

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Green Park School - Significant Change Proposal	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Moran Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Director	Meredith Teasdale, Director of Education	
Originating service	Special Educational Needs Service	
Accountable employee	Tom Knott Tel Email	SEND Commissioning Officer Tel: 01902 551469 tom.knott@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Not applicable.	

Summary

This report presents the outcome of Pre-publication Consultation on the proposed permanent expansion of Green Park School. The paper seeks determination of whether or not to proceed to a formal period of Representation in relation to the proposed permanent expansion.

Recommendations for decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Director of Education:

1. Having considered the outcomes of Pre-publication Consultation regarding the proposed permanent expansion of Green Park School, approves progression to a period of Representation regarding the proposed permanent expansion of Green Park School.

Signature

Date:

Signature

Date:

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 20 February 2019, Cabinet resolved that; the commencement of a period of Pre-publication Consultation on the proposed permanent expansion of Green Park School be approved and that authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Director of Education, to consider the outcome of Pre-publication Consultation and determine whether to proceed to Representation.
- 1.2 In March 2019, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Education, endorsed the identified investment priorities for the future use of the Special Provision Capital Fund and approved the allocation of resources to a new capital project at Green Park School.

2.0 Green Park School

- 2.1 Green Park School is a community special school located within the Bilston North Ward. The school caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).
- 2.2 Pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum as they learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. (Source: DfE & DoH 2015)
- 2.3 In December 2015, Green Park School was judged by Ofsted to be Good.
- 2.4 Numbers on roll at the school have increased markedly in recent years (115 in January 2015 to 136 in January 2019).
- 2.5 To meet anticipated demand, the Council has commissioned 144 places at Green Park School for the 2019-20 academic year. To support this temporary uplift in capacity, the Council is currently working closely with the school and partners to develop and deliver an appropriate capital scheme to meet pupils' needs in September 2019.
- 2.6 It should be noted that the current capital investment needs to be recognised as providing capacity to cater for a temporary uplift in capacity in 2019/2020 until, and dependent upon, a final decision on the proposed permanent expansion being made.

3.0 Proposed Permanent Expansion

- 3.1 It is proposed that Green Park School is permanently expanded from 108 places to 144 places with effect from 1 September 2019.
- 3.2 The creation of additional capacity within this popular and successful school would provide extra places to meet an increasing level of demand in the City.

4.0 Consultation and Decision-Making Timeline

- 4.1 The proposed expansion qualifies as a significant change (prescribed alteration) which requires the undertaking of statutory consultation and decision-making processes in accordance with 'The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013' and 'The Education and Inspections Act 2006 – as amended by The Education Act 2011'.
- 4.2 Figure 1 below summarises the planned consultation and decision-making process:

Figure 1: Consultation and Decision-Making Process (Subject to relevant approvals being secured)

Date	Process
4 March 2019 to 31 March 2019	Pre-publication Consultation.
April 2019	The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Director of Education, consider all outcomes of Pre-publication Consultation and determine progression to a period of Representation.
13 May 2019 to 9 June 2019	Representation Period.
10 July 2019	Cabinet consider all outcomes of consultation and make a final decision on the proposals.
17 July 2019 to 13 August 2019	Appeals Period.
1 September 2019	Subject to approval, proposals are formally implemented.

5.0 Outcome of Pre-publication Consultation

- 5.1 Pre-publication Consultation commenced on 4 March 2019 and ran until 31 March 2019.
- 5.2 During Pre-publication Consultation, more than 400 letters and consultation documents were distributed to stakeholders. Consultees included the Governing Board of Green Park School, members of staff at Green Park School, parents/carers of pupils attending Green Park School, all Wolverhampton Ward Councillors and all schools in Wolverhampton. A complete list of stakeholders can be found at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 During the Pre-publication Consultation period, 35 written responses were received by the City of Wolverhampton Council. These were completed by a range of stakeholders including members of staff at Green Park School, parents/carers of pupils at Green Park School, members of the Governing Board at Green Park School and pupils at Green Park School.

5.4 Figure 2: Written Responses Summary

Consultation Question	Number of Responses Received	Yes	No	Don't Know	Abstained
Do you agree with the proposal to permanently increase the capacity of Green Park School?	35	22 (62.9%)	3 (8.6%)	7 (20.0%)	3 (8.6%)

Copies of all consultation responses can be found at Appendix 2 and must be given due consideration.

5.5 A number of supportive comments regarding the proposal were received during Pre-publication Consultation, including;

- “Yes, would be brilliant as more children with disabilities will get a chance to get opportunities to get the right level of care they need.” (Response 8 – Parent/carer of a pupil at Green Park School).
- “The City is growing - every child needs an education. Green Park is an excellent school to provide this.” (Response 15 – Member of Staff at Green Park School).
- “With a growing city demand for school places is inevitable, so this is an important need that more places are made to accommodate the growing population, with an amazing school” (Response 20 - Member of Staff at Green Park School).

5.6 A number of concerns and considerations regarding the proposal were also received during Pre-publication Consultation, including;

- “I understand that more places are needed but I don't feel it is suitable for the school unless funds are available for expansion/staffing both teaching and admin. More spaces would benefit the children, but it needs to be balanced with the needs of staff as to the increase of the work load.” (Response 22 – Member of Staff at Green Park School).
- “I agree that more places are needed but would hope that staffing levels and car parking are going to be looked at.” (Response 23 - Parent/carer of a pupil at Green Park School).
- “My main concern is with extra pupil numbers will the excellent standard of Green Park suffer?” (Response 31 – Other - Member of Voluntary Committee).
- “Whilst delighted that the school remains a very popular choice for parents my concerns centre around the suitability of the building for an increase in pupil numbers. Special needs pupils require increased space for movement, storage of equipment, medical needs and staff facilities, together with increased staffing.” (Response 32 - Other - Member of Voluntary Committee).

5.7 Council employees met with members of Green Park School's Governing Board on 13 March 2019. A summary of this meeting is available at Appendix 3.

5.8 Council employees met with members of Green Park School's School Council on 13 March 2019. A summary of this meeting is available at Appendix 4.

5.9 Council employees met with staff members from Green Park School on 13 March 2019. A summary of this meeting is available at Appendix 5.

6.0 Evaluation of alternative options

6.1 Alternative options exist including;

- Option one: Not uplifting the capacity of the City's specialist estate to cater for anticipated demand. This is likely to result in both additional pressure on local settings and an increase in placements in out of city and independent settings (these placements are often more expensive than local placements and can result in pupils needing to travel long distances).
- Option two: Considering the introduction of additional capacity in an alternative local specialist setting. There is a risk that this would result in additional pressure on local settings as opportunities for the timely expansion of appropriate settings are limited.
- Option three: Consider the development of solutions within mainstream provision. This approach would align to the aforementioned policy to develop opportunities for students with SEND to attend mainstream provision. An initial appraisal of this option suggests that it is unlikely to be cost effective nor practical to support the needs of pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) within mainstream provision, at this point.

6.2 The proposed change aligns to the Council's strategic aspirations to:

- "Ensure Wolverhampton's school estate is fit for purpose and meets the full range of more complex needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities now being placed."
- "Develop local provision in order to reduce the number of children needing residential and out of area education, health and care services." (City of Wolverhampton Council 2016).

7.0 Reasons for decision

7.1 The proposal would support the Council to develop high quality educational provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and ensure that community needs can be met effectively.

8.0 Financial implications

8.1 The capital costs of the expansion at Green Park School will be met through the Special Provision Capital Fund in accordance with the 'Special Provision Capital Fund – Investment Priorities' IEDN report in March 2019.

- 8.2 The revenue funding for additional High Needs places is met from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. In recent years, there have been overspends within this area of funding, leading to a continued need to borrow from future years. The proposed change will contribute to reducing the need to borrow forward from this grant, by ensuring that pupils can access provision locally rather than being directed to alternative out of city or Independent provision which is often more expensive.

[JB/16042019/J]

9.0 Legal implications

- 9.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is a school place available for every child. The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities under review (including its sufficiency), working with parents, young people, and providers.
- 9.2 The legal implications arising from this report are stated in the body of the report. In addition, any proposals to alter the structure of school provision in the area would need to comply with the detailed provisions in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to ensure sufficient consultation is undertaken and that relevant stakeholders are notified of the proposals/decisions in a timely manner.

[TS/10042019/R]

10.0 Equalities implications

- 10.1 This report has equal opportunity implications as the contents have direct relevance to educational provision for children and young people in the City.
- 10.2 Subject to approval to proceed, consultation would form part of the Equality Impact Analysis. The equality analysis would be informed by the outcome of consultation and be reported to decision makers.

11.0 Environmental implications

- 11.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

12.0 Human resources implications

- 12.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

13.0 Corporate Landlord implications

- 13.1 Representatives of the Corporate Landlord and Education Directorates are working closely with school leaders and partners to develop an appropriate capital scheme which effectively supports the expansion and meets pupils' needs.

14.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

- 14.1 Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and relevant health providers have been given the opportunity to engage in both Pre-publication Consultation and feasibility regarding the capital scheme at Green Park School.
- 14.2 The City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton CCG are working closely to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND can continue to be met effectively.

15.0 Schedule of background papers

- 15.1 IEDN, March 2019 – ‘Special Provision Capital Fund – Investment Priorities’
- 15.2 Cabinet, 20 February 2019 – ‘Green Park School – Significant Change Proposal’
- 15.3 Cabinet, 12 September 2018 - ‘The Vision for School Organisation 2018-2020: City of Wolverhampton Education Place Planning’
- 15.4 Department for Education (April 2016) Making ‘prescribed alterations’ to local authority-maintained schools
- 15.5 Cabinet, 24 February 2016 - ‘Joint Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy’

16.0 Appendices

- 16.1 Appendix 1: Pre-publication Consultees
- 16.2 Appendix 2: Pre-publication Consultation Responses
- 16.3 Appendix 3: Green Park School’s Governing Board – Meeting Summary
- 16.4 Appendix 4: Green Park School’s School Council – Meeting Summary
- 16.5 Appendix 5: Green Park School’s Staff – Meeting Summary