

**SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL****Cabinet Report**

---

**Report of:** Jayne Ludlam

---

**Report to:** Cabinet

---

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015

---

**Subject:** School Places in Sheffield

---

**Author of Report:** Alena Prentice (2053418)

---

**Key Decision:** Yes

---

**Reason Key Decision:** Affects two or more wards

---

**Summary:** The report describes the need for new primary and secondary school places between now and the end of the decade and outlines a programme for providing them. This includes two major projects, one in the southwest and one in the northeast.

---

**Reasons for Recommendations:**

The outline school places programme set out in this report is recommended to Cabinet on the basis that it will deliver a coherent and ambitious vision for secondary and primary school places in the areas of the city where population growth requires additional school capacity to be provided. It is a programme which recognises the aspirations of families to have access to high quality education for their children within their local area and provides a pattern for investment that will achieve the best possible outcomes whilst achieving best value for the Council's resources.

The scale of the extra school capacity needed over forthcoming years in the secondary sector requires an innovative and forward-thinking response from the city. The recommendation is to endorse a strategic vision of commissioning two new outstanding secondary schools backed with investment in the provision of high quality buildings, which could involve partnership from the sector and other key city-partners.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Endorse the outline programme for the provision of primary and secondary places in the North East and South West of the city as set out in this report;
  - (ii) Agree that consultation should be undertaken on the proposals set out in Section 6 above; and,
  - (iii) Receive a further report in November 2015 detailing the outcomes of that consultation and setting out the proposals in full detail for a final decision.
- 

**Background Papers:**

---

**Category of Report:        OPEN**

---

## Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

<b>Financial Implications</b>
YES Cleared by: Paul Schofield
<b>Legal Implications</b>
YES Cleared by: Nadine Wynter
<b>Equality of Opportunity Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Tackling Health Inequalities Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Human Rights Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Environmental and Sustainability implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Economic Impact</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Community Safety Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Human Resources Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Property Implications</b>
YES Cleared by: Dave Wood
<b>Area(s) Affected</b>
All
<b>Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead</b>
Cllr Jackie Drayton
<b>Relevant Scrutiny Committee</b>
Children & Young People
<b>Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?</b>
NO
<b>Press Release</b>
Yes

## **REPORT TO THE CABINET**

### **SCHOOL PLACES IN SHEFFIELD**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report describes the need for new primary and secondary school places between now and the end of the decade and outlines a programme for providing them. This includes two major projects, one in the southwest and one in the northeast.

#### **2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE**

- 2.1 Ensuring that there are enough school for every school-age child is a fundamental responsibility of local government and is essential to the Sheffield City Council's focus on enabling children to have a great start in life, achieve their full potential, and contribute to the success of the city. At the heart of the vision for increasing school places in Sheffield is the Council's role in guaranteeing excellent education outcomes and equitable access for all.

#### **3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY**

- 3.1 The outcome would be a programme to ensure there are enough primary and secondary school places to meet population demand in 2016 and beyond. This includes an assessment of whether the solutions are sustainable in the long-term.

#### **4.0 CONTEXT**

- 4.1 Since the recent low point in 2002, births in Sheffield have risen by up to 25%. This has already resulted in over 1,000 more children coming into Sheffield primary schools each year. The Council has worked hard in partnership with schools to meet this extra demand and has managed to retain a very high proportion of families who are offered a place at one of their preferred schools (97% in 2015).
- 4.2 This has only been possible through a programme that has added over 4,500 primary school places, including expansions and new schools. Looking ahead the challenge of providing more primary school places will remain because the primary school system overall has fewer surplus places and small changes in local populations can and will require action to increase capacity. The most significant challenge for the remainder of the decade is to see the growth through into secondary schools (see appendix 1).

#### **5.0 THE STRATEGY & PROGRAMME 2016-2020**

- 5.1 The vision is for all Sheffield families to have access to great, inclusive schools in every area of the city. This means schools working in partnership to ensure each child reaches their potential, equal access for

the most vulnerable children, schools at the heart of their communities, and getting the best value from all funding opportunities.

5.2 This must be delivered through each and every project brought forward under this programme. It will be embedded in consultation and decision making through the use of five criteria against which to judge all options to meet a need for more school places in any area:

- Children's outcomes: the impact on the standard of education that would be provided in the area
- Equality: whether this option would ensure that the needs of all children are met, in particular the needs of more vulnerable children and families
- Need for places: whether the option best meets a need for additional places in the area, the impact on neighbouring schools, and the impact on families of not getting a local place
- Buildings, sites and cost: whether the option is practically possible and represents a value-for-money use of public funds
- Community: the impact on the wider community and local residents, including traffic and environmental issues

5.3 In developing a programme for school places it is important to engage through the formative stage with partners, local members and stakeholders, in particular the City-Wide Learning Body and its partnership groups of headteachers and governors, but also with parents and carers and local communities. The criteria set out above have guided those discussions and helped to ensure that there was sufficient breadth to the appraisal of options.

5.4 It is also important to consider the long-term outlook. The current projection for Sheffield is for births to stabilise at or around the current level, meaning ongoing pressure on school places. The cyclical nature of the number of births since 1945 shows a change from growth to decline or vice versa around every 10-11 years. On that basis the low point in 2001, could mean that the recent peak in 2012 is to be followed by a trend of declining births, although the 2013 and 2014 numbers show only limited falls. In meeting this ever-changing need the strategy at primary level is to meet local need wherever necessary through limited, yet positive change proposals that could withstand long-term change. In secondary schools the programme outlined in this report is a considered and sustainable answer to needs into the next decade. The current expected high point in Year 7 numbers comes after that period in 2022/23. Planning for that current peak needs to be considered as part of a second phase in the light of further projections that will show clearly whether this is a short-term peak or a continuation of growth.

### **Primary Strategy**

5.5 The school at the heart of its community is an important first principle in developing primary school places. Easy travel to school for children of

primary age is highly important to parents and there is a strong expectation that they will be able to gain a place for their child at a good local school in the community which they live. This principle is embedded in the Council's catchment-based admissions policy. In practice, therefore, the focus of the strategy has been on providing sufficient places in areas where there is population growth.

- 5.6 The two focuses of the programme outlined in this report are the South West and North East of the city. These are the areas which have seen the greatest levels of demographic growth and change and where the number of places is insufficient to ensure that all children can get a local school place. Work is also taking place to consider the options for more primary places in the Netherthorpe/Crookesmoor area from 2017 onwards and this will be subject to period of exploration to consider the options for adding places in this area. Smaller scale changes will continue to be needed in other localities and an annual monitoring exercise will continue to drive the programme over the next period.
- 5.7 The North East area has seen sustained population growth over the last decade. The Council has responded by expanding a number of the local primary schools, including Pye Bank CE NIJ, St Catherine's RC NIJ, Owler Brook NIJ and Whiteways NIJ. It has also commissioned two new primary schools, Oasis Fir Vale and Oasis Watermead, which opened in September 2014. Whilst this added capacity has largely accommodated the number of families that apply for Reception places, it has been insufficient for a mobile population with families that need to access places for their children mid-year. Typically, those children have had the disadvantage of being referred to places in neighbouring areas which has increased the difficulty for families in getting their children to school and has also resulted in some siblings being offered placed in different schools. The need now is for an additional 30 primary places per year in the Burngreave area to supplement those provided at the Oasis schools and to enable more families to get a place for their child in a school in their local area.
- 5.8 In the South West of the city, there is a need to respond to the overall population growth, including the recent increase in the number of families moving to live in the Ecclesall, Greystones and Millhouses areas. A permanent expansion of Greystones Primary School was implemented from September 2014 and a temporary 'bulge class' is being provided at Dobcroft Infant from September 2015. What is now needed is a permanent solution to adding 30 extra places in this area from 2016 onwards to enable all children in the area to access a local school place.
- 5.9 The Council undertook an initial consultation on a proposal to provide these places at Dobcroft Infant and Junior Schools. The feedback from this consultation was reported to Cabinet on 18 March at which it was decided to 'pause' the proposals and to consider the alternative options for providing these places. A public options appraisal has been carried out with feedback from parents and governors received through workshops and an online survey. Detailed feedback and the appraisal of

options that resulted from this process are reported in Appendix 2. Listening to the views of the wider community about how to provide these places has shaped the keystone projects listed below.

### **Secondary Strategy**

- 5.10 In the secondary sector, the Council is embarking on a major legacy programme to ensure that the significantly larger number of children coming through the city's primary schools can be accommodated at secondary level. The scale of the change and investment needed to deliver the capacity in the secondary system will require strong buy-in from city-partners and to be founded on a strong vision of excellence that will capture the aspiration of parents.
- 5.11 In order to make sense of the very significant level of expansion required, an initial planning horizon of 2018/19 has been adopted as the basis of this programme. This is expected to be the first major peak in the city's trajectory of secondary growth followed by a period of stability with further growth from 2023 onwards. It is expected by September 2019 that an additional 15 to 19 forms of entry (15 x 30 places) will need to be added to the system just to accommodate all children transferring from primary schools into Year 7. This is the equivalent of more than two secondary schools, which are typically 6-8 forms of entry in size. In common with the primary sector, the focus is on the South West and North East of the city where there is a need to accommodate significant demographic growth.
- 5.12 The Council has undertaken a detailed investigation of the options for providing the extra secondary capacity needed city-wide. The conclusion has been that, due to physical and other constraints, it would not be feasible to do so solely by expanding existing schools. The scale of the additional capacity needed, and the fact that two areas of the city are the focal points of population growth, clearly point to the establishment of two new secondary schools to add to Oasis Don Valley already commissioned to open in September 2018.
- 5.13 The commissioning of new schools creates a generational opportunity to realise the vision of excellence and inclusion that underlines the Council's aspirations for families and children. The commissioning process now involves a competition to identify the provider that is best placed to meet the Council's vision. It is possible that this could be a proposition led by a collaboration of Sheffield schools with other city partners.
- 5.14 The capacity provided by these two newly commissioned schools will need to be supplemented by expansions of individual schools in order to ensure that sufficient places are provided to meet need, both for 2018/19 and beyond. Where already identified, these are outlined in the proposed programme below, although further work is needed to fully appraise all the options so as to set out specific plans for consultation. In addition to investigating the feasibility of expansion at individual schools, a possible option will be to consider commissioning Key Stage 3 places, possibly city-centre based, feeding directly to the two University Technology

Colleges.

## 6.0 KEYSTONE PROJECTS

- 6.1 **A new secondary school in the northeast:** the vision is to establish an outstanding new 750-place (5FE) secondary school to open in 2018 to serve the Burngreave and Fir Vale area. Consideration is being given to options for locating the new school in the Burngreave area including consideration of options for incorporating the former Pye Bank School building in the Woodside area. The new secondary school will link to the creation of additional primary provision of 210 places, either through expansion of a local school, a new primary school, or a primary phase to join the new secondary provision.
- 6.2 It is expected that 60 additional Y7 places will be needed in 2017 prior to the opening of the new northeast school to meet the needs of the growing population. This will be met flexibly by the four schools that serve the area – Hinde House, Firth Park, Parkwood and Fir Vale – being prepared to accommodate additional numbers of students as required for that year.
- 6.3 **A masterplan for the southwest:** the vision is to create an outstanding new 1200 place (8FE) secondary school to open in 2018 in the heart of the southwest area. Consideration is being given to the best possible location for the new school including options around the Holt House area. The new secondary school could therefore have links to a new/rebuilt Holt House/Carterknowle Primary school, enabling an expansion of primary places in the Ecclesall schools (see below).
- 6.4 Further additional secondary capacity is proposed through the expansion of Silverdale Secondary school by 60 places (2FE) from 2017. Taken together with the new school, this plan would provide sufficient places secondary places for the South West of Sheffield into the next decade.
- 6.5 It is expected that 90 additional Y7 places will be needed in 2016 and 2017 in order to accommodate children transferring from primary schools in advance of the new school opening. This will be met in part by temporary places at Silverdale in advance of their permanent expansion and by offering additional places at Newfield, which is linked to King Ecgbert through the Mercia Academy Trust.
- 6.6 The primary element of the masterplan consists of three linked proposals which taken together will provide the additional places at Ecclesall in line with the consultation response whilst also providing investment in infrastructure to meet the aspirations of parents and improve outcomes:
- 6.7 The **permanent expansion of Ecclesall Infant school** from 60 to 90 places per year. In conjunction with the proposals below, the 30 additional children will be enabled to transfer to Ecclesall Junior School.
- 6.8 Creating junior places for the children who attend Clifford Infant by



**changing the age range at Clifford Infant** to become a through primary school. This would allow the 30 children per year at Clifford Infant who currently feed to Ecclesall Junior School to complete their primary education within one setting. It would also free up 30 places at Ecclesall Junior school for the 30 additional children at Ecclesall Infant to transfer to.

- 6.9 The **merger of Holt House Infant and Carterknowle Junior schools** in new/rebuilt buildings on a single site. The merger of the two schools would provide the structure, leadership and investment to enable an improvement in outcomes for children in this catchment. It will also release the Carterknowle Junior building and site for possible re-use by Clifford as a through primary school.

## **7.0 COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Although much of this outline programme has been formed through engagement with schools, governors, parents and other city-partners, it is the Council's intention to engage fully on the detail of each proposal and its implications for relevant stakeholders prior to proceeding.

- 7.2 A full consultation on each of the proposals named in the programme above will be undertaken in the Autumn Term with the schools communities affected. This will allow for a full communication and engagement exercise to take place about the new school proposals, enabling local parents and other stakeholders to give their views. It will also allow time for the detail of the proposals, including the site options, to be fully developed and the necessary engagement with stakeholders undertaken. A report on the outcomes will be presented to Cabinet before Christmas and a final decision on a fully-developed programme.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Local Authorities have a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient schools are available for their area. Proposals to reorganise maintained school provision to meet this requirement, such as expansion and changes to age range, are governed by the procedures set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 ("Prescribed Alterations Regulations"), and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 ("Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations") and relevant statutory guidance. In the case of existing Academies, any changes would be negotiated directly between the Academy and the Education Funding Agency.
- 8.2 In terms of new schools, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as amended by the Education Act 2011, if the Council thinks that a new school needs to be established it must first seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy. The Council would evaluate the proposals and it would then be for the Secretary of State to determine which, if any,

proposals they determine should be implemented by way of entering in to Academy arrangements.

- 8.3 All the proposals outlined would therefore be subject to consultation and would follow the relevant statutory process referenced above. This will mean the publication of statutory proposals relating to the primary changes as part of the autumn consultation process.

## **9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council receives an annual capital allocation from central government to provide school places known as 'Basic Need'. Sheffield was allocated £17.2m for 15/16, £21.4m for 16/17, and £15.7m in 17/18 to meet these predicted deficits. From these allocations, £34.1m has already been committed to approved projects to create additional school places in the city.
- 9.2 The total estimated cost of the proposals outlined is around £50m. Were the proposals to be put forward as stated above, following the consultation process, some £44m of expansion and maintenance grant allocations would be required in addition to the published Basic Need allocations running to the end of 2017/18. This additional resource would be sought from future basic need allocations (and is line with the average allocations over the past three years). It could also be supplemented by alternative funding sources e.g. funding bid opportunities, or targeting savings within these schemes. The Community Infrastructure Levy is another possibility but any CIL revenues may be committed to other projects until 2018/19.
- 9.3 The Government has pledged an increase in the funding targeted at school places nationally from £5bn to £7bn over the course of the current parliament. With funding matched to need and Sheffield continuing to show pressure on places, the current anticipation is that future allocations of basic need funding would be sufficient to cover the requirements outlined above. Because of that pressure, other projects to add school places are likely. It remains sensible therefore to seek all funding opportunities to support these and future projects.
- 9.4 In prior years the Council has balanced the funding demands of the programme by combining the maintenance and expansion grants to use this to best effect.
- 9.5 Further feasibility work to better understand costs and implications would be undertaken as part of the next phase, prior to any final decision.
- 9.6 The construction of new schools may require the acquisition of new land or reallocation of existing (surplus) Council land for use in education. This has implications for the funding of the capital programme either because of the cost of the land purchase or the loss of capital receipts from sites earmarked for disposal. The property implications are discussed below in section 10. The costs of land acquisition are not included in the figures in 9.2. The full impact of this will be reported to Cabinet in future reports

seeking capital expenditure authorisation once the outcome of the consultation exercise is known.

## **10.0 PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Clearly with the two new schools proposed there would be significant property implications. Part of the purpose of the next phase of consultation would be to work through the options for the sites and fully understand the implications for the Council, schools, families, and the local community prior to any decision.

## **11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 The outline programme described in this report has been subject to considerable amounts of formative discussion with schools, parents and other stakeholders. The criteria set out in 5.2 above have been used as a means of structuring an evaluation as well as an understanding of the technical feasibility and estimated costs. Where new secondary schools have been proposed, the alternative option of expanding existing schools has been fully considered in every aspect and deemed insufficient, unfeasible or educationally unviable to provide the capacity increase needed across the secondary sector in the programme up to 2020.
- 11.2 The alternative options to Dobcroft for the delivery of primary places in the South West have been fully scrutinised through a public options appraisal and evaluation process, based once again on the criteria in 5.2. This concluded a preference for the increase in places to be delivered in the Ecclesall catchment linked to the provision of junior places for pupils at Clifford Infant. The detailed options for the provision of primary places in the North East area linked to the proposed new secondary school remain to be fully evaluated.
- 11.3 The option of doing nothing or delaying delivery of the provision proposed is not feasible. It poses significant risks to the Council in not providing sufficient statutory school places and to parents in not being able to secure a school place for their child.

## **12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 The outline school places programme set out in this report is recommended to Cabinet on the basis that it will deliver a coherent and ambitious vision for secondary and primary school places in the areas of the city where population growth requires additional school capacity to be provided. It is a programme which recognises the aspirations of families to have access to high quality education for their children within their local area and provides a pattern for investment that will achieve the best possible outcomes whilst achieving best value for the Council's resources.
- 12.2 The scale of the extra school capacity needed over forthcoming years in the secondary sector requires an innovative and forward-thinking response from the city. The recommendation is to endorse a strategic

vision of commissioning two new outstanding secondary schools backed with investment in the provision of high quality buildings, which could involve partnership from the sector and other key city-partners.

### **13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Endorse the outline programme for the provision of primary and secondary places in the North East and South West of the city as set out in this report;
- (ii) Agree that consultation should be undertaken on the proposals set out in Section 6 above; and,
- (iii) Receive a further report in November 2015 detailing the outcomes of that consultation and setting out the proposals in full detail for a final decision.

Alena Prentice  
Head of Access & Pupil Services  
July 2015