
Cabinet

30th October 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor K Maton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title: One Strategic Plan – SEND proposal for the use of the Woodlands site

Is this a key decision?

Yes – The proposals within the report will affect all wards and have financial implications in excess of £1m.

Executive Summary:

Under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, Coventry City Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places and fair, appropriate access to education for all. It is the Council's role to plan, commission and organise school places in a way that raises standards, manages supply and demand and creates a diverse infrastructure.

Coventry City Council Cabinet approved in principle the draft One Strategic Plan on 2nd October 2018 and agreed that this should now be consulted on. The One Strategic Plan sets out pupil forecasts for primary and secondary across education planning areas in response to rising or falling pupil cohorts across the city. It outlines the strategy proposed by the Local Authority and the Coventry Secondary Headteacher Partnership to meet the additional places required in secondary provision from 2019 – 2021.

The One Strategic Plan also outlines the strategy to meet the growing demand for places for children with special educational needs and disabilities including provision for children age 5 to 16, with complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This specialist provision is currently delivered by Woodfield Special School from two separate sites. It is acknowledged that the existing school buildings are deemed unsuitable for purpose in the long term and have insufficient capacity to meet the growing demand.

An opportunity has arisen to re-use the site which contains listed buildings, previously occupied by Woodlands School, to co-locate Woodfield School, in its entirety. This would provide a future proofed fit for purpose educational environment, offering a full range of facilities including sport to learners, with the capacity for the provision to grow. The potential utilisation of the 'Woodlands site' enables the physical separation of phases specifically primary and secondary to ensure that pupils from either phase are able to benefit from age appropriate curriculum and resources. The site security and design will ensure that pupils will only be able to access their own internal and external learning environment.

This report sets out how such a relocation could be facilitated and seeks an “in principle” approval to proceed with a detailed feasibility study, consultation and, if appropriate, present final proposals for Council consideration and decision.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the principle of refurbishing the existing Woodlands School site to provide a new home for the existing Woodfield Primary & Secondary schools and the potential subsequent relocation of the Woodfield schools to the Woodlands site and to apply for planning/listed building consent in order to be able to implement the proposals if a subsequent detailed feasibility study is approved by a future Cabinet and Council.
2. Approve the proposal to pursue planning consent for residential use and subsequent disposal, subject to consent being granted, of the current Woodfield Primary (Stoneleigh Road) & Secondary (Hawthorne Lane) sites and to “ring fence” the receipts towards the costs of implementing recommendation 1.
3. Undertake all necessary consultation with families, the wider education community and all statutory bodies on the proposals set out in recommendation 1 and to bring the outcome of the consultations, feasibility study along with the financial implications of any final proposal back to Cabinet and Council for consideration in making any final decision.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

Coventry One Strategic Plan and Education Capital Programme
Cabinet Report – 2nd October 2018

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=11774&Ver=4>

The future provision of Woodlands Academy
Cabinet Report – 4th July 2017

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=11470&Ver=4>

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No - Scrutiny Board will be included in the consultation on these proposals at their meeting 1st November 2018

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

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. The local authority has a statutory duty to secure a sufficiency of appropriate education places for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Coventry's inclusion strategy is built on the principle of equality of opportunity, with an expectation that children will be able to attend a school in their community and have equal access to the same range of curriculum and social experiences as their mainstream peers.
- 1.2. Under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, Coventry City Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places and fair, appropriate access to education. It is the Council's role to plan, commission and organise school places in a way that raises standards, manages supply and demand and creates a mixed economy of infrastructure.
- 1.3. This means that Local Authorities have to provide a continuum of provision to meet a continuum of need. Whilst Coventry currently has relatively few specialist provisions delivered in the form of resourced centres/units in mainstream schools, it does have a good range of special school provision. Consequently, very few Coventry children have to attend schools outside of the City, which is a position that needs to be maintained.
- 1.4. However, the recent evidenced growth in need, specifically in the area of complex communication (autism spectrum conditions) and social emotional and mental health (SEMH), has placed a level of demand on the special school system that exceeds supply. School age Education, Health, and Care plans have increased from 1559 to 1861 in 3 years.
- 1.5. Whilst the recent expansion and relocation of Tiverton Special School has created much needed capacity in the primary sector, for children with generic learning difficulties there is no physical capacity in the system to support as outlined in section 6.3 of the One Strategic Plan:
 - SEMH growth across all age ranges
 - Increased demand for secondary/post 16 special school placement for generic learning difficulties, as primary age pupils move through the system
 - ASC growth across all age ranges
- 1.6. It is proposed that the number of specialist SEMH places in both primary and secondary phases is expanded to meet this known demand. The proposed increase in places is included in the finances below.
- 1.7. There are many benefits of having a shared site but separate buildings, access and play space, for both the pupils and for the school. These include, seamless transition for pupils moving from primary to secondary key stages. Shared facilities reduces revenue costs and supports sustainability and in this case provides access to a wealth of different sports facilities.
- 1.8. In the UK, ALL children are entitled to participate in PE lessons at school. The Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including SEND pupils, have access to a wide range of sports provision in recognition that it's good for health and wellbeing as well as learning how to work in a team.
- 1.9. This project gives the Council the opportunity to utilise a vacant education site that is Grade II listed, making it fit for purpose for specialist use and bringing it back in to use for both the wider public, and for added benefit of existing and future Coventry pupils.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Woodlands proposal

- 2.1. There is a requirement to expand SEN provision across the city; this is particularly acute in terms of Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH). Currently, the only provision in the city offering SEMH in a school-based setting is Woodfield Special School (Primary and Secondary Split Site).
- 2.2. The option of Woodfield Special School remaining on their current sites was considered. It is felt the ongoing capital works required, including any future expansions, would require a substantial investment. The sites are unable to expand to meet additional capacity needs and the investment would not address the ongoing revenue pressure experienced caused by a split site school.
- 2.3. The return of the Woodlands Academy site to the Council, presents an opportunity to re-purpose the site for special school provision. This proposal is underpinned by a survey and feasibility report undertaken by architects acting on behalf of the Council. It is confirmed that it is possible to integrate a primary and secondary Special School onto the Woodlands site.
- 2.4. The integration onto one site, allows both Woodfield primary and secondary phases to benefit from shared working practices, more efficient and improved facilities, and a purpose designed building. In addition, the refurbishment of the Woodlands site would potentially allow a continuation and expansion of the community sporting provision that has been successfully provided at the site for many years.
- 2.5. The existing Woodlands buildings are of a 1950's vintage and are Grade II listed. As such significant investment is required to allow them to be used as a modern SEND school.
- 2.6. The costs of undertaking this work have been assessed at a high level as part of a preliminary feasibility study and are estimated to be in excess of £15m.
- 2.7. The educational capital budget would not be able to support these costs, accordingly a more innovative approach to funding the refurbishment is required.
- 2.8. Officers are seeking support to progress with a detailed planning application for the conversion of the Woodlands site into a Primary and Secondary SEND school to allow for the relocation of and expansion of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary sites.
- 2.9. In order to facilitate this proposal, it is intended that residential planning consent be sought on both the existing Woodfield School sites, namely Hawthorne Lane and Stoneleigh Road, and if successful the site be sold and the proceeds ring-fenced and used to fund the refurbishment of the Woodlands site.
- 2.10. From the preliminary work undertaken it is considered unlikely that the proceeds from these two sites be sufficient to fully fund the capital costs. Accordingly, it is further proposed to investigate a limited amount of residential development on the Woodlands site to support the proposals. Such development would only be permitted if absolutely required to facilitate the proposal.

2.11. Part of the Woodlands site is currently utilised by the community for sport; including Powerleague, and clubs for specialist gymnastics, wheelchair basketball, and cheerleading. The vision provided by the Sports and Active Recreation team would be to encourage further use linked to the SEN School by creating a sports and activity hub in order to produce the best community use offer. It is proposed that this plan will increase site usage, and generate income from the community use facilities supporting revenue budgets whilst creating an education sport offer during curriculum time.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1. No consultation has taken place to date. As set out in the report, it is intended to undertake consultation on these proposals and to report back to a future meeting.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1. The timescale is set out in the following table:

Activity	Approximate Timing
Consultation with Primary, Secondary SEND Headteachers	October 2018
Consultation with parents and local community	Send part of the Autumn Term 2018
Development of the detailed planning application, schedule of works and cost estimate	9 months from Cabinet approval
Report to Council to consider the financial requirement to implement Woodlands repurposing project	July 2019
Woodfield Special School relocated to Woodlands site	September 2021

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1. Financial implications

5.1.1. From the initial work undertaken to date it is anticipated that the budgetary requirement can be summarised below. Capital spend proposals outlined below:

Woodlands	Estimated Expenditure and Income
Estimated Total Build Costs	£15,158,173
Estimated Community Space	£2,730,583
Total	£17,888.756
Education Grant (Basic Need/SEND)	(£2,300,000)
Land Receipts	(£10,400,000)
Community Space Sports Grant	(£2,730,583)
Total Funding	(£15,430,583)
Estimated Gap	£2,458,173

5.1.2. All costs and funding are estimated and require further verification, they will be subject to Secretary of State approval to convert Woodfield's school fields into a development site. It is assumed that Community space expenditure will be matched by grant income. We are exploring whether the current funding gap could be met / partly met from a contribution from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) revenue reserves. When the former Woodland's school closed there was a one-off return of funding to the DSG to reflect the fact that the Education Funding Agency had recouped more budget from the Local Authority than was required to fund the school. This is within the central DSG revenue reserves. In addition creating additional places within the city will create capacity to

ensure that we can keep children and young people within provision in the city, and reduce the need for more costly out of city provision. This will reduce / prevent DSG revenue expenditure. To pursue this, we will need to get Schools Forum approval before applying to the secretary of state for approval. It is proposed that any further funding gap would be met from corporate capital resources.

- 5.1.3. The final figures are subject to the completion of consultation and planning, and a further report will be provided to Cabinet/Council once this has been achieved.

5.2. Legal implications

- 5.2.1. The City Council need to obtain the relevant planning permissions and enter into the appropriate contractual arrangements for the construction of new schools in line with the requirements of the Council's rules for contract and relevant procurement legislation. A further report seeking a final decision on proposals will be provided to Cabinet and Council for consideration detailing the outcome of the consultation, the detailed feasibility study, outcome of any planning applications and the financial implications. This future report will also require more detailed legal implications in relation to the property matters that will at that stage need to be considered including the legal requirement to obtain consent from the Secretary of State.

- 5.2.2. The City Council has a statutory duty under Section 14 of the 1996 Education Act to provide sufficient school places. The consultation and determination arrangements meet the requirements of The Education and Inspection Act 2006 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Failure to comply with these statutory requirements would leave us unable to expand school places as required, subject to action by DfE or to seek alternative provision outside of the City and independent sector.

- 5.2.3. Public authority decision makers are under a duty when making decisions 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 - section 149(1) Equality Act 2010). The applicable protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment; race, religion or belief, sex; sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

- 5.2.4. Decision makers must be consciously thinking about these three requirements as part of the decision making process with rigour and with an open mind. The duty to have "due regard", sits alongside the need to take into account budgetary, economic and practical factors. Consideration being given to the potential adverse impacts and the measures needed to minimise any discriminatory effects.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?

These proposals will support and synergise with the Council's Policies as set out below:

- **Making the most of our Assets** – utilising existing estate to maximum potential and ensuring value for money.
- **Improving Educational Outcomes** – by providing additional school places in Good or Outstanding Schools.
- **Raising the Profile of Coventry** - by providing additional school places in Good or Outstanding schools.
- **Creating the Infrastructure** – Aiding in Schools to be self-sufficient.
- **Rationalising our property portfolio** – Enabling schools to reach their potential.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

Monitoring is carried out through a number of different processes. This project will be monitored through a project management team and full project board and will be subject to careful scrutiny and regular assessment on progress towards identified milestones. Further monitoring will be carried out through progress reports to the Cabinet Member (Education and Skills) and Cabinet.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

There are no specific impacts on the organisations.

6.4. Equalities / EIA

Children with a learning disability including mental health are considered to fall within the proposals for the broad spectrum school, co-locating both schools, will provide greater equality and better access to resources for these children with a wide range of educational needs. The new school building would be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) compliant. The proposal aims to ensure that all Coventry children have access to education in accordance with their needs. Any revised accommodation changes and admission arrangements take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 in the context of their possible impact on equal opportunities.

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.

The majority of children categorised as SEMH experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties that manifest themselves in many ways. These may reflect an underlying mental health difficulty such as anxiety or depression; self-harming, substance misuse or symptoms that are medically unexplained. Many children may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder or attachment disorder and/or an underlying learning difficulty such as autism or dyslexia. If the child exhibits persistent and severe difficulties in relation to social behaviour and relationships, emotional development and mental health they are likely to fall within one or more of the protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010.

This proposal seeks to address the inequalities created by social exclusion, by securing an appropriate provision that maximises young people’s life chances in adulthood, through improved: engagement, educational achievement, self-esteem and aspiration.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) the environment

Coventry’s schools currently account for 28% of the City’s carbon footprint and this scheme will support the reduction of that level through replacing old school buildings with modern, energy efficient facilities. The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme as amended is a mandatory carbon emissions tax covering non-

energy intensive users in both public and private sectors, and is a central part of the UK's strategy to deliver the emission reduction targets set in the Climate Change Act 2008. Emissions from schools (including PFI Schools) are to be included in the total reported carbon emissions for their participating local authority. The new school building would also be designed to mitigate the effects of climate change fluctuations and to help reduce surface water run off as a result of flash or extreme weather events, reducing any negative effects on the local community and environmental infrastructure.

All the proposed changes and the environmental impacts of the proposed scheme will be considered as part of the planning process and will comply with all relevant environmental legislation.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

Planning for re-designation to SEMH will require close partnership with the PCT, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, Social Care and Private/Voluntary Organisations and will enable multi-agency support and provision for children with SEN to be made.

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