

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	PROPOSALS TO EXPAND CITY CENTRE PRIMARY SCHOOLS
DATE OF DECISION:	18 SEPTEMBER 2012
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:	
Not applicable.	

BRIEF SUMMARY:

Southampton is currently experiencing an unprecedented rise in the number of children in the city that require a school place, with the main pressure point being the central spine of the city running from the Bassett/Swaythling/Portswood in the North to the Bargate in the South. This report sets out proposals for pre-statutory consultation on increasing the number of places available in the city centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Having complied with Rule 15 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules:

- (i) To commence 6 weeks of pre-statutory consultation in September 2012 on proposals to:
 - Increase the PAN of Bassett Green Primary School from 60 to 90 from September 2013 (the school has initially expanded for 1 year only from September 2012)
 - Increase the PAN of Bevois Town Primary School from 30 to 60 from September 2013 (the school has initially expanded for 1 year only from September 2012)
 - Increase the PAN of St John's Primary and Nursery School from 30 to 60 from September 2014
- (ii) 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 consultation in accordance with statutory and other legal requirements.
- (iii) Subject to complying with Financial and Contractual Procedure Rules, to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and Learning, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to do anything necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.
- (iv) To add, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, a sum of £3,000,000 to the Children's Services Capital Programme, for the expansion of city centre primary schools, funded from non-ring-fenced Department for Education Basic Need Grant.
- (v) To note that approval for the expenditure added in recommendation (iv) above will be brought forward to Cabinet when sufficient detail can be provided to effectively inform decision making.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. This report is presented as a general exception item in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. Amendments to the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to information) (England) Regulations 2012 require 28 days notice to be given prior to determining all Key Decisions. This new requirement was published by government mid August and comes into effect on 10th September 2012. It has not been possible to meet the requirement of 28 days notice between publication of the new Regulations and the scheduled meeting of Cabinet and it is not reasonable or practicable in the circumstances to defer all key decision items to a future meeting.
2. The city centre is experiencing greater pressure on places than any other area of the city and whilst a number of schools have expanded as a result of the primary review phases 1 and 2 it is clear that additional primary school places are required if we are to meet our statutory duty to provide a school place to all those children that require one.
3. Primary Review Phase 2 projects increased the number of year R places in the city to 3,030 from September 2012 and this number of places would be replicated in all primary aged year groups in subsequent years. However, recent birth and child benefit data indicates that pupils numbers are due to exceed our planned year R capacity in 2014, 2015 and 2016:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Year R forecast	2,910	3,040	3,240	3,140

4. The demand in the city centre was greater than anticipated for the 2012/13 year and several schools had to be expanded, initially for 1 year only, to accommodate the extra demand. The schools selected were Bassett Green Primary and Bevois Town Primary, as they could admit an extra class at short notice and also had the potential to expand throughout all year groups. These two schools, along with St John's, are now proposed to expand in all year groups.
5. If the proposal were approved, the city would have a total of 3,120 year R places from September 2014 and in subsequent years.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

6. If no action were taken the city would have a significant deficit number of year R places in September 2014, 2015 and September 2016 and while there still may be a deficit with the implementation of these proposals, it would be far reduced and more manageable. The creation of further school places (in addition to the proposals in this report) will be subject to the LA receiving further allocation) of capital funding from the DfE.
7. Several other schools in the central spine of the city were visited (Portswood Primary and Swaythling Primary) both in relation to a 1 year expansion in September 2012/13 and longer term expansion plans from 2013/2014 onwards. However, both these schools were discounted due to a lack of internal space and site restrictions, which would make expansion/capital works both difficult and expensive. They had no rooms which could be converted at short notice into a classroom for September 2012 and had a no

outdoor space which could conceivably be used to accommodate multiple classrooms.

8. Bassett Green and Bevois Town could be left with a 1 year “bulge” year group and could revert to the 2011/12 PAN in 2013/14, however this was neither schools preference, nor the Local Authority’s, given the projected future demand and difficulties in managing 1 year group which is larger than all others.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out):

9. Visits were made to a number of schools in the central spine of the city in April 2012 to determine and discuss the potential for short and long term expansion. As a result of these visits 2 schools were discounted. Bassett Green and Bevois Town were selected as they had internal space which could accommodate extra children in September 2012 and school sites which could cope with further expansion.
10. In addition to this officers met with the head teacher and prospective parents at St John’s Primary and nursery school as a result of the oversubscription of St John’s for the 2012/13 academic year. A subsequent visit was made to a potential expansion site close to the school, to assess its viability.
11. As a result of these visits and discussions it is proposed that:
Bassett Green Primary School would (formally) increase its PAN from 60 to 90 from September 2013. The net capacity would increase to 630 by September 2018. The school has already agreed to admit up to 90 pupils in September 2012.

Bevois Town Primary School would formally increase its PAN from 30 to 60 from September 2013. The net capacity would increase to 420 by September 2018. The school has already agreed to admit up to 90 pupils in September 2012.

St Johns Primary and Nursery School would increase it’s PAN from 30 to 60 from September 2014. The net capacity of the school would increase to 420 by September 2020.

12. The three schools that are being proposed to expand are located in the central spine of the city, from the university in the north, through the city centre and down to the Bargate in the south. As such, all are fairly easily accessible by public transport. These schools are being proposed for expansion in response to demand for places in the city centre, as there is an expectation that the LA will offer a school place to children within 2 miles from their home address. If a school place is offered beyond 2 miles from a home address we, in accordance with the Council’s adopted Home to School Transport Policy, would be required to provide funding for transport. The reasoning behind these proposals is to reduce the distances that pupils/parents have to travel to school, thus limiting the need for the LA to provide transport assistance. We anticipate that very few, if any, pupils accessing mainstream education in the city will require funding for transport if these proposals are implemented,

13. The School Organisation Proposals in this report would have the affect (if approved) of:
- Permanently increasing the Published Admission Number of Bassett Green Primary from 60 to 90 from September 2013.
 - Permanently increasing the Published Admission Number of Bevois town Primary from 30 to 60 from September 2013
 - Permanently increasing the Published Admission Number of St John's Primary and Nursery from 30 to 60 from September 2014
- There are no plans to change any of admissions arrangements for any of these schools, other than in relation to the number of children they can admit.
14. It is proposed that 4 weeks of pre-statutory consultation will take place from 26 September 2012 until 24 October 2012. If the response to consultation is positive, a report will go to cabinet on 13 November 2012 and, if approved, 4 weeks of statutory consultation will run from 21 November 2012 until 19 December 2012. it is anticipated that a decision on the proposals would be made on 29 January 2013.
15. Further impacts of this proposal include the impact on early years providers and community groups and requirement for secondary school places in the future. Further details can be found in appendix 1.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Capital/Revenue:

16. The costs of pre statutory consultation will be met from the Children's Services revenue budget.
17. The revenue costs of all schools are met from the Individual Schools Budget Funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant. The amount of Dedicated Schools Grant that the authority receives each year is based on the number of Children in the city. If the city's overall numbers grow, this will result in an increase in the amount of grant received which can be passed onto schools via budget shares calculated using Southampton's Fair Funding Formula.
18. The Council has received £3,899,000 of non ring fenced Basic Need capital grant from the DfE, which was distributed to those authorities that had the greatest projected deficit of school places. If the proposals are approved the majority of this funding, £3,000,000, would be allocated to these projects.
19. Detailed cost estimates of the proposed capital projects will be brought for approval at the final stage of the consultation process. This detail will be included in the report which is planned to go to cabinet on 29 January 2013.

Property/Other:

20. Although still in the early stages of developing these proposed projects, it as anticipated that the schools will expand as follows:
- Bassett Green Primary – 6 new classrooms to be built on site and the existing office/school lobby to be converted into a classroom.
- Bevois Town Primary – staff room converted into a classroom, former SCC office space to be converted into a teaching area and additional classrooms to be built on the existing site.

St John's Primary and Nursery – the proposal for St John's is less clear at this stage as this expansion is not proposed to come on stream until September 2014. Tentative options include the conversion of an SCC owned and occupied building (this would be subject to internal discussion / consultation) or a new build option. More detailed information on the accommodation that St John's might use for expansion will be included in subsequent consultation and decision making reports, if the proposal is taken forward after pre-statutory consultation. St John's is a foundation school and a member of the Regents Park Trust. At present, we are in the process of transferring the land to the Trust.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

21. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. LA's must also ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area and promote diversity and parental preference.
22. Alterations, changes, creation or removal of primary provision across the city is subject to the statutory processes contained in the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Proposals for change are required to follow the processes set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2007 as amended, together with the corresponding Admissions Regulations as appropriate. Statutory Guidance on bringing forward proposals applies, which requires a period of pre-statutory consultation (and additional rounds of pre-statutory consultation if further viable options are identified during initial consultation) followed by publications of statutory notices, representation periods and considerations of representations by Cabinet or considerations by the Admissions Forum and approval as part of the Admissions Process as required.

Other Legal Implications:

23. In bringing forward school organisation proposals the LA must have regard to the need to consult the community and users, the statutory duty to improve standards and access to educational opportunities and observe the rules of natural justice and the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, article 2 of the First Protocol (right to education) and equalities legislation.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS:

24. The proposals outlined in this document will contribute directly to the achievement of the outcomes set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

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KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Bassett, Swaythling, Portswood, Bevois, Bargate
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1.	Equality Impact Assessment
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Documents In Members' Rooms:

1.	Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School by Enlargement or Adding a Sixth Form A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies
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Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to be carried out.	Yes
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Other Background Documents

Integrated Impact Assessment and 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)
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1.	None.	
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