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Agenda Item No.6(r)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

11 March 2021

Report of the Executive Director for Children's Services

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF MICKLEY INFANT SCHOOL TO A PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of Report

To report the outcome of the non-statutory consultation on the growth of Mickley Infant School to primary status and seek permission to proceed to the issue of a Statutory Notice.

2. Information and Analysis

Mickley Infant and Nursery School currently provides education for children aged 3 to 7 years. The school was designed as an infant only site to accommodate 40 infant age pupils and a 20 place nursery. The nursery numbers are fluid dependent on the number of reception children already in school as the class is run as an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit. The school also offers 30 hour funded places for those parents who can access this. The core facilities (hall and dining) accommodate their existing pupils. There is no library or separate physical education facility.

The expansion of the school would support the housing development in the locality with land potentially being available next to the school or at the rear of the school as it backs onto farmland.

The school and local community recognises and supports the need for the expansion of the age range to become a primary school and last year a petition in support of the expansion was forwarded to the

Cabinet Member for Young People. Currently most children attend Shirland Primary School for their junior provision.

The estate where Mickley Infant & Nursery School is situated has poor public transport links and this is exacerbated by the fact that the bus that they currently use has been stopped in the evenings. Historically, the parents have organised and funded this but it is no longer financially viable. As a result, parents are struggling to ensure that their children arrive and return from Shirland Primary School in time for the school day. As a response to this, Mickley Infant School has been forced to shorten its school day as parents could not be in two places at once.

There is a planning application for 120 dwellings in the normal area of the school which would yield an additional 24 primary school aged children. Shirland Primary School is unable to expand any further and following the DfE Building Bulletin 103 guidance on accommodation requirements, Mickley Infant School has space to become a Primary School with a pupil admission number of 10 and a capacity of 70.

A non-statutory consultation took place between 24th September 2020 and 12 November 2020 to seek the views of interested parties before reporting to Cabinet and a copy of that consultation paper is attached at Appendix A.

There were 34 responses to the consultation all of which supported the expansion. There were common themes to the comments and therefore they have been grouped together.

General

- 21 respondents simply provided general support for the proposal as being in the best interests of children, the school and the community.

Quality

- 9 respondents expressed satisfaction at the quality of the existing school provision and would welcome the opportunity to continue their child's education there if the school were a primary.

Continuity

- 8 respondents identified that by extending the schools age range, the children would have continuity in learning and relationships with school staff

Transportation

25 respondents expressed concerns around distance and travel; numerous features were cited in particular:

- 11 respondents reported their concern for having no means of transportation and the current poor transportation links
- 3 respondents highlighted current safety concerns around travelling on foot to the alternate primary provision
- 17 respondents noted their struggles, pressures or upcoming concerns in getting siblings of differing ages to different schools that are not close in distance

Summary – The consultation demonstrated overwhelming support for proceeding with the conversion of the school to a primary. The next stage of the consultation process is to issue a Statutory Notice, a copy of which is attached at Appendix B. The consultation on the Statutory Notice would take place over a 4 week period from 19th April 2021 to 18th May 2021. The outcome of that consultation will be reported to Cabinet.

3. Financial Considerations

A feasibility has been instructed for the additional accommodation which could be phased. The cost of the expansion will be confirmed once the design has been agreed however it is expected that the first phase would be in the region of £1M. Funding will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

4. Legal Consideration

The proposal is subject to the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and the Department for Education guidance publication - Making significant changes ('prescribed alteration') to maintained schools published in October 2018. Although there is no longer a prescribed 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alterations, there is a strong expectation on schools and the Local Authority to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication as part of a duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations. The non-statutory consultation took place between 24th September and 12th November 2019 which was a 6 week period to take account of the 1 week half term break and extended due to Covid 19.

5. Property Considerations

Mickley Infant School is owned by Derbyshire County Council. The works will be procured and carried out through County Property.

6. Social Value considerations

The Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient places for the pupils in the County and this conversion will address the needs of the parish of Mickley. A primary school is able to organise and co-ordinate the teaching across the primary phase, and there is no need for a transition between infant and junior schools; the transition from infant to junior can be unsettling for some children and impact on educational progress, parents may have children in both infant and junior schools at separate locations thus presenting travel and time issues in getting children to school.

7. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: Prevention of Crime & Disorder, Equality of Opportunity and Environmental, Health, Human Resources and Transport Considerations.

8. Background Papers

These are held on file in the Children's Services Development Section and County Property.

9. Key Decision

No.

10. Call-in. Is it necessary for the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed in this report?

No.

11. Strategic Director's Recommendations

To consider the outcome of the non-statutory consultation and to approve the issue of the Statutory Notice for the conversion of Mickley School to a Primary whilst planning and funding is sought.

Jane Parfremment, Executive Director for Children's Services

Appendix A

The proposed conversion of Mickley Infant School to a Primary School

Mickley Infant and Nursery School currently provides education for children aged 3 to 7 years. The school was designed as an Infant only site to accommodate 40 infant age pupils and a 20 place nursery. The nursery numbers are fluid dependent on the number of Reception children already in school as the class is run as an Early Years Foundation Unit. The school also offers 30 hour funded places for those parents who can access this. The core facilities (hall and dining) accommodate their existing pupils. There is no library or separate physical education facility. The expansion of the school would support the housing development in the locality with land potentially being available next to the school or at the rear of the school backing as it backs onto farmland.

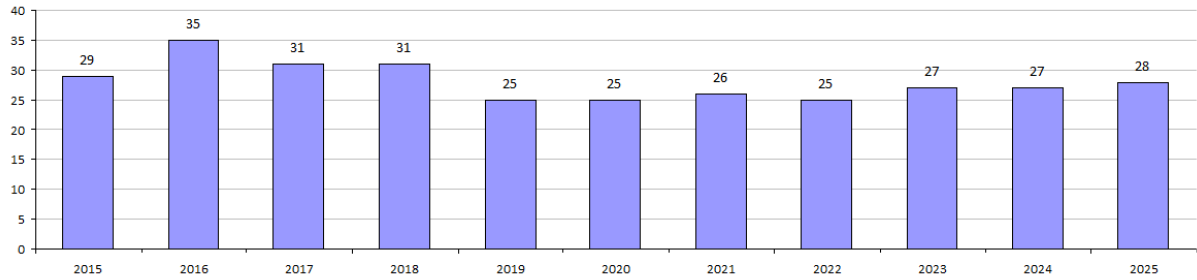
The school and local community recognise and support the need for the expansion of the age range to become a primary school and last year a petition in support of the expansion was forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Young People. Currently most children attend Shirland Primary School for their junior provision.

The estate where Mickley Infant & Nursery School is situated has poor public transport links and this is exacerbated by the fact that the bus that they currently use has been stopped in the evenings (The parents historically have organised and funded this, but it is no longer financially viable). Due to this, children who have siblings that attend Shirland Primary School will be struggling at the start and end of each school day. As a response to this, Mickley Infant school has been forced to shorten its school day as parents cannot be in two places at once.

There is a planning application for 120 dwellings, which would yield an additional 24 primary school aged children. Shirland Primary School is unable to expand any further and according to Building Bulletin 103, Mickley Infant School has space to become a Primary School with a pupil admission number of 10 and a capacity of 70.

The current projections are shown below:

Historic NOR and Projections



The planning area projections are:

Dfee	SchoolName	SchoolStatus	PAN	Capacity	NOR	ProjYr1	ProjYr2	ProjYr3	ProjYr4	ProjYr5
2314	Mickley Infant School	Community	20	40	25	26	25	27	27	28
2223	Shirland Primary School	Community	20	199	195	193	183	175	180	179
2266	Wessington Primary School	Community	10	70	74	72	68	71	78	82

Shirland Primary School and Wessington Primary school are both on restricted sites and unable to expand any further. There is currently a scheme to increase the capacity at Shirland Primary School which increases the pupil admission number to 30, funded primarily by S106 however this will be limit of expansion.

In order to enable Mickley Infant and Nursery School to progress into a Primary School with a pupil admission number of 10, the following accommodation would be required:

Two 55 sqm KS2 classrooms

Two KS2 toilets

Staffroom

Group Room

Catering have confirmed that the existing infrastructure would be able to accommodate the additional numbers.

If this consultation indicates that there is continued support for the conversion, the proposal will be to submit a request to commence the process for a statutory consultation to increase the age range of Mickley Infant school from 7 to 11 thus changing the status from an infant school to primary school.

Under normal circumstances, this non statutory consultation would run for 4 weeks however given the issues relating to Covid 19, to give interested parties longer to consider the proposal, it will run for 6 weeks in term time from Thursday 24th September to Thursday 12th November.

Please email your thoughts on this proposal to jenny.webster@derbyshire.gov.uk or alternatively hand them into the school office in a sealed envelope marked CONSULTATION for the attention of Jenny Webster (Childrens Services).

Appendix B

Statutory Notice for the Proposal by Derbyshire County Council for the Conversion of Mickley Infant School to a Primary School.

Notice is given in accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alteration to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulation 2013 that Derbyshire County Council, Smedley Street, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG intends to make a prescribed alteration to Mickley Infant School, 6 Milton Avenue, Stretton, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 6GG.

It is proposed that the age range changes from 4 – 7 to 4 – 11

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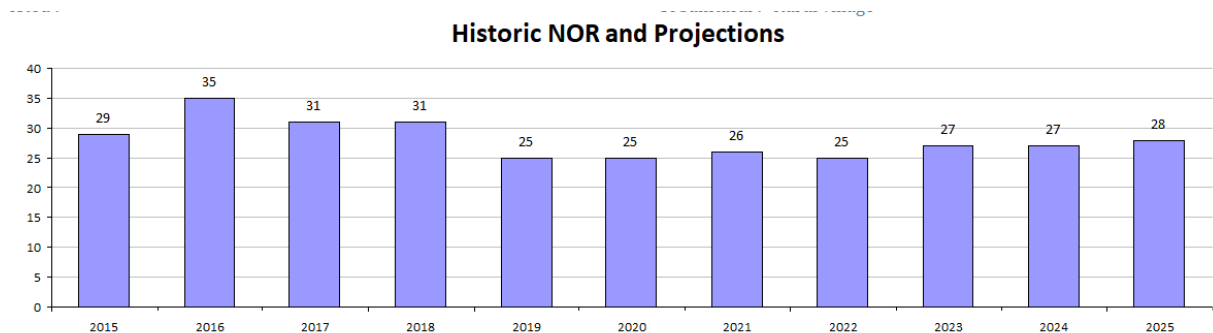
In earlier consultation the school and local community have recognised and supported the need for the expansion of the age range to become a primary school and last year a petition in support of the expansion was forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Young People.

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In order to enable Mickley Infant and Nursery School to progress into a Primary School with a pupil admission number of 10, the following accommodation would be required:

- Two 55 sqm KS2 classrooms
- Two KS2 toilets
- Staffroom
- Group Room

Once the consultation is concluded, the outcome will be reported to Cabinet.

The consultation on this proposal will be from 19th April 2021 to 18th May 2021.

The consultation document is available on the Derbyshire County Council website at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have-your-say or by request from Jenny Webster on Tel: 01629 536537 or by e-mail to jenny.webster@derbyshire.gov.uk

Within four weeks of the publication of this notice, any person may object to or comment on the proposal by writing to the address or by sending an e-mail to the contact details below.

Jenny Webster , Assistant Education Officer, Block C, Chatsworth Hall,
Chesterfield Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3FW or
jenny.webster@derbyshire.gov.uk

The deadline for receiving responses is Tuesday 18th May 2021.

Head of Development

Date of Publication