
Cabinet Member for Education

20 January 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education - Councillor D Kershaw

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of People

Ward(s) affected:

Wyken

Title:

Petition for Additional External works to Clifford Bridge Primary School

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

Following the expansion of Clifford Bridge Primary School in September 2014, a petition was submitted on 24th November 2014 by parents/carers requesting the installation of a ramp connecting the KS1 and KS2 playgrounds. The new building is now occupied and is fully operational. All the school buildings are on the same level, however, the playing field and the KS1 playground are at a higher level. Access to the upper KS1 playground is currently through the building or externally by using steps or a pedestrian gate from Bracadale Close. The petition requests a modification to enable internal site access to both playgrounds with the installation of a connecting ramp. During the recent construction phase it emerged that there are significant contaminated ground conditions on site that resulted in additional expenditure, completely depleting the contingency budget. The cost of a new ramp has been estimated in the region of £50,000, but this will again be dependent upon whether contaminated materials are found in the ground.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to note the petition and agree to measures to improve the pedestrian circulation around Clifford Bridge School grounds, as recommended in Option 2 of the report.

List of Appendices included:

- Appendix 1: Details of the petition from Clifford Bridge parents and carers.
- Appendix 2: Clifford Bridge School site plan and pedestrian access arrangements.
- Appendix 3: Detailed costs of ramp construction.

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

Cabinet Member (Education) 11th December 2012 – Report on the Outcome of Consultation on the Proposed Expansion of Primary School Places 2014/15

Cabinet 5th March 2013 – Report on the Determination of Statutory Notices for the Proposed Expansion and Changes to Admission Numbers for 12 Primary Schools for September 2014

Cabinet Member (Education) 18th June 2013 – Report on Increasing Pupil Places Programme 2014: Aldermoor Farm, Broad Heath, Clifford Bridge, Coundon & Frederick Bird Primary Schools

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: External works to Clifford Bridge Primary School.

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Due to increases in the primary age population, Clifford Bridge Primary School was one of twelve primary schools approved for expansion by Cabinet in March 2013. The school was to increase in size from one to two forms of entry (210 to 420 Year R to 6 places) with effect from September 2012. The building was completed on schedule for the start of the current 2014/15 academic year. The approved budget for the scheme was £2,879,000. The design team, in consultation with the school, has delivered a very good building, which is all on the same level and fully accessible.
- 1.2 The scheme included:
- A single storey KS2 block of 8 Classrooms, new entrance lobby, office suite and link to the existing building;
 - Adaptations to the existing building, including extending the hall, creating a studio, relocating the Community Association into another area of the building, converting a former classroom into a staffroom, remodelling classrooms and the former staff room;
 - Externally a new KS2 playground was created, additional car parking, some new footpaths and areas of landscaping.
- 1.3 External access arrangements have changed with the introduction of the new building. There is now an upper and lower playground connected by a flight of steps making it difficult for some parents and carers to conveniently access the site when dropping off or collecting children.
- 1.4 During the construction the land was found to have a number of contaminants below the surface. Where these were found they were disposed of safely and fully in accordance with regulations and best practice. The additional and considerable costs incurred from this disposal have resulted in the scheme being over budget. Some savings have had to be made and there is no funding remaining.
- 1.5 A petition 'Clifford Bridge Primary School – Concerns with extension and associated groundwork' - was submitted on 24th November 2014 (Petition Register Ref. No: 35/14). There are 223 signatories to the petition calling for a ramp to be installed between the KS1 and KS2 playgrounds.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Three main options have been considered to address the access issues for parents and carers with pushchairs who need to access different parts of the school when dropping off or collecting pupils.
- 2.2 Each option has advantages and disadvantages. The principle objective is to try and improve external circulation for parents and carers around the site, when they drop off and collect pupils. The school population will continue to grow by 30 extra pupils a year for the next 4 years. The existing infrastructure and arrangements are as follows and shown in Appendix 2:
- 2.2.1 The school direct all parents who use the main entrance (off Coombe Park Road) around to the right hand side of the new building and across the KS2 playground. Access to the KS2 classrooms is very straight forward, with access directly from this lower playground.

2.2.2 Pupils in KS1 need to continue around the outside of the building to access the KS1 playground so as to gain access to their classrooms. Adopting this route they then need to use a flight of steps to go up to the KS1 playground. As this is difficult for parents with pushchairs, some have opted to push pushchairs up the adjacent grass bank. It is in this location that a ramp has been suggested.

2.2.3 There is an alternative school gate to the KS1 playground from Bracadale Close. Parents and carers can gain level access to the KS1 playground using this gate, unfortunately as things stand, they then have no direct level access to the lower playground, KS2 or the main school office.

2.3 Option appraisal. Three options have been considered and are as follows:

2.3.1 **Option 1** to make no change to the physical environment. Instead encourage parents to use the gate which serves the area of the school they most need to access, this will include using the upper level playground gate.

Disadvantages: This option will be less convenient for parents and carers needing direct access to various parts of the school each visit. This may result in fewer parents and carers having daily contact with class teachers, if children are not accompanied to their classrooms.

Advantages: There will be no capital outlay. No further construction required.

Conclusions: The current situation and attempts to manage it by the school continues to present difficulties for some parents and carers. This is highlighted in the 223 name petition. This option is affordable and until further funding for a more costly solution is secured, it cannot be rejected.

2.3.2 **Option 2** to create an alternative path around the school as shown in Appendix 2. In addition to the existing arrangements this will create another route around the school to the left hand side of the school building from the main school entrance. It will provide a level access route linking the main entrance with the Key Stage 1 and Foundation stage external area. It will involve installing a gate by the side of the community association room, some new pathway and relocating a storage shed. The cost of this work is in the region of £12,000.

Disadvantages: This option may be less convenient for some parents and carers needing direct access to various parts of the school each visit, albeit a significant improvement on the current situation.

Advantages: This option will provide a permanent improvement to access. It will enable all parents including the ones using the Bracadale Close gate to gain level access to other parts of the school including the main office. The works will cause minimal disruption to the school and can be carried out at short notice.

Conclusions: This option presents a compliant solution which is easily achievable with minimal risk and disruption. At £12,000 it does take the project over budget and some additional funding will be required. Subject to securing the funding this is the preferred option.

2.3.3 **Option 3** to construct a ramp between the two playgrounds. This will provide a level access route externally around the school. It will involve some excavation of the school grounds and ramping of approximately 90m². The cost of this option is estimated at £50,722 however it depends on what may be encountered. Appendix 3 is a generic costing for a ramp in the vicinity of the steps.

Disadvantages: Constructing a ramp will be intrusive for school operations, works may have to be carried out during school holidays. There is a great likelihood that contamination will be unearthed. The cost of option 2 is £50,722.

Advantages: This option will provide a permanent improvement to access. Parents and carers with pushchairs will be able to gain access between the playgrounds and level access to other parts of the school.

Conclusions: This option presents a compliant solution, however, it has risks of unknown ground conditions, is potentially intrusive to the operations of the school and the most costly option at over £50,722. Securing this additional capital expenditure is uncertain. This option therefore is rejected.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 Following Cabinet approval on 18th June 2013, the detailed design of the new school building and the alterations to the existing school was carried out in close consultation with the school leadership team, council officers and design consultants. These meetings occurred prior to building starting on site and on a monthly basis during the construction phase. Many decisions were made to ensure that the end product would be of a high quality, ready on time and on budget. When difficulties arose these too were discussed and occasionally compromises needed to be reached. The external landscaping and ultimately the decision, to only include steps between the two playgrounds was decided during on-going design review meetings.
- 3.2 On the first day of term in September 2014, the school contacted the local authority to request a ramp adjacent to the steps as part of the project. Consultation took place with the school leaders to look at other options and how these could be managed. A site meeting was held on 25th September 2014 to discuss the options available.
- 3.3 The costs of the various options were shared. It was confirmed that the school was not in a financial position to assist with the cost.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Subject to approval of option 2 the works can be carried out and completed within a few weeks.

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 The cost of the Council's preferred option (Option 2) is £12,000 and would be funded from within the 2014/15 Capital Programme.
- 5.1.2 The cost of the petitioners preferred option (Option 3) is estimated at £50,722. Your officers are of the view that this does not represent good value for money at a time when funding is limited and there is a more cost effective solution which delivers level external access to all parts of the building.

5.2 Legal implications

None

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

This proposal will continue to encourage parents and carers to walk pupils to school, contributing to the health and well being of the school community.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The key risk to this proposal is ensuring parents and carers accept the new arrangements. The decision is not their preferred choice as the third option is the solution put forward by the school community. This matter has given rise to local concerns which have generated local press and the 223 name petition.

Working closely with the school new arrangements need to be established and evolve particularly as the school continues to grow in population.

What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.3 Equalities / EIA

Public authority decision makers are under a duty to have due regard to 1) the need to eliminate discrimination, 2) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not 3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not (public sector equality duty - s 149(1) Equality Act 2010). The applicable protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment; race, religion or belief, sex; sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

Decision makers must be consciously thinking about these three aims as part of their decision making process with rigour and with an open mind. The duty is to have "due regard", not to achieve a result but to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals. Consideration being given to the potential adverse impacts and the measures needed to minimise any discriminatory effects.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

Report author(s):**Name and job title:**

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Petition from Clifford Bridge Parents and Carers

We the undersigned parents and carers of pupils of Clifford Bridge Primary School and Community Centre wish to raise serious concerns regarding the recent school extension and associated ground works. The consultation process of school plans included a ramp access between the original playground and the newly constructed playground, which was subsequently agreed within minuted meetings.

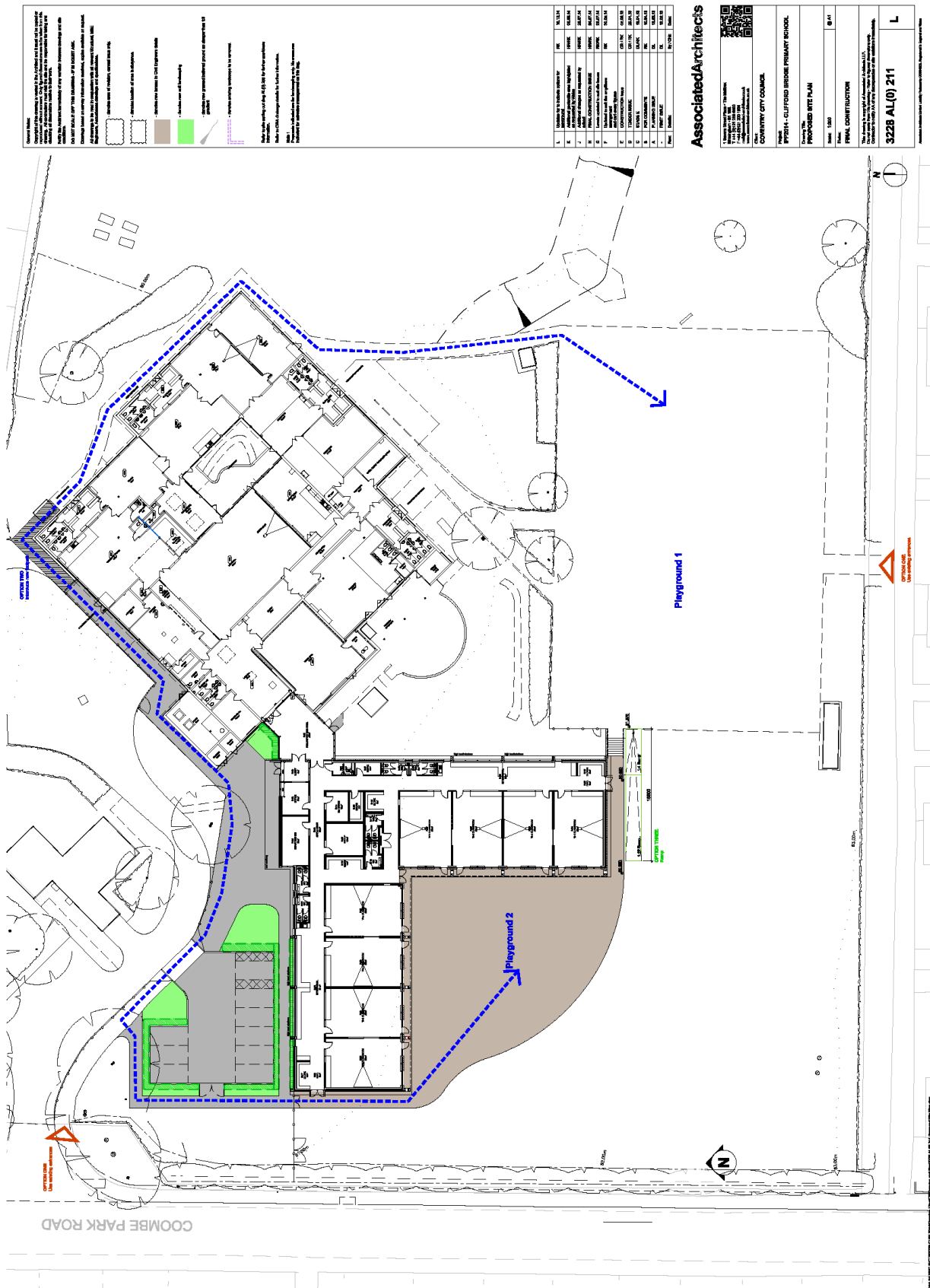
As a primary school we have many attendees using pushchairs, elderly carers with mobility issues and the potential for wheelchair users. The current arrangements are not sufficient to accommodate the community needs or to enable pupils in the different key stages to get into classrooms on time as parents/carers cannot safely access both areas without a long divert around the exterior of the school perimeter. (A number of children are getting late marks). We strongly believe the external works of the new build has created a hazardous situation resulting in one accident and a number of near miss incidents.

The proposed alternative arrangements are seen as a cost cutting option for the council rather than fulfilling the original build brief itself and in turn creates additional hazards by a) potentially blocking emergency escape routes and b) requiring significant traffic flow through or round a car park where there is little space to negotiate pushchairs.

As part of the Construction Design and Management Regulations and wider Health and Safety Legislation design teams must design out hazards at planning stage. Whilst this appears to have happened with the proposed ramp, this does not appear to have been actioned in the build.

We are disappointed at the Councils lack of ownership on this matter considering it was their requirement to extend school places at Clifford Bridge Primary School and are looking to them to provide a ramp as per the original plans.

Appendix 2





Clifford Bridge Primary School
 Provision of New External Ramp connecting External Hard Landscaping - Option 2
 Preliminary Feasibility Estimate of Cost
 2nd October 2014
 Revision 0

New External Pedestrian Access Ramp - Option 2 (Excludes regrading of existing ground)						
Ref	Proposed Elemental Scope of Works	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total	Comments
1. Site Clearance						
1a	Strip of existing surface materials	87	m ²	30.00	2,610.00	General strip off of existing soft landscape surface materials
1b	Total Site Clearance				2,610.00	
2. Substructure						
2a. Excavations						
2a	Excavations; generally	26	m ³	30.00	780.00	Small machinery
2c	Disposal of spoil off site	26	m ³	55.00	1,430.00	Assume non contaminated spoil; to off site tip
2d	General labours to surfaces of excavations	1	Item	650.00	650.00	Levelling; trimming and the like
2e	Allowance for drainage alterations	1	Item	2,000.00	2,000.00	Provisional allowance; Acco drainage system or the like
2f. Surface Treatments						
2g	Store fill	13	m ³	80.00	1,040.00	
2h	Herbicide	87	m ²	5.00	435.00	
2i	Earthwork support/formwork	1	Item	500.00	500.00	
2j. Concrete						
2k	Concrete kerb foundations to lower level (including haunching)	47	lm	30.00	1,410.00	
2l	Total Substructure				8,245.00	
3. Superstructure						
3a. External Walls						
3a	Provision for Engineering brick retaining walls; complete; both sides of ramp; curved to suit plan profile	30	m ²	280.00	8,400.00	Includes foundation
3c. Surface Treatment						
3d	Tarmac finish; complete to all surfaces	87	m ²	75.00	6,525.00	Pedestrian grade
3e. Fixings and Furnishings						
3f	Handrail; to one side only; curved to plan profile	37	lm	150.00	5,550.00	Non architectural; plasticised finish
3k	Total Superstructure				20,475.00	
6. Main Contractor On-Costs						
6a	Main Contractor General Preliminaries Costs				5,326.10	
6b	Main Contractor Overheads & Profit-Cost Allowance				2,565.93	
7	Estimated Construction Costs				39,222.03	
9	Contingencies Allowance				7,500.00	Allowance based at risk associated with asbestos in ground; 30m ³ of spoil at £250.00 per m ³
11	Professional and Statutory Fees Cost provision				4,000.00	
12	Construction Project Cost (excl VAT)				50,722.03	Excluding VAT