

Council Report

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting - 12th December 2016

Title

Proposal to increase capacity at Wath C of E Primary School

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected

Wath

Executive Summary

Wath C of E Primary School is full or oversubscribed in all year groups and has an extensive Reception / Foundation Stage 2 waiting list annually for places following the entry to primary school National Offer Day.

This report seeks approval to increase capacity at the school to accommodate current and future demand for places.

Recommendations

1. That subject to a successful planning application, the proposal to increase capacity at Wath C of E Primary School by the installation of three (3) additional classrooms to accommodate current and future pupil numbers be approved.
2. That the proposal to install three (3) additional classrooms be included in the 2018/19 Capital Programme.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – current and future pupil population numbers and responses to consultation

Background Papers

Reports to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services, 22nd May 2013, 24th July 2013 and 13th November 2013 on proposals to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) at the school from 30 to 45.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Proposal to increase capacity at Wath C of E Primary School

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That subject to a successful planning application, the proposal to increase capacity at Wath C of E Primary School by the installation of three (3) additional classrooms to accommodate current and future pupil numbers be approved.
- 1.2 That the proposal to install three (3) additional classrooms be included in the 2018/19 Capital Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has a historic annual profile of satisfying 90% + parental first preferences on entry to Primary and Secondary school national offer days. School Place planning in the borough is RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated as 'green' by the Department for Education (DfE) and 84% of new school places are delivered in Ofsted rated 'Good / Outstanding' schools compared to the national average of 80%.
- 2.2 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under, the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 to ensure a sufficiency of school places and satisfy parental first preferences as far as possible. The duty also extends to the requirement to ensure new school places are delivered in 'successful and popular' schools.
- 2.3 The Wath Learning Community has experienced a significant increase in pupil numbers in recent years due to extensive housing development in the local area. Appendix 1 outlines the additional capacity already added to the area to accommodate rising cohort numbers. Appendix 1 also details pupil numbers and capacity at Wath C of E Primary School and across the learning community.
- 2.4 Wath C of E Primary School is full or oversubscribed in all year groups. There are numerous Admission appeals lodged by parents / carers annually for places at the school, after being refused a place due to being full up to Published Admission Number (PAN) in line with the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) Admission to school code of practice 2014.
- 2.5 The School is a voluntary aided C of E School and converted to Academy status on 1st October 2016. As an Academy the Governing Bodies Trust Board are the 'Admissions Authority' for the school and, under the requirements of the DfE School Admissions Code 2014, 'own admission authorities are not required to consult on their PAN where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN'.
- 2.6 The school was expanded for the start of the 2014/15 academic year to accommodate a rise in pupil numbers with an increased PAN of 45. The Governing Body responded to a request from the Local Authority to provide places for an additional fifteen (15) pupils in the 2014/15 R/FS2 cohort to accommodate the exceptionally high numbers of pupils in the Learning community for entry to primary school in that particular year group.

- 2.7 Following National Offer Day for entry into the school for the 2016/17 academic year, the Governing Body responded to a request from the local authority to accept a further two (2) pupils classed as 'excepted pupils' under the requirements of the school admissions code 2014. Added to this eleven (11) pupils were allocated a place at the school by the Independent Admissions Appeals Panel following appeals hearings lodged under the School Admissions Code 2014 and, heard in line with the requirements of the School Admission Appeals Code 2012.
- 2.8 As a result of the additional pupils being allocated places as outlined above, and future expected pupil numbers there is a requirement for three (3) additional classrooms to be installed by September 2018 to accommodate existing and expected future pupil numbers. With the addition of the three (3) additional classrooms the school will have a maximum capacity for 420 pupils. The additional three (3) classrooms will allow for sufficient space for all pupils and also allow the Governing Body to set a PAN in future years in line with increased demand for places (up to a maximum of 60 pupils) and, within the parameters of the maximum capacity available and infant class size legislation requirements.
- 2.9 The table in Appendix 1 shows the current and projected numbers on roll from Reception / Foundation Stage 2 (R/FS2) to Year 6 for Wath C of E Primary School.
- 2.10 Historic Reception/FS2 waiting list numbers are also shown in Appendix 1 for respective academic years. Waiting lists must be retained for the first full term of the new academic year for Reception/Foundation Stage 2 pupils under the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 There is a statutory duty on Local Authorities under the requirements of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 'to ensure the sufficiency of school places in their area'.
- 3.2 The additional three (3) classrooms would enable more parents to access their first preference school for their child and, therefore maintain or increase performance against that indicator on national offer day for entry to primary phase education.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Option 1: Wait until existing surplus capacity in the local area is completely exhausted and then add additional capacity to meet rising local demand. However as some year groups are already full or oversubscribed across the learning community this would mean that some parents and carers would be unable to secure a school place in their local area.
- 4.2. Option 2 – Recommended: Subject to a successful planning application, install the required three (3) classrooms for September 2018 to accommodate current and expected future cohort numbers.

4.2.1 The proposal will enable the Headteacher and Governing Body to forward plan long term with sufficient capacity to accommodate the expected future pupil numbers.

4.2.2 The Headteacher and Governing Body will also have the physical resources available to allow for fluctuations in cohort numbers on an annual basis.

5. Consultation

5.1 As an Academy the School Governing Bodies Trust Board are the 'Admissions Authority' and, under the requirements of the DfE School Admissions Code 2014, 'own admission authorities are not required to consult on their PAN where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN. If, at any time following determination of the PAN (set during the annual admissions consultation), the Admissions Authority decides that it is able to admit above its PAN, it must notify the local authority in good time to allow the local authority to deliver its co-ordination responsibilities effectively'.

5.2 As the proposal falls outside the requirement to complete a full 'prescribed alteration' under the requirements of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, a period of local consultation has been held with Governors, parents / carers, staff and local Ward Elected Members (as required by the above regulations and associated statutory guidance where proposals are below or outside the requirement).

5.3 Responses to the consultation completed between 23rd September and 21st October 2016 are detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. Cabinet should have regard to the responses when considering the recommendations.

5.4 There were two (2) responses received to the consultation which are outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

5.5 The responses are broadly supportive of the proposal to add additional capacity at the school. Comment has been made regarding potential additional traffic implications at the start and end of the school day. However, as part of the planning application, the Planning Board will consider the implications of the expansion and consideration would be given to any traffic concerns raised as part of the planning application process and any remedial actions / control measures required.

5.6 Should the proposal be approved by Cabinet, further meetings and correspondence will need to take place with Governors, Staff, Pupils and Parents / Carers in relation to the building work timeline, health and safety implications and how this will be managed on site as part of the planning process.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

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|-----|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 6.1 | December 2016 | Seek Cabinet approval of the proposal |
| | January 2017 | Planning application |
| | April 2018 | Commencement of building works |
| | September 2018 | Sign off completion and handover |

6.2 The project will be led by the RMBC Corporate Property Unit.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 Within the approved CYPS Capital Programme (2016-18) an amount of £150k has been allocated in 2017/18 to provide one additional classroom at Wath C of E Primary School.

7.2 Following a reassessment of need, the cost of the project is estimated at £650,000 in total, to provide the three (3) additional classrooms to accommodate current and expected future pupil numbers and resources at the school. It is recommended that the estimated £650k project cost be included in the 2018/19 Capital Programme. This replaces the existing approved project for one (1) classroom in the 2017/18 Programme. A further report will be submitted to amend the CYPS Capital Programme to reflect this change and other future years projects.

7.3 The funding will be provided from basic need funding (provided to Local Authorities from the DfE to meet future pupil place demand).

7.4 The project will be tendered using the legally compliant YorBuild framework.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, to ensure a sufficiency of school places in areas of current and future need, provided in successful and popular schools.

8.2 The school is regularly oversubscribed on national offer day for entry in to Reception / Foundation Stage 2. Pupils are regularly refused a place under the Admission to School code of practice 2014 and subsequently at appeal both for Reception / Foundation stage 2 and as 'in year' applications to other year groups. The school remains extremely popular as a first preference for parents and carers applying for school places in the learning community.

8.3 As the School Governing Body Trust Board are the 'Admissions Authority' it must notify the local authority in good time of any proposed increase in PAN to allow the local authority to deliver its co-ordination responsibilities effectively'.

8.4 A period of consultation was completed to comply with the requirements of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and associated statutory guidance.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are no Human Resource implications to consider from the Local Authority's perspective. Future rising cohort numbers may well lead to further employment opportunities at the school. This however would be for the Governing Body to determine as the employer.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The proposals would lead to more parents and carers being able to access their first preference school, maintaining or further improving the Primary School National Offer Day First (1st) preference and combined three (3) preference profile within the Borough.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 The proposals would lead to more parents and carers being able to access their first preference school, increasing parental satisfaction in being allocated a preferred school.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 The proposal to add additional capacity at the school will have minimal impact on neighbouring schools, as the learning community is already operating close to its maximum capacity and pupil numbers continue to rise.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There are always risks associated with increasing the number of school places at a school, since this could adversely impact numbers at other schools. However the learning community is already operating close to its maximum capacity and struggling to be able to offer places in some year groups.
- 13.2 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, to ensure a sufficiency of school places in areas of current and future need, provided in successful and popular schools.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

- 14.1 Karen Borthwick (Assistant Director – Education and Skills)

Approvals Obtained from:

Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services:

Mark Chambers (Finance Manager CYPS)

Jonathan Baggaley (Finance Manager Regeneration, Environment and Capital)

Assistant Director of Legal Services:

Neil Concannon (Solicitor)

Head of HR Services:
Paul Fitzpatrick (CYPS HR Business Partner)

Head of Procurement:
Helen Chambers (Principal Procurement Officer)

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