

Report title: Proposed expansion of Trinity Road Primary School, Chelmsford	
Report to: Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training	
Report author: Clare Kershaw, Director for Education	
Date: August 2021	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Mark Pincombe, School Organisation Officer	
County Divisions affected: Springfield	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report on the responses to the public consultation that closed on 13 April 2021 about the proposals to expand Trinity Road Primary School, from 315 places (1.5 forms of entry) to 420 places (2 forms of entry) from September 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to publish statutory proposals to expand Trinity Road Primary School, from 315 places (1.5 forms of entry) to 420 places (2 forms of entry) from September 2022.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 The 10 Year Plan indicates a sustained need for additional primary school capacity in the central Chelmsford area. Growth in the area has come about through rising birth rates and new residential development. This expansion at Trinity Road Primary presents a good option to help towards meeting this local demand.
- 3.2 Essex County Council (ECC) has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for children living in the county. In order to do this we monitor birth rates, new housing developments and patterns of parental preference across groups of schools. This information is used to forecast pupil numbers and to ensure there are sufficient school places across the county
- 3.3 The following table (which was included in the consultation document) shows the potential deficit of places over the next five years across the central Chelmsford area as shown in “The 10 Year Plan for Meeting the Demand for School Places in Essex 2021-2030” (The 10 Year Plan):

Year to be admitted to Reception	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Total number of Reception places	480*	480*	480*	480*	480*
Predicted local requirement for Reception places	486	516	520	534	545
Predicted deficit with potential pupils from new housing	-6	-36	-40	-54	-65

*There is sufficient existing capacity within the local group of schools for an additional 30 places giving a total of 510 places available each year.

- 3.4 Longer term forecasts indicate that there will be further sustained growth in central Chelmsford with the need for additional primary school places. The number of children registered with a GP will continue to be monitored, as will the actual numbers of pupils in schools, and further solutions developed as necessary
- 3.5 A stated priority of “Essex Organisation Strategy 2017-2021” is to “offer children good economic prospects, by providing an outstanding education in Essex”. ECC is under a duty to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child’s educational potential. It must also ensure that there are sufficient schools in the county to promote diversity and increase parental choice
- 3.6 ECC’s proposal to expand Trinity Road Primary is intended to ensure that local children have the opportunity to access a local school. The school is popular and is rated “Good” by Ofsted. Expansion of the school will provide more places to meet the growing demand in the area, and will enable more parents to gain a place for their child at a popular, high performing school.
- 3.7 In considering the proposal to expand the school, the impact on other local schools has been considered. It is not expected to have any detrimental impact upon other local schools, as it responds to increased demand within the area. Phased growth should ensure no disproportionate impact upon any other school in the area.
- 3.8 A consultation on the proposed expansion was conducted by ECC between 8 March 2021 and 19 April 2021, with consultation documents being made available online and sent to interested parties via email. ‘Virtual’ drop in sessions were also offered to interested parties. Responses to the consultation could be made through the organised virtual information sessions and/or via the electronic response form, and by letter or email.
- 3.9 A total of 10 responses were received during the consultation period with 5 in favour and 5 raising concerns.
- 3.10 The concerns raised were, in general, related to parking/traffic issues in the area, the capacity of the site to expand, and the condition and size of the

current buildings. The response to these concerns are detailed below. There will be a further opportunity for comment if statutory proposals are published and a further consultation exercise undertaken.

- 3.11 This expansion is required due to additional housing and Trinity Road provides the nearest school to the development and will minimise any increase in traffic movements. The project scope will provide additional cycle and scooter storage facilities to further encourage non-car use as modes of transport to getting to school, alongside which the school will be working with the children on the school travel plan, which will look at journeys made to school and their modes of transport. This can be incredibly successful in mitigating any increase in traffic movements.
- 3.12 The expansion replaces an existing and poor condition HORSAs building (Hutting Operation for the Raising of School-Leaving Age) dating back to 1945-1950 with a new build block. The school site is sufficient in size to accommodate the additional 105 children, just 2 additional classrooms and additional group space is required, with the reprovision of a new dining hall and kitchen as the limited life HORSAs building will be replaced as part of the expansion works. The requirements for this expansion in building and external spaces were assessed against the Building Bulletin 103 requirements and are being met. Additionally, the development of the school site has considered the limitation of having a detached second playing field, and includes a new all weather multi games court area by repositioning the existing junior sized grass pitch to improve current PE opportunities

4. Options

- 4.1 **Option 1** is to do nothing. The option to do nothing is not reasonable and prevents the expansion of Trinity Road Primary School. There is a need to increase pupil places and the proposed expansion of Trinity Road Primary School is a solution to meet the continued increase in demand for school places and for ECC to meet its statutory duty to provide a school place for every child.
- 4.2 **Option2 – recommended option**; This proposal is part of the overall strategic response to the need for additional school places in central Chelmsford across the whole of the ten year period as set out in the 10 Year Plan. The expansion of Trinity Road Primary School will provide additional capacity in central Chelmsford, and will provide the opportunity to meet a higher number of parental preferences.
- 4.3 Trinity Road Primary School is popular and delivers high quality education, and offering the permanent expansion ensures that there are sufficient places for local children in the right area of Chelmsford.
- 4.4 ECC's proposal to expand Trinity Road Primary is intended to ensure that local children have the opportunity to access a local school. The school is popular

and oversubscribed and is rated “Good” by Ofsted. Expanding the school will enable more parents to gain a place for their child at a popular, high performing school

5. Issues for consideration

- 5.1 A low-carbon design has been commissioned for this project; specifying as a minimum, the maximised use of photovoltaics to generate electricity, and other design features to ensure that the investment in the building delivers environmental benefits.
- 5.2 This is part of ongoing innovation and design work being commissioned by the Sustainable Growth Directorate to find ways for the education capital programme to deliver on more of the council’s key priorities; in this case to protect the environment.

6.1 Financial implications

- 6.1.1 There are no financial implications as this decision is only to publish statutory proposals. However, before any expansion proposal can proceed, a further decision must be taken which would outline the financial implications for that particular scheme.

6.2 Legal implications

- 6.2.1 Trinity Road Primary School is a maintained school. The regulations governing this expansion proposal are the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, which requires a local authority to publish a statutory proposal where it proposes to increase pupil numbers in a maintained school.
- 6.2.2 The process for publishing statutory proposals for maintained schools is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013
- 6.2.3 There is no prescribed ‘pre-publication’ consultation period for prescribed alterations, but Department for Education guidance makes it clear that there is a strong expectation on schools and local authorities to consult interested parties in developing their proposals prior to publication, as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations.
- 6.2.4 Details of the representations received during the consultation period are included in the background papers. The Council is satisfied that the consultation process is sound and compliant with all procedural requirements.

7. Equality and Diversity implications

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. The project will maintain sufficiency of school and early years provision enabling all people within the community served to continue to have access to statutory services.

8. List of appendices

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

9. List of Background papers

None

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date 09/08/21
Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training	

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Executive Director for Finance and Technology (S151 Officer)	03.08.21
Stephanie Mitchener on behalf of Nicole Wood	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	15.07.21
Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	