

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting(s): Thursday 4 July 2019

Subject: SEND Consultation recommendations & Next Steps

Report of: Director - Children and Families

Contact Officer: Catherine Pealing 01942 489454

Cabinet Portfolio Holder and area: Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Summary: To update Cabinet on the position regarding proposals for SEND provision improvements and report on consultation outcomes.

Link to Corporate Priorities:

Our People: Together we feel happy, safe, included and look out for each other;

- Best start in life for children and young people
- Happy healthy people
- Communities that care for each other

Our Future: Together we will build a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive;

- Economic growth that benefits everyone
- A well-connected place
- Confidently digital
- A home for all

Wards Affected: ALL

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet

- consider the outcome of the consultation,
- agree to utilise £10m capital funding to deliver the first phase of our programme, the rebuild of Hope School on the Central Park site.

- agree to proceed to informal consultation on the relocation of Hope School to the Central Park site and increasing the capacity of Hope School.
- delegate the decision to proceed to formal consultation on the Statutory Notice to increase the capacity of Hope School to the Director of Childrens Services.
- Agree to delegate responsibility to sign any contracts arising from this report to the Assistant Director (Legal)

Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?* Utilising £10m Capital Education funding

Is budget release necessary (Capital Expenditure Only)? Yes

*What are the **legal** implications?* None at this stage

*What are the **staffing** implications?* None at this stage

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason). If not required, then a relevance check needs to be completed. Previous impact assessment completed see appendix 1

*What are the **property** implications in terms of reduction, addition or change to the council's asset base or its occupation?* The proposals for Hope would be to build a new school on the Central Park Site that would also consider opportunities for Health services to be integrated in addition to housing for health. The current Hope school site would be reserved for educational purposes as we have assessed that we may need it for a primary school in the future due to population growth though housing developments.

Risks: If we do nothing, it is likely that we will be unable to meet our statutory duty to provide suitable and safe educational places for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Sustainability: The benefits to the council will include finance in relation to cost avoidance; reputation because it would mean a significant investment into the teaching and learning of some of our most vulnerable children, demonstrating the value the council places on these children and young people and socially as it will allow children to be

educated closer to their communities.

Has the Assistant Director - Legal (Monitoring Officer) (Brendan Whitworth) confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

Has the Director Resources and Contracts (Deputy Chief Executive)(Paul McKeivitt) confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

The alternative would be to do nothing and continue to send our children out of borough for provision. This is significantly more costly in terms of revenue. In addition, it does not address the current state of the buildings and it does not keep children in their community.

Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?

- (1) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (2) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

The Key decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **five working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 16 July 2019, unless exempt from call-in. This item is included on the Forward Plan.

There are no background papers for this report

Directorate Sign-off:	James Winterbottom
Date:	28 May 2019

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Please list any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description
1	Cabinet Report November 2018 & EIA
2	SEND Capital Consultation template
3	SEND Capital consultation response summary

Background:

On the 22nd November 2018 Cabinet considered a Report (attached as Appendix 1) from the Director of Children & Families [Minute 54] which sought approval for the pre-publication consultation on the development of specialist provision across the borough for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The development aimed to improve the offer to children and young people by increasing capacity, developing new provision within mainstream services and significantly improving the condition of our special school buildings. Cabinet agreed to go out to pre publication consultation on a range of proposals to improve the condition of Wigan's special schools and resourced provision.

Following Cabinet approval, this consultation took place in January 2019. A copy of the consultation is attached in appendix 2. A summary of the results is provided in Appendix 3. On consideration of the responses from the original consultation, the following proposals on the review of our provision were made, as set out below;

Proposals for a phased approach for developing our special school provision

Phase 1: 1 to 2 years

Hope School

The current school does not have the space required and it has some condition issues that need to be addressed and therefore the proposal is to build a new school on a new site on Montrose Avenue (The old PEMBEC/Central Park site). As part of this project we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places.

Phase 1: 2 – 5 years

Rowan Tree Primary School

The current school does not have the space required and it has some condition issues that need to be addressed and therefore the proposal is to build a new school on the current site or on a new site identified in Leigh. As part of this build we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places. The land at Rowan Tree would allow us to build a new school whilst maintaining the children's provision in their current buildings.

Landgate School, Bryn

The current school does not have the space required and it has some condition issues that need to be addressed and therefore the proposal is to build a new school on the current site or on a new site not yet identified. As part of this build we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places.

In the immediate term we will be carrying out some minor works to improve the environment.

Phase 2: within 5 to 10 years

Willow Grove Primary School

The current school does not have the space required and it has some condition issues that need to be addressed and therefore the proposal is to build a new school on the current site or on a new site – not yet identified. As part of this build we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places. The land at Willow Grove would

allow us to build a new school whilst maintaining the children's provision in their current buildings.

We are also looking to develop a further provision in the Leigh area. The site is to be identified but there would be potential to situate on the new land identified with Rowan Tree. It would remain a separate provision and will be part of Willow Grove's offer. In the short term we are considering other temporary alternatives as there is significant demand for this provision.

Phase 2 : 5- 10 years

Oakfield High School, Hindley

Extend the school to build in longer term additional places. In the short term we may need to make some adjustments to the current building or consider off-site provision to meet demand. It is intended that this will be until the Capital is available to complete permanent works to the school.

Newbridge Learning Community School, Platt Bridge.

There are currently no proposals for this provision.

Response to Consultation on Proposals

The consultation had 3 main questions and the responses are highlighted below;

Do you feel that we have the proposals in a good priority order?

606 (67.9%) Yes

270 (30.3%) No

16 (1.8%) Didn't answer

If not, could you briefly tell us your reasons for this?

241 people provided a response.

Broadly whilst the responses were more in favour of the proposals, there were some themes that were clear from the respondents who said no and in some cases also those who said yes:

- There was an overwhelming concern from all parties about the length of time we have proposed for the whole programme. Most respondents felt that the time scale was far too long as the demand is current and growing.
- It is clear that students, staff, parents and governors want to prioritise their own schools which is understandable particularly around the demand needs at Oakfield. However, the building condition issues at Hope and Oakfield are different and on condition Hope is a priority.
- In addition to condition, students would really like more space in their schools as they feel they are getting too crowded and they would like better facilities – this was a frequent response in addition to being really proud of their school.
- In addition, there were a number of issues raised that also came from the initial informal consultation in 2018. There is a concern around children and young people with higher functioning autism. Our parents and schools do not feel there is enough appropriate provision and were disappointed that we did not have a proposal in the consultation for this. Our response is that we are currently looking

at this specific issue separately, we do not have the resources nor do we feel that a separate school provision would be appropriate and so we did not include as part of these proposals. However, in parallel to the consultation, as part of the SEND transformation programme, we are looking at our current resourced provision and working with our schools to review our current offer. We are optimistic that we can identify both primary and secondary schools across the borough to provide resourced provision for children with higher functioning autism. It will also address the issue of locality as parents also identified that there is a lack of provision in the eastern side of the borough, particularly Leigh.

- Inclusion is also a key theme raised throughout the responses in terms of providing better funding, resources and training to mainstream settings to support students to maintain their places there. Again, we have discussed our specific plans on this briefly below.
- Headteachers responses have centred on the strategic approach for specialist provision both now and in the future and challenge the ambition of the plan. It is important to note that whilst we are continuing to review our offer across the borough, the current and predicted demand for places and condition needs to be met now. We will continue to work with our school leaders in parallel to this to ensure our offer for the future is fit for purpose and meets the needs of all of our children.

In some cases it may be necessary to identify new sites to re-build the school. This could be because it is not feasible to extend the current school without disruption to the children already attending the schools. Or the school site may not be big enough to allow for expansion.

Do you agree that in some cases it may be necessary to relocate a school provision?

738 (82.7%) Yes

144 (16.1%) No

10 (1.1%) Didn't answer

If not, could you briefly tell us your reasons for this?

110 people provided a response (see spreadsheet)

The main issues raised in response to this were:

- Ensuring least disruption to our more vulnerable learners.
- Accessibility for independent travel
- Congestion and access

Are there any other things that you would like to say that you feel we should consider? Use the space below to tell us.

386 people provided a response (see spreadsheet)

The responses to this question in the main have been covered in the bullet points above however, there was also a frustration around the closure of special schools some years ago. All local authorities came under significant pressure over 10 years ago to reduce the number of special school places. A review was undertaken, and a number of schools were closed. This caused a lot of anxiety, anger and upset at the time and there is obvious tension remaining. The plans at the time were developed in support of the inclusion

agenda and for a number of years were successful with many more children and their families selecting mainstream schools and being successful.

Actions since consultation

Since the consultation and Cabinet approval in November 2018, due to the demand for places and some of the immediate concerns around condition of buildings, we have had to action the following:

- We have replaced a mobile at Hope school at a cost of £300k
- We have worked with an Independent provider to register as a special school for children with Social emotional and mental health issues (SEMH) and we are working with them to open an additional school in Leigh.
- We have had to increase provision at three Towers alternative Provision academy to accommodate an additional 16 pupils at KS3 (Y7 – Y9).
- We have opened the engagement centres for KS3 pupils and have recently extended that offer to 16 primary age pupils.
- We have committed approximately £700k to works at Oakfield to allow them to take the significant increase in pupils for their September intake in Y7. This action is unavoidable.
- We are working with Willow Grove school to increase their capacity temporarily to allow an additional 16 pupils to attend from reception to Y6 from September 2019. This will be with temporary mobiles at a cost of approximately £300k and is unavoidable.
- We continue to work on our SEND Transformation programme and are committed to changing the offer for our pupils with SEND and how we respond to their needs. There is currently an issue nationally with inclusion and we are determined to support our schools to be more inclusive to ensure our families are more confident with this offer rather than feeling specialist provision is the only option.

Proposals:

As the consultation indicates, the first phase of the SEND Capital programme would be to rebuild on a new site and increase capacity of Hope School. We would be proposing to move Hope School to The Central Park Site on Montrose Avenue. As the distance is less than 2 miles, the proposals for relocation of the school are not subject to Statutory Notice, informal consultation would be required with the interested stakeholders in relation to both the increased capacity in school and the relocation. The outcome of any consultation will need to be considered alongside any decisions to proceed with any of the proposed options. As described in the Cabinet paper in November, any intention to develop this site alongside Health and adult service partners to ensure the site has a more holistic response to the children, young adults and their families that access the school and additional services. We will also be considering how this can become a much more utilised community asset that will enrich the lives of the community in which it sits.

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area: Children and Families

Service Lead: Children and Families

Date: 24 June 2019

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? NO