

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 21 August 2012

Decision No: (CAB 12/13 8713)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SUBJECT:	PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SPRINGWELL SCHOOL
AUTHOR:	James Howells, School Organisation & Strategy Manager

THE DECISION

- (i) To note the outcome of pre-statutory consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- (ii) To authorise the publication of a statutory proposal to enlarge Springwell School from the 5th November 2012 by the addition of 8 places (one class group) in year R and continuing incrementally in subsequent years. This would have the effect of enlarging the school from 64 places currently to 120 places by September 2018.
- (iii) To delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and Learning, following consultation with the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services, to determine the final format and content of statutory Notices and publish proposals in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Standards and Frameworks Act 1998 and associated Regulations and Statutory Guidance.
- (iv) To add, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, a sum of £399,000 to the Children's Services Capital Programme, for Springwell School expansion, funded from non ring fenced Department for Education Basic Need Grant.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. There is currently a high demand for places at Springwell Special School. At the placement meeting on 17th May 2012, there were 22 children who had been put forward for consideration for a place and there were 12 places available (including the additional places at Thornhill). As a result there are currently not enough special school places in the City to accommodate all those children with complex needs that require a place.
2. The additional children would need a place from November 2012 (given their ages, they are not required to start in September) so it is essential that the consultation process commences as quickly as possible so that all the consultation processes and prospective cabinet reports can be completed before November.

3. The expansion proposal, if approved, would ensure that the Local Authority (LA) could meet its statutory duty to provide a school place (whether in SEN or mainstream) to all children in the city that require one. While demand is not expected to be as high next year as it was this year, this proposal would enable the school to admit an increased number in subsequent years if demand remains at a high level.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1. The LA could decide not to increase the number of SEN placements available at Springwell. This would be likely to result in children and young people with statements not being able to be placed in the most appropriate provision to meet their needs, which could negatively impact upon outcomes for those children. It could also lead to an increase in the number of SEN tribunals if parents are not happy with the provision that they are offered. In this instance most parents would be successful at a tribunal and we would likely have to offer the child a place at Springwell anyway. The expansion of the school, as per School Organisation legislation, would negate the time and financial costs of having to hold several tribunal hearings.
2. Springwell is the only school in the city that can cater for the specific needs of the additional pupils that have been assessed. No other school in the city (neither SEN nor mainstream) has the expertise, in terms of both staff and facilities, to accommodate the assessed needs of these children and as such, no other schools were considered for this expansion proposal.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 21 August 2012

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*