



Education Operations & Delivery

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Please ask for:

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Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date: 12th November 2017

Dear Tracey

Cheltenham Secondary School Provision

Further to the ongoing discussions between yourselves and my officers, I would like to formerly outline the County Council's position regarding the need for a new secondary school for Cheltenham.

As you know, since 2007 there has been an increase in birth rates which has, in part, resulted in a sustained growth in demand for school places – with data from the Office of National Statics suggesting these trends will be sustained well into the future. This, coupled with additional pupil yield from strategic and non strategic housing, has resulted in the significant increase in demand for primary school places year on year in Cheltenham.

Since 2011 this rising demand has been met by working collaboratively with schools in the primary sector, and more recently with secondary schools to provide additional capacity as these pupils move into the secondary phase of their education. The latest data clearly shows the pressure on both primary and secondary school places is concentrated in the south of Cheltenham.

Whilst we have sought to maximise the opportunities available from the expansion of existing secondary schools, it is simply not feasible to continue with this approach to meet the identified future demand in full; attempting to do so would result in an annual shortfall of at least 3 – 4 forms of entry, equivalent to 120 Cheltenham children being without a secondary school place each year from 2021 - with no flexibility going forward to cater for any unidentified need e.g. through new housing yet to come forward. Further, the opportunity to establish a new school would be lost given that 3-4 forms of entry is not a viable size for a secondary school. Consequently, the council would be unable to meet this demand and fulfil its statutory obligation to ensure a sufficient supply of school places.

Therefore the most appropriate option for the Council and Cheltenham families is to establish a new 900 place secondary school (6 forms of entry) and identify a strategic site of around 7 Hectares capable of accommodating this new school.

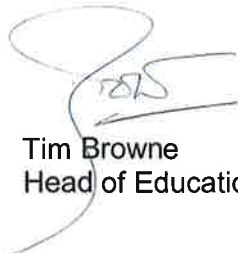
To this end, please find attached a copy of an independent report which was commissioned for the purpose of conducting a sequential land test assessment of potential sites for accommodating a new school. As you can see the report indicates that the most appropriate option would be a combination of utilising Gloucestershire County Council land at Farm Lane, Leckhampton, together with part of the land south of the Shurdington Road, Leckhampton.

I would therefore like to confirm that following detailed analysis, this site, in our view, would be the most appropriate location for the new school for the reasons set out in the report. Consequently, I should be most grateful if you could include this proposal as part of your Pre-submission Consultation for the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan. Securing this site will ensure that families in Cheltenham can continue to have access to good and outstanding local secondary school places now and into the future.

Given the strategic importance of this provision, we are committed to securing the land required either through negotiation or by use of statutory powers - the extent of how much land acquired will be established through determination of education operational needs and further technical investigations regarding Planning, Transport, Environmental, Design and Site investigations – but currently thought to be in the region of 2 Hectares. Please note, however, I will recommend the use of compulsory purchase powers should this be necessary.

If you require any additional information, or have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Gareth Vine, Senior Manager – Education & Capital, who can be contacted on 01452 427547 or at gareth.vine@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Browne', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and loops back to the left.

Tim Browne
Head of Education