

DECISION-MAKER:	Cabinet
SUBJECT:	St Mary's Woodlands SEND resourced provisions
DATE OF DECISION:	25 June 2024
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR WINNING CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

N/A

BRIEF SUMMARY

Southampton is at capacity with special school places based on current builds, both for secondary and primary cohorts. Consideration has been made of how to manage the existing pressure on the Council in terms of need for more specialist placements and the resources available to the city rather than using high cost out of city placements.

In relation to primary - the unit at St Mary's is proposed to replicate that existing in another primary school in the city. There are no additional costs to the LA to set this up as the school's existing environment can absorb the additional placements.

The unit at Woodlands Secondary School is a new model and requires a capital investment of £250,000. The proposed profile of pupils for placement have no alternative options in the city so pupils placed there going forward would otherwise be placed outside the city in high cost settings, which has implications for both the DSG High Needs and the General Fund as it relates to Home to School Transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	To approve the spend of £250,000 within the Children's & Learning capital programme to facilitate the opening of a SEND unit for children and Young people with SEMH needs on the site of Woodlands Community College. This unit will accommodate 8 spaces initially.
	(ii)	To approve the opening of a SEND unit for children and young people with moderate learning difficulties and associated speech, language and communication needs. on the site of St Mary's Primary School. This provision is initially to support 8 KS 1 pupils.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The current position is that Southampton does not have a specialist school for girls with social, emotional & mental health (SEMH) needs in Southampton. These pupils are either currently attending mainstream secondary settings with bespoke support, accessing the Compass pupil referral unit or attending out of city placements at a high cost to the Local Authority. Southampton currently has a provision for boys with the same needs and this provision cannot be expanded to accommodate girls in its existing condition. It is considered that a fully contained unit on the site of a mainstream secondary school can provide an option for a cohort of girls to ensure they have the same opportunities as boys with similar needs.

For girls with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and SEMH needs the pathway for specialist provision has been in placements outside the city and these come at a cost of a minimum £70,000 per year. The proposed provision is for 8 pupils to be filled over a two year period. Year 1 - 4 pupils and year 2 - 8 pupils. There is the potential for further growth to 12 pupils in the future.

Placements at Woodlands School will support a bridge for pupils to return to mainstream school if appropriate and will also allow girls the benefit of being educated in their local area. These placements will also lead to a reduction in permanent exclusions across the city.

2. There has been an increase in recent years of pupils with complex needs entering reception at primary school and as a result an increase in the pressure on special school placements. Over the last two years places at Springwell School have been increased to support this. Pupils with complex needs have been increasingly placed in our mainstream schools and schools have made accommodations to support this additional level of need. The SEND team have supported this via funded outreach packages. There are, however, some pupils that require something more bespoke and therefore the unit at St Mary's will allow for 8 pupils to be supported in a specialist way. This replicates the model at Mason Moor which opened in September 2023 to support 10 pupils with the same need. There are no set up costs for the unit as this can be offered from the schools existing building due to empty classrooms.

The lack of growth in these placements has led to increases in tribunals for Springwell over the last three years. It has also led to an increase in tribunals for settings in other LA's and therefore children being transported out of the city.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. Do nothing. In relation to Woodlands, this will result in the LA continuing to incur high costs in relation to out of city placements and girls will not be able to access an appropriate suitable setting in the city. In relation to St Mary's, this will result in a continued failure to meet the needs of a set of pupils that currently cannot be placed due to special school capacities.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
4.	<p>A full statutory consultation has taken place in relation to both units, this concluded in January 2024.</p> <p>We are proposing to open a unit for 8 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and associated speech language and communication needs and/or autism in St Mary's C of E School. This would be housed within the current school building within its own area with access to its own toilet facilities. It would have access to the main outside space of the school and would be supported by its own team of staff.</p> <p>We are proposing to open a unit for 8 pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs at Woodlands Community College. This would be housed in its own building separate to the main site. It would have access to its own toilet facilities and outdoor space. Pupils in attendance would be supported by a dedicated team of staff in the setting.</p>
5.	£250,000 is approved in the capital programme fund additional SEND units. It is proposed to utilise this existing project to fund the Woodlands Unit, which will support up to 8 secondary age girls in Southampton. The funding is to cover the build of a contained unit on the school site that can provide a contained setting for the pupils.
6.	The set up of the unit at St Mary's has no cost implications attached. The school currently has two empty classrooms that can be utilised to support the set up of the provision.
7.	Both units will accommodate pupils from all areas of the city and all pupils will be assessed for transport to school in line with the home to school transport policy.
8.	Placements at the units will be funded per pupil via the Higher needs budget in line with the funding for other special schools and units in the city.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
9.	The approved capital budget is £250,000, funded by the schools allocation grant, already in the capital programme. This funding is to be made available to Woodlands to cover the cost and set up of the unit. The School will follow usual procurement processes to ensure the project comes in within these costs. The school will be given the responsibility to ensure this comes in within the funding envelope.
10.	The plan for the unit is to provide two classroom spaces that will support growth to 12 pupils however should costs exceed the allocated funding the size will reduce and placements will remain at 8. The cost of the provision is still offset over the 5 year period.
11.	<p>For Woodlands, placements are agreed at a cost per placement of £35,000. Cost only applied once the pupil is in attendance.</p> <p>4 places- £140,000 per academic year 8 places- £280,000 per academic year 12 places-£420,000 per academic year</p>

	For St Mary's the setting will receive £10,000 per placement plus a top up amount for each pupil placed. This equates to an annual amount of £80,000 for 8 places plus a top up of £8048 per pupil placed. This is in line with Springwell School who have a similar cohort of pupil profile.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
12.	Woodlands Community College is a PFI setting and therefore are subject to using specific providers for any work on site.
13.	Woodlands Community College and St Marys Primary School will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of their SEND Units.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
14.	The addition of a special education needs unit at a maintained mainstream school is a 'Prescribed Alteration' within the meaning of the School Standards & Frameworks Act 1998. Proposals must be consulted upon before formal statutory Notices published and a 4 calendar week representation period completed in accordance with the statutory guidance "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools – statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers January 2023". Cabinet is required to determine statutory proposals within 2 calendar months of the close of the representation period set out in the Statutory Notice (attached at Appendix X)
15.	The Council, in reaching its decision is required to demonstrate that pupils will not be displaced by the introduction of any new provision and demonstrate how the proposed arrangements will lead to improvements in the standard, quality or range of provision for children, together with how the proposals comply with the Council's duties under s.149 Equalities Act 2010 (the 'Public Sector Equality Duty'. A detailed EISA relating to these proposals is attached at appendix X).
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
16.	Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years The Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations and applies to England. It is relevant as all pupils who attend a SEND unit provision have an Education, Health and Care Plan which states the provision required to meet their needs.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
17.	Whilst forecasting for placements has taken place it is possible that the demand for the unit will not meet the allocated placements. The costs of the unit can be covered with just four pupils in attendance and moving into year 2 consideration can be given to make the unit mixed boys and girls which will support with placement pressures at the Polygon School. It is considered that this is low risk.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	

	The provision of this resource base is consistent with the Council's policies and strategies.
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KEY DECISION?	Yes
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	ESIA for Woodlands
2.	ESIA for St Mary's
3.	Statutory Notice of Consultation

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	Consultation Full results summary
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	Yes
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Data Protection Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	No
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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. Special educational needs and disability code of practice. 0-25 years	SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)