

Council Report

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 13 March 2017

Title

Proposal to increase capacity at Wath Comprehensive School

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas – Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services

Report author(s):

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Ward(s) Affected

Wath and Hoover

Executive Summary

Wath Comprehensive School is an Ofsted rated 'good' school and is currently oversubscribed, this trend is set to continue in future years.

This report seeks approval to increase capacity at the school to accommodate the current and future demand for places, subject to a successful planning application.

Recommendations

1. That subject to a successful planning application, approval be granted to the proposal to increase capacity at Wath Comprehensive School by the installation of additional teaching and learning spaces to increase capacity by 150 places to accommodate current and future pupil numbers.
2. That £1.3m of the £2.5m earmarked funding for increasing secondary school places in the Borough in 2017/18 approved by the Cabinet/Commissioners Decision Making Meeting of the 11th April 2016, be allocated to fund the proposed project at Wath Comprehensive School and that this expenditure be re-profiled into 2018/19 to reflect the construction programme for this project.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Pupil population numbers, school capacity and summary of consultation

Background Papers

Reports to the former Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services – delegated powers meetings (22.5.2013, 24.7.2013, 13.11.2013, 8.3.2014, 21.5.2014), on proposals to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) at Wath C of E Primary School, Cortonwood Infant School and Brampton Ellis Primary School by expansion of the school buildings.

Report to Cabinet (11.07.2016) on proposals to increase secondary school capacity across the Borough to meet future increased demand.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Report Title: Proposal to increase capacity at Wath Comprehensive School

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That subject to a successful planning application, approval be granted to the proposal to increase capacity at Wath Comprehensive School by the installation of additional teaching and learning spaces to increase capacity by 150 places to accommodate current and future pupil numbers.
- 1.2 That £1.3m of the £2.5m earmarked funding for increasing secondary school places in the Borough in 2017/18 approved by the Cabinet/Commissioners Decision Making Meeting of the 11th April 2016, be allocated to fund the proposed project at Wath Comprehensive School and that this expenditure be re-profiled into 2018/19 to reflect the construction programme for this project.

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 schools on national offer day. 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 Wath Comprehensive School is a Foundation Trust status school and is currently rated as a 'good' school by Ofsted. As a Trust status school, the Governing Body are the Admissions Authority for the school and, under the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) School Admissions Code 2014, own admission authorities are not required to consult on their Published Admission Number (PAN) where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN.
- 2.4 The school has experienced a significant increase in pupil numbers in recent years and remains both successful and popular. The school is currently oversubscribed and the trend is set to continue in future years. Appendix 1 details current pupil numbers and capacity at the school.
- 2.5 Wath Comprehensive School's feeder and catchment area schools; Wath C of E Primary School; Cortonwood Infant School and Brampton the Ellis Primary School (Junior campus) have all been expanded or are in the process of being expanded to accommodate the rising demand for places in the learning Community. West Melton Primary School has also had additional classroom space added to facilitate a small increase in PAN and capacity due to increased place demand.
- 2.6 There are longer term plans to create further capacity in the primary phase of the learning community, to meet future expected increases in demand due to ongoing house building in the Wath and Brampton Bierlow areas of the Borough.
- 2.7 The school is regularly full or oversubscribed on National Offer Day for entry into secondary phase education. There are also several appeals for places lodged under the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014 heard on an annual basis.

Appendix 1 shows that the school also maintains an extensive waiting list for Year 7 places following National Offer Day on an annual basis for the first term of the new academic year, as required under the School Admissions Code 2014.

- 2.8 As a result of the current oversubscription and future rising cohort numbers, there is a requirement to install additional teaching and learning space at the school by September 2018. With the installation of the additional space, the school will have an increased capacity of one hundred and fifty (150) places. The additional teaching and learning space will allow for sufficient space for all pupils and also allow the Governing Body working with the Local Authority to set a Published Admission Number (PAN) in future years in line with increased demand for places and the additional space available.

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 classrooms at Wath Comprehensive School 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 secondary phase education.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Option 1: Maintain capacity at the school at the current level. However as the school is already oversubscribed and catchment area resident pupil numbers continue to increase, this would mean that some parents and carers would be unable to secure a school place at their local school in future years.
- 4.2 Option 2 – Recommended: Increase capacity at the school to enable the Headteacher and Governing Body to forward plan long term with the security of having sufficient space to accommodate the expected future pupil numbers.
- 4.2.1 It is recommended that the proposal to increase the capacity at Wath Comprehensive School by one hundred and fifty (150) places by the installation of additional teaching and learning space to accommodate current and future pupil numbers be approved.
- 4.2.2 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. The addition of the additional classrooms will further support this statutory requirement and performance indicator.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 As a Trust Status School, the Governing Body is 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 to satisfy parental preferences, it must notify the Council 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 statutory guidance.
- 5.3 Responses to the consultation completed between 21st November 2016 and 16th December 2016 are detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. Cabinet should have regard to the responses when considering the recommendations.
- 5.4 There were four (4) responses received to the consultation and a summary of the responses is detailed below. Responses to the consultation are broadly supportive of the proposal.
- 5.5 Comment has been received in relation to the allocation of school places to 'non Wath catchment area' resident pupils at the school. It should be noted that places at the school in the normal admission round are allocated in line with the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014. Any non-catchment area resident pupils would be categorised either in the 'distance' category or the 'non-catchment area resident with an older sibling on roll' category when Y7 places are allocated. Due to extensive house building in the Wath and Brampton Bierlow areas of the school's catchment area, the catchment area pupil yield will continue to grow in future years, reducing the number of places available to non catchment area resident applicants in future years.
- 5.6 Comment has been received in relation to the implications of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract. As with any extension to a PFI school building there is a protocol the Council is contractually obliged to follow, which is through an Authority Notice of Change (ANC). The ANC triggers the contractual change to the PFI Project Agreements through a Supplementary Agreement which has to be agreed by all parties to the PFI Project Agreement. This will include legal and funders' costs which will be paid for by the Council and is profiled in to the £1.3m cost of the project.
- 5.7 When extending the building there are Life Cycle costs (funding to maintain the buildings to the PFI Output Specification over the remaining duration of the PFI contract which terminates in 2034). The Life Cycle costs will be factored in to the Unitary Charge. Additional facilities management costs from the extension will be funded by the school and covered by the extra funding received from the DfE for the additional pupils.
- 5.8 Comment has been received in relation to health and safety and safeguarding implications on site during the construction of the extension. 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 and health and safety and safeguarding procedures on site during the construction period.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

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| 6.1 | February 2017 | Seek approval of the proposal |
| | December 2017 | Planning application |
| | February 2018 | Commencement of building works |
| | September 2018 | Sign off completion and handover |

- 6.2 The project will be led by the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Corporate Property Unit.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The proposal in principle, to increase secondary school capacity across the Borough, to meet future demand for places was approved at Cabinet on 11th July 2016 (minute number 46). Approval of the borough wide strategy was granted subject to detailed reports relating to individual projects being brought forward for consideration by Cabinet.
- 7.2 Within the approved Children and Young People's Services Capital Programme for 2016-18 (approved at Cabinet/Commissioner decision making meeting on 11th April 2016) an amount of £2.5m has been allocated in 2017/18 to provide secondary school places in the Borough.
- 7.3 The cost of the project is estimated at £1.3m in total, to provide the additional classrooms required to increase capacity by one hundred and fifty (150) places to accommodate current over subscription and expected future pupils and associated resources. It is proposed that this is accommodated within the £2.5m Capital Programme allocation and that this expenditure is re-profiled to reflect the fact that the majority of this spend will be in 2018/19.
- 7.4 The funding for the project will be provided from basic need funding provided to Local Authorities from the Department for Education (DfE) to meet future increased pupil place demand.
- 7.5 The extension will be designed and project managed by the Council's Design and projects Team. The contractor will be procured by the PFI Management Company Engie and approved by the Technical Advisor acting on behalf of the PFI funders. Legal and funder costs associated with the requirements of this approval have been factored in to the £1.3m budget.

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. Wath Comprehensive School meets this profile as a result of its current Ofsted rating of 'Good' and as it is oversubscribed with a waiting list for places annually following national offer day.
- 8.2 The school is regularly full or oversubscribed on national offer day for entry in to secondary phased education. The school remains extremely popular as a first preference for parents and carers applying for school places in the local area under the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014.
- 8.3 As a Trust status school, the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority and, under the requirements of the DfE School Admissions Code 2014, Governors will notify the Local Authority of any proposed increase in PAN in good time to allow the Local Authority to deliver its co-ordination responsibilities effectively.
- 8.4 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 and associated guidance, the requirement to complete a period of local consultation has been fully adhered to.

- 8.5 Should the school pupil population ever exceed two thousand (2,000) pupils there is a requirement to notify the Department for Education (DfE) via the schools census return and the school updating relevant information on the DfE's Edu-base system.

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 secondary 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 secondary schools in the authority. As the secondary pupil population continues to rise and Wath Comprehensive School is already operating at above 100% capacity, there is a need for additional capacity at the school to accommodate future rising catchment area category pupils.

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 school is already operating above its maximum capacity which was highlighted in the Local Authority's 2016 School Capacity and Planning (SCAP) return to the Department for Education. The additional capacity will allow the Headteacher and Governing Body to strategically plan for future curriculum delivery with the assurance that there is sufficient space.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Karen Borthwick (Assistant Director – Education and Skills)

Approvals Obtained from:

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services: Named officer
Mark Chambers (Finance Manager CYPS)
Jonathan Baggaley (Finance Manager Regeneration, Environment and Capital)

Assistant Director of Legal Services: Named officer
Neil Concannon (Solicitor)

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

Head of Procurement: Named Officer
Helen Chambers (Principal Procurement Officer)

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