

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET COUNCIL		
SUBJECT:	EXPANSION OF SPRINGWELL SPECIAL SCHOOL		
DATE OF DECISION:	15 SEPTEMBER 2015 16 SEPTEMBER 2015		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Robert Hardy	Tel: 023 8083 3347
	E-mail:	Robert.hardy@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Hilary Brooks	Tel: 023 8083 4899
	E-mail:	Hilary.brooks@southampton.gov.uk	
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
None			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
<p>This report sets out the proposal for increased capacity at Springwell Special School following increased demand on special places. The reports seeks approval to add a further £1.3M of expenditure to the Education & Children's Social care Capital Programme in addition to the £1.4M approved by Cabinet in March 2015. The total scheme is to be phased; £1.1m in 2015/16 and £1.6m in 2016/17.</p>			
<p>The report also provides an update on the position on increasing the capacity at Springwell Special School, following the Cabinet decision on 17th March 2015 to add a sum of £1.4m to the Council's capital programme, from the non-ringfenced DfE Basic Need Grant, to achieve this.</p>			
<p>At the time of the March Cabinet report bids were expected in response to a tendering process to create additional Year R capacity in time for September 2015. No bids were received. Since March 2015, a range of actions have been taken to address this problem and these are set out in this paper.</p>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
CABINET:			
	(i)	To add, in accordance with Financial procedure Rules, a sum of £1.3M to the Education & Children's Social Care Capital Programme for phase 1 of the expansion of Springwell School funded from non-ringfenced Department of Education Basic Need capital grant.	
	(ii)	To agree for further work to continue so that detailed proposals and costings can be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting on the longer-term plan to create the further capacity required at Springwell School.	

COUNCIL:

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| (i) | To approve, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, capital expenditure of £2.7M, phased £1.1m in 2015/16 and £1.6m in 2016/17 within the Education & Children's Social Care Capital Programme to carry out work. |
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1. | <p>Current State</p> <p>The number of children whose statutory assessment of their Special Needs results in a legally-binding decision to admit them to Springwell School continues to increase. The number of children whose statutory assessment results in a placement at a mainstream school in Southampton also continues to increase. This is largely a result of the changes in age-range and scope of assessment introduced by the Children & Families Act from September 2014.</p> |
| 2. | <p>The Council's revenue funding to meet costs in the High Needs Block has also increased significantly for the current financial year and beyond. This has been achieved by transferring resources from the schools block, following consultation with the Schools Forum as additional resources have not been provided for within the Dedicated Schools Grant, (DSG). Further, the current and anticipated increase in demand in special school places will continue to put pressure on High Needs budgets as there no additional money is expected from future years DSG allocations.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Separate work has also been undertaken to create a forecasting model for the future, which the authority previously lacked, and this will be used to guide proposals for further development of special school capacity and provision.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Provision for Year R in Sept 2015</p> <p>Once no bids were received for the Year R provision for Sept 2015, a range of alternative temporary solutions were explored. The only viable option that met the requirements of this group of children was a short-term, low-cost adaptation of space at Start Point Sholing. This will accommodate all of the 2015 Year R group, but is not viable as a long-term option for a number of reasons.</p> |
| 5. | <p>These include the future requirements for the use of this space to accommodate expansion of Start Point provision; the fact that this space would only ever be usable as Year R provision but capacity at Springwell would still need to increase to accommodate these children at Year 1 and above. There are also dis-economies of scale (and cost) for SCC and the school to continue to add further satellite provision to the mix.</p> |
| 6. | <p>The maximum capital budget requirement to adapt Start Point Sholing as outlined above is £110,000. The request to add funding and approval for this spend has been included in the wider Education & Children's Social Care Capital Programme report that is on the same agenda as this report. This meets the cost of adaptations at Sholing and some staff-related adaptations at Springwell which couldn't be accommodated at Sholing. For September 2015 the 'satellite' Springwell classes at Bassett Green School (agreed as a temporary solution to the equivalent problem last year) return to the use of that school and those children join the rest of Year 1 at Springwell.</p> |

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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| 7. | If capacity at Springwell Special School is not increased, there are only two |
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	alternative routes open to the Council.
8.	Option 1 - The first would be to direct mainstream primary schools to accept children with high level special needs and to provide ongoing additional revenue support packages to those schools that would have the capacity to accept them. This carries significant financial risks and the risks of legal challenge from those mainstream schools, many of whom already accept children with significant levels of special needs.
9.	A detailed financial estimate of the scale of the revenue pressure related to this option has not been prepared, but can be undertaken. It is likely to be in the region of £500,000 per year. This figure is based on an average cost for additional funding per pupil of £20,000. An estimate of the cost and reputational risks of significant legal challenges by schools is harder to quantify. But we have already seen the number of SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) cases rising and a significant number of those are requiring us to make placements in independent sector schools as alternatives to local special schools, not placements at mainstream schools.
10.	Option 2- The second option would be to place children in independent sector special schools (or be required to by SENDIST), none of which fall within the city's boundaries. The lowest current annual cost of such a placement is £57,000 for a child attending such a school as a day pupil (not residential) and the council would also be required to support additional daily transport costs in addition to the placement cost.
11.	The current and estimated size of year groups at Springwell is 24 children, equated to an annual revenue placement cost of £1.37m (24 X £57,000) plus additional transport costs.
12.	Other options considered – Other sites for the build have been considered, for example the former school buildings at Eastpoint were considered as part of option appraisal, but rejected due to existing plans for future ownership of the site and income to the authority associated with this.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
13.	<p>SELECTED OPTION</p> <p>Increased capacity for Sept 2016 (Phase 1)</p> <p>An analysis of the reasons for the lack of bids for the on-site expansion at Springwell, quickly identified that the insistence on an off-site modular construction (which would have required a significant element of adaptation to meet the needs of a special school) acted as the key dis-incentive plus broader market conditions in the construction industry (which affected other bids).</p>
14.	Most options involved increasing the size of the accommodation on the current site, some incorporate the unused field next to the current site. The preferred option agreed with the school leadership and Governing Body involves a two phase expansion.
15.	An option-appraisal and design process has commenced to create a traditional-build extension to the current Springwell site. The total estimated costs for the phase 1 is £2.7m.
16.	In order to proceed with the traditional-build proposal for 2016, a further £1.3m is required to be funded from the Basic Need Grant in addition to the £1.4m already approved by the Cabinet.

17.	The proposed extension will provide an additional 6 classrooms with all ancillary facilities, built to match the style and design of the existing school and directly connected to it. This will enable optimum flexibility in the use of this and the current teaching spaces.
18.	Increased capacity for 2017 and beyond (Phase 2) In discussions with the Head and Governing Body of Springwell school it was clear that the SCC response to increasing demand in the city and the impact on Springwell School over the last three years had been a series of temporary and last-minute solutions rather than a longer-term plan.
19.	Therefore, in commissioning the option appraisal and design of what was required for September 2016, a fuller option appraisal and design process was requested to create proposals for the creation of an expanded school, built in a series of phases to create the long-term capacity that forecasts and demand indicates is required.
20.	An outline costing indicates that this will require up to a further £8.86m in addition to £2.7m phased across two financial years as follows (as shown in table 1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £3m in 2016/17 • £5.86m in 2017/18
21.	At this stage no request for provision has been made for any phase 2 costs in Education and Children's Social care capital programme as the funding source is unclear.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

22	The changes to the programme, contained in this report, and those agreed previously at Cabinet, in respect of the increase in capacity at Springwell School (phase 1) are shown in the table 1 below.			
	Table 1 - Summary of changes to the Education & Children's Social Care Capital Programme to increase capacity at Springwell School			
		Phase 1		
		2015/16	2016/17	
		£M	£M	£M
	Total Required for Phase 1	1.1	1.6	2.7
	Previously added to the programme, (Cabinet Mar 15)			(1.4)
	To be added as per this report			1.3
23	A summary breakdown of the estimated costs of Phase 1 is shown in table 2 below and a further breakdown on the planned spend is included in Appendix 1.			

Table 2- Budget Estimate for Phase 1 Springwell School		
		£'000
	New Build	2,017
	Drainage & external works	217
	Site Specific Allowances and abnormals	195
	Risk (design & construction) Allowance	244
	Allowance for survey fees	27
	Total	2,700
24	It is proposed that the additional expenditure will be funded from the non-ringfenced Department for Education Basic Need capital grant in its entirety. All funding will be received prior to expenditure taking place.	
25	As outlined previously within this report of the total £2.7m required to complete phase 1, £1.4m has been previously added by Cabinet to the Education & Children's Social Care capital programme. The residual £1.3M is requested by Cabinet to be added as per this report. Further, the total £2.7M proposed expenditure is required to be approved by Council in order for the scheme to commence.	
26.	The recurring revenue costs associated with the phase 1 increase in capacity at the school are anticipated to be between £0.4M and £0.5M per annum. This will be funded from within the recurrent Dedicated Schools Grant.	
<u>Property/Other</u>		
27.	None.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS		
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>		
28.	The power to provide and maintain educational facilities as proposed in this report is set out in the Education Act 1996.	
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>		
29.	None	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
30.	This relates to the strategic priority for Protecting Vulnerable People and the School Improvement Plan	

KEY DECISION?	Yes	
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	The school is located in Bitterne Ward but admits children from all areas of the City	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	None	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	None	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
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	