The Tenax Schools Trust and the Local Governing Body are seeking views on a proposal to expand Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9SH by increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 240 to 300 Year 7 places from September 2019.

1. Why are we considering an expansion of Bennett Memorial Diocesan School?

The Tenax Schools Trust, the Local Governing Body of Bennett Memorial Diocesan School and Kent County Council (KCC) would like to expand Bennett Memorial Diocesan School to help provide more high quality school places for local children. Tunbridge Wells is experiencing a significant increase in demand for secondary school places and there is an urgent need for additional secondary school provision within the town centre area of the Borough. KCC as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available and has asked Bennett Memorial Diocesan School to consider providing additional places by expanding the school from 8 to 10 forms of entry (from 240 to 300 Year 7 places each year). Bennett Memorial has already assisted in the provision of additional places by admitting up to 30 pupils over its planned admission number of 240 in 2016 and 2017.

The future need for education provision for the County is detailed in the County Council’s Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21, which is a five year rolling plan that is updated annually. The Plan details the following for Tunbridge Wells:

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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>-12 1</td>
<td>-155</td>
<td>-124</td>
<td>-144</td>
<td>-245</td>
<td>-183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7-11</td>
<td>7,883</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-155</td>
<td>-437</td>
<td>-795</td>
<td>-857</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The forecast data outlined in the tables above highlights the increasing demand for secondary school places, which cannot be met locally without increasing provision within the town centre area. Highlighted in red is the shortfall in places as demand outstrips the number of places available in schools. However, it must be noted that the forecast data outlined above does not account for pressures arising from new housing developments under the emerging Local Plan.

Housing/Demand for School Places
The Tunbridge Wells Borough’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a need for 12,960 houses (648 per year) in Tunbridge Wells between 2013-2033. The emerging requirement is more than double its current target of 300 homes per year.

In the light of these likely developments, and irrespective of which specific option or combination of options is ultimately chosen, there will continue to be a rising demand for secondary school places in the town which will need to be met.

**Why Bennett Memorial Diocesan School?**

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School is a very popular school judged ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted in June 2012, and is consistently among the very highest achieving schools locally and nationally. For the Year 7 intake in September 2017 the school received a total of 843 parental preferences, of which 289 were 1st preferences, for a PAN of 240.

The Church of England has an historic commitment nationally to the provision of education and schools for the wider community. Bennett Memorial is a Church of England school, with high academic success and a distinctive approach to education. As such, it places a particular focus on enabling all students to fulfil their unique potential, excelling both academically and in terms of the development of character and values. The school expects commitment and high standards both in lessons and beyond lessons, with students benefiting from a vast range of wider opportunities, especially in music, debating, drama and competitive sport. The curriculum at Bennett is a traditional one with rigorous expectations that all students can succeed in their study of high value academic subjects.

The expansion of Bennett Memorial Diocesan School by 2 forms of entry for September 2019 will act as the strategic response to the forecast population growth within the Borough. The Trust of which Bennett is part has agreed with KCC to carry out a public consultation on the proposal to expand the school permanently, and if it were agreed that the proposal should go ahead, additional accommodation would be provided to enable the school to expand.

2. **Are there plans to show how this expansion will be delivered on site?**

The school is currently working, with KCC’s support, on establishing how additional accommodation and infrastructure can best be provided to enhance and improve the current facilities for all Bennett students. The additional accommodation required for the proposals will be subject to separate planning requirements, which will involve further public consultation. Stakeholders, including local residents, will have an opportunity to view the plans, ask questions and make comments. This will enable the design team to take into consideration all views before submitting final plans for approval.

3. **How will the school deal with any possible increased traffic and congestion?**

Traffic and parking assessments will be carried out as part of the design and planning process. The school’s travel plan would be updated and utilised by the school to encourage families to find alternative ways of travelling to school in order to reduce the number of car journeys.

4. **Will the expansion adversely affect the school’s operation during the building work?**

All of the building works will be planned carefully and contractors will work with the school to ensure that works are scheduled to keep disruption to an absolute minimum. The building site will be a secure area to ensure the health and safety of the students, staff, parents and visitors to the school.

5. **How will the expansion happen and how many children will there be at the school?**
It is intended that the expansion would happen incrementally, with 60 additional Year 7 places offered in each year, so that the school would grow over a 5 year period until it reached a total of 1500 Year 7-11 places. The table below shows the phased increase proposed for the overall capacity of the school, with 60 additional Year 7 places permanently available each year from 2019/20. As noted above, the school has already admitted up to 30 pupils over its planned admission number, with KCC’s support, in 2016 and 2017, in response to high levels of demand for places at the school. This has been managed very successfully.

Published Admission Number Planned Increase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020/21</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021/22</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022/23</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023/24</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
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</table>

6. Will there be enough recreational space?
As part of the feasibility, the design team will focus on providing sufficient hard and soft play space for the larger number of pupils. The school will plan how best to use the space to provide sufficient time for co-curriculum activities during and outside of the school day.

7. What additional funding will Bennett Memorial Diocesan School receive?
Revenue Funding: Furniture and Equipment - £6,000 per new classroom will be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment. This will be given to the School to purchase the required equipment.

Pupil Growth Funding: the school will receive growth funding in accordance with the Pupil Growth Policy established by KCC and its Schools’ Funding Forum.

8. The consultation process – indicative timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 October 2017 to Tuesday 14 November 2017 (midnight)</td>
<td>Public Consultation Period</td>
</tr>
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| Monday 30 October 4:00-5:30pm 22 November 2017 | A ‘drop-in’ information session will be held at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9SH  
The outcome of the Education Consultation will be reported to the Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee. |
| November 2017 – December 2017 | The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education considers all the comments and decides whether to continue with the proposals. |
December 2017 – January 2018  If the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education decides to proceed with the proposals a Public Notice will be published in a local newspaper, displayed at the school and available on the school’s and KCC’s website. During this time comments and objections can be made about the proposal. The Public Notice will run for 4 weeks.

January 2018  The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education considers all responses made and decides whether to confirm his decision.

January – February 2018  Statutory Stakeholders have 4 weeks to appeal the decision

September 2019  Subject to no objections, the proposals are implemented

9. **How can I give my views?**

   There are a number of ways to give us your views on this proposal:

   - A ‘drop-in’ information session is being held at the school on Monday 30th October where there will be the opportunity to ask questions and complete a response form.
   - By handing your response form into the Bennett Memorial Diocesan School Reception Office.
   - By emailing: public.consultation@bennett.kent.sch.uk
   - By sending the response form to Simon Curtis, Chair of the Local Governing Body, c/o Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9SH.
   - All responses must be received by midnight on 14 November 2017.

10. **What happens next?**

    The consultation period runs from Wednesday 11 October 2017 to Tuesday 14 November 2017. If you are intending to contact us with your views, please do this by midnight on 14 November 2017. The outcome of the consultation will be discussed at the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee in November. We will also pass all your comments to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education who will make a decision on whether to proceed with this proposal. If he decides to proceed we will then publish a Public Notice in January 2018, which will run for 4 weeks.

    Whether the proposals for expansion go ahead or not will also be dependent on a decision of the Board of the Tenax Schools Trust and the outcome of the statutory planning process. Subject to agreement from each party, a business case will be submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency for a final decision on the proposal to expand.

    The additional accommodation required for the proposals will be subject to separate planning requirements which will include further public consultation.

    Simon Curtis
    Chair of the Local Governing Body
Please complete this response form by no later than midnight on 14 November 2017 and return it by:
- handing your response form into the Bennett Memorial Diocesan School Reception Office
- emailing: public.consultation@bennett.kent.sch.uk
- posting the response form to Mr Simon Curtis, Chair of the Local Governing Body, c/o Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9SH.

Do you agree with the proposal to expand Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 240 to 300 for September 2019? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Which of the following best describes you?
☐ Parent/Carer / ☐ Member of Staff / ☐ Governor / ☐ Pupil
OR - ☐ Other interested party .............................. (please state interest).

Name .............................................................................. Address..........................................
........................................................................................................................................

Comments

Please provide your comments overleaf if necessary

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
- Bennett Memorial Diocesan School is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. KCC will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.
• KCC has completed an Equality Impact Assessment to see if the proposal could affect anyone unfairly. We welcome your views on the assumptions we have made and the conclusions we have drawn. To view the document, go to [www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations).


**BENNETT MEMORIAL DIOCESAN SCHOOL EDUCATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM**

Please complete this response form by **no later than midnight on 14 November 2017**

**Comments**