



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet Report

Report of: Jayne Ludlam

Date: 18th September 2013

Subject: School Places in Sheffield

Author of Report: Joel Hardwick (ext 35476)

Summary: The report provides an update on the impact of the growth in population and the requirement to provide further additional primary school places from 2014/15. It seeks permission to consult on proposals to increase places in five areas of the city.

Reasons for Recommendations: Providing sufficient primary school places is a statutory duty of the Council. This will mean that Sheffield children reaching primary school age in 2014 and beyond will continue to have a school place in the area of the city in which they live.

Recommendations:

- (i) Give permission for officers to carry out consultation in the areas identified and to report back to Cabinet following consultation.
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Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
No Cleared by:
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Nadine Wynter
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO Cleared by:
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
All
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Cllr Jackie Drayton
Relevant Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee if decision called in
Children, Young People and Families
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
YES/NO

SCHOOL PLACES IN SHEFFIELD

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides an update on the impact of the growth in population and the requirement to provide further additional primary school places from 2014/15. It seeks permission to consult on proposals to increase places in five areas of the city.

2. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 Providing sufficient primary school places is essential to the Council's focus on enabling children to have the best start, achieve their full potential and contribute to the success of the city. This programme is aimed at providing enough primary school places for all Sheffield children reaching primary school age in 2014 and beyond in the area of the city in which they live.
- 2.2 At the heart of the vision for increasing primary school places in Sheffield is the council's role in guaranteeing excellent education outcomes and equitable access for all.

3. OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The outcome would be to provide enough primary school places in the right areas to meet demand in 2014 and beyond. This includes an assessment of whether the solution is sustainable in the long-term.

4. CONTEXT

- 4.1 Since 1977 birth rates in Sheffield have fluctuated, with a more recent peak of 6,805 in 1990/91, followed by a steady decline to 5549 in 2001/02. This downward trend was reversed in 2002/03 as Sheffield saw an increase in births, rising steadily to 6,602 in 2009/10. Recent data suggests the birth rate in Sheffield is, for the time being, sustained at this higher level. In addition to the population growth there has been a more recent rise in the number of pupils applying for places mid-year, after the normal point of entry. The local schools are usually full so this has led to an increase in children allocated to out of area schools and families with siblings split across different schools.
- 4.2 Over the last five years the Council has taken steps to address the growth in demand with the addition of over 2,500 places to the primary system to date, with approved plans for a further 1,000. All targeted at areas of the highest demand.

- 4.3 The Council approved the most recent of those proposals in November 2012 with a decision to create two new primary schools in the north east of Sheffield. Following a successful capital bid the Council is also in the process of commissioning a new 2-16 school in the Darnall/Attercliffe area. Overall, Sheffield is now operating in a tighter system as the reduced number of surplus places means reduced flexibility. This means that local population rises are more likely to require action to provide additional places.

5. AREAS FOR LOCAL DISCUSSIONS

Wybourn

- 5.1 Wybourn Primary is oversubscribed from its catchment area in 2013 and is expected to be so again in the following two years unless additional places are provided. The population across the area is growing, additional housing will create further additional demand, and places in neighbouring schools are expected to become increasingly tight.
- 5.2 Wybourn currently offers 45 places per year. A proposal to increase the school to 60 places per year would satisfy local demand for the foreseeable future and would be the preferred option for consultation locally.

Greystones

- 5.3 Greystones Primary was included in the Council's previous round of expansions with a temporary proposal to increase from 60 places per year to 90 places per year for intakes in 2009, 2011, 2012, & 2013. These places have all been taken up with around 80 first preferences from the catchment area. Although there is a drop in the cohort coming through in 2014, numbers return to recent levels in 2015 and 2016 with upwards of 80 first preferences from catchment expected.
- 5.4 The preferred option for local discussion would be to permanently increase Greystones to 90 places per year.

Crosspool

- 5.5 The population has grown in the area covered by Lydgate and Hallam primary schools in recent years with catchment pupils initially refused a place in the 2012 intake. The nearest alternative places were at a considerable distance and provision was made for 30 additional pupils at Hallam prior to the start of the school year to offer these pupils a local place. Future years are anticipated to remain at the higher level requiring some additional places in the area.
- 5.6 Increasing places at the Lydgate schools is not considered feasible nor desirable given the current size of the schools and their sites. Hallam Primary currently offers 60 Reception places each year and the preferred option for local discussion is to increase places at Hallam

Primary. This could be up to 90 pupils per year.

Firth Park

- 5.7 The area around Hucklow, Hatfield, Hartley Brook, and Beck primaries has seen overall growth in population in recent years. This has been matched more recently by increasing numbers of mid-term applications. The schools have all filled in the latest Reception application round and Hatfield and Hucklow have catchment pupils on their respective waiting lists where pupils have applied after the deadline or arrived mid-year.
- 5.8 The demand is focussed on the southern end of this area around Hucklow and Hatfield. Given the size of the local schools and their sites, the preferred option would be a new school in the area offering at least 30 places per year. This would only be possible by 2015 and interim arrangements will be sought, such as increasing places at one of the local schools through temporary additional accommodation.

Tinsley

- 5.9 The Tinsley schools were included in a previous round of expansions with a temporary proposal to increase to 75 places per year for three years beginning in September 2012. The population has remained at this higher level but even with the additional places, further late and mid-year applicants are not always able to access a local place.
- 5.10 Given the size of the existing schools, the locations, and the relative geographical isolation the preferred option is to create a new primary school away from the motorway offering 90 places per year. This would replace the existing Nursery Infant and Junior schools.
- 5.11 The project to rebuild the Tinsley schools away from the motorway could not be afforded within the normal capital allocation. The Tinsley area was therefore part of the successful bid for additional funding through the Department for Education's Targeted Basic Need Programme announced in June 2013.

6. DELIVERING ADDITIONAL PLACES

- 6.1 The current legislation on making changes to schools means that the above proposals have different decision-making routes and timetables which are outlined below.

Expansion Proposals (Wybourn, Greystones, Crosspool)

- 6.2 A six-week consultation period with the results reported to the Council's Cabinet (November 2013). If proceeding, the Council then publishes a legal notice stating the final proposal with 4 weeks for the public to make written representations (expected December 2013-January 2014). Any representations received are then reported back to inform a final decision by Cabinet (March 2014).

- Replacement Schools (Tinsley)
- 6.3 As above for expansion proposals but with a 6 week period for written representations and a final decision by the Schools Adjudicator.
- New Schools (Firth Park)
- 6.4 The process for establishing new schools does not require consultation at this stage. The Council would propose in this case a short pre-consultation period running alongside the proposals above to share information with local stakeholders and listen to concerns prior to undertaking the statutory process at the next stage.
- 6.5 Should the Cabinet decide at the next stage to move ahead with the proposal under new legislation, the Council cannot propose a new Community School financially maintained by the Council. Having identified a need for a new school, the Council must seek proposals from prospective providers to set up and run a new Academy.
- 6.6 Discussions with local stakeholders would also continue following the decision in order to continue sharing information, find out local aspirations for the new school, and help shape the proposal as it develops. In particular we would want to find out what local people want to see from the provider of the new school.
- 6.7 The Council set out a process in relation to the recent development of new primary schools in Fir Vale and Shirecliffe when inviting proposals. Key criteria around a strong track record of improving outcomes in a similar context, inclusion, and partnership working were used. Each prospective sponsor met a panel of Sheffield representatives and were asked to commit to signing up to the Sheffield asks and the City Wide Learning Body as part of the process. Following this process all proposals would be passed to the Secretary of State with the Local Authority's assessment of them. The Secretary of State then makes the final decision on provider and would work with them and the Local Authority to set up the new school.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Legal

- 7.1 Local Authorities have a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient primary schools are available for their area. The proposals to reorganise school provision to meet this requirement, such as expansion, are governed by the procedures set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended. New school proposals are governed by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as amended by the Education Act 2011 and the Academies Act 2010. The Council also has a duty to have regard to the statutory guidance.

Financial Implications

- 7.2 Capital: The resulting capital schemes would be funded from the Council's Basic Need Allocation of £13.2m to cover 2013/14 and 2014/15. This is funding from central government to allow Councils to fulfil their statutory duty to provide enough school places. The only exception would be the Tinsley scheme which will be part-funded from the successful bid into the Targeted Basic Need programme amounting. The estimated capital costs would be presented to Cabinet at the next stage once preferred options from the consultation are confirmed.

Equality of Opportunity

- 7.3 The overall aim of this programme is to ensure that access to quality primary school provision is available to all children of primary school age across Sheffield.

Environmental & Sustainability

- 7.4 Providing additional local school places will increase the number of families who are able to go to their local school. This will reduce the number of longer journeys and should therefore increase the number of pupils who are able to travel to school in a sustainable way.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The consultation process will allow for alternative proposals to be put forward and this would be reported back to Cabinet at the next stage.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Providing sufficient primary school places is a statutory duty of the Council. This will mean that Sheffield children reaching primary school age in 2014 and beyond will continue to have a school place in the area of the city in which they live.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Cabinet are requested to:
- (i) Give permission for officers to carry out consultation in the areas identified and to report back to Cabinet following consultation.

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