

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Officer Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Peter Colenutt
Title:	Head of Strategic Development
Reference:	7432

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1. The decision:

- 1.1. That unconditional approval be given to the following proposal; the publication of a public notice under Section 19 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

To make a prescribed alteration to OAKRIDGE Infant School and OAKRIDGE Junior School, Oakridge Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 5RR (category of schools – community) by enlarging the premises of the schools, with effect from 1 September 2018.

2. Reason(s) for the decision:

- 2.1. Following local consultation, the County Council received 13 written comments regarding the proposal to enlarge the schools. In considering the responses received the County Council felt that the provision of additional school places was necessary and that comments received did not represent sufficient concern to prevent proceeding with the enlargement. The proposal to enlarge Oakridge Infant School from 210 to 270 places, and Oakridge Junior School from 240 to 360 places, with effect from 1 September 2018, should proceed to the next stage of the process.

3. Consultation

- 3.1. Formal consultation took place between 25 January and 4 March 2016. A letter was sent to consultees as detailed below and a drop-in session was held at Oakridge Infant School on 8 February 2016. The proposal was also included on the County Council's consultation website. A copy of the consultation letter is attached.
- 3.2. Letters were sent to;
- Parents of children attending Oakridge Infant School and Oakridge Junior School

- Headteacher, school staff and Governing Body of Oakridge Infant School and Oakridge Junior Schools
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of neighbouring schools
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council – Chief Executive
- Trade union representatives
- Local Dioceses
- MP – Right Honourable Maria Miller
- HCC Elected Member – Councillor Jane Frankem
- Tracey Sanders – Manager, Services for Young Children
- Residents in the local area (184 letters sent)

4. Consultation responses received

4.1. A total of 13 written comments were received. The key issues raised by consultees can be summarised as follows;

- Concerns over significant congestion on roads around the schools at the beginning and end of the school day raised by multiple consultees.
- Large volumes of traffic currently using Upton Crescent for Oakridge Infant and Junior schools drop off and collection. The road is often reduced to one driving lane. Many parents use the unused land (car park) by the Oakridge West Club for parking during drop off and pick up times and for school events, which is only accessible through Upton Crescent.
- Residents of Stratfield Road will see an increased number of parents/guardians using the street for parking. Resident states it can be a struggle to be able to move off their drive at peak times so would like to see yellow lines to stop inconsiderate parking.
- Resident of Stratfield Road advised that parents park close to the junction with Oakridge Road. Suggests double yellow lines and encouraging walking and scooting. Also suggests south entrance onto school site and to create parking on the White Ditch field.
- A parent suggested that a footpath across the playing field at the rear of the schools would allow pupils to walk/cycle to school more.
- A disabled resident commented that he often finds it difficult to park outside his house due to the school congestion.
- Damage to the side of an Upton Drive resident's property has increased as they live on the cut through to the private car park (Oakridge West Club). The resident suggests that there should be no increase to the capacity of the schools until there is an alternative arrangement for the delivery of the pupils. Also suggests other areas are considered for drop

off and another entrance developed for the school, possibly from Sherborne Road.

- A resident of Upton Crescent suggested that some consideration be given to parking being made available for parents. There is parking just across the road from the schools at the recreation ground but these are often taken up by workers at businesses at Houndmills. They suggested consideration could be given to giving parents permits to park there.
- Maria Miller, MP for Basingstoke, commented that she was in agreement to the provision of additional places being provided at the schools but urged that additional nursery places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds be provided at the Oakridge Infant and Junior Schools.
- Councillor Paul Harvey from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council commented as follows;
 - Advised there are three main streams of pedestrian access to the school, those that walk up Oakridge Road, those that cross over Sherborne Road and those that come down Upper Sherborne Road and cross over at Oakridge Road. He advised that the crossing attendant at Sherborne Road is superb and makes a huge difference to safety and were it to be considered appropriate he would listen carefully to any suggestions made about a new school gate onto Sherborne Road.
 - Has concerns about the safety of pedestrians crossing over from the north to south side of Oakridge Road. Requests a full and proper crossing of some kind to improve safety.
 - Advised that the use of the private car park land at the rear of the school site is a benefit. He would be concerned at where these vehicles may try and park when that area is not available to them. While the surface of the area is poor and the access is actually onto private land the point is that at this time significant numbers of parents use it to drop off their children and the site allows them to do so off the highway. There are a number of issues with this site that need to be monitored as it is not regulated and safety is also a concern.

5. Comments on consultation responses received

5.1. With respect to the comments received around traffic congestion there is a process that will be followed to identify issues and seek solutions. As part of the consultation process officers from Hampshire County Council attended the consultation drop-in session to explain the process in developing a School Travel Plan (STP), and to seek the community's views and concerns over parking, travel and transport that exist. These concerns have been

captured through a feedback response form whereby consultees categorised their position within the community and the comments that they have.

- 5.2. The School Travel Plan is a long-term document produced by the whole school community and any other interested/affected parties. It looks at how children, parents, staff and visitors travel to and from school, and sets out measures to;
 - Encourage and enable pupils, parents, guardians and staff to walk, scoot and cycle to school. Where this is not possible, consider public transport, car sharing or 'Park and Stride' to school.
 - Encourage and provide educational programmes relating to child travel and how this links to the environment, safety and health.
 - Improve safety.
- 5.3. Once the consultation forms have been collated and summarised, the school with the support of the School Travel Planning Team, will then survey pupils, parents and staff as to how they travel, the barriers that they may encounter, and suggestions as to improvements. Using the results of this along with responses from the principle to expand consultation the issues will be classified on behalf of the whole school community along with possible solutions.
- 5.4. The school and STP team will subsequently work with the various key stakeholders to develop an action plan to target the issues that are preventing pupils, parents and staff from using alternatives to the car. The initiatives identified will be a combination of physical measures such as scooter storage or crossing points, and 'soft' measures relating to education, promotion and enforcement. For those who have no alternative but to use the car, other options will be considered such as 'Park and Stride' sites.
- 5.5. The travel plan will link to a Transport Statement, undertaken by consultants, using additional data acquired from traffic surveys, accident data, parking beat surveys and so on. The outcomes of the Transport Statement will clearly define between measures that are essential to mitigate against the travel impact of the increase in numbers, and desirable measures that will provide a general improvement to routes to school, long term.
- 5.6. The suggested proposals will be taken back to the school community at the pre planning consultation event for further discussion, and possible adjustment, prior to submission of the planning application.
- 5.7. A review of the staff car parking numbers will be undertaken against current parking regulations and if additional places are identified as being required then they will be provided as part of the school expansion project.
- 5.8. The headteacher and governors will be fully involved in the development of the design of the new accommodation and all plans will ensure that pupils are safeguarded both during construction and through the design of the new buildings.

- 5.9. Discussions have been had with regard to the provision of more Early Years care on site. At present there is a lack of significant demand in the direct area. In addition, although there is already Early Years care provided at an on site nursery, the site does not allow for expansion of the Early Years provision at the present time.
- 5.10. The organisation of the construction phase of the project will take account of issues of access to the site and the working arrangements on site. A number of measures will be put in place to minimise disruption such as ensuring no deliveries are made to site during the beginning and end of the school day. Health and safety is a key issue for school expansion projects and will be considered at all stages.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Pupil forecasts for Oakridge Infant and Oakridge Junior Schools show numbers growing as a result of increased demand for school places from within the school's catchment area. In order to meet the County Council's statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of school places these schools need to be expanded.
- 6.2. The comments received during the consultation will be considered through the development of the school travel plan, the design process for the new school buildings and as part of the planning application process. In considering the responses received the County Council felt that the provision of additional school places was necessary and that comments received did not represent sufficient concern to prevent proceeding with the enlargement.

7. Other options considered and rejected:

- 7.1. Not to approve the proposal would mean that there are insufficient primary school places available in the school to meet the demand from within the catchment area.

8. Conflicts of interest:

- 8.1. Conflict of interest declared by an Executive Member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision:

None

9. Dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service:

None

Approved by:

Date:

18 March 2016

**Peter Colenutt, Head of Strategic Development
On behalf of the Director of Children's Services**