

Forward Plan reference number: FP/233/11/21

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: 19 January 2023	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Springfield, Chelmsford	

Confidential Appendix

This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 Investment in this primary school setting delivers on a range of key commitments set out in *Everyone's Essex – Our plan for levelling up the county: 2021-2025*.
- 1.2 Delivery of key commitments include delivering infrastructure to support new homes and communities; achieving net-zero, through buildings that will have a net-zero carbon operational design; supporting active travel as part of the built environment of a sustainable, healthy neighbourhood; enabling healthy lifestyles by providing facilities that give focus for the community; supporting high quality education outcomes with facilities that ensure children are able to learn and teachers able to teach in the most conducive environment.
- 1.3 If the recommended option is approved to agree the expansion of Trinity Road Primary School, Essex residents in Springfield will benefit from additional, high quality primary provision becoming available in their area from September 2022, increasing their chances of gaining local places for their children in preferred schools.
- 1.4 The additional accommodation is to achieve net-zero carbon design and this supports the strategic aim of Everyone's Essex to create a high-quality environment by reducing carbon emissions. It will support the uptake of more sustainable transport methods as the development of local school places within expanding communities would mean fewer journeys will need to be made beyond them, in order to access education. There is a greater likelihood that journeys to school will be undertaken using more sustainable modes of transportation (like walking, cycling or scooting, rather than making car journeys). This has the potential to promote healthier neighbourhoods for the

future, both environmentally and in terms of physical wellbeing through exercise.

- 1.5 Expanding Trinity Road Primary School represents a capital investment in its local community. It delivers a modern, higher quality learning environment for pupils beginning their formal education, promoting engagement during those vital early years of schooling and thus increasing the likelihood of future prosperity.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the proposal published in the Statutory Notice, dated 2 September 2021, without modification, to enlarge the premises of Trinity Road Primary School, to increase its capacity from 305 places (1.5 forms of entry) to 420 places (2 forms of entry) on a phased basis, with effect from September 2022
- 2.2 Approve the capital budget for construction and associated project fees as profiled in the Confidential Appendix.
- 2.3 Agree to the procurement of a contractor to undertake the building works through a two-stage design and build mini competition using the Essex Construction Framework.
- 2.4 Agree that the Head of Infrastructure Delivery may award the contract for the expansion of Trinity Road Primary School once he is content that the following conditions have been met:
 - a. A satisfactory planning permission has been granted;
 - b. The construction costs are within the agreed budget and represent value for money.

3 Background and Proposal

- 3.1 The demand for school places continues to grow within the administrative area of Essex County Council (ECC), and ECC has a duty to ensure that every child wanting one has access to a school place. In executing these responsibilities, the ECC also seeks to add value to the educational offer that can be made to parents and carers within a local area, to ensure that learners receive the best possible outcomes from their time in formal education.
- 3.2 Like many places across Essex, Chelmsford is growing as a result of house building activity underway in the local area. Projected pupil numbers, as set out within Essex County Council's latest school place planning document (*10 Year Plan - Meeting the demand for school places in Essex, 2021-2030*) show a sharp rise over the next few years and as such, these children should ideally be accommodated within local schools.
- 3.3 There is a growing demand for primary school places within central Chelmsford, the planning group within which Trinity Road Primary School sits. The ongoing deficit of places in the area over the next ten years is illustrated by

the table below should no mitigation be forthcoming. Over time further measures could be needed to relieve this forecast pressure on places within the local area.

- 3.4 The current 10 Year Plan forecasts a permanent deficit of reception places in the central Chelmsford area in 2022/23 and then from 2025/26 onwards. While the most recent forecast data (May 2022) predicts the reception place deficit is not now until 2028, live admissions data indicates this may not be the case.

For the 2022/23 academic year additional Reception places were required and Trinity Road Primary agreed to admit 8 additional pupils in anticipation of this expansion project. Bulge classes were also needed at other schools in year groups 2 and 3 to mitigate a steep climb in the demand for school places. The Admissions team continue to admit pupils into the primary schools in this area of Chelmsford, indicating an increase in mid-year growth and a potential under-forecasting of demand. The additional places required are primarily a result of new housing within central Chelmsford and migration into the area including from the placement of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

Should these places not be provided locally then there is a strong possibility that increased car journeys will need to be made outside the local area, in order for parents to secure a preferred primary school placement. However, by enhancing provision that sits directly within the area of demand it is not unreasonable to see this as the more sustainable solution, with children able to walk, cycle or scoot to their local school, reducing congestion and the subsequent impact that that has upon public health.

3.5 Chelmsford Central

Current PAN: 480

Current Capacity: 3498

Reception Place Forecast

Year	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
+/-	-16	41	5	-4	-12	-15	-19	-23	-27	-30
Kings Road Primary, Maltese Road Primary, Meadgate Primary, Moulsham Infant, Moulsham Junior, Oaklands Infant, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary, The Cathedral CE Primary, Trinity Road Primary, Westlands Primary										

- 3.6 It is proposed to increase the number of pupils able to attend the Trinity Road Primary School. The proposed expansion will ensure that more local children can access a local school place. It will provide more places to meet the growing demand in the area and will enable parents to gain a place for their child at a school rated 'Good' by Ofsted (last inspected in May 2020). It is strongly supported by the School's Governing Body and senior leadership, who recognise the organisational advantages that moving to two forms of entry would deliver for future pupils.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that the school will grow on a phased basis, as it admits up to 15 additional pupils into its Reception Year cohort from September 2024. The school could be expected to reach its full capacity of 420 places in September 2030.

- 3.8 The proposed expansion will require construction of two new Classrooms, a group room and toilets. The basic dining hall will be replaced with a multi-use hall – a large space with improved acoustic performance to support pupils from the schools designated hearing impaired unit for ideal learning that includes optimal thermal comfort for building occupants.
- 3.9 The school's kitchen facilities and dining area currently housed in a HORSAs (Hutting Operation for the Raising of the School-Leaving Age) building which is estimated to have been erected in the 1950s. A recent electrical condition report (July 2022) deemed the electrics unsatisfactory. In addition, a recent condition survey (October 2022) reported that the building is not insulated and only has single glazed windows so there is dampness throughout the building, cold draughts, and mould. It is not fit for purpose for children eating their school lunches. The survey outcome has condemned the building due to health and safety concerns and the unsatisfactory state of the building.
- 3.10 The new building will maintain appropriate internal temperatures, achieving low CO₂ concentration levels, performing air purging when spaces are unoccupied for excellent protection in minimising spreading of airborne infections, providing adequate fresh air and minimising cold draughts. The buildings heat will be generated through Air Source Heat Pumps. An array of energy saving devices and additional insulation ensures it has low energy use within the scope of the budget.
- 3.11 It is proposed that the works required to expand the Trinity Road School will be procured using ECC's ECF2 framework through a two-stage design and build mini competition tender process. The project will be Project Managed and Quantity Surveyed by ECC. Quality Inspectors will inspect the works to ensure the building standards are met and that Health and Safety is maintained within the school site. Throughout the design stage, the ECC Technical Team will also undertake milestone reviews of the proposals to ensure that the output will deliver the low/zero carbon design principles to satisfy Chelmsford City Council Community Infrastructure Levy funding criteria.
- 3.12 The potential impact of increasing the school's published admissions number on other local schools has been taken into account to ensure all local schools remain viable. This expansion by 15 Reception places does not fully mitigate the medium to longer term demand within central Chelmsford planning group on its own, and appropriate solutions will be delivered elsewhere within the group when it is prudent to do so, during the current 10-year forecast period. Therefore ECC does not believe this proposal will have any significant impact on other local schools.
- 3.13 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 were received.

3.14 The outcome of the consultation for expansion set out in paragraph 3.12 was considered by the Cabinet Member for Education and a decision was taken on 10 August 2021 to proceed with the publication of a Statutory Notice to effect the expansion.

4 The Statutory Notice was published on 2 September 2021, with a closing date for representations to be received of 30 September 2021. There were no responses received.

5 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

5.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Provide an equal foundation for every child
- Develop our County sustainably
- Share prosperity with everyone

5.2 Approving the recommendations in this report will have the following impact on the Council's ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030:

5.2.1 Trinity Road Primary School will benefit from a building that includes zero carbon enhancements to the specification, which will contribute to ECC's aspiration to reduce its carbon footprint, working towards its net zero targets. Any reductions saved through cost avoidance could be reinvested into resources that improve the delivery of the curriculum, thereby improving education outcomes for young people.

5.2.2 The aspiration to achieve zero carbon in the project specification is consistent with ECC's emerging commitment towards commissioning zero carbon buildings as referenced in the climate change commission report presented to ECC. The proposed Net zero enhancements will comply to the LETI (London Energy Transformation Initiative) design guide.

5.2.3 Building to the 2050 weather file helps mitigate the risks of future overheating, and the use of the weather data files enables designers to test their building models against a variety of weather scenarios and predictions for UK summer temperatures. This means buildings can be designed to be more sustainable and resilient to current and future weather conditions.

5.2.4 Considerations within the modelling process to avoid overheating and also improve energy efficiency, aligned with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance of a fabric first approach, would include, building orientation, building form, thermal mass of the building fabric, high insulation, increased airtightness, optimising solar gain and natural ventilation.

5.3 This report links to the following strategic priorities in 'Everyone's Essex':

- A strong, inclusive and sustainable economy
- A high-quality environment

- Health wellbeing and independence for all ages
- A good place for children and families to grow

6 Options

6.1 Option 1 – Agree to approve the proposal and expand Trinity Road Primary School

6.1.1 This proposal is part of the overall strategic response to meet the need for additional school places.

6.1.2 ECC's proposal to expand Trinity Road Primary School is intended to ensure that local children have the opportunity to access a local school and, as the need for these places is driven by demand that already exists within the town, these children will live well within walking distance of the School and a safe walking route must already exist for them to get there on foot, bicycle or scooter. However, ECC has dedicated officers who assist schools in drawing up travel plans, and this resource will be available to the School should it need to mitigate the impact of additional children travelling to the site by car.

6.1.3 On balance it is considered desirable to expand Trinity Road Primary School for the educational benefits this will bring (for example, the removal of mixed age teaching as it will run two full classes per Year Group). Further, education funding being largely driven by pupil numbers, financial benefits can be expected to follow the expansion, in terms of the resource secured by the School to deliver the curriculum.

6.1.4 The outcome of the strategic analysis indicated that expanding Trinity Road Primary School is a viable option that represented good value for money to the Essex taxpayer.

6.1.5 Option 1 is therefore the preferred option.

6.2 Option 2 – Do nothing

6.2.1 The option to do nothing is not practicable. This report identifies a growing need for primary school places within central Chelmsford, and Essex County Council is under a legal duty to make sure that a school place is available for each child within its administrative area that requires one.

6.2.2 While pupils within this area could be offered school places elsewhere in city or county, this would have outcomes contrary to ECC aims, e.g. increased traffic and CO2 emissions, reduced active travel with its associated health benefits. This approach could also result in significant home to school transport costs.

6.2.3 Accordingly, taking no action is not the recommended option.

7 Issues for consideration

7.1 Financial implications

Capital

7.1.1 Please see the confidential financial appendix for capital financial information

Revenue

7.1.2 School revenue budgets are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and are based on pupil numbers in the October prior to the start of the financial year. The DfE allows basic need growth to be funded by the Essex Formula for Funding Schools and the difference between estimated pupils and the October Census is added to the number on roll which will generate additional funding in an academic year to ensure the school has sufficient resources to provide the required number of classes. At the end of the approved growth period the school will be funded on actual pupil numbers.

7.1.3 As the school will be expanding year on year there will be the need for additional teaching and support staff. The recruitment process will be managed by the school's leadership team.

7.1.4 The estimated furniture and equipment costs of £22,000 will be funded from within the existing furniture and equipment revenue budget funded via the DSG

7.2 Legal implications

7.2.1 ECC has a statutory duty to commission supply of school places. ECC is responsible for funding the 'basic need' provision of additional school places in Essex at all schools, including academies.

7.2.2 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.

7.2.3 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.

7.2.4 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.

- 7.2.5 ECC is a contracting authority for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. They are required to carry out complaint procurement process when procuring works. The ECF 2 Framework is a compliant route to market provided ECC follow the terms of the call off.

8 Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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).
- 8.3 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.

9 List of Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Confidential Appendix
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Analysis

10 List of Background papers

- 10.1 Consultation document
- 10.2 Consultation letter to parents

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date 10.11.22
Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability	

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Executive Director, Children, Families and Education	10.11.22
Clare Kershaw on behalf of Helen Lincoln	
Executive Director, Corporate Services (S151 Officer)	10.11.22
[Daniel Tooke on behalf of] Nicole Wood	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	13.09.22
Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	