



Cabinet Report

Report of: Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 17 September 2014

Subject: Changes at Oughtibridge Primary, The Rowan Primary and Becton School – feedback from consultation

Author of Report: Joel Hardwick, 27 35476

Key Decision: No

Summary:

Statutory consultation has taken place on changes to three Sheffield schools – an increase in capacity at Oughtibridge Primary, an increase in capacity at The Rowan Primary (Special) and a change of age range at Becton School (Hospital School). This report provides feedback on the consultation and seeks a final decision on the proposals.

Reasons for Recommendations:

Consultation has been conducted to listen to concerns and to test the level of support for the proposals from parents, school staff, governors and the community. Overall the positive response to consultation reflects the wide ranging support for the proposals.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to approve:

- i. An expansion at Oughtibridge Primary from 45 places per year to 60 places per year, starting in the Reception intake in September 2015 and that a capital approval submission will be brought forward in due course.
 - ii. An expansion at The Rowan Primary (Special School) from 68 to 90 places overall, starting in September 2015 on condition that the capital scheme receives planning permission by 1st May 2015
 - iii. A change in the age range of Becton School (Hospital School) from 11-18 to 5-18, with a change to the proposed start date of 1st September 2014 to 1st October 2014; and note
 - iv. That the Rowan School expansion capital scheme is the subject of an approval request in the Month 3 Budget Monitoring report.
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Background Papers:

Individual Cabinet Member decisions seeking permission to consult on the above proposals – 13th June 2014

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: Paul Schofield
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
YES
Area(s) Affected
All
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead
Cllr Jackie Drayton
Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Children & Young People
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press Release
NO

REPORT TO CABINET

Statutory Changes at Oughtibridge Primary, The Rowan Primary and Becton School – feedback from consultation

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Statutory consultation has taken place on changes to three Sheffield schools – an increase in capacity at Oughtibridge Primary, an increase in capacity at The Rowan Primary (Special) and a change of age range at Becton School (Hospital School). This report provides feedback on the consultation and seeks a final decision on the proposals.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places for all children who require one. The proposal at Oughtibridge is a direct response to increased demand for places at the school from within its own catchment area. Providing the expansion will enable catchment residents to obtain a place at their local primary school.
- 2.2 Demand for places at The Rowan is increasing. The school is a special school providing places for primary aged children with complex communication difficulties, particularly Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Increasing numbers of pupils under assessment require specialist placements and the proposal to expand The Rowan is a response to this need. Some of the additional places are also intended to be utilised on a more flexible basis by pupils with ASD who are currently accessing mainstream placements. This will build capacity in the mainstream sector to meet the needs of this group of pupils.
- 2.3 Education provision for primary-school aged children who are patients of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is currently delivered under a service level agreement with Becton School. The proposal envisages formalising this provision by changing the age range of Becton to reflect the current practice. This change will also facilitate per-place funding for all pupils at the school. This gives more transparency to the funding available and is in line with national funding guidelines which state there will be a nationally specified amount per place in hospital schools which is different to the 'place plus' model used for all other schools.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 If agreed, the outcome of this proposal will be a final decision from Cabinet to implement the proposed changes. This will reflect the views expressed by stakeholders during consultation and will enable the aims of the proposals to be met.

- 3.2 Sustainability of the schools going forward is underpinned by the forecasts which provide evidence of increased demand. For Oughtibridge and The Rowan, additional revenue funding will follow the increased pupil numbers anticipated by the proposals. For Becton, the formal change of age range will allow per-pupil funding to be implemented after the expiry of the existing Service Level Agreement, providing more clarity and certainty to the funding of the school going forward.

4.0 PROPOSALS

Background

- 4.1 In June/July 2014 the Council undertook consultation on changes at three Sheffield schools:

- An expansion at Oughtibridge Primary from 45 places per year to 60 places per year, starting in the Reception intake in September 2015
- An expansion at The Rowan Primary Special School from 68 to 90 places overall, starting in September 2015 (placements may be made into any year group)
- A change in the age range of Becton School (a hospital school located within the Becton Centre for Children & Young People) from 11-18 to 5-18 years.

- 4.2 The rationale for the proposals is based on an analysis of need in light of the Council's statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places. Expansion at Oughtibridge will enable catchment residents to obtain a place at their local primary school. Expansion at The Rowan will provide additional capacity within the special school sector for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, which is a growing cohort. The proposed change at Becton will enable the children of primary school age currently attending Becton to be formally on the school's roll.

- 4.3 In line with the statutory process required, the proposals were subject to a 4 week period of consultation. Activity has included the circulation of newsletters, meetings for parents, staff, and school governors, and engagement with local residents in the vicinity of the schools. Feedback from the consultation is reported back to Cabinet for a final decision on the proposals. Full responses to the consultation are included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Oughtibridge

- 4.4 A consultation newsletter was circulated to all families at the school and copies were also provided to neighbouring schools. Two sessions of 'school-gates' consultation were held, with parents invited to speak to officers in the playground at drop off and pick up times. A briefing for governors was held and staff were also offered this opportunity. In addition to the consultation with those directly linked to the school, two drop-in sessions were organised for local residents who may be affected

by the physical implications of the proposed expansion. A dedicated email address, telephone number and postal address were also provided for responses.

- 4.5 Overall, parents were supportive of the proposal. A total of 35 parents responded to the consultation. Many parents already understood that school places were tight in Oughtibridge. Parents acknowledged the popularity of the school locally, its high standards and quality of provision and an increasing population of the area. One parent expressed frustration that the local authority had not sought to expand the school earlier but welcomed the proposal overall.
- 4.6 Governors at Oughtibridge Primary were supportive of the proposal with the caveat that the physical development of the site would need to reflect the school's priorities and needs. No separate briefing was required for staff and no specific responses were received. Meetings were also held with Bradfield Dungworth Primary Governors and the Headteacher at Wharnccliffe Side Primary. The issues raised at these neighbouring schools were similar. Whilst there was understanding that the growth is in the Oughtibridge Primary catchment, there were natural concerns about any potential future loss of pupils and the impact this would have on the budgets of these two small schools.
- 4.7 A small number of residents attended the drop-in sessions, with two written responses also being received. Residents supported the principle of expanding the school to accommodate local demand, but had concerns around parking, traffic and the management of the construction process.

The Rowan

- 4.8 A consultation newsletter was provided to all families at the school. Officers attended a parents' coffee morning and the school's Parents' Evening and spoke to a total of 17 parents (there are 69 children currently on roll at the school). Officers also briefed governors. No separate briefing was required for staff but informal queries were answered when officers were at the school. Two drop-in sessions for local residents were held. In addition the Council suggested establishing a project group with local residents represented to discuss and work through the issues. This was discussed with local residents in a meeting at the school on 17th July.
- 4.9 The response from parents of Rowan pupils was largely supportive, with many parents explaining the anxiety they had experienced when seeking a place at The Rowan for their child. Some parents had concerns about the management of the proposed flexible placements, particularly around the disruption caused by pupils attending part time or for short periods and the impact this would have on children with ASD. One parent expressed concern that the quality of the school's provision could suffer as a result of the added pressure of managing an expansion.
- 4.10 The majority of responses to the consultation came from local residents. Around 30 residents attended the two drop in sessions and a number also emailed or telephoned to express their views. The vast majority of the

concerns focused on parking and traffic issues around the school. The issues raised are a combination of existing problems and the potential for these to be exacerbated by the proposed expansion. The concerns include access to Durvale Court, particularly when the minibuses arrive at the school to drop off and collect children and parking by staff and visitors on Durvale Court and surrounding roads.

Becton School

- 4.11 A consultation newsletter was provided to all families at the school and placed on the school's website and on noticeboards. Officers attended a drop-in session which was advertised and a reminder sent via text to parents. Governors and staff were briefed at their regular meetings. Letters were sent to relevant teams within the Health service in addition to the usual statutory consultees.
- 4.12 No parents attended the drop-in session or responded to the consultation (this was not unexpected due to the nature of the school, the wide area it serves and the minor impact the proposed change will have on existing pupils). Governors were unanimously in favour of the proposed change. Staff were largely supportive of the principle of the change but had a number of questions around potential funding implications and future HR impacts if the change would enable changes to their terms and conditions of employment. A letter of support for the proposal was received from the Joint Clinical Director, Community Wellbeing and Mental Health Division, Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

5.0 FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 Capital: The expansion proposals at Oughtibridge and The Rowan will require capital projects to provide additional accommodation. All capital approvals will be sought separately through Cabinet at the appropriate time with detailed costs and set in the context of the overall capital strategy. In terms of the Oughtibridge proposals, the estimated cost of providing an additional 0.5FE through new buildings would be £1.25m and will be prioritised from the Basic Need grant. This is a high level estimate based on the number of additional places and a true budget for providing these places at Oughtibridge will be established through detailed feasibility work. Oughtibridge is known to be a constrained site which has a number of issues including a potentially difficult planning process. The Rowan scheme, which is at a more advanced design stage than Oughtibridge, is estimated to cost £1.7 million, including internal work at the school to address existing condition and suitability issues. Funding of £693,000 was secured from the Government's Targeted Basic Need fund to fund the expansion of places at The Rowan. This is the subject of a capital approval request in the Month 3 Budget Monitoring report. There are no capital implications to the proposals at Becton.
- 5.2 Revenue: For Oughtibridge, extra pupils, starting in September following an expansion, do not automatically receive revenue funding until the start

of the next financial year the following April. This is because a school's standard per pupil budget share is based on the pupil census taken the previous October. An amount of money, known as the growth fund, is agreed each year with schools (through Schools Forum) and set aside from the overall school revenue fund. Where necessary, this allows the Council to fund the basic staffing costs, teacher at main scale 5 and teaching assistant at spinal point 18, at expanding schools between September and March. Schools must apply for this funding once it is clear that extra pupils will be starting and extra staffing will be required. Schools' existing balances are considered in growth applications. If a school's balance is greater than 4% of the overall budget, this is usually deemed sufficient to absorb costs without additional money from the growth fund.

- 5.3 For Becton, the funding for Amber Lodge is historic and currently passported to the school via a Service Level Agreement with the governors of Becton School. This lodge deals with the majority of primary aged pupils who attend the hospital though some are placed in Ruby Lodge. This proposal would lead to a cessation of the SLA from the next financial year in April 2015 and move to per place funding in line with national arrangements for funding of hospital schools which is different to the 'place plus' model used for high needs children in other schools. There is no anticipated increase to the overall costs unless the national funding rate for hospital schools is set at a rate higher than £16k per place which is not expected at this time.
- 5.4 For The Rowan, additional places commissioned by the Authority would be funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant/High Needs Block. The Local Authority's return to the Education Funding Agency for the financial year 2015-16 would reflect the increase in the number of places commissioned by the Local Authority at The Rowan School, thereby ensuring the appropriate level of funding is received by the Local Authority from the Education Funding Agency to support the increase in the school's budget.

Legal Implications

- 5.5 Local Authorities have a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient schools in their area. The three proposals described in this report are defined as prescribed alterations, meaning they require a legal process to bring them about. Proposals to reorganise school provision are governed by the procedures set out in the The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. These new regulations came into effect from 28th January 2014. Local Authorities are also required to have regard to the statutory guidance dated January 2014 when exercising functions under the Prescribed Alterations Regulations. A copy of the guidance is attached to this report at Appendix 1, including the guidance relating to SEN proposals.

Human Resources Implications

- 5.6 Expansion of schools will require additional teaching and support staff to be employed. This is a matter for the individual schools to organise in line

with their normal processes.

Equalities Implications

- 5.7 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted for each project. There are no negative impacts identified. Provision of additional capacity at special schools increases the ability of the city to provide for the needs of all Sheffield children.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The alternative options would be to provide the capacity at alternative schools or not to provide the capacity at all. Analysis shows that this additional capacity is required to meet growing demand. The consultation process allowed for all alternative proposals to be put forward, including providing the capacity at a different school. No alternatives came forward during consultation and the proposals were largely supported.

7.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Consultation has been conducted to listen to concerns and to test the level of support for the proposals from parents, school staff, governors and the community. Overall the positive response to consultation reflects the wide ranging support for the proposals.
- 7.2 The proposal at the Rowan is the only one to gain a significant negative response, yet the key issues raised are not concerned with the principle of increasing the number of places at the school. The issues around parking traffic that have been raised are important considerations and therefore the recommendation is to proceed with the condition that the scheme receives planning permission. This is where the impact of the development on highways would be properly considered.
- 7.3 In line with the Regulations, once statutory notices have been published and consultation concluded, a decision must be reached by the decision-maker (in this case, the Local Authority), otherwise the proposals must be formally withdrawn. It has not been possible to complete the process for Becton in line with the initial proposal to implement from 1st September 2014. Under its powers under the Regulations, Cabinet is asked to amend the proposal to change the implementation date to 1st October 2014. This has no practical implications as existing arrangements will continue and changes to financial arrangements would not come in until the new financial year in April 2015.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve:
- i. An expansion at Oughtibridge Primary from 45 places per year to

60 places per year, starting in the Reception intake in September 2015 and that a capital approval submission will be brought forward in due course.

- ii. An expansion at The Rowan Primary (Special School) from 68 to 90 places overall, starting in September 2015 on condition that the capital scheme receives planning permission by 1st May 2015.
- iii. A change in the age range of Becton School (Hospital School) from 11-18 to 5-18, with a change to the proposed start date of 1st September 2014 to 1st October 2014; and note
- iv. That the Rowan School expansion capital scheme is the subject of an approval request in the Month 3 Budget Monitoring report.

Joel Hardwick
Acting Senior Manager, School Organisation
17th September 2014

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