

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Monday, 18 October 2021

Decision No: (CAB 21/22 32464)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Education
SUBJECT:	Special School Expansion and Reconfiguration
AUTHOR:	Tammy Marks

THE DECISION

- i) Approve an addition to the capital programme of £4.295M, with approval to spend, for the purchase of modular units on the Green Lane site to accommodate the September 2022 intake of pupils at Great Oaks Academy. Details are set out in paragraph 15.
- ii) Approve the spend of £0.30M in 2021/22 to employ consultants to progress the overall SEND project. This will come from the previously agreed capital allocation of £4.4M within the capital programme. If long term proposals for the SEND developments on Green Lane are not approved, this would be an abortive cost and a pressure on the revenue budget for the General Fund.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Southampton City Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places to meet need.

Forecast numbers of secondary complex needs places suggests that up to 50 additional places may be required in September 2022.

The planned expansion of provision for the SEN expansion project generally expected to be delivered in September 2022 is no longer feasible due to the number of project delivery requirements and is now anticipated to be completed for partial occupation by September 2023. An interim solution is therefore required to accommodate the September 2022 cohort.

Funding is required to commence the design phases to progress the development of proposals for the expansion of secondary complex needs places on the Green Lane site. Design services for RIBA Stage 2 are necessary to prepare for consultation and financial approval. This forms part of the overall proposals of the SEND programme. The Green Lane element of the programme is currently estimated at £10M, however, this is still subject to consultation and financial approval. It is important to note that if

the long-term proposals for Green Lane are not approved this amount will become an abortive cost (impacting on revenue) and therefore, Cabinet are asked to agree the spend, which would proceed at risk.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

A partial delivery of the whole SEND scheme using modular constructions was considered but this could not be completed in time for September 2022.

Rental of modular buildings was considered and rejected due to the level of General Fund revenue required which considered not best value for money, especially as experience suggests a regular need for modular classrooms. This option would incur revenue costs of £1.48M, £0.91M in 2022/23 and £0.57M in 2023/24, to allow for the temporary hiring of modular units on Green Lane site for 70 weeks.

A do nothing option was considered. This is not a recommended option as the Council would fail to meet its statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places and would be forced to place children in high cost out of city independent special schools. At an average cost of £70,000 per place this would equate to £3.50M for 50 children per year. Independent settings have geared themselves up to offer post 16 education provision which could result in some young people remaining in out of city provision until 25. We will be unable to bring these children back to maintained provision if and when this capacity is created, meaning that the likely cumulative cost of placing children in these settings from September 2022 could be in the region of £23M. This would be a pressure on the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs budget (the funding from Government that supports schools), rather than the General Fund. There is an additional risk that it is highly unlikely that the independent sector would have enough spaces to house these children in the more local settings, which would mean increased charges for transport and residential costs, or a failure to place children in the type of setting that they have been assessed to need.

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: 18th October 2021

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Claire Heather

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)*