

Appendix E – 19 August 2014 Executive

Business Case for proposed school and academy expansions for September 2016 implementation.

Silsoe CofE VC Lower School

Central Bedfordshire Council's Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning

Please provide details of how you believe the proposed expansion of your school will meet each of the 9 principles below. As a guide, please consider and delete the explanatory grey text provided in each before inserted your text –

1	<p>The need to provide local schools for local children, ensuring a sense of community belonging and also promoting sustainable modes of travel.</p>
	<p>The development on the Cranfield site at the southern end of Silsoe village has increased the demand for places at the local lower school – Silsoe VC Lower School. We cannot accommodate this increased demand on our present site and as a result children within this catchment area have, on occasion, been denied a place within their local school. The impact of this is not only detrimental to individual families but contradicts Section 76 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which places a duty on local education authorities to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area. Ensuring the sufficiency of provision local to the areas of demographic demand supports this duty by reducing the need for car journeys and also limits potential growth in the cost of providing school transport on distance criteria to qualifying pupils to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities.</p> <p>The education which can be provided within a local lower school to local children at the beginning of their school career is also very important in helping to foster a sense of community belonging. This is particularly significant within a rural community such as Silsoe where the school can provide the hub for the village. Building the school within the new development in the village will help to integrate these children and their families within the wider community. Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. Providing sufficient accommodation within local schools enables children living in the same local community to attend the same school fostering a coherent community identity and enabling community ownership to build around a range of extracurricular activities. Close partnership between the school and the community centre which will be built next to the school has the potential to reinforce these benefits.</p>
2	<p>The need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable.</p>
	<p>Currently the standard number for each intake at Silsoe VC Lower School is 27 children per year group. We are already oversubscribed in four year groups but the size of the school site and infant class size legislation will prevent us from increasing our school size on this site beyond 150 pupils. This total is below the ideal size for a primary school and as such the school on its current site with its current numbers would be regarded as a small school.</p>

	<p>Small rural schools such as Silsoe have nationally shown themselves capable of delivering the National Curriculum and of providing a high standard of education. In determining a minimum school size, it is however not simply issues of quality that need to be considered but also but also organisational, social and community issues.</p> <p>Present funding arrangements puts particular pressure on a small senior leadership team and team of teachers because smaller schools have less staff to share key roles and responsibilities. Forthcoming changes to the local funding formula, as a result of national school funding reform, will increase the pressure to operate more efficiently. Smaller schools also have a smaller pool of parents from which to recruit a vibrant and talented governing body.</p> <p>Ideally lower schools should have 2 forms of entry (i.e. two classes per year group), leading to a school size of up to 300. This gives head teacher a balance of some teaching, as well as time to manage and monitor, with the ability to employ appropriate non-teaching support in the school. The proposal for the new school will be that it will be able to accommodate expansion to reach this ideal size. This will ensure the long term sustainability of high quality education for the youngest children within this community.</p>
3	<p>The ability to support the expansion of local popular and successful schools or to link expanding schools with popular and successful schools.</p>
	<p>In line with the Council's vision of providing a good or outstanding school in every community Silsoe VC Lower School is fully committed to providing outstanding education for all of its pupils. The vision of the Governing Body and current leadership team is that the expansion of our highly successful school will enable us to provide the highest standard of education to more pupils.</p> <p>Our most recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to provide outstanding education as did our church school's inspection. This is a major reason for the school's popularity and explains why parents choose to send their children to Silsoe from outside the school's catchment.</p> <p>Our current school development plan is focused on maintaining outstanding education whilst managing the increase in numbers and the pressure on the current site. In future years our priority will be to ensure that our standards will continue to be exceptional. Our results over the past five years in Early Years outcomes, end of Year 2 assessments and Year 4 assessments have been exceptional. To maintain these standards we will focus on the recruitment of the best possible teachers to join the current highly successful team and will use the opportunity of new well designed facilities to provide the highest quality curriculum. These two factors will enable us to motivate the children and will support us in implementing curriculum change.</p>
4	<p>The potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities</p>
	<p>Our school has been recognised as a National Support School in recognition of our successes over the past five years and the head teacher is a National Leader of Education. This means the school is working to support other schools in challenging circumstances locally. This ensures we are focused on the development of system leadership, succession planning and staff development.</p> <p>Two senior teachers currently work as moderators to support the local authority in monitoring the quality of end of Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 assessments.</p>

	<p>The expertise of our Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties team is recognised locally and recently the headteacher has worked as part of the Support and Aspiration Board to help to develop the local authority's response to the new special needs code of practice which will be introduced in September 2014.</p> <p>We also understand and fully endorse the importance of local partnerships. We work closely with the other schools in the Harlington Area Trust of which we are an associate member. We are part of the Bedfordshire group of Values based schools and work closely with the St Albans Diocese to enhance our status as a voluntary controlled Church of England school.</p>
5	<p>The ambition to achieve a single phase of education 0 -19 and reduce school transfer points</p> <p>There is evidence that learning can be lost at points of transfer between schools and also transition within schools from one phase or key stage to another. As a result the Harlington Area School's Trust aims to promote collaboration amongst the 13 schools which feed into Harlington Upper School. Silsoe VC Lower is one of these schools. The trust aims to provide for all children in this community continuity of pedagogy and curriculum, and shared expectations of progress, behaviour and ethos.</p> <p>Silsoe VC Lower School also works very closely with the onsite Pre-School. This partnership is essential in ensuring seamless transfer into school for all of the local children who attend the Pre-School. At present the Pre-School is managed by a parental management committee however the Governing Body of the School and the Management Committee of the Pre-school are considering changes to the Pre-School constitution to bring it under the management of the school. This would ensure the long term future of Early Years provision for children in this community from the age of two years plus. It would also improve the continuity of experience we can provide for our youngest children and their families.</p>
6	<p>The need to support the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA).</p> <p>Effective lower school education is the first step to delivering the Coalition Government policy of ensuring that all young people are in either education, training or work related education / training full time up to the age of 18. Fundamental to ensuring that young people have the skills and desire to tackle further education or training they need to have key skills in reading, writing and mathematics and a desire for lifelong learning. Fundamental to the vision of Silsoe VC Lower School is the desire to inspire all of our pupils to enjoy learning. We are also committed to providing intervention and support to pupils with additional needs to overcome their difficulties and develop a resilient and determined approach to learning. Therefore our simple aim is to ensure our children are 'middle school ready' by the time they leave us and that they already have aspirations, self- belief and a desire to achieve at this stage in their lives.</p>
7	<p>To seek opportunities to create inspirational learning environments for the school and to maximise community use.</p> <p>The school will be designed to provide an inspirational environment which will promote values based education and will promote sustainability and outdoor learning. The facilities will be designed by the local authority but the school will be fully engaged in contributing towards the design choices. The key aim of the design will be to provide premises that are fit for purpose for the increased capacity of the school. The design will take into account the school's church foundation and the need to provide sufficient space for worship, sport and free</p>

	<p>school meals for all infants.</p> <p>The school will work closely with the parish council and local stakeholders to maximise the use of the community sports facilities including the shared sports fields.</p>
8	<p>To promote the diversity of provision offered in Central Bedfordshire to increase opportunities for parental choice</p> <p>Silsoe Lower school as a voluntary controlled lower school is part of Central Bedfordshire's comprehensive system of education. It is a co-educational school which provides for children between the ages of 4- 9 years.</p> <p>The school has a strong values based ethos and is proud of its denominational foundation. It is a voluntary controlled Church of England lower school and it works in close partnership with the local parish and the St Albans Diocese.</p>
9	<p>To support vulnerable learners in Area Special Schools and integrate appropriate Special Educational Needs provision within mainstream schools</p> <p>Silsoe VC Lower School has a strong and successful record in promoting inclusion.</p> <p>The school currently has a six place specialist provision for pupils with statements of need for Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). The needs of these children cannot be met within mainstream classes. Silsoe hosts one of the two SEBD provisions within the authority. Children with these types of additional needs are some of the most vulnerable and as such are at most risk of exclusion from school. Under the proposed expansion of the school the new school will be able to increase its offer to an eight place provision. The new school will be able to improve the facilities we can offer for these vulnerable pupils. The current provision whilst highly successful was not purpose built and as such is cramped.</p>

	<p>Capacity to Deliver the proposed expansion.</p> <p>For schools/academies that would like to procure design and construction works directly and manage the project to completion, please set out below the project management approach that you intend to take, including governance arrangements. Please ensure that you are clear of the professional support that you intend to engage and of the experience of the School and its Governing Body in successfully delivering significant capital projects.</p>
1	<p>Not applicable.</p>