) states that "statutory proposals are required for a proposed enlargement of the premises of the school which would increase the physical capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils".
- 9 A consultation document and response form were prepared. A copy is attached as Annex 1. The documents were placed in the school and made available to parents, staff and other stakeholders in the week commencing 8 December 2008. The consultation document requested written comments by 16 January 2009. Copies of responses received by the due date have been placed in the Cabinet Office and Members' Library and the originals are held by the School Organisation and Capital Projects Team.
- 10 14 responses have been received to the consultation. 13 of those who responded are in favour of the proposal to increase the size of the school. 1 respondent opposed the proposal on the grounds that other facilities such as the yard and school hall can only just accommodate the current number of pupils on roll. The school hall is 180 square metres. Area guidelines for schools issued by the DCSF indicate that a hall of this size can hold up to 525 pupils. The proposed capacity of Murton is for 480 pupils therefore the school hall is large enough.
- 11 A risk assessment has been undertaken in respect of this proposal and the following conclusions have been reached:
- Not implementing the recommendations could mean that pupils may not be offered a place at their local school.
 - Not implementing the recommendations may adversely impact on the Council's CPA status, or may prevent the Council successfully meeting expectations (eg relating to the planning of school places) in inspections such as the Joint Area Review and the Annual Performance Assessment (APA).

Conclusion and Recommendations

- 12** The proposal will mean that there will now be sufficient room at the school for the number of pupils expected to be living in Murton in future years.
- 13** Cabinet is requested to give approval to move to the next stage to issue a statutory public notice on the proposal.

Background Paper

None

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School Organisation - Murton Comm Primary/DA

Appendix 1: Implications

Local Government Review

None.

Finance

The cost of the proposal is approximately £511,000 to be funded from the School Modernisation Budget.

Staffing

Additional teaching staff will be employed.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity will be addressed by the school being fully accessible to more pupils from Murton.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be improved to all pupils from Murton who want a place at their local school.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Sustainability

The additional accommodation will be sustainable in accordance with national guidelines for sustainability but also providing sustainable education provision.

Human Rights

All pupils have the right to be educated in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on Children's Rights. This should be taken into account when considering the proposals in the report.

Localities and Rurality

There will be implications for the community of Murton.

Young People

The proposals in the report will have a direct impact on young people.

Consultation

This report follows from initial consultation with Elected Members for the ward of Murton, staff, Governors, parents, pupils and the wider community. Their responses are located in the Cabinet Office and Members' Library.

Health

None.