

**Proposal to expand Edward Peake C of E VC
Middle School, Biggleswade
to provide new middle school places for children in
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire**



Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools', October 2018, that Central Bedfordshire Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School, Potton Road, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 0EJ from 1 September 2020.

This consultation invites interested parties to respond to the proposed expansion of Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School.

Notice date:	4 January 2019
School:	Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School, Potton Road, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 0EJ
Proposer:	School Organisation, Admissions & Capital Planning, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds, SG17 5TQ

Description of proposed alteration

Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to expand Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School by two forms of entry (60 places) per year group from 1 September 2020. This would increase the capacity of the school from 600 to 840 places.

Evidence of demand for proposed alteration versus need, including results of preliminary consultation

Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School was expanded two years ago to provide 120 additional school places. At the time of the expansion it was acknowledged that an additional 900 dwellings were planned for the area with delivery between 2019 and 2027.

Further new middle school places are needed in Biggleswade as a result of this significant and continued housing development within the town and as identified by the council's School Organisation Plan.

There are no new middle school sites secured through S106 contributions in the town and the anticipated rate of growth in the town's middle school year groups is also such that a new standalone school would not fill and be revenue efficient for a number of years

Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School is therefore the preferred school for the proposed expansion due to its location in the area of greatest need, the ability of school to accommodate the expansion on its site and its 'Good' Ofsted rating.

As required by the Department for Education, the council consulted interested parties in order to develop this proposal. Stakeholders, who included school governors, staff, and parents/carers, the local parish council, all other schools and academies within Central Bedfordshire plus council ward members, were invited to give their feedback via an on-line response facility on the council's website regarding the proposed expansion. This preliminary consultation ran from 9 October to 13 November 2018, during which time a drop-in was also held at the school to enable stakeholders to raise any queries or concerns regarding the proposal.

56% of the 37 responses received to the preliminary consultation via the on-line facility either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal. 38% of responses either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. There was general agreement that due to the scale of housing development in Biggleswade, additional school places are required.

Objectives - including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice

The objective of the proposal is to ensure that the council can continue to fulfil its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in this area.

Central Bedfordshire Council and the Governing Body of Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School have carefully considered the expansion of the school and believe that it would bring many potential benefits to the school and the local community including –

- Ensuring local children can attend their local school
- The school would continue to have the same values, ethos and links with the town that currently exist
- It would expand and build upon an Ofsted 'good' school which is already very much part of the community providing the opportunity for the wider and expanding community to benefit
- Improved facilities for the school enabling it to offer a broader curriculum
- An opportunity to continue to raise standards of attainment, building on existing best practice and extending it to more children

The effect on other educational institutions within the area

The council believes that the expansion of the school would have little or no effect on other schools within the area.

Project costs and indication of how these would be met

The total cost for the proposed expansion of Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School is estimated at £8.3 m. The new build that would be provided has still to be agreed but it would consist of sufficient classroom space to accommodate the additional children plus space for the required support facilities.

Central Bedfordshire Council's New School Places Programme is funded by developer contributions and Basic Need grant income from the Department for Education. The council also continues to ensure that all opportunities are taken to increase income and to seek alternative funding sources for new build and expansions of existing school buildings.

The day to day running costs of school provision are met through revenue funding which is made available to each school as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and is based primarily on the numbers of pupils attending each school. This increases accordingly within an expanded school and would fund the additional staff and resources that would be required.

Where necessary and where schools and academies are undertaking significant expansion on commission from the council, additional revenue support for relevant costs is accessed through the council's Growth Fund, reviewed annually by the council's Schools Forum.

Capital expenditure within the New School Places Programme is subject to the council's Code of Financial Governance.

School size

Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School has a published admission number of 150 per year group and there are currently 528 statutory school aged children on roll at the school.

The expanded school would increase in size from 600 to 840 places.

The council is currently working with school clusters to review the future structure of schools within Central Bedfordshire: this project is referred to as 'Schools for the Future'. As the council deliberates this with schools, all expansions will seek to future-proof their sites to enable any changes to be accommodated.

Proposed admission arrangements

There are no proposals to change the admission arrangements for 2020/21 for Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School if the school is expanded. The admission arrangements are published on the school's website and include the criteria that is used to determine how places are allocated if there are more applications for places than the number of places available.

The published admission number would be updated accordingly.

National curriculum

The school would continue to follow the age-appropriate National Curriculum.

Equal opportunity issues

There are no planned changes - there would be a continuation of the school's current policies and procedures to ensure there is no discrimination and to promote equal opportunities and foster good relations.

Community cohesion

This expansion would enhance and improve wider opportunities and experiences within the local community for all families.

All school expansions are expected to enhance community facilities. It is generally accepted that schools should provide a community use agreement

Travel and accessibility

Local children and families are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school and the school would be required to work with Central Bedfordshire Council to update their Travel Plan.

School premises and playing fields

Under the School Premises Regulations all schools are required to provide suitable outdoor space in order to enable physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and for pupils to play outside safely.

The proposed expansion at Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School would be built on an area of hard play. In designing the new build, considerable effort would be made to ensure that outdoor provision is not lost and re-provided if required.

Proposed stages for implementation

If the expansion is approved by the council, it is anticipated that it would be implemented from 1 September 2020.

How to respond to this formal consultation

This formal consultation commences on **4 January 2019** and closes on **1 February 2019**. You can **have your say via the online form** which is available on the council's website here – <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/public-statutory/notices.aspx>

Or you can complete the response form on pages 6 and 7 and return it to the FREEPOST address provided at the end of the form.

Both on line responses and completed forms to confirm your support, raise any objections and submit any comments should be returned by **5 pm on 1 February 2019**

Following the close of the consultation, the council's Executive will be asked to consider the responses received and determine the proposed expansion.