

ITEM NO:18

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	REDUCTION IN SIZE OF PLOT FOR DISPOSAL AT HAREFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL		
DATE OF DECISION:	5 JULY 2010		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

There is a confidential appendix attached to this report and is not for publication by virtue of Category 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Authority) of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules. It is not in the public interest to disclose this because publication of this information could influence bids received for property which may be to the Council's financial detriment.

SUMMARY

An opportunity has arisen to retain the old Harefield Junior School hall for remodelling as additional classroom space, which will most likely be required in the implementation of the Primary Review Phase 2. Retention of the hall would require the repositioning of the school car park which would have to be relocated onto land currently declared surplus to educational requirements and previously approved for disposal by Cabinet on 17th March 2008. This report seeks approval to vary the size of the plot declared surplus / for disposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Having complied with the requirements of Paragraph 15 (General Exception) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules it is recommended:

- (i) To approve a reduction in the size of the plot of land for disposal at Harefield Primary School previously approved by Cabinet on 17th March 2008; and to note the likely consequential reduction in the realisable capital receipt and the knock on impact to the funding of the Harefield Primary rebuild project.
- (ii) To delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services and Learning in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Resources, authority to determine the size of the plot ultimately declared surplus to educational requirement at Harefield Primary School.

- (iii) To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services and Learning, following consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, to do anything necessary to give effect to the proposals set out in this report. Including but not limited to the entering into and varying of contracts; submission of planning applications; and all other matters ancillary to, conducive to, or calculated to facilitate the completion of the Harefield Primary School project.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This report is submitted for consideration as a General Exception under paragraph 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, notice having been given to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Public. The matter requires a decision because the demolition of the old Harefield Junior School is due to commence in August and an opportunity has arisen to retain the old school hall for remodelling as additional classrooms which could be required to satisfy some of the demand for additional primary places currently being assessed within the Primary Review. To delay the decision would not allow sufficient time for the necessary arrangements to be made to keep open the option to retain the hall.

CONSULTATION

2. The Children's Services & Learning Capital Board have considered this matter.
3. The Head Teacher of Harefield Primary School has been consulted on the proposals and is supportive.
4. The main contractor on the Harefield Primary School rebuild project has been consulted and has given advice on how this proposal could be implemented.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. To demolish the old Harefield Junior School and dispose of 1.9 acres as previously approved. This option was rejected as it would deny the Council the option to retain the old school hall for remodelling as classroom accommodation and could result in new school accommodation having to be built elsewhere to cater for the increasing numbers of primary age children.

DETAIL

6. The new Key Stage 2 block at Harefield Primary School is due to be completed at the beginning of July this year and at that point the school will move into the new accommodation and vacate the existing junior block which will then be demolished. Demolition is programmed to start from 2nd August 2010.
7. There is considerable pressure on primary school places in the city and whilst some extra places have been provided in the city centre and Freemantle areas, still more places need to be provided in other parts of the city, if the City Council is to avoid failing in its statutory duty. It is predicted that the Woodlands cluster of schools, which includes Harefield Primary School, will have a shortfall of 27 Year R places in September 2012.

8. Harefield Primary School is currently 1.5 forms of entry (1FE), providing 45 Year R places annually.
9. As a result of the pressure on Primary school places it was suggested that, instead of demolition, the old junior block be retained and Harefield Primary School could then expand to 2 forms of entry (2FE) subject to due process. The proposal to retain the old Junior School hall would, if approved, allow the City Council at some time in the future to raise Harefield Primary School to 2 forms of entry and increase the Year R places to 60 per annum, subject to any statutory enlargement procedures that may be required.
10. Such an increase to 2 forms of entry would have the full support of the school. A 2FE school has many advantages over a 1.5 FE school; it is easier to manage class sizes and can benefit from economies of scale.
11. Capita were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study to investigate the possibilities for retention of all or part of the existing junior building. The CS&L Capital Board considered the feasibility study and decided to recommend the retention of the school hall to remodel as classrooms since this preserves the Council's options for the next stage of the Primary Review.
12. In order to make the retention of the hall possible then, the school car park would have to be relocated onto land declared surplus to educational requirements by Cabinet on 17th March 2008. A further Cabinet decision is required to amend the previous Cabinet decision to make this possible.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

13. The cost of retaining the old school hall, which will involve a variation to the existing contract are estimated as follows:

Retention of hall	£40,000
Option appraisal fees	£29,000
Total	£69,000

This can be funded from within the existing Harefield Primary Rebuild budget.

14. It is estimated that it will cost between £675,000 and £790,000 to remodel the hall, if retained, as 3 classrooms and ancillary accommodation. Options on whether to proceed with remodelling work will be covered in the Primary Review Phase 2 report, due to go to cabinet in the autumn. It can therefore be determined in advance of selling the land whether or not the hall is required for additional classrooms as part of implementing Primary Review Phase 2.
15. If is subsequently decided that the hall is not required for remodelling as classrooms then there could be a further cost to demolish it and the new car park and reconstruct the car park in its original location.

Revenue

16. There are no revenue implications to this report.
17. If it is determined that Harefield Primary School will become 2FE then the additional school places will be funded through the Individual Schools Budget funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Property

18. If this proposal is approved then further work will be required to progress the disposal of that land remaining surplus to educational requirements.

Other

19. In order to retain Harefield Junior School's existing hall, amend the extent of adopted highway and reposition the car park, planning approval is required to vary the planning consent previously granted. The earlier application proposed to completely demolish the old Harefield Junior School buildings and construct the school car park. Pre-application advice has been given by Planners and such advice has been incorporated into the planning application. The new planning application was submitted on 23rd June 2010 and the planning authority has a statutory 8 weeks in which to determine the application.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

20. The provisions of facilities for schools, including the provision of land and buildings, together with the maintenance and renewal of such facilities is made in accordance with the Education Act 1996 as amended.
21. Any contracts or contract variations made in relation to this project will be subject to the provisions of the Contract procedure Rules as set out within the Constitution and compliance with national procurement Regulations.

Other Legal Implications:

22. Disposal of land that is or was school land or buildings or land that was used as or comprised playing field land is subject to the requirement to obtain consent from the Secretary of State in accordance with s.77 School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by Schedule 4 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 and to Schedule 35A of the Education Act 1996 as inserted by Schedule 7 to the Education Act 2002. The disposal of land declared surplus pursuant to this report will be subject to obtaining the necessary consents in due course. Retention of part of the site previously declared surplus for further use as school facilities will not amount to a disposal or change of use.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

23. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Children and Young People's Plan and Community Strategy in providing enhanced facilities for young people and the community.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	Capital Receipts – Confidential and not for general publication.
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the
Access to Information
Procedure Rules / Schedule
12A allowing document to be
Exempt/Confidential (if
applicable)

1.	None	
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Background documents available for inspection at:

KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Harefield
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