

Riverside Primary School

Consultation on a proposal to enlarge the premises of the school and increase its capacity to 420 places from 2022

November 2021



Introduction

The County Council must ensure that there is a school place every year for each child in Essex. In doing so we want to take every opportunity to allow more parents to send their child to their preferred school and support schools to increase the educational achievement and life chances of all young people.

As is the case across many parts of Essex there is predicted to be continued pressure on school places in Rochford District. Additional primary school places will be required from 2022 onwards in the Hullbridge area specifically. We have been working with the schools in the area to find solutions to meet the additional need. Whilst meeting the increased demand for places has been made harder by the restraints on public expenditure, providing sufficient school places remains a high priority for the County Council.

In response to this growth in the demand for primary school places we are seeking your views on a proposal to expand Riverside Primary School from 315 places to 420 places, making it a two form of entry primary school. We show in this document why we consider it essential to provide new school places in Hullbridge, from 2022 onwards and I invite you to let me have your views on this proposal. All the views expressed will be taken into account by the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training when he decides whether to publish a statutory notice about the expansion.



Clare Kershaw
Director, Education

BACKGROUND

The Hullbridge area has recently experienced a rise in the demand for primary school places, as a result of births, families moving in and new housing. Latest forecasts indicate continued growth in pupil numbers and additional provision is required to balance future supply and demand for local school places.

Pupil Forecasts and Deficit of Primary School Places

Essex County Council (ECC) has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for children living in the county. In order to do this we monitor birth rates, new housing developments and patterns of parental preference across groups of schools. This information is used to forecast pupil numbers and to ensure there are sufficient school places across the county.

The following table shows the forecast for the availability of Reception places over the next ten years in the area of Riverside Primary School, as shown in ECC's "10 Year Plan – Meeting the demand for school places in Essex - 2021 to 2030".

Year	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
+/-	7	0	-7	-12	-14	-15	-15	-15	-16	-16

There will be very little headroom at Reception intake from 2022/23 onwards, with a deficit of Reception places forecast thereafter. Longer term forecasts indicate that there will be further growth in the area. The number of children registered with a GP will continue to be monitored, as will the actual numbers of pupils in schools.

Much of the increase in demand for primary school places will be caused by inward migration and new housing in the area. The 10-year plan shows that an expansion at Riverside Primary School, which will increase the admission number from 45 to 60 each year, is the proposed solution to both the short term and forecast longer term deficit of school places.

How Can You Make Your Views Known?

ECC is seeking the views of all interested persons about the proposal to expand Riverside Primary School. At this stage no decision has been made on the expansion proposal and all the views received will be considered prior to a decision being taken as to whether to go ahead with the proposal. A final decision will be taken in the context of the growing need for more primary school places in Hullbridge.

This consultation is about whether you think an expansion at Riverside Primary School is needed, given the predicted increase in the number of local children needing a school place. The proposed changes to the building, to allow this expansion, are listed below.

You are invited to respond to this consultation using the following electronic survey form:

You may also send feedback and comments to:

School Organisation Team
school.organisation@essex.gov.uk
County Hall – C418
Market Road
Chelmsford CM1 1GS

All comments received through these mechanisms or made directly to council officers or members will be collected and included in the analysis of feedback received.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the consultation process or the expansion proposal you can call or email Rhona Long, School Organisation Officer, at rhona.long@essex.gov.uk. Alternatively you may contact the chair of governors of the school, via the school office.

School Expansion Proposal

It is proposed to expand Riverside Primary School from 315 places to 420 places by remodelling the current accommodation at the school, making it a two forms of entry primary school. This would enable the school to permanently admit 60 Reception children each year, an increase of 15 over the current capacity.

Expansion of the school will provide more places to meet the growing demand in Hullbridge and will enable more parents to gain a place for their child at their preferred local school.

Admissions

The admissions criteria and priority admission area for the school would not change as a result of the proposed expansion.

Transport Arrangements

Transport arrangements would remain in line with the home to school transport policies of Essex County Council and the existing Travel Plan would be reviewed by the school.

Building Work

In conjunction with the school leadership initial work has been undertaken to consider remodelling the school, which include the reprovision of 2 classrooms, a new food science room and a the library will be moved and will have a calm room. A small group room will also be created and the infant kitchen will be refurbished to allow for food preparation and serving due to the distance between the main kitchen in the junior building and the infant building.

Funding

The County Council has made provision in its Capital Programme for the proposed school expansion. The Council publishes its capital programme at www.essex.gov.uk.

What happens next?

At the end of this consultation period the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training will consider all feedback and views expressed by interested parties during the consultation and will make a decision on whether to proceed with the school expansion proposal. The governing body of the school will also consider the feedback from this consultation and decide if it still wishes to support the proposal.

Timeline

The consultation period will run from 4 November 2021 to 2 December 2021. Below is the estimated timeline for the decision process.

4 November 2021	Consultation commences – consultation document can be viewed: https://www.essex.gov.uk/school-organisation-and-place-planning/consultations-and-statutory-proposals
16 November 2021	Drop in sessions for parents, staff and the local community to be held at the school between 2pm - 4pm, and 6pm - 8pm.
2 December 2021	End of consultation period
December 2021	Decision by ECC on whether to publish a Statutory Notice
January 2022	Publication of Statutory Notice (if decision above is to proceed with the expansion process)
Early February 2022	End of four week period for representations
March 2022	Decision taken by Essex County Council on expansion proposal
* 1 September 2022	Riverside Primary School expands to become a 420 place primary school

* This stage will apply only if the proposal is approved by the County Council.

All written comments should be received by ECC by 2 December 2021. ECC handles information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 and is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. Your responses to this consultation will only be used to assess the community's view of the proposed amalgamation and not for any other purpose. We will not give information about you to anyone outside the County Council.

The information contained in this leaflet can be made available in alternative formats: large print, Braille, audio tape or disk. Please call 03330 131071.

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