

LISBURNE SCHOOL EXPANSION AND RE-LOCATION

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In April 2018, the Council's Cabinet approved the development of a proposal for an expanded and re-built Lisburne School on an alternative site. The proposed expansion to the School requires formal consultation and publication of a statutory notice under The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
- 1.2 Consultation on the proposal was undertaken from 11 March 2019 to 3 May 2019 approval is now sought to publish a statutory notice for the proposed change and for the final determination to be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, subject to there being no significant objections.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Local authorities are required to ensure sufficient school places are available, including specialist provision for those who need it. There are increasing numbers of children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) who require specialist places and Stockport has six special schools which cater for these needs. Increasing numbers of children with an Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan mean the majority of these schools are overfull and some places, including at Lisburne School, are provided in temporary or off-site buildings. Due to the shortfall of places a significant amount is currently spent each year on placements outside the Council's own provision for pupils with higher levels of need.
- 2.2 The existing Lisburne School building at Half Moon Lane was originally intended for approximately 60 pupils, however, in 2014 and 2015 additional modular classrooms were added to the site. In 2017 and 2018, further places were provided at sites some distance from the main School, including Hollywood Park Nursery and the Overdale Centre. This means a number of children are unable to access the School's main facilities. Across the main school site and the satellite provisions there are currently 109 pupils:

Year Group	6	5	4	3	2	1	R
Number of Pupils	12	14	13	23	16	14	17

Source: October 2018 School Census

- 2.3 As numbers across the school have grown significantly in recent years and the number of pupils with higher levels of need continues to increase it is proposed to expand the school into a larger new building that will accommodate up to 208 pupils. This will mean 4 classes (average class size 7 or 8 pupils) in each of the 7 year groups.
- 2.4 The current Lisburne School building and site in Offerton is too restricted to allow for expansion and has a number of suitability issues for children with special needs. Options have therefore been considered for the future of the School

which will help more pupils benefit from the excellent education opportunities already available at Lisburne School.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 This proposal will increase provision and improve learning opportunities, combined by a bespoke fit for purpose building:

- To re-locate the school from Half Moon Lane to the Woodbank Block of the former Offerton School site;
- To increase the number of places available to 208 for children aged 4 to 11 years of age.

4. BENEFITS

4.1 Improved Education Opportunities

4.1.1 Local authorities must offer places that support the special educational needs of individual pupils and parental preferences. Lisburne School is an Outstanding community special school that provides successful education for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Severe Learning Difficulty and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty. Demand for this type of school place has increased significantly, therefore expanding Lisburne School will offer the opportunity for this Outstanding provision to a larger number of children in future.

4.1.2 Additional places at the school will mean more pupils are able to benefit from these excellent educational opportunities. It is proposed to increase places at the School to 208, offering more opportunities to an increasing number of vulnerable pupils who need the specialist support which can be offered. In addition, more places at the School will reduce the Council's reliance on placements out of Borough for pupils with special educational needs.

4.2 Improved Accessibility

4.2.1 The new building will be designed specifically to accommodate children with SEND. This will be a significant improvement on the existing school building which has been adapted from a former mainstream school building and is now stretched beyond its capacity, with separate units across the site as well as additional units in other locations. The proposed new building and its facilities would also be fully accessible for people with disabilities with spaces which are designed to allow mobility for pupils with physical difficulties.

4.3 Bespoke Fit for Purpose Buildings

4.3.1 The proposal will provide enhanced provision with pupils and staff benefitting from bespoke buildings and better facilities that are fit for purpose to deliver the best education possible. The School will have a modern building with lower maintenance costs, meaning funding can be more appropriately directed towards teaching and learning.

4.3.2 If the current Lisburne building was to be retained, it would require additional expenditure on condition work in future, but such investment would not make the building fit for purpose for the specialist provision required, including accessibility for children with disabilities.

5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 In April 2018 the Council's Cabinet agreed that a first phase of investment would focus on addressing capacity issues within the primary special sector in order to support children in their early phase of education. This is to be achieved by a proposal to build a larger replacement Lisburne School with space for 208 pupils.

5.2 Existing site

5.2.1 The option of the School remaining at its existing location is unviable for a number of reasons. The existing Lisburne site is not large enough for the necessary increase in size to accommodate up to 208 pupils and there would be considerable logistical difficulties for redeveloping the site whilst the School continues to delivery outstanding education. Development on the current site would be exceptionally difficult due to the limited circulation and operational space caused by the on-site nursery, primary and special school and the temporary accommodation.

5.2.2 The existing building is not fit for the future and work to re-develop could not be undertaken with the School in occupation. Decanting of children from the existing school to a temporary site would be required in addition to significant highways mitigation works (identified from the concerns raised previously by placing the temporary mobiles currently on site) at additional cost. As well as being costly, alternative accommodation would have to be provided for pupils whilst the work was underway and this would be very disruptive to the School.

5.3 School re-location to the former Offerton site:

5.3.1 The existing buildings on the former Offerton School site were considered for the previous move of Castle Hill High School. At the time it was recognised that the Vernon block was the most suitable building for re-use due to the significant condition issues with the other buildings on the site. Castle Hill High School now occupies the Vernon block but the other buildings have continued to deteriorate.

5.3.2 A new building on the site of the Woodbank building at the former Offerton School site is deemed to be the best option and this is now being progressed with detailed feasibility work underway. Any development of the site will be subject to planning permission and local residents will be consulted by the Local Planning Authority on the specific building and site proposals following submission of a planning application. In the Planning context the site has Major Existing Development status within the Green Belt. The volume of existing buildings on the site is sufficient to offset the proposed development.

5.4 School re-location to other sites:

5.4.1 The Council currently has no suitable alternative sites that could accommodate the School with all necessary facilities. Consideration has been given to the former Orrishmere Primary School site in Cheadle Hulme and to the former Dial Park Primary School site on Blackstone Road, Offerton. Both of the sites are too small for the size of school proposed.

6. FUNDING

6.1 The funding model for the proposal is detailed in the report to Cabinet in April 2018, which highlights that the Council currently spends significant amounts of money placing and transporting pupils with complex needs to settings which are not

maintained by the Council. These placements are much more expensive than Council provision as well as being further afield for the children who live in Stockport, with some children travelling significant distances to available placements outside the Borough.

- 6.2 For some children the Council simply cannot meet their needs and more complex settings are required, however there is a large number of children coming forward who need places of the type provided by our existing schools. In delivering this proposal significant savings can be made against external placements and the associated travel costs. It is intended to use a combination of borrowing, grant funding and capital receipts to fund the project.

7. PROCESS

- 7.1 The expansion of a Council-maintained special school is subject to a statutory process, prescribed by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations October 2013. The process consists of four stages:

- Stage 1: Publication of a statutory notice and proposal for the change
- Stage 2: Representation period of four weeks for comments or objections
- Stage 3: Decision on whether or not to implement
- Stage 4: Implementation

- 7.2 Prior to the formal stages, the Council is expected to undertake consultation with a wide range of people and the final decision should take account of the feedback received. Consultation has been undertaken and a summary of the feedback received is outlined below.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation on the proposal to re-locate and expand Lisburne School was undertaken between 11 March and 3 May 2019. A copy of the consultation documents is attached at Enclosure 1. The following key stakeholders were consulted:

- The School's governors
- Parents/carers of pupils
- School staff
- Pupils
- Associated schools
- Residents local to the proposed School site in Offerton
- Families of children attending The Fairway Primary School
- Families of children attending Castle Hill High School
- Stockport NHS Foundation Trust
- School Nursing Team
- Trade unions
- Members of Parliament
- Ward councillors
- School's contractors

- 8.2 Hard copies of the consultation leaflet were made available via the School to all staff, governors and parents/carers and to parents, staff and governors at the Fairway

Primary and Castle Hill High Schools located adjacent to the proposed new School site. Hard copies were also sent to 210 residential properties around the proposed site. Additional information was sign-posted to the Council's website.

- 8.3 Emails were sent to the remainder of consultees and notifications were placed on the Council's website and social media allowing interested parties access to the consultation. Five consultation drop-in sessions were hosted at Lisburne School and at Castle Hill High School for parents/carers and local residents. Pupils from the School Council were also consulted to ensure their views are taken into account.

9. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 9.1 Overall there was a good response to the consultation with 176 responses received. Of the responses received 78 were in hard copy and 98 were online. The vast majority of responses were in support of the proposal as demonstrated in the table below.
- 9.2 Consultees were asked how far they agree with the proposal and to provide any comments they wish to have considered.

Responses	Number Received
Strongly agree	121
Tend to agree	25
Neither agree nor disagree	13
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	13
Don't know	1
Total	176

- 9.3 Of the responses received, 74 provided further comments. In addition to the written responses received, 13 people attended the drop-in sessions to view indicative plans and discuss the proposal. The sessions were attended by only a small number of people (13 in total) who wished to see plans for the proposal and discuss site issues with Council officers. Those who attended also provided written responses and these are included in the 176 responses detailed.
- 9.4 There is clearly a very strong acknowledgement of the need for additional places and of the quality of provision offered by Lisburne School. Of the 146 responses in agreement with the proposal, 50 provided supporting comments which refer to the additional space, good location and links with Castle Hill High School. There were however some concerns expressed about the increased traffic at the proposed site as well as parking issues.
- 9.5 Of the 16 responses received which do not support the proposal, 14 were from local residents, one a parent of a Lisburne pupil and one parent of Castle Hill pupil. Comments were also provided by 14 of the respondents, largely focused on the impact of additional traffic along The Fairway and at the junction with Marple Road, concerns regarding parking and the safety of children and pedestrians.
- 9.6 A number of responses referred to the perceived need for additional mainstream secondary school places on the site, particularly given the consultation proposals

under the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework which may result in additional housing being provided on the site in future.

9.7 Full details of the consultation responses, including all comments received are contained in Enclosure 2.

9.8 Traffic and parking issues around the Offerton site

9.8.1 It is recognised that there is an historical issue with traffic along The Fairway and mitigation measures have already been consulted upon for implementation by the Highways Team. Residents raised further concerns about parking and congestion around the site entrance which currently serves the Music Service, Life Leisure sports facilities, Castle Hill High School and The Fairway Primary School. The majority of pupils will be transported to the School in minibuses for which there will be adequate provision within the school site for parking.

9.8.2 Proposals will be developed for submission as part of the planning application in consultation with highways expertise and will review proposals such as potential extension of the existing roadway within the site with additional development of drop-off, one way routes, and parking bays which could help to alleviate some of the current issues. Consideration will also be given to the start and finish times of the school day in order to spread the pressure of traffic arriving at the site.

9.8.3 In addition there is some community concern regarding future use of the remainder of the proposed site, which is currently highlighted in the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) consultation. The GMSF consultation is a separate issue and will not be dealt with in this report as it has no bearing on delivery of the School.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 There is a very strong level of support for the proposal to re-locate and expand Lisburne School despite some concern regarding highways implications for the proposed site, which are proposed to be mitigated by a detailed transport impact assessment and comprehensive design for access and parking provision. The proposal offers an excellent opportunity to significantly improve the educational offer available for some of Stockport's most vulnerable children whilst increasing provision to meet increasing demand and enabling more children to be educated within their locality.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 The Cabinet is requested to:

11.1.1 Consider the outcomes of the consultation exercise.

11.1.2 Approve the publication of a statutory notice for the proposed changes to Lisburne School, specifically to increase provision for 4 to 11 year olds up to 208 places from September 2021 (subject to planning permission).

11.1.3 Delegate the final decision to the Deputy Chief Executive, subject to there being no significant objections.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Cabinet of 24/04/18

ENCLOSURES

Enclosure 1: Consultation Documents

Enclosure 2: Consultation Feedback Document

Enclosure 3: Equality Impact Assessment (Draft)

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Charlotte Cordingley on Tel: 0161 474 4240 or by email on Charlotte.cordingley@stockport.gov.uk