

Report title	Green Park School – Significant Change Proposal	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Lynne Moran Education and Skills	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Meredith Teasdale, Director of Education	
Originating service	Special Educational Needs Service	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Education Leadership Team	28 January 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the commencement of a period of Pre-publication Consultation on the proposed permanent expansion of Green Park School.
2. Delegate authority 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.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report seeks approval to commence Pre-publication Consultation on the proposed permanent expansion of Green Park School.

2.0 Background

2.1 Local authorities must ensure that there are sufficient good school places for all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

2.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep provision for children and young people with SEND under review (including its sufficiency).

2.3 On 12 September 2018, Cabinet approved the 'Vision for School Organisation 2018-2020: City of Wolverhampton Education Place Planning' which outlines the Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and organisation of school provision across the City. The strategy recommends that the development of provision for students with SEND is guided by the following principles:

- "Local solutions are developed to support a reduction in the required number of out of City placements.
- The number of transitions experienced by children with SEND should be minimised wherever possible.
- Solutions should be developed to offer opportunities for students with SEND to attend mainstream provision, unless doing so would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children." (City of Wolverhampton Council, September 2018).

2.4 Levels of demand for educational provision in Wolverhampton have increased significantly in recent years. This uplift has primarily been driven by a 24% increase in births between 2002 (2,807) and 2014 (3,481) (source: ONS Vital Statistics) but will also have been influenced by increased life expectancy for children born with complex disabilities and congenital conditions.

2.5 The Council's 2018 SEND Sufficiency Analysis provides the City of Wolverhampton Council and our partners with a summary outlining current and anticipated future needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Wolverhampton. The paper highlights that:

- In January 2018, there were 7,491 pupils with SEND on roll in Wolverhampton schools (one in every six pupils).
- The number of pupils with SEND in the City has increased over the last two years (6,935 in January 2016 to 7,491 in January 2018).
- The total number of pupils with SEND within Wolverhampton's schools are forecast to increase by 13.05% between 2017/18 and 2025/26.

3.0 Green Park School

3.1 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).

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)

3.2 In December 2015, Green Park School was judged by Ofsted to be Good.

3.3 Numbers on roll at the school have increased markedly in recent years (115 in January 2015 to 136 in January 2019). Current numbers on roll significantly exceed the designated capacity of the school (108). Please note that the designated capacity of the school is defined as “the number of pupil places the establishment can accommodate” (DfE 2019) but does not necessarily correlate directly with the physical size of the buildings. Special schools are not subject to net capacity assessments which are employed in mainstream schools to identify the physical capacity of individual schools.

3.4 To meet anticipated demand, the City of Wolverhampton Council has commissioned 144 places at Green Park School for the 2019-20 academic year. To support this temporary uplift in capacity, the Council are currently working closely with the school and partners to develop an appropriate capital scheme to meet pupils’ needs in September 2019.

4.0 Significant Change Proposal

4.1 It is proposed that Green Park School is permanently expanded from 108 places to 144 places with effect from 1 September 2019.

4.2 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.

5.0 Consultation and Decision Making Timeline

5.1 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’.

5.2 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.
w/c 8 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.

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 decisions

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 Council employees are currently working closely with the school and partners to develop an appropriate capital scheme to meet pupils’ needs in September 2019. Subject to subsequent approvals, grant funding to support the implementation of the project would be provided via the Special Provision Capital Fund.

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 are often more expensive).

[DB/23012019/M]

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/22012019/W]

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 schemes which effectively supports the prescribed alteration and meet pupils' needs.

14.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

14.1 Members of the SEND and Commissioning Partnership Board have been included in consultation regarding the priorities for the investment of the Special Provision Capital Fund.

14.2 Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and relevant health providers have been given the opportunity to engage in the feasibility regarding the capital scheme at Green Park School.

14.3 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

SEND and Commissioning Partnership Board, 06 February 2019, 'Special Provision Capital Fund'

SEND and Commissioning Partnership Board, 24 October 2018 – '2018 SEND Sufficiency Analysis'

Cabinet, 12 September 2018 - '[The Vision for School Organisation 2018-2020: City of Wolverhampton Education Place Planning](#)'

Department for Education (April 2016) Making 'prescribed alterations' to local authority maintained schools

Cabinet, 24 February 2016 - '[Joint Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy](#)'