

Executive

17 March 2016

Report of the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills

Portfolio of the Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People

Additional Primary School Places for Micklegate

Summary

1. This paper considers the options for providing additional primary school places in the Micklegate area of York.

Recommendation

2. Members are asked to approve the recommendation to expand Scarcroft Primary School as the preferred option for adding additional primary school places in the Micklegate area. Following more detailed analysis of the feasibility studies, and further discussions with the school's governing body; a paper will be presented to the April Executive meeting providing information about the adaptations to be made to the school and its outdoor space to accommodate additional pupil places.

Reason: Whilst the LA supports proposed changes to Scarcroft Primary School's building and outdoor spaces, further time is required to receive and analyse that information before a preferred recommendation can be put forward.

Background

3. A consistent rise in demand alongside continued popularity of both Knavesmire and Scarcroft schools in the Micklegate area has led to the need to create additional primary school places.
4. Projections show that an additional 41 primary places will be required in the Micklegate area by September 2017. These figures reflect the projected level of future anticipated births, which are

based on data supplied by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). By the 2022/23 academic year, as the larger cohorts begin to move through primary year groups, between 100 and 120 places will be required across Reception to Year 6. The ONS projected births for the city indicate that the Reception cohort will continue to grow beyond this point until around 2025.

5. Projected pupil numbers are calculated from patterns of parental preference using ONS actual and projected birth data and the likely impact from new housing developments. The number of additional places required is calculated as the difference between number of pupils expected and the current capacity of schools serving the area.

Consultation

6. The Southbank cluster of schools were consulted in March 2015. The consultation concluded that an annex to Scarcroft Primary School on the Millthorpe site was the preferred option for adding additional primary school places in the Micklegate area.
7. On 26 January 2016, an information event was held at Scarcroft Primary as an opportunity for parents/carers and the local community to voice their questions and comments about the options being considered.
8. Following this information event, the Ebor Trust approached the council and the Education Funding Agency with a proposal for a city-wide Free School to be built on the former Askham Bar site.
9. A paper was presented to the council's Executive meeting on 11 February 2016. At this meeting, the decision was made to initiate a further period of options appraisals and to organise an informal consultation with parents and the local community. During the five week period of informal consultation, information was made available on a web page, a link and e-mail address at: micklegateschoolplaces@york.gov.uk. This period of consultation has informed the recommendation at paragraph 2.
10. On 8 March 2016, a Ward Councillors' meeting was held at Scarcroft Primary School to update parents/carers and the community on the results of the informal consultation process and to allow people to voice further questions and comments.

Options

11. The following are a list of options. Options (b), (c) and (d) are currently being considered or are waiting for further information. Options (e) to (h) have all been rejected. The reasons for their rejection are discussed in the 'Analysis' section.
- (a) provide no additional places in the Micklegate area
 - (b) seek additional feasibility studies to accommodate additional pupils in the existing Scarcroft Primary school building and look at options for providing outdoor spaces
 - (c) consider the option of a city-wide Creative Arts Academy which would be a free school as part of the Ebor Multi-Academy Trust
 - (d) build accommodation for 210 (1 form entry each year) additional places, as an annex to Scarcroft Primary on the Millthorpe School site
 - (e) build a 210 (1 form entry) place primary school on the former Terry's Car Park site at Nun Ings
 - (f) build a 315 (1.5 form entry) place school on land behind The Grove and The Square off Tadcaster Road
 - (g) build a 630 (3 form entry) place school at either Bishopthorpe Infant or Archbishop of York CE Junior school sites
 - (h) exploration of other site options:
 - (i) build a school on Little Knavesmire
 - (ii) build on the allotments adjacent to Millthorpe School
 - (iii) build on the former Askham Bar Park & Ride site
 - (iv) build on Nunnery Lane car park

Analysis

(a) Provide no additional places in the Micklegate area

12. The area is currently served by Scarcroft Primary School, with pupils placed at Knavesmire Primary as part of the wider Southbank area. The demand for pupil places can no longer be met within the current 1.5 form entry Scarcroft Primary school, for the following reasons:

- to mitigate the need for places at both Scarcroft Primary and Knavesmire Primary, an expansion project to provide additional places recently took place at Knavesmire Primary which met the demand from both schools individual catchment areas. Following this extension, it is no longer possible to expand Knavesmire Primary as there is not enough playing space on the site to accommodate additional numbers
- if no additional places were to be provided, transport would have to be arranged for pupils living in the Micklegate and Southbank areas to the next nearest schools that have spaces. At present there are only a limited number of places in other local schools whilst those schools with any significant capacity are in other parts of the city some of which are some distance away from Micklegate and Southbank eg Clifton, Woodthorpe, Tang Hall
- transport costs would be significant. Any transport costs would have to be met out of the authority's revenue budgets. Estimated costs are expected to be in the range of 100k-150k per year
- families in Micklegate would not be able to access places in their locality

13. Therefore, in order to resolve the growing issues in this area, to do nothing is not an option.

(b) Seek additional feasibility studies to expand provision at Scarcroft Primary School

14. Once received, the options will be considered in order to create space at Scarcroft Primary to accommodate additional pupil places with the following implications:

- recognition will need to be given to the school's listed building status. As a grade 2* listed building, any adaptations are likely to be complicated and will need to be very carefully managed
- consideration will need to be given to the timescales required to make adaptations
- a key issue to be resolved is the need to increase the school's access to outdoor space and the ways that this could be increased. Options include using a section of the Micklegate Stray; adding a MUGA (multi use games area) onto Scarcroft

Primary's hard standing play ground of which space is already at a premium; adding a MUGA onto the Millthorpe School site; and reducing car parking areas within the school grounds

- additional approvals will need to be sought to fulfil listed building condition requirements
- the feasibilities will not take into account the effect on outdoor space. Whilst Scarcroft Primary will manage the lack of outdoor space by adopting staggered play times, the school has no green field areas or space for a multi use games area (MUGA)

(c) Consider the option of a Free School

15. A free school application is being developed by the Ebor Academy Trust. This application focuses on the development of a 2 form entry city wide Creative Arts Academy.
16. If approved by the Department for Education, parents from across the city would be eligible to seek a place at this school.
17. If additional places become available through a free school, it is predicted that there would be a surplus of places across the city.
18. As the location of this school has currently not been identified this option does not directly resolve the school pupil place issue in the Micklegate area.

(d) Build accommodation for 210 (1fe) additional places, as an annex to Scarcroft Primary on the Millthorpe School site

19. This would provide an annex to the existing Scarcroft Primary site.
20. The position of this building would be at the Nunthorpe Avenue side of the Millthorpe School site in an area not currently identified as playing field. See Annex A.
21. The proposed annex of Scarcroft Primary School would provide 210 additional pupil places, future proofing provision against increasing demand over the next ten years and beyond. Scarcroft Primary currently has an admission number of 45. An additional 30 places will increase Scarcroft's admission number from 45 to 75.

22. The current estimate for the capital outlay suggests approximately £5.3m for a traditional contractual building method, rising to £6.2m for a modular build. There would be no capital receipts gained from this option. The projected costs incorporate an estimate for the completion of the entire project, including fees, surveys, fixed furniture & equipment (ff&e), abnormals, exclusions and contingencies.
23. It is aimed to provide this new building for 1 September 2018. For the school year beginning 1 September 2017, additional pupil places would be accommodated within Scarcroft Primary in larger mixed year groups on a temporary basis.
24. There are a number of advantages in developing the annex on the Millthorpe School site. As the favoured option by the school cluster, the location of the new building would immediately be integrated within the existing school community. It is likely that the older age groups would be based at the Millthorpe site, therefore it is anticipated there could be strong parental support for this option as pupils would gain a familiarity and ease with regards to their transition from primary to secondary schools. The building will also create some flexible space to accommodate the anticipated increase in pupil numbers into the future, if required.
25. With no land purchase costs, this is seen as the best location to meet the demand for additional places in the Southbank area and there would therefore be no catchment changes required. There may be some issues throughout the planning process with regards to the availability of playing field space, highways infrastructure, travel planning, site access during the construction period and impacts on local residents, but it is felt that these problems can be overcome.
26. At present, Millthorpe School, Scarcroft Primary and Knavesmire Primary will be converting to academy status and forming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The target date for conversion is 1 April 2016. The freehold interest to the Millthorpe site is currently owned by the council but the whole site is to be leased on a 125 year lease to the MAT following conversion. Under the terms of this lease, the LA would need permission to build on the Millthorpe site. However, as the schools are currently in agreement with the recommended option, and the new building will be providing additional pupil places for the MAT, it is expected that once the

schools are part of a MAT they will continue to agree to the recommendation for the provision of additional pupil places as described.

(e) Build a 210 (1fe) place school on the former Terry's Car Park site at Nun Ings

27. This proposal was for a 2 storey 1fe (210 places) primary school plus an 80 place nursery (age ranges as described in option A) and a multi use games area. This option was rejected for the following reasons:

- as a traditional contractual building scheme, the estimate for capital outlay suggested £7.4m would have been required, which included an estimate to purchase land. This estimate rose to £8.3m for a modular build. The cost per pupil place would be very high at £35,238 for a traditional build and £39,523 for a modular build
- currently the land is owned by Henry Boot Ltd, therefore there would be no capital receipts gained from this option
- CYC Asset Property Management contacted Henry Boot Ltd with regards to the LA's interest in purchasing a section of land. On 16 November the agents of Henry Boot Ltd responded as follows:

'The car park site is not an option my clients wish to explore due to proposed overspill car parking spaces for the uses we have agreed terms with on the Chocolate Works. We can look at the 20 acres of greenbelt land located adjacent in Henry Boot's control. However this will be long term in getting any consent and I believe you are under certain time constraints.'

- further correspondence was received on 27 November that intimated that Henry Boot Ltd might be willing to allow greenbelt land to be sold. However, due to the timescales for the provision of additional pupil places, the length of time and complexity involved in land negotiations and following advice received from Asset Property Management, it has been decided not to pursue the option of purchasing land from Henry Boot Ltd any further
- part of this site is within both flood zones 2 and 3 which would have needed careful consideration throughout part of the planning process

(f) Build a 315 (1.5fe) place school on land behind The Grove and The Square off Tadcaster Road

28. This proposal was to build a 2 storey 1.5fe (315 places) primary school together with an 80 place nursery on land directly adjacent to The Grove and The Square off Tadcaster Road and has been rejected for the following reasons:

- this land is too far away from the Micklegate area to be considered as an option

(g) Build a 630 (3fe) place school at either Bishopthorpe Infant or Archbishop of York CE Junior school sites

29. This proposal was for a 2 storey 3fe (630 places) primary school plus an 80 place nursery and a multi use games area. This option has been rejected for the following reasons:

- this was not an ideal option as the location is further from the Southbank area and would have only provided a partial solution for the need for additional primary places
- there would also have been other complications such as the need to consider changing the catchment area and flooding issues across the Bishopthorpe village area

(h) Exploration of other site options

30. Other options that have been considered and rejected are:

- build a school on Little Knavesmire. This proposal was rejected due to the encroachment onto a large, open community space
- build on the allotments adjacent to Millthorpe School. This proposal was rejected as any loss of allotment land will need to be re-provided in the existing area where space for allotment is at a premium
- build on the former Askham Bar Park & Ride site. This was rejected as this site was identified to be included in the Local Plan as a much needed area for housing
- build on Nunnery Lane car park. This site is very narrow for a school development and is adjacent to the city walls. As such, it is unlikely that planning permission would be forthcoming

Council Plan

31. This proposal links to the following key council corporate priorities:
- a prosperous city for all - the LA wants to ensure that there is a good quality of education available for all around the city
 - a focus on a frontline service - this proposal links directly to the CSES objective that all children should be able to go to local schools that are good or outstanding
 - a council that listens to its residents - the LA has listened to the needs of the school cluster by focussing on the needs of the local school and the local residents to provide enough pupil places in a popular area of the city

Implications

Financial

32. The main capital funding for pupil place expansion is the Department for Education Basic Need Capital Grant. At present, allocations have been confirmed up to, and including, 2017/18, totalling £37.75m, of which £15.1m has been spent, or is committed to ongoing schemes.
33. Initial high level planning had allocated a further £19.8m for schemes to alleviate place pressures across the city, including provision for this scheme.
34. As of March 2016, around £1,094k of Section 106 has been earmarked for the scheme. Of this, only £274k has actually been received by the council. The remainder relates to outstanding payments for the Terry's and York College sites.

Equalities

35. A Community/Environmental Impact Assessment (CIA/EIA) is included with this report as Annex B.

Property

36. Please refer to the recommended option for comments.

Legal

37. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on the council as local education authority to “contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary, secondary and further education are available to meet the needs of the population in their area.”
38. The expansion of an existing school would require a statutory proposal to be published, consulted upon and determined in accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. Regard must be had to any statutory guidance. That guidance is currently under review by the Department for Education.
39. If the council thinks that there is a need for a new school then it is required to seek proposals for a Free School.
40. The option of using part of Micklegate Stray to increase the school’s access to outdoor space is complicated by the fact that the Stray is subject to the provisions of the Micklegate Stray Act 1907 which places restrictions on how it could be used. Any proposal would need to be carefully evaluated against the provisions of that Act.

Other Implications

41. There is no specific Human Resources (HR), Crime and Disorder or Information Technology implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

42. The need for school places in this area of the city is already significant and will continue to grow. To not add any places would result in pupils not being able to access their local school, additional transport costs will be incurred, reputational risk to the LA and failing in a key statutory duty not to provide sufficient school places.

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Report
Approved



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Wards Affected: Micklegate Ward

All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A – Position of a new building at Millthorpe School

Annex B – CIA/EIA Form