

## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 16 October 2012

**Decision No:** (CAB 12/13 8851)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SUBJECT:	PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SPRINGWELL SCHOOL
AUTHOR:	James Howells

### THE DECISION

- (i) To note the outcome of statutory consultation as set out in this report.
- (ii) To authorise the expansion of Springwell School from the 5 November 2012 by the addition of eight places (one class group) in year R and continuing incrementally in subsequent years (if there is sufficient demand for additional places in future years).
- (iii) 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 approve, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, capital expenditure of £399,000 from the Children's Services Capital Programme, for the expansion of Springwell School.

### REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. There is currently a high demand for places at Springwell Special School. At the placement meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012, there were more children put forward for consideration for a place at Springwell than there were places available. As a result there are currently not enough special school places in the city to accommodate all those children with complex needs that require a place.
2. The additional children would need a place from November 2012 (given their ages, they are not required to start school in September) so it was essential that the consultation processes were completed over the summer months in order to ensure that a Cabinet decision could be made in October, thus allowing the pupils to start at the school in November.
3. The expansion proposal, if approved, would ensure that the Local Authority (LA) could meet its statutory duty to provide a school place (whether in SEN or mainstream) to all children in the city that require one. While demand is not expected to be as high next year as it was this year, this proposal would enable the school to admit an increased number in subsequent years if demand remains at a high level.

4. The expansion of the school by eight places (which is greater than 10% of the existing school capacity) triggered the requirement for statutory consultation to take place before the children could be admitted to the school. As such, we were required to conduct the consultation on the basis that the school would expand by eight additional places each academic year until all seven year groups had expanded. However, we only currently have funding for two classrooms and do not yet have pupil data to indicate that all year groups will need to be expanded. As a result, we will need to carry out further consultation if pupil demand and/or a lack of funding mean we will not expand the school beyond 2013.

#### **DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

1. The Local Authority could decide not to increase the number of SEN (Special Educational Needs) placements available at Springwell. This would likely to result in children and young people with statements not being able to be placed in the most appropriate school to meet their needs, which could negatively impact upon educational outcomes for those children. It could also lead to an increase in the number of SEN tribunals if parents are not happy with the provision that they are offered. In this instance most parents would be successful at a tribunal and we would likely have to offer the child a place at Springwell anyway. The expansion of the school, as per School Organisation legislation, would negate the time and financial costs of having to hold several tribunal hearings.
2. Springwell is the only school in the city that can cater for the specific needs of the additional pupils that have been assessed. No other school in the city (neither SEN nor mainstream) has the expertise, in terms of both staff and facilities, to accommodate the assessed needs of these children and as such, no other schools were considered for this expansion proposal.

#### **OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION**

None.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD**

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 16 October 2012

Decision Maker:  
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:  
Judy Cordell

**SCRUTINY**

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*