

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 19 February 2013

Decision No: (CAB 12/13 9841)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SUBJECT:	PROPOSALS TO EXPAND THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CITY
AUTHOR:	James Howells

THE DECISION

- (i) To consider and take into account the outcome of statutory consultation as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- (ii) To approve the implementation of the enlargement of the following two schools from 1 September 2013 (subject to obtaining the necessary planning consents):
 - The enlargement by 30 places (1FE – form of entry) per year group of Bassett Green Primary School, with implementation from 1 September 2013, beginning with Year R and continuing incrementally until all seven year groups have been expanded. This would have the effect of enlarging the school from 2FE (60 places per year group) to 3FE (90 places per year group), and increasing the net capacity to 630 by September 1 2018. Please note that Bassett Green admitted 90 pupils to year R in September 2012 for one year only. This proposal is to expand the school on a permanent basis.
 - The enlargement by 30 places (1FE – form of entry) per year group of Bevois Town Primary School, with implementation from 1 September 2013, beginning with Year R and continuing incrementally until all seven year groups have been expanded. This would have the effect of enlarging the school from 1FE (30 places per year group) to 2FE (60 places per year group), and increasing the net capacity to 420 by September 1 2018. Please note that Bevois Town admitted 60 pupils to year R in September 2012 for one year only. This proposal is to expand the school on a permanent basis.
- (iii) To approve the implementation of the enlargement of the following school from 1 September 2014 (subject to obtaining the necessary planning consents):
 - The enlargement by 30 places (1FE – form of entry) per year group of St Johns Primary & Nursery School, with implementation from 1 September 2014, beginning with Year R and continuing incrementally until all seven year groups have been expanded. This would have the effect of enlarging the school from 1FE (30 places per year group) to 2FE (60 places per year group), and increasing the net capacity to 420 by September 1 2020.

- (iv) To add, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, a sum of £1.55 million to the Children's Services Capital programme, from the ring fenced DfE basic need grant.
- (v) Subject to the approval of Council to add £400,000 to the Bassett Green Primary project on the 13th February, to approve, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, capital expenditure of £3.65 million in 2013/14 and £1.3 million in 2014/15 from the Children's Services Capital Programme for the expansions of:
- Bassett Green Primary £1.4 million
 - Bevois Town Primary £1.45 million
 - St Johns Primary and Nursery £2.1 million
- (vi) To note that assumptions have been made about the likely level of Basic Need Grant to be awarded in future years. If the final award is less than anticipated any shortfall in funding will need to be met from Council resources.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. The rapid rise in the number of pupils requiring a school place over the last three to four years, has meant that severe pressure has been brought to bear on the school estate. Forecasts indicate that this pressure is not likely to recede in the foreseeable future and demand may well increase beyond current levels in 2015/16.
2. Extra places have already been put in at schools across the City as a result of the Primary Review Phases 1 and 2, however rising demand for places, specifically in the central spine of the city, means that additional places will be required.
3. Bassett Green and Bevois Town Primary school's both expanded for one year only in September 2012 in order to cope with higher than expected demand in the central strip of the city. These schools were selected because they were in areas of the city where demand was high, they were able to accommodate an additional class and had the potential to expand all year groups in the long term. As a result the planning of the capital projects for these schemes are at a more advanced stage than they are for St Johns.
4. St Johns is the only school in the heart of the city centre and demand for places at the school is high as a result of the significant residential property developments the city centre. The school has a fairly small site and has only recently expanded from an infant to a primary school. However, a council owned building near the school has been identified as the space which could accommodate the additional children at the school. This building is the Eagle Warehouse and currently houses the Archaeology Collection.
5. The expansions of these three schools would provide us with 3,090 year R place school places, compared to an anticipated cohort of 3,040 pupils in 2014/15. In 2015/16 the demand for year R places will jump significantly to around 3,240. We do not expect demand to remain at this level so are looking at a number of temporary, one year expansions for 2015/16.
6. If we are to maintain and improve the school experience we offer to our children we must ensure that their learning environment is conducive to a quality education.
7. As a local authority we have a statutory obligation to provide every child who wants one with a quality school place. Failure to do so would mean we would be failing in one of our basic duties.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1. Under the Regulations Cabinet may either:

- (a) approve the recommendations, or
- (b) reject the recommendations, or
- (c) approve the recommendations subject to one of a number of limited statutory conditions, or
- (d) approve the recommendations with modifications (minor modifications only).

2. SCC could take no action, but if so the Local Authority would not fulfil its statutory obligation to provide every child who wants one with quality school place. Failure to do this would mean we would be failing in one of our basic duties.

3. Other schools were visited (Portswood Primary, Swaythling Primary) when the Local Authority was looking at schools that could expand for 1 year only in September 2012 and in the longer term. However these were discounted due to space restrictions on both sites.

4. The Local Authority could proceed to expand St Johns on the existing school site however this would significantly reduce the outdoor play space at the school. There are also a number of areas of archaeological importance on the site so building on it, whilst not impossible, would be difficult and costly.

5. If the Eagle Warehouse were vacated but were not used to expand St Johns Primary and Nursery School, it could be sold to an external organisation, thus creating a capital receipt for the Local Authority. A report commissioned in March 2009 concluded that the "Market Value of the freehold interest in the property in its existing condition, assuming vacant possession, is £195,000 (One Hundred and Ninety Five Thousand Pounds)." Children's Services preference is for the building to be converted for school use, as opposed to selling it on the open market. Clearly, a capital receipt would not be available if the Eagle Warehouse were used for educational purposes.

It should be noted that the Bevois town expansion proposals involves the use of a Council owned property on Cedar Road, which was previously occupied by Social Services. The council would forego a capital receipt if the building were used for educational purposes. In April 2007 the property was given an asset valuation of £440,000

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: 19th February 2013

Decision Maker: The Cabinet Member
for Children's Services

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)*