

Committee/Meeting: Cabinet	Date: 13 March 2013	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: CAB 86/123
Report of: Corporate Director Education, Social Care & Wellbeing Originating officer(s) Pat Watson, Head of Building Development		Title: Woolmore School – Proposed Expansion Wards Affected: Blackwall & Cubitt Town	

Lead Member	Cllr Oliur Rahman
Community Plan Theme	A Prosperous Community
Strategic Priority	Priority 3.1: Support lifelong learning opportunities for all

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report explains the background to the proposals and informs Cabinet of the consultation that has taken place to date. The report recommends that statutory proposals are now published for the enlargement of the school.

2. DECISIONS REQUIRED

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report;
- 2.2 Agree that statutory proposals should be published for the enlargement of Woolmore Primary School to admit 90 pupils in each year from September 2014.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 Proposals have been developed to expand Woolmore Primary School to assist in the LA's programme to provide primary school places to meet growing local need. Initial consultation on the proposals has been held. Cabinet is asked to consider the proposed expansion, the response to the initial consultation and the recommendation that statutory proposals for the expansion should be published. The publication of statutory proposals is required in order to implement this change to the school.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 In order to meet the rising need for school places, the Council has implemented a number of school expansion projects and continues to develop further schemes to meet need. Longer term development plans for the borough include proposals for new primary schools. However, further expansion proposals are needed to keep pace with the need, so taking no action would leave the Council at risk of being unable to discharge its statutory functions. The options for expansion have been considered having regard to the factors set out in paragraphs 6.9 to 6.11 of the report.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 On 5 September 2012 the Mayor in Cabinet received a report Planning to Meet the Growth Requirement for School Places 2012 – 2022. This set out the projected need for school places and actions in place to meet the need. There is a steeply rising need for additional primary and secondary school places.
- 5.2 Woolmore Primary School is in Woolmore Street, E14 . At present it admits 30 pupils in each year group (1 form of entry) and has a maximum capacity of 210 pupils, plus a nursery class. There is a rising need for primary school places in the borough. The greatest pressure for admission to primary schools is being experienced in the central and eastern areas of the borough. The Local Authority has to ensure that there are sufficient school places available to meet the needs of the population.
- 5.3 The development of Woolmore School has been considered as part of the Blackwall Reach Regeneration. The increase in school places will provide for residents of the new homes in the Blackwall Reach area as well as contributing to the overall extra places required in the borough.

6. BODY OF REPORT

Decision-making on school expansion proposals

- 6.1 There is a statutory framework for implementing certain alterations to schools, including enlargements. The requirements are included in the Education & Inspections Act 2006 with associated regulations. For community schools, the Local Authority (LA) can propose certain alterations, including enlargements.
- 6.2 The prescribed process requires a two stage consultation process. The initial, pre-statutory consultation should provide information on the proposals and include a wide range of consultees. The outcome of

this stage is then considered and, if the LA agrees, statutory proposals are published for a specified period (usually four weeks). After this period, the LA must consider any responses to the second consultation and decide whether or not to implement the proposals, or modify them in the light of the consultation.

- 6.3 There is a right of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator for certain parties against the LA's decision.
- 6.4 The timetable for the process is shown in paragraph 6.31, taking into account the legal requirements of the consultation and decision-making process.

THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

- 6.5 The report referred to above, Planning to Meet the Growth Requirement for School Places 2012 – 2022, included details of the need for additional primary school places and options considered to meet the need.
- 6.6 The LA keeps the need for additional school places under regular review to ensure that there are sufficient places to meet need. Annual school roll information is used to project the need for places in future years. The projection methodology takes into account the trend in school rolls, actual birth data and population projections. This information is compared with data on the capacity of existing schools and the extent of unfilled places in schools in order to assess if additional capacity has to be planned for, or if there is excess capacity which can be reduced.
- 6.7 The LA has been experiencing pressure on admission to Reception year particularly in the areas in the centre and east of the borough where new residential development has been taking place. Options continue to be developed to meet the steeply rising need for additional places.
- 6.8 The position for the current year and in the medium term is as follows:

	Places available 2012/13	
Reception	3,416	
	January 2013 projected roll	January 2015 projected roll
Reception	3,370	3,537
Total R-Y6	21,563	23,629

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL SITES FOR EXPANSION

- 6.9 The Local Development Framework and Core Strategy indicated that some new primary schools are likely to be required, even after allowing for some schools which are not now completely full and that some schools could be expanded on their existing sites. In managing the best use of its assets and the available finance, the LA has first considered which of the existing school sites could be expanded. Proposals have been or are being implemented to expand a number of primary schools and further options will continue to be investigated.
- 6.10 In identifying potential sites for expansion, the following factors have been considered:
- the physical capacity of the existing site and buildings to be expanded;
 - the location of the school – is it in an area where the need is rising;
 - the practical implications of the scheme – can it be implemented with an acceptable level of disruption to the school;
- 6.11 In addition to the above factors, in taking the decision to proceed with the proposals at any site, the LA will consider the strength of the individual school, its popularity and success, and its capacity to adapt to the increase in size.
- 6.12 Having regard to all these factors, expansion at WoolmoreSchool is considered a suitable option as set out below.

Woolmore School

- 6.13 The potential for WoolmoreSchool to be expanded was identified some time ago as the Blackwall Reach regeneration project was developed. It was recognised that the area wide development proposal gave the opportunity to consider the expansion of the school at the heart of the community. The expanded school will not only provide extra school places for residents of Blackwall Reach (now and of the new homes to be provided) but also contribute to the overall supply of school places in the borough.
- 6.14 The proposals for WoolmoreSchool have been developed in association with the area redevelopment and so a strategic approach to the best use of available land has been possible. In order to facilitate the expansion of the school, additional land is to be incorporated into the school site. To the east of the existing school, the site of the former health centre in Robin Hood Lane is to be incorporated into the school site. Following development of the residential blocks to the west of the school site, Bullivant Street will be closed and the area incorporated into the school site. These areas of additional land enable the school to be expanded from 1FE to 3FE and provide sufficient play area.

- 6.15 A planning application for the new school building was submitted in late December. Following detailed feasibility work, it is proposed to completely rebuild the school as it did not prove feasible to extend the existing building. Subject to planning permission and the statutory proposals, work will start in spring 2013.
- 6.16 Consultation meetings were held with governors and parents during the feasibility stage of the school design. The response supported the rebuilding option which is now proposed.
- 6.17 It is proposed that the new building will be constructed on the Robin Hood Lane site. This enables the school to remain in its existing building until the new building is completed. The school will then decant into the new building and the old school building will be demolished to create the play area.
- 6.18 The proposal has been developed in consultation with the Headteacher and governing body who support the proposal.

Funding Implications

- 6.19 The overall Blackwall Reach scheme will contribute s. 106 funding of £14.48m in total. Within this, £6.4m is identified for the provision of school places. The s. 106 funding is profiled over a number of years as the development is implemented in phases. It is therefore proposed to fully fund the school project from the DfE Basic Need grant and then apply the s. 106 receipt for subsequent school places schemes when available.
- 6.20 A capital estimate for this scheme of £10m was adopted by Cabinet on 5 September 2012.
- 6.21 Additional revenue funding will be provided to the school through the LA's funding formula.

Implementation of the Expansion

- 6.22 It is proposed that the increase should take effect from September 2014, subject to the approval of the statutory proposals. This means that the first increased year group of 90 will be admitted in September 2014. The school will have three nursery classes.
- 6.23 It is proposed to admit the extra pupils to the school at reception year only until all year groups are full to three forms of entry. This will mean that the school has time to gradually adapt to the increase in size and introduce any new management arrangements as the pupil numbers increase.

CONSULTATION

- 6.24 The initial consultation period was from 7 January to 1 February 2013. The proposed building design was on display in the school for parents and children to see. Pupils were consulted about the proposals. A copy of the consultation paper issued is included as Appendix A. The consultation paper was sent to:
- all parents and carers of children now at Woolmore School
 - all staff at Woolmore School
 - all governors of Woolmore School
 - all headteachers and chairs of governors of primary schools in Tower Hamlets
 - all councillors in Tower Hamlets
 - local MPs
 - the London Boroughs of Newham and Hackney
 - the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the Westminster Diocese Education Service
 - local trades unions
- 6.25 Consultation meetings were held to discuss the proposals with parents.
- 6.26 The overall response to the proposed expansion of the school was positive. The consultation paper included a form to return and the analysis of those returned is as follows:

For	Against
57	0

- 6.27 Two parents' meetings were held at the school during the consultation period. The response from parents who attended these meetings was positive and they welcomed the proposal to invest in the school and generally saw this as positive for their children and the area. At the parents' meetings there were questions and discussion on a number of issues which were responded to by the LA officers and the headteacher in the meetings:
- impact on the playground during the works
 - how will the school be affected by the works on site

FURTHER ACTION NOW PROPOSED FOR WOOLMORE SCHOOL

- 6.28 The consultation that has been conducted complies with the requirements of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 and the Secretary of State's guidance on consultation. The outcome of the consultation has been reviewed and there is support for the proposals.
- 6.29 The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to agree to publication of statutory proposals for the expansion of Woolmore Primary School. The statutory proposals will be published in East End Life and made available at the school. Any comments or representations on the

proposals should be submitted to the Council by the end of the four week period.

6.30 If there are no objections to the statutory proposals in the four week period, the decision to implement will be dealt with by the Corporate Director, Education, Social Care & Wellbeing in accordance with the scheme of delegation. If there are objections to the proposals, the decision will be referred to Cabinet.

6.31 The timetable for the process for each school is set out below:

Cabinet receives a report on the initial consultation and decides on publishing formal statutory proposals	13 March 2013
Statutory proposals published with 4 weeks allowed for comments	18 March – 12 April 2013
The decision will be taken to implement the proposals either by the Council's Cabinet if there are objections; or, if there are no objections, by the Corporate Director, Education, Social Care & Wellbeing	By 11 June 2013
Building works commence	Spring 2013
Additional pupils admitted to Reception year	September 2014

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

7.1 This report concerns the formal process for consulting about and deciding on the expansion of the school. The capital works for Woolmore School are due to cost £10m in total, with most of the work taking place during 2013/14 financial year. The £10m is reflected in the CSF capital programme, as approved at Cabinet on 5 September 2012. The difference in timing between the expected receipt of S106 monies and the payments associated with this capital project partly supported by S106 monies is noted

7.2 Future revenue costs of the expanded school will be funded through the school enrolling more pupils and attracting more formula funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant. Schools are generally funded on the number of pupils on roll in the October prior to the start of the financial year. So, the growth of Woolmore School each new academic year will need to be taken into account when Schools Forum considers how much to set aside for Pupil Number Growth within the overall Schools Budget for future years (ie to meet the part-year (7/12ths) costs of additional pupils from September – March of the financial year).

8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 8.1. One of the Council's duties in respect of education is to secure that sufficient schools are available for primary and secondary education in Tower Hamlets. This obligation arises under section 14 of the Education Act 1996. The schools must be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of appropriate education.
- 8.2. In deciding what provision to make in respect of primary and secondary schools, the Council is required to consider the need to secure diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice. This sits alongside the Council's general equality duty, which requires it to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Equalities analysis will need to be carried out alongside the development of proposals.
- 8.3. Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that where a local authority proposes to make prescribed alterations to a maintained school, it must publish its proposals. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 ("the Prescribed Alterations Regulations") specify what alterations made by local authorities are prescribed alterations and specify the procedure to be followed when publishing and determining such proposals. The enlargement of a school's premises so as to increase the school's capacity by: (a) more than 30 pupils; and (b) 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser) is a prescribed alteration. The proposals described in this report fall within that definition so the procedure in the Prescribed Alterations Regulations must be followed.
- 8.4. The Prescribed Alterations Regulations require the Council to follow a two stage process involving consultation prior to publication of a proposal, followed (assuming the Council wishes to proceed) by publication of the proposal. As part of the initial consultation, prescribed information must be provided to prescribed persons. The Council is required to have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance as to consultation on proposals. The guidance recommends that the consultation allows adequate time, provides sufficient information for those being consulted to form a considered view and makes clear how the views can be made known. Proposers must be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the views expressed during the consultation in reaching any subsequent decision as to the publication of proposals. The report states that consultation complies with the requirements of the Regulations and guidance and so the Council is in a position to determine whether to publish a proposal.

- 8.5. The Prescribed Alterations Regulations prescribe what information must be specified in a proposal and how it should be publicised. The proposal should be published within a reasonable timeframe following consultation so that it is informed by up to date feedback. A statutory notice containing specified information and stating how complete copies of the proposals can be obtained must be published in a local newspaper, and also posted at the main entrance to the school (and all the entrances if there are more than one) and at some other conspicuous place in the area served by the school (eg. local library, community centre). It is essential that the published notice complies with the statutory requirements as set out in the Regulations.
- 8.6. Paragraph 6.19 of the report refers to funding from the S106 Agreement on the Blackwall Reach project. Members are advised that whilst there is nothing to suggest that project will not go ahead the S106 funding does not become payable until it does and the funding is staged throughout the development. As this project is to be funded from the Basis Need Capital Grant from the Government the timing of the receipt of s106 moneys from Blackwall Reach will not impact on this project

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1. The expansion of schools is necessary to ensure the Council meets its legal obligation to secure sufficient schools for Tower Hamlets, but will also promote equality of opportunity for children and young people (including within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010).
- 9.2. The provision of school places and the LA's admission arrangements aim to promote fair access to schools particularly in terms of the distance from home and to allow siblings to attend the same school.
- 9.3. The new building will be fully accessible which will enhance the range of provision available in mainstream schools for children with physical disabilities. The school will be inclusive for children with special education needs.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 The design of the building and materials proposed to be used for Woolmore School have taken account of sustainability and energy efficiency. Products to be chosen will offer significant energy saving values; insulation products that have an approved environmental profile; and timber from certified sustainable sources.
- 10.2 The design must comply with Building Regulations, Part L which has strict guidelines in respect of carbon emission levels and energy efficiency.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The project at Woolmore School has a high capital value and close monitoring of the project through the preparatory stages is in place and will continue through implementation stages with appropriate, experienced project management resources. If the proposals do not proceed, there will be a risk to be managed that some children will be without a school place local to their home.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no specific implications arising.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 13.1 The Council is using its assets efficiently by seeking to extend and expand existing school sites to meet the needs of the rising school age population before acquiring land to build a new school

14. APPENDICES

Appendix A – WoolmoreSchoolConsultation Document

**Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information)
(England) Regulations 2012**

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

Brief description of “background papers”

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.

none

N/A

LB TOWER HAMLETS

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO EXPAND WOOLMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

In Tower Hamlets there is a rising school age population. The Council has to ensure there are sufficient school places so that all resident children can attend school locally. As part of the regeneration of the Blackwall Reach area, the Council has developed a proposal to expand Woolmore School by building a new school.

This will allow Woolmore School to increase from 30 pupils in each year to 90 pupils in each year. The first additional children will be admitted from September 2014.

Consultation Process

This paper is being sent to:

- all parents and carers of children now at Woolmore School
- all staff at Woolmore School
- all governors of Woolmore School
- all headteachers and chairs of governors of primary schools in Tower Hamlets
- all councillors in Tower Hamlets
- local MPs
- the London Boroughs of Newham and Hackney
- the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the Westminster Diocese Education Service
- local trades unions

This consultation period runs from 7 January to 1 February 2013. A form is included at the end of this paper for the return of your views.

There will be parents' meetings at the school on 17 January at 9.00 am and at 3.00 pm – we hope as many parents as possible will be able to come to one of the meetings to hear about the proposals and let the Council know your views.

Why are more school places needed?

In Tower Hamlets there has been considerable development to provide new homes and this is anticipated to continue for some years to come. It is projected that nearly 3,000 new homes will be built on average each year until 2025. The birth rate is rising and it is clear that the population trend will continue to rise. The Council needs to plan for the services that the population will need, including schools.

The Council has already carried out schemes to increase the size of some primary schools to ensure that there are enough places for all the children who need a place. Between 2012 and 2022 the total number of children at primary schools will increase by approximately 7,300 pupils, a rise of 34%. The Council therefore has to continue to make plans for providing extra places.

The main areas where the need for school places is rising are in the central and eastern areas of the borough, including Poplar and the Isle of Dogs. These areas will benefit from a large amount of the new residential development. In time, the projections of the increase in the school roll will require new primary schools to be built.

Woolmore School

Woolmore School is in an area of the borough where the school age population is rising. The regeneration of the Blackwall Reach area will bring more homes to the area and so more local children needing a primary school place. The regeneration project has given the opportunity to build a new school, allowing Woolmore to expand and to maintain its position at the heart of the community.

Woolmore has been recognised as a good school by OfSTED and the Council believes that the strong ethos and management of the school will enable the Headteacher and staff to effectively include the increased roll whilst maintaining the standards for all children and the character of the school which parents value. The admissions criteria for the school will not change and so the children at the school will continue to be those who live in the local area.

The Council will spend £10 million on the new building for Woolmore School. This will be a great new opportunity for the local community to ensure that local children have excellent facilities and the best education for their start in life.

Expanding the school will bring additional resources and facilities to the school, so that the range of opportunities for children will be expanded. There will be more teaching and support staff and increased professional development opportunities for existing staff which will help to recruit and retain good quality teaching and non-teaching staff.

The school will get a larger budget for the additional children and to support opening the new building.

The building plans for the school

The Council has been working with the Headteacher and governing body to develop the plans for the school. The new school will enable the Headteacher and staff to build on the character and ethos of Woolmore. They want to ensure that what parents and children value about the school is maintained in moving to the new building.

A planning application has been submitted for the new building. You will be able to see the plans for the new school during this consultation period. As part of the Blackwall Reach development, an extra area of land will become part of the school (where the closed health centre stands) so this makes a larger site in total. There will be a new school building built facing Robin Hood Lane and with the playground extending to Bullivant Street. The new building will include all the classrooms for the larger number of children, a large hall, library and multi purpose areas. It will have a lift and will be built to modern standards of heating and insulation.

The new building will be completed whilst the school stays in the existing building. The school then moves into the new building and the old school is demolished and a new playground created.

The construction work will be planned with the highest priority given to the safety of everyone at the school. The Council is working with the Headteacher on the plans for how the works are carried.

Size of the increase in roll

The school now has 30 places in each year group with two nursery classes. Under the new proposals, there will be 90 places in each year and three nursery classes. The total school roll over time will eventually be 630, plus the nursery classes. There will be no change to the admissions arrangements to the school. The school has in the past opened an extra class, and these children will, as previously planned, remain at the school until completing Year 6.

How will the increase take effect

The extra children will be admitted to the school in Reception year only from September 2014, so that the full increase will arise after 7 years. Additional children will not be admitted above the total of 30 for a year group where 30 was the original year group number, but there may be admissions where there are vacancies in any year group.

Effect on children now at the school

The increase in roll will happen over a 7 year period which will allow the school to gradually absorb the changes. The children now on roll of the school will be in the existing school during the building works to create the new school. Very careful planning is continuing by the Authority and the Headteacher to ensure that the disruption to school life is kept to the minimum possible. Some of the existing play area will not be in use during the works and the Headteacher will

work out the best way to make sure children can still have good play opportunities during the works. .

Other expansion proposals in the area

The Council is considering other options for schools where it may be possible to expand. Consultation on proposals will take place as they are developed. The eastern part of the borough is one of the areas where the highest levels of new housing are anticipated and it is likely that one or more new primary schools will eventually be built.

Timing

This consultation runs from 7 January to 1 February 2013. The timetable for consultation and taking decisions following this stage of consultation is:

Initial consultation	7 January to 1 February 2013
The Council's Cabinet receives a report on the consultation and decides on publishing formal statutory proposals	13 March 2013
Statutory proposals published with 4 weeks allowed for comments	18 March – 12 April 2013
The decision will be taken to implement the proposals either by the Council's Cabinet if there are objections; or, if there are no objections, by the Corporate Director of Children, Schools & Families	By 11 June 2013
Building works commence	Spring 2013
New building completed, the school moves in and the first additional Reception year pupils are admitted	September 2014
The old school building is demolished and new play area is created	September 2014 – February 2015

Next steps

During this current consultation period, the Council wants to hear from as many people as possible. Please let us know your views by completing and returning the form on the next page.

There will be parents' meetings at the school on 17 January at 9.00 am and at 3.00 pm – we hope as many parents as possible will be able to come to one of the meetings to hear about the proposals and let the Council know your views.

WOOLMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF WOOLMORE SCHOOL

	Please tick as appropriate
I agree with the proposal to expand the school	<input type="radio"/>
I do not agree with the proposal to expand the school	<input type="radio"/>

Other comments

NAME	
PARENT, GOVERNOR, OTHER (please state)	
DATE	

Please return this page by 1 February 2013 to:

The school office; or

Pat Watson, Head of Building Development, Children's Services, Town Hall,
Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, E14 2BG, or

e-mail to: pat.watson@towerhamlets.gov.uk