

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Outcome of Initial Consultation on the Proposed Primary School Expansion Programme 2018-2020	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Claire Darke Education	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Linda Sanders, People	
Originating service	School Planning and Resources	
Accountable employee(s)	Bill Hague Tel Email	Head of School Planning and Resources 01902 555100 bill.hague@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	People Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	14 August 2017 22 August 2017

Summary

To consider the responses to Initial Consultation on the proposed schemes included in the Primary School Expansion Programme 2018-2020 and to determine whether to proceed to the statutory consultation process.

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Strategic Director of People;

1. Gives consideration to all of the outcomes of Initial Consultation on the proposed expansion of Loxdale Primary School and approves progression to the statutory consultation process.
2. Gives consideration to all of the outcomes of Initial Consultation on the proposed expansion of Spring Vale Primary School and approves progression to the statutory consultation process.

3. Gives consideration to all of the outcomes of Initial Consultation on the proposed expansion of Stowlawn Primary School and approves progression to the statutory consultation process.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places.
- 1.2 Levels of demand for educational provision in Wolverhampton have increased significantly in recent years. This uplift has principally been driven by a 24% increase in births between 2002 (2,807) and 2014 (3,481) (ONS Vital Statistics).
- 1.3 To ensure the ongoing sufficiency of provision the Local Authority has recently invested heavily in expanding the primary school estate and has introduced in excess of 2,150 additional primary school places since September 2012.
- 1.4 To ensure the continued sufficiency of primary school provision in the south east of the City significant investment in additional capacity is required.
- 1.5 On 27 June 2017, Cabinet approved the undertaking of required statutory processes in relation to the proposed Primary School Expansion Programme 2018-2020. The schemes proposed for inclusion in the Programme were developed in line with the Council's approved and published strategic policy as outlined in the Primary School Organisation Strategy 2016-2018.
- 1.6 Cabinet also delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Education in consultation with the Strategic Director of People, to consider the responses to Initial Consultation and determine whether or not to proceed to Stage 1 of the statutory process in relation to schemes included in the Primary School Expansion Programme 2018-2020.

2.0 Outcomes of Initial Consultation

- 2.1 Initial Consultation commenced on 3 July 2017 and concluded on 30 July 2017. During consultation letters outlining the proposals were distributed to relevant stakeholders. The consultation documentation and consultation survey were published on-line at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/consultations. In addition, copies of the consultation letters were placed in community facilities local to the schools. A full list of stakeholders who were consulted and the community facilities used can be found in the accompanying Supporting Information Packs.
- 2.2 Loxdale Primary School (Bilston East Ward):
 - 2.2.1 It is proposed that Loxdale Primary School is permanently expanded and that with effect from September 2018, the school's Reception admission limit is increased from 30 to 60. The admission limit for subsequent years would also be 60 and by September 2024 the school would cater for up to 420 pupils.
 - 2.2.3 In order to facilitate the proposed expansion and due to current site constraints, Loxdale Primary School would relocate onto the Bilston Urban Village site. Given practical constraints it is envisaged that for the 2018/19 academic year that the school would

continue be housed on the existing site with a transfer to the new site anticipated in 2019/20.

2.2.4 During the initial consultation period, 79 written consultation responses were received by the City of Wolverhampton Council. These were completed by a range of stakeholders including Governors, staff and parents/carers of pupils.

Number of responses received	Respondents in favour of the proposal	Respondents who did not agree with the proposal	Respondents who 'did not know'
79	60 (76%)	14 (18%)	5 (6%)

Copies of all consultation responses are available to decision makers in accompanying Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.

2.2.5 A number of supportive comments regarding the proposal were received during Initial Consultation including:

- "I think it will be a fantastic opportunity for the children at Loxdale – to be educated in a building that is fit for purpose, on a site that is large enough to accommodate our pupils. It will enable us to continue to provide a good education for the children of Bilston and to equip them with the key skills for lifelong learning." (Response 5 - Member of the Governing Body and a Member of Staff at Loxdale Primary School)
- "The expansion of the school will be a great opportunity for the local community. Loxdale Primary School is a highly popular school that many parents wish their children to be part of." (Response 11 – Member of Staff at Loxdale Primary School)
- "My son will be moving to Secondary school by the time this school is built, hopefully SWB so it will be easier for me to get my year 7 and my year 4 from the new Loxdale a lot easier." (Response 53 - Parent/Carer of a pupil at Loxdale Primary School)
- "I am moving to a new home in Bilston Urban Village soon and I have two children who are looking to attend their primary school there. It will be a lot more convenient for us as there is currently no primary there within the radius of 0.5 miles." (Response 66 - Local Resident)

2.2.6 A number of concerns and considerations regarding the proposal were also identified during Initial Consultation including:

- "The distance to the proposed site is further for us, and as we're relying on grandparents who do not drive to take our daughter to school this will cause and inconvenience. Also the busy roads around the area are off putting, either when walking and whilst driving. Also if our daughter will have spent 2 years at the current school, we worry a move will be disruptive." (Response 35 - Parent/Carer of a pupil at Loxdale Primary School).
- "I don't think I am happy with the change of the children having to relocate to another location, I feel as though this may affected their learning and this will be a big

distraction for them, my daughter will be reaching her last years and I don't want anything to jeopardise her education as I feel it will." (Response 70 – Parent/Carer of a pupil at Loxdale Primary School).

- "Please leave Loxdale where it is. Feel free to build a new school but leave Loxdale as it is." (Response 72 – Parent/Carer of a pupil at Loxdale Primary School).

2.2.7 Representatives from Education, Corporate Landlord and Place attended a meeting of the Governing Body of Loxdale Primary School on 6 July 2017. Notes of the meeting are available to the decision makers in the Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.

2.2.8 Parents/Carers were invited to attend drop-in sessions at Loxdale Primary School where Council representatives were available to answer any questions or queries on the proposed expansion or relocation of the school. These sessions were held on Tuesday 11 July 2017 between 3.30pm and 4.30pm and between 5.45pm and 6.45pm; attendance was limited. Notes of these sessions are available to the decision makers in the Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.

2.3 Spring Vale Primary School (Spring Vale Ward):

2.3.1 It is proposed that Spring Vale Primary School is permanently expanded and that with effect from September 2018, the school's Reception admission limit is increased from 30 to 60. The admission limit for subsequent years would also be 60 and by September 2024 the school would cater for up to 420 pupils.

2.3.2 During the Initial Consultation period, 54 written consultation responses were received by the City of Wolverhampton Council. These were completed by a range of stakeholders including Governors, staff, parents/carers of pupils and local residents.

Number of responses received	Respondents in favour of the proposal	Respondents who did not agree with the proposal	Respondents who 'did not know'
54	37 (69%)	10 (19%)	7 (13%)

Copies of all consultation responses are available to decision makers in accompanying Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.

2.3.3 A number of supportive comments regarding the proposal were received during Initial Consultation including:

- "Very good school and more pupils will get to enjoy its warm and friendly feeling" (Response 13 – Parent/Carer of a pupil at Spring Vale Primary School).
- As a resident in the Ettingshall Park Area, I am aware of local families who have not got a place at Spring Vale. Expanding will ensure that children on the Dovedale estate will get their first preference at their local school. The school has been over-

subscribed for a while and parents/carers, who live a short distance from the school, should be able to get their preferred choice. Spring Vale Primary is the 1st choice for our area and that is because it is a great school and families aspire for their children to attend.” (Response 18 - Parent/Carer of a pupil at Spring Vale Primary School).

- “I think the expansion will serve the growing community, allowing more children and families to benefit from our ‘Spring Vale’ family”. (Response 34 – Member of Staff at Spring Vale Primary School and Local Resident).
- “Good for the school and children in the local area.” (Response 49 – Member of Staff at Spring Vale Primary School and Local Resident).
- “Spring Vale is a good school with the capacity to be outstanding. For a number of years now it has been oversubscribed and expansion would offer more children access to a good education.” (Response 54 – Member of Staff at Spring Vale Primary School).

2.3.4 A number of concerns and considerations regarding the proposal were also identified during Initial Consultation including:

- “I have reservations about the expansion of the school. You only have to come to the school in the morning and at home time and look at the amount of cars illegally parked in Kenilworth crescent and by the shops on Hateley drive to realise that this is a bad idea. I am surprised that a child has not been badly injured already.” (Response 2 – Local resident)
- “I think it depends on how many pupils will be in each class and will there be enough staff to supervise them. I’m also concerned resulting the education due to disruption it may cause the other children that are used to only having 30+ pupils in the class to such a change. Car parking outside the school will be overcrowded as that’s already a problem at the moment”. (Response 19 – Parent/Carer of a pupil at Spring Vale Primary School).
- “Concerned more pupils will means the standard of education will fall. Concerned their will not be enough teachers and staff to educate and supervise resulting in poor behaviour from pupils.” (Response 20 - Parent/Carer of a pupil at Spring Vale Primary School).
- “Disruption to teaching and learning while construction going on esp if add another storey to existing single storey building esp noise, vibration and dust. Existing school boundary is well too small to double student and staffs population....cannot cope with double the population unless there can be an expansion of the school boundary.” (Response 28 – Parent/Carer of a pupil at Spring Vale Primary School).

2.3.5 Please note that a further consultation response was received outside of the designated consultation period. The response was supportive of the expansion and has been included within decision makers’ Supporting Information Packs.

2.3.6 Representatives from Education and Corporate Landlord attended a meeting of the Governing Body of Spring Vale Primary School on 11 July 2017. Notes of the meeting are available to the decision makers in the Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.

2.4 Stowlawn Primary School (Bilston North Ward):

2.4.1 It is proposed that Stowlawn Primary School is permanently expanded and that with effect from September 2018, the school's Reception admission limit is increased from 30 to 60. The admission limit for subsequent years would also be 60 and by September 2024 the school would cater for up to 420 pupils.

2.4.2 During the Initial Consultation period, 27 written consultation responses were received by the City of Wolverhampton Council. These were completed by a range of stakeholders including Governors, staff and parents/carers of pupils.

Number of responses received	Respondents in favour of the proposal	Respondents who did not agree with the proposal	Respondents who 'did not know'
27	20 (74%)	3 (11%)	4 (15%)

Copies of all consultation responses are available to decision makers in accompanying Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.

2.4.3 A number of supportive comments regarding the proposal were received during Initial Consultation including:

- "I think the expansion of Stowlawn Primary school would be a good idea. With having three of my children attending this school and seeing how well each child is progressing. The expansion would offer more children places to attend this school and get the same level of teaching and care as my children do". (Response 1- Parent/Carer of a pupil at Stowlawn Primary School).
- "I think it will be great for everyone, teachers, children and community". (Response 11 – Member of staff at Stowlawn Primary School).
- "...it would benefit staff through a wider range of opportunities for support and progression...it would benefit pupils by widening opportunities and access to a broader variety of teaching skills; it would attract a more diverse school population..." (Response 18 – Member of the Governing Body and Member of Staff at Stowlawn Primary School).
- "I think that the expansion will secure the future of a fantastic school. My youngest child will start school in 2020 and I hope he gets a place at Stowlawn". (Response 25 – Member of Staff and Parent/Carer of a pupil at Stowlawn Primary School).
- "The expansion will provide school places that are needed locally. Currently the school does not have a single place available and we have had several children who have attended nursery who have not been able to secure a full-time reception place. A two-form entry Primary School will be more sustainable in the future and make the school more financially viable. Potentially this could help recruit and retain quality teachers and will offer further opportunities for employment in the area...". (Response 26 – Headteacher Stowlawn Primary School).

- 2.4.4 A number of concerns and considerations regarding the proposal were also identified during Initial Consultation including:
- "...where would the extra intake go – how will building work be done and how will it impact on current pupils – years of building work and disruption is not desirable as I feel it would negatively impact on the current intake." (Response 4 - Parent/Carer of a pupil at Stowlawn Primary School).
 - "I think the expansion is a bad and good idea. Family's are getting bigger so I think more places for pupils would be good...I think an expansion would cause havoc on getting pupils in and out of school...I also think the road is dangerous enough outside the school without adding more cars, parents and pupils to the situation...(Response 13 – Parent/Carer of a pupil at Stowlawn Primary School).
 - "...the finish of the school day would need to be considered as there is already congestion on Green Park Avenue due to Green Park School minibuses leaving at the same time as Stowlawn pupils are being collected; disruption to the current school population during building work.....; risk to pupil standards during the build...". (Response 18 – Member of the Governing Body and Member of Staff at Stowlawn Primary School).
- 2.4.5 Representatives from Education and Corporate Landlord attended a meeting of the Governing Body of Stowlawn Primary School on 13 July 2017. Notes of the meeting are available to the decision makers in the Supporting Information Packs and must be given due consideration.
- 2.5 In response to the outcomes of consultation, Council representatives from the would like to make the following comments:
- 2.5.1 Distance to Proposed New School Site (Loxdale Primary specific):
In order to facilitate the proposed expansion and due to current site constraints, Loxdale Primary School would need to relocate to a new site. Subject to approval of the proposal, the school would transfer onto the nearby Bilston Urban Village development and be rebuilt as a two-form entry primary school. The proposed site on Bilston Urban Village is 0.41miles (straight line distance) from the existing school site. It is recognised that for some families the school would be further from their home addresses but also that it will be closer for others.
- 2.5.2 Delivery Disruption (Loxdale Primary specific):
Should the proposal be approved, the building works on Bilston Urban Village would not affect the pupils at the existing Loxdale Primary School site. It is anticipated the transfer to the new site would be in academic year 2019/20 once building is completed.
- 2.5.3 Current School Site (Loxdale Primary specific):
The enlargement in capacity of Loxdale Primary School has been proposed to ensure sufficient school places are available. However, it is not possible to increase the school's capacity to two-form entry on the existing site and therefore relocation onto Bilston Urban Village has been proposed.

2.5.4 Effect on School Standards:

When implementing change proposals, the Council seeks to minimise disruption to pupils and parents and to avoid any longer-term detriment to pupils. It is recognised that making significant changes to individual establishments can have a disruptive effect on the delivery of education. Subject to approval to implement, all schools would be offered the opportunity to receive additional support from their School Improvement Advisers. In addition, school performance will be closely monitored by the Council's School Standards Department.

2.5.5 Parking:

It is recognised that car parking in the vicinity of schools is a sensitive issue and can cause disruption for residents, often resulting in complaints to Councillors, Members of Parliament and Council representatives. Parking on school sites is limited and there is potential for the proposed expansions to exacerbate local issues. Subject to approval of the proposals, additional car parking for staff will be considered and delivered where required. There may also be scope for providing additional short term parking or drop off/pick up facilities for parents/carers and this will be investigated. In addition, related enforcement measures would be fully considered as part of the statutory planning processes relating to the proposed schemes.

As part of any associated planning applications the Council's Highways Team would consider the impact of any proposed new build and may make some recommendations or impose certain requirements.

The issue of school gate parking and the resultant problems that occur is currently subject to a Vibrant and Sustainable Scrutiny Panel report. The Panel will consider the report when it convenes on 28 September 2017. The Panel may choose to make further recommendations to Cabinet regarding interventions that it feels are necessary to address the problems that currently persist.

2.5.6 Road Safety:

At the beginning and end of the school day there is traffic congestion outside all schools. However, it is recognised that school expansions can increase pressure on local traffic networks and potentially exacerbate the road safety risks.

Schools will be encouraged to consider the potential to establish walking buses such as those currently operational at Fallings Park Primary School (although it is recognised that for practical reasons these usually only take place in the morning). In addition, Council representatives and partners are currently exploring the potential for wider solutions including Park and Stride and Walk Once a Week initiatives. Increasing the number of pupils walking to school would offer multifaceted benefits including the promotion and enabling of healthy lifestyles.

It is the responsibility of each school to determine the start and finish times of the school day but a practical approach is welcomed where required.

2.5.7 Building Works (Spring Vale Primary and Stowlawn Primary):

To facilitate the proposed expansions, significant investment in additional accommodation would be required. Council representatives will work with architects and schools to ensure that any additional accommodation meets the needs of pupils, staff, and curriculum delivery and to minimise disruption. In order to deliver the required places in a timely manner it would be necessary to undertake building works during term time. Representatives would ensure that works minimise disruption and prioritise the safety of staff and pupils. Any alterations or extensions to school buildings are subject to planning approval.

2.5.8 Class sizes and Staffing:

Subject to approval of the expansion proposals, there is likely to be a need for schools to employ additional staff to support the increased number of pupils and classbases as two form entry schools have 2 classes per year group. However, the future organisation of staffing within schools is the responsibility of individual schools' Headteachers and Governing Bodies.

Please note that infant classes (i.e. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) are not allowed to contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher (other than in limited exceptional circumstances). Please be assured that, should the proposed expansions be implemented, class sizes at the schools would meet this requirement.

3.0 Consultation and Decision Making Timeline

3.1 Subject to approval to proceed, the following consultation and decision making timeline would apply:

- **3 July 2017 – 30 July 2017 (Initial Consultation) - Completed**
Consultation with stakeholders including parents, staff, Governors and the local community.
- **August 2017 (Individual Executive Decision Notice)**
The Cabinet Member for Education in consultation with the Strategic Director of People, consider the responses to Initial Consultation and determine whether or not to proceed to Stage 1 of the statutory process.
- **18 September 2017 (Stage 1 – Publication)**
A Statutory Notice is published detailing the proposals.
- **18 September 2017 – 15 October 2017 (Stage 2 – Representation)**
Formal Consultation period, offers stakeholders the opportunity to submit comments on the proposals.
- **29 November 2017 (Stage 3 – Decision)**
The Cabinet of the Council consider the outcome of consultation and make a final decision on the proposals.

- **1 September 2018 (Stage 4 – Implementation)**

Subject to approval, proposals would be implemented as published.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 This report deals with the responses to the initial consultation in regard to the proposed Primary School Expansion Programme 2018-2020, subject to final approval, the implementation of the scheme would have significant financial implications for the City of Wolverhampton Council.

4.2 An additional exempt report providing further information regarding the financial implications and the proposed funding strategy of this programme will be presented to Cabinet on 13 September 2017. [HM/09082017/S]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 Under s.14 of the Education Act 1996, a local authority shall secure sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in their area. Sufficient means sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education. In meeting this duty, a local authority must do so with a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice.

5.2 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 provide that proposed permanent enlargements of school premises as described in the body of the report are prescribed alterations which means that statutory proposals have to be published, and there must be a period of four weeks for representations before a decision is made. The statutory process includes publication of proposals, and statutory consultation.
[TS/15082017/Q]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 This report has equal opportunity implications as the contents have direct reference to educational provision for children and young people in the city. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, in exercising their functions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other unlawful conduct under the Act, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 Subject to the approval to move to the next stage of the consultation process, a full Equality Analysis regarding the Primary School Expansion Programme 2018-2020 will be undertaken following completion of the consultation process.

6.3 Subject to final approval of the Programme, equality implications will be considered in line with the Council's standard tender evaluation process. Equality issues will also be addressed in the planning and accessibility of any necessary building work.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 Any building work arising from these proposals would be geared to promote improvement to the physical environment.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 Subject to ultimate approval and implementation of the expansion proposals, there is likely to be a need for schools to employ additional staff to support the increased number of pupils. However, the future organisation of staff within schools is the responsibility of individual schools' Headteachers and Governing Bodies.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 Corporate Landlord will continue to work with the Council's representatives in particular Projects and Works, Procurement, Planning and Highways, liaising with the schools' representatives to deliver on each individual scheme within the agreed time scale and cost envelope. Once completed Corporate Landlord will update the asset database with new as built drawings and associated building information, informing Legal, Finance and Insurance of the changes. The expansion of these schools will enhance the Council's estate and reduce the level of condition backlog. Future consideration will be given to assets that may become surplus as part of the expansion process.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- Bilston Urban Village Supplementary Planning Document
- Cabinet (27 June 2017) School Place Planning
- Primary School Organisation Strategy 2016-2018.