

Meeting: Policy Development and Decision Group (Joint Commissioning Team)

Date: 6 November 2017

Report Title: School Place Planning and Basic Need Grant

This supplementary report is being provided following a meeting with the Free Schools Team on 2nd November 2017.

FREE SCHOOLS UPDATE

As stated in the main report, there is a shortfall of primary places in Paignton. To deliver a long term solution the Council has supported two applications for free schools in the Paignton area. Both Torbay applications were approved in March 2017 as part of Wave 12 of the government's Free School Programme with the condition that the Council provides the sites.

Paignton CofE Primary School – DfE have approved an application from Learning Academy Partnership South West for a one form of entry primary school with a nursery. The school is planned to open in 2019 and will help address the immediate need for additional capacity in the Preston and surrounding wards.

Windmill Primary School – DfE have provisionally approved an application from COAST Academies for a two form of entry primary school with nursery. The approval is dependent on a number of large housing developments in the West of Paignton (White Rock) achieving planning approval. If planning is not forthcoming within an agreed timeframe then the approval is likely to be withdrawn.

Officers met with the ESFA Free Schools Team on 2nd November to review the proposed sites for the two Paignton Free Schools. As both approvals have the condition that the Council provides the site, Officers have been working closely with the ESFA to identify an appropriate site. The main focus has been on identifying a site for Paignton CofE Primary School as this school is needed for September 2019 but both parties have also been mindful of the implications and site requirements for the Windmill School.

Following extensive work over the last 2 years, Officers consider that the only available site that can be delivered within the required timescale for Paignton CofE Primary is land at Yannon's Farm in the west of Paignton. A report went to Council in August seeking approval for Officers to purchase the site subject to ESFA final approval.

In August the ESFA informed Officers that they had commissioned Located to undertake a further site search on their behalf just to be sure that all possible sites had been considered. Located is the quango that the ESFA have established to help identify sites for approved free schools.

The ESFA presented Located's report to Officers last week (2nd November). In summary the only viable site that Located could identify in addition to Yannon's Farm was land at the top of Preston Down Road. Officers had already considered this land and presented this to the EFSA, however following a visit to the site with the ESFA in May, it was discounted as

high risk and not deliverable in the timescale. The land is Council owned but leased to the Coast & Countryside Trust. It is also in the Local Plan for residential development so any other use would impact on Council housing targets.

The ESFA have now asked Members to consider this site before they will give approval for the acquisition of Yannon's Farm. This is because it is a potentially viable site available within the Preston Ward which is the ward identified in the LAPSW free school application.

The ESFA have concerns that putting the Paignton CofE Primary School at Yannon's Farm is not in the area specified within the free school application and will impact on the viability of the Windmill application as the two proposed sites are relatively close together.

The Windmill School approval is subject to the Inglewood housing development achieving planning permission as the site is within that development and is being provided as part of the S106 agreement.

Officers have informed the ESFA that the Inglewood development is a departure from the Local Plan and that the Windmill School will not be required if the development does not proceed.

There is a large amount of development already underway on that side of the Brixham Road with no primary school to serve the existing and growing community, for school place planning in the future it will be important to ensure that at least one school is delivered to serve the existing developments at White Rock.