

Review of Secondary Education Provision in Cambridge

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **17th April 2007**

From: **Director of Planning and Development, Office of Children and Young People's Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **Not applicable** Key Decision: **No**

Purpose: **To:**

- a) **Provide a summary of the responses received to the recent consultation on secondary education provision in Cambridge and highlight key issues and concerns raised.**
- b) **Provide details of the emerging response to meeting the secondary education needs of the planned development areas in and around Cambridge.**
- c) **Outline the further work required to inform a decision by Cabinet on the strategic provision of secondary education in Cambridge at its meeting on 22nd May 2007.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is asked to consider the outcome of consultation and advise on the further work to be undertaken in response to issues raised.**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Major new housing developments in and around Cambridge are planned over the next twenty years, with over 22,000 new homes forecast. Developing the public sector infrastructure to meet the needs of these new developments represents a major challenge.
- 1.2 The scale of the forecast population growth has necessitated a strategic review of secondary school provision across the City. The review has been conducted through a first stage of discussions with key stakeholders between December 2006 and January 2007 with a more formal consultation in March 2007. A detailed background information document containing proposals for the future pattern of secondary provision in the City was circulated widely. In addition, officers attended a number of meetings at which the proposals were discussed. This paper sets out the results of the consultation and proposes further actions in response.
- 1.3 It is intended to present a further report to Cabinet on 22nd May 2007 setting out recommendations on the future provision of secondary education in Cambridge, following further analysis and review of the consultation responses.

2.0 PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

- 2.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan concentrates housing growth in and around Cambridge in a small number of large developments on the City's edge.
- 2.2 The main development areas are:
- **The Southern Fringe:** approximately 4,030 dwellings planned for areas south and to the east of Trumpington
 - **North West Cambridge:** approximately 2,930 dwellings on two development sites, either site of Huntingdon Road, with potential to expand to 5,200 dwellings.
 - **North East Fringe:** approximately 2,900 dwellings at Chesterton Sidings and the wastewater treatment works site
 - **Cambridge East:** planned in three phases: North of Newmarket Road (1,750 dwellings), North of Cherry Hinton (2,100 dwellings) and Cambridge Airport (8,150 dwellings).
- 2.3 To predict the number of secondary aged pupils arising from new developments the Council uses a multiplier of 17.5 secondary aged pupils per 100 dwellings. This figure is reduced by 7% to 16.3 maintained sector pupils per 100 dwellings in order to reflect anticipated demand for independent sector schools. It is estimated that the new developments planned for Cambridge will generate demand for approximately 4,000 maintained secondary school places.

3.0 EXISTING PROVISION IN CAMBRIDGE

3.1 There are six maintained secondary schools in Cambridge:

- Chesterton Community College
- Coleridge Community College
- Manor Community College
- The Netherhall School
- Parkside Community College
- St Bede's Inter Church School

3.2 St Bede's is a voluntary aided school and the only secondary school in Cambridgeshire with a church designation. It does not have a specified catchment and draws its intake from a wide area.

3.3 The remaining five schools provide 4135 places. At September 2006 there were 3490 11-15 year olds on roll, giving surplus capacity of 645 places. Surplus capacity has historically been concentrated at Coleridge and Manor Community Colleges, although in both cases demand for places is increasing.

3.4 In addition to these six schools, there are four maintained secondary schools outside the City that have traditionally attracted parental preference applications from families living in Cambridge. These schools are Impington Village College, Comberton Village College, Sawston Village College and Bottisham Village College. These are known collectively as the necklace Village Colleges

4.0 THE REVIEW OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CAMBRIDGE

4.1 It is evident that additional capacity will be needed in the secondary school sector to meet the demand arising from the new developments. In order to inform the response to this demand, the following principles were agreed with secondary headteachers:

- There is a continued need for the operation of catchment area
- The choices of parents should be based on issues such as ethos and specialism, not differential quality of education
- There should be minimal turbulence for young people and communities through the implementation period of the review
- The review should support the implementation of the 14-19 curriculum across the City.
- Inequalities in the school estate should be minimised
- Schools should play a central role in their communities
- The Authority should support the development of sustainable schools

4.2 Based on these principles and knowledge of the proposed new developments, consultation was undertaken in March 2007 on the proposals for secondary school provision in Cambridge to 2042

detailed below.

4.3 **Cambridge East:** The proposals were:

- A new school with capacity for up to 1,500 pupils (10 FE) established to serve the main airport development.
- Coleridge Community College designated as the catchment area school for the North of Newmarket Road development (which is expected in advance of the airport development)
- Netherhall School designated as the catchment school for the North of Cherry Hinton development.

4.4 **North West Cambridge:** A new 600 place (4FE) school established within the development area with potential for expansion to 900 places (6FE) if required, recognising the potential for further housing development.

4.5 **Southern Fringe:** A new 900 place (6FE) school established, initially with 600 places (4FE) on the preferred site close to Fawcett Primary School to serve the needs of the new development and act as the catchment area school for Fawcett Primary School and Morley Memorial Primary School. Morley Memorial Primary School would move from the catchment of Coleridge Community College in order to provide capacity for Coleridge to offer places to young people from the North of Newmarket Road development.

4.6 **North East Fringe:** Manor Community College increased in size from 2014/15 to provide up to 1200 places (8FE).

4.7 No changes to existing arrangements were proposed for Parkside Community College or Chesterton Community College or the four necklace Village Colleges.

5.0 **RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION**

5.1 A total of 51 consultation responses were received:

- Members of the public =34
- District Councils = 2
- County Councillors =1
- District Councillors =1
- Developer Representatives =4
- Schools =7

5.2 Three public consultation events were held in the last two weeks of March, and officers also attended the following meetings:

The Morley Memorial School's Association
Sawston Village College Governing Body
Principal and governor representatives of Bottisham Village College
Principal and governor representatives of Netherhall School
South Cambridgeshire in Your Patch

Cambridge City Environment Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 The responses covered a wide range of issues and are summarised below. All will receive detailed replies.

5.4 **Methodology for Calculating School Places**

5.4.1 Three responses on behalf of developers expressed concern that the methodology used in the review to forecast future pupil numbers overstates the demand for school places. The Council's Demographer has considered the developers' evidence and considers that the projections, which informed the proposals on which consultation was undertaken, remain valid and should continue to be used, whilst recognising the need to keep the housing mix of the proposed developments under review.

5.4.2 An educational consultant working for one of the developers has proposed the creation of a policy framework for secondary school provision that would set out how the demand for places is calculated, how existing surplus places are taken into account, how financial contributions are calculated and their timing, the treatment of land contributions and the equalisation mechanism to be used to reflect the value of land and how contributions are adjusted following implementation and monitoring of the developments.

5.4.3 Such a framework would have merit, if only to bring together existing policy and practice. It is proposed that work is started to develop such a document, and that further detailed discussions are held with developers with a view to reaching an agreed baseline from which to future demand.

5.5 **Changes to catchment for Morley Memorial Primary School**

5.5.1 The proposal to designate Morley Memorial Primary School as a partner primary for the new school proposed for the Southern Fringe development attracted most comment, with the majority of the respondents being parents. All respondents who expressed a view on this issue, including Morley Memorial Primary School and the Parkside Federation, supported the retention of the existing catchment arrangement with Coleridge Community College. The City Council also requested that the implications of this proposal be reviewed.

5.5.2 The proposed change in catchment arrangements was derived from the need to identify a catchment school for the North of Newmarket Road development, where building work is anticipated taking place from 2009/10. Coleridge was identified as the most suitable City catchment school for the development in terms of proximity and as a pragmatic response to ensuring there were sufficient places available to meet the forecast need from this development.

5.5.3 Objectors to the proposal referred to the potentially destabilising

impact on Coleridge particularly in the longer term, concerns over the distance and the perceived difficulty of the journey to the Southern Fringe school, the loss of the strong links between Coleridge and the local community around Morley Memorial and the lack of a natural community link between Coleridge and the North of Newmarket Road development.

5.5.4 Two alternative options have emerged from the consultation process.

1. Establish two smaller secondary schools to serve the Cambridge East development with one school opening earlier to serve the North of Newmarket Road development and the Abbey Ward of Cambridge. Several respondents, including the City Council, suggested this. The City Council Environment Scrutiny Committee also asked the Council to consider the merits of the Park and Ride site at Greenhouse Farm for a new small secondary school to serve the new development and the Abbey Ward.
2. Expand Bottisham Village College from 1050 pupils (7FE) to 1200 pupils (8FE) in order to accommodate some of the projected demand for school places from the North of Newmarket Road development.

5.5.5 Both proposals have the potential to reduce the need for a catchment area change for Morley Memorial School and are judged to merit further evaluation. This work is being undertaken in order to inform a recommendation to Cabinet for its 22nd May 2007 meeting.

5.6 **Southern Fringe Secondary School**

5.6.1 Any change to the proposal that Morley Memorial School become a partner primary school to the planned Southern Fringe secondary school obviously has an impact on this school's planned size. Rather than a 900 place (6FE) school, a 750 place or 5FE school would be required. However, it would be prudent for the preferred school site to have capacity for 6FE in order to provide some potential for future expansion.

5.6.2 Countryside Properties PLC, one of the principal developers for the Southern Fringe, are amongst the developers who have expressed concerns over the methodology used to predict future demand for school places. Whilst making clear that they consider the proposal for a new school in the Southern Fringe area to be reasonable, they believe there is a considerable risk of the school being undersubscribed.

5.6.3 As an alternative, they suggest that expanding Netherhall by 450 places (3FE) to 11FE (1650 places) and St Bede's by 1FE to 6FE (900 places) would provide sufficient places to meet anticipated need. This would have significant transport implications; much of the development area is over three miles from Netherhall. It leaves South

West Cambridge with comparatively poor access to secondary education. In addition St Bede's operates without a catchment area and has expressed a firm desire to remain at its current size.

- 5.6.4 Sawston Village College also expressed concern over the proposal to establish a secondary school in the Southern Fringe. The College noted that its numbers on roll are forecast to drop to 968 by 2016/17 when the school has potential to accommodate 1350 and could be expanded to 1500 places. The College considers that it could accommodate all the children from the Southern Fringe development and that measures could be taken to address transport concerns.

5.7 **North West Cambridge**

- 5.7.1 Both developers, the University of Cambridge and David Wilson Estates have expressed concern at the proposal to establish a new secondary school in the North West Cambridge development. Planning secondary education provision for this development is recognised as problematic, the potential for the development to grow has to be taken into account and the existing configuration of secondary schools in north Cambridge makes change to catchment areas difficult.

- 5.7.2 In addition to raising concerns over the methodology for predicting demand for secondary provision, the University make the case for more detailed work to be undertaken to determine the optimum location for the proposed new secondary school in north Cambridge, including expansion of the Manor School and the development of a new school on the North East Fringe.

- 5.7.3 The close proximity of Manor Community College and Chesterton Community College limits scope for responding to new demand for secondary school places in North Cambridge but it is accepted that all options need to be considered in detail. This work is underway and will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting in May.

5.8 **Other Issues Raised During the Consultation**

- 5.8.1 Whilst responses have focussed on the more controversial proposals contained within the review a range of other issues have been raised that should be brought to the attention of Cabinet.

5.8.2 **Post-16 Provision**

A number of respondents expressed the view that the review should have covered provision spanning the 11-19 age range. Separate discussion is taking place with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Collegiate Board on the planning of 16+ provision to meet the needs of the new developments.

5.8.3 **Size and design of new schools**

A number of respondents, particularly those expressing concerns over the proposed change to Morley Memorial Primary School's catchment area consider smaller secondary schools of 600 places (4FE) preferable to larger schools. Only one respondent made the case for larger schools. The proposals for school size featured in the review have been based on the estimated local demand for school places rather than an optimum school size. However, it is recognised that there is a need for a clearer policy statement on the range of school size at both primary and secondary phases and this will be developed through the CYPS Planning and Development SDG.

The City Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee expressed the view that new schools should be designed as a minimum to BREEAM excellent standards. An announcement from DfES on future standards for school design is expected shortly, which will inform further consideration of this issue.

5.8.4 Diversity of provision and parental preference

One respondent expressed concern at the access to denominational secondary education given the projected population growth and the fact that St Bede's was not planned to expand. Whilst not pre-empting the future competition for prospective promoters of the proposed new secondary schools, further consideration will be given as to how an increased demand for denominational education in Cambridgeshire can be best met.

Another expressed concern at the impact of the reduction in spare capacity within the secondary sector. It was noted that the current spare capacity, although concentrated in two schools, provides an enhanced level of parental choice for secondary schools. A significant reduction on spare capacity also potentially reduces the choices available to parents, particularly those living outside of the catchment area of a school. This needs to be balanced against the duty to keep surplus places under review, and take action to remove spare places where possible.

5.8.5 Investment in existing schools

Chesterton Community College set out its case for rebuilding and refurbishment of the school and expressed concerns about the impact of new schools being built. It is recognised that there is a case for capital investment in the Chesterton site but will need to be considered in the context of needs elsewhere in the County.

The College also noted that it was considering whether it should reduce the school's intake to 180 from 210 and thus its operational capacity from 1050 to 900 places. Officers will work with the school on both issues.

5.8.6 Revenue funding impact

Each new school will open with pupil numbers well below capacity and require a significantly higher level of per pupil funding in order to deliver the curriculum. Whilst this may to an extent be mitigated by collaborative working with other schools there will be a pressure on the secondary funding quantum as a result of new schools opening. The need for national recognition of this issue has been raised formally with DfES. The current national consultation on school funding proposes the establishment of a mechanism for increasing funding to authorities with exceptional local circumstances.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Officers are in the process of completing a comprehensive revenue assessment of the Structure Plan developments to inform future decision-making in respect of the funding of new schools. The work undertaken to date has been based on the option of establishing three new secondary schools in the City: one in the Southern Fringe, one in the North West Fringe and one in Cambridge East.
- 6.2 Further financial modelling work will be undertaken to determine both the revenue and capital consequences of establishing two smaller schools in Cambridge East, which would, in turn, reduce the planned size of the Southern Fringe secondary school.
- 6.3 The revenue effects of establishing the proposed new schools would be reduced if they were to open under a formal federation with an existing school along the model of the Parkside/Coleridge Federation. There have been very preliminary discussions with some of the existing schools to explore this option. However, It must be borne in mind that under education legislation, all new schools are subject to competition regulations and it is not possible, therefore, to make any firm predictions of future federation arrangements.
- 6.4 Negotiations with the developers in respect of S106 contributions are proceeding on the basis of the requirement for additional places. Provision for children as a result of changes to catchment area would need to be met from the County Council's own resources.
- 6.5 There would be long-term financial consequences to the County Council if it were decided to provide for some children from the new developments at one or more of the necklace Village Colleges. As the distances involved are beyond the three-mile statutory walking distance, the County would need to provide free transport. The cost of a bus pass for use on a service bus is £580 per pupil per year from September 2007.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The matching of demand and supply for secondary school places involves the management of significant risks.
- 7.2 Sites have yet to be secured for the required new schools with

developers in the Southern Fringe and North West Fringe developments disputing the need for such provision. This will need to be resolved through further negotiation with developers in liaison with City, District and Council planning officers in the next year in order for design and building to be completed to allow the schools to open on time.

- 7.3 All new schools will be established under the new competition regulations of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This will significantly extend the lead-in time necessary to complete all of the statutory processes governing the establishment of new schools, it may prove necessary to commence the competition process before all the site details are finalised in order to ensure that the schools open at the earliest point possible to serve the new developments.
- 7.4 There are significant risks to project delivery; developers may vary completion rates/housing densities in response to market conditions. The council has a limited ability to finance the capital costs ahead of Section 106 funding being made available at the agreed trigger points. In addition planning permission and discharge of conditions for new and expanded schools will need to be achieved so that there is no impact upon the construction programme.
- 7.5 The new schools will be designed at a time of considerable change in the way that teaching and learning are delivered. School design will need to ensure the flexible use of space to ensure that buildings continue to meet the educational needs of young people educated in 30 years time.
- 7.6 New or expanded secondary schools offer considerable potential for hosting or providing a range of services to the local community. An extended range of services provided from schools can have significant benefits to young people and their community as well as potentially reducing the capital cost of new developments. There is a risk that this potential is not realised. Further work to explore options for the co-location of services with schools and the operating arrangements involved is being undertaken.