

**Executive**

**16 March 2023**

Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Education

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

## **Clifton Green Primary – Re-organisation and Security**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides details about a proposed capital scheme for Clifton Green Primary School to re-organise the site to develop the provision to support better outcomes for children with SEND.

### **Recommendations**

Executive is asked to:

- a. approve option 3 outlined in this report, that is to re-organise internal rooms and spaces and address safeguarding and security issues that affect the external areas within the school site.
  - b. agree to a planning application to be submitted for the scheme.
  - c. approve the carrying out of a procurement process to procure a contractor to carry out the works and to delegate to the Corporate Director of Children and Education (in consultation with the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, the Chief Finance Officer and the Director of Governance or their delegated officers) the authority to take such steps as are necessary to procure, award and enter into the resulting contract. subject to the winning bid being within the budget set out in paragraph 17 of this report.
2. Reason: This will ensure that the use of the rooms and spaces within Clifton Green Primary are suitable and sufficient to meet the needs of children and will reduce the number of pupils that need to access other specialist provision around the city. It will also ensure that the security and safeguarding of pupils and others using the site is improved. This

work supports the outcomes of the Inclusion Review which will provide more suitable provision in mainstream settings for neurodiverse children and for those with a primary need of SEMH (Social and Emotional Mental Health).

## **Background**

3. The school recently received a 'good' Ofsted Inspection and is ambitious, wanting to continue its improvement journey by securing the recent 'good' Ofsted judgement and possibly 'outstanding' in the future as it will be better able to meet the needs of children with SEND if the school spaces are adapted to support their learning.
4. Academic data shows that too many children are leaving at the end of key stage assessment points below the age-related expectations.
5. Clifton Green Primary faces an increasing number of significant challenges that exacerbate the ability to help pupils reach this expectation due to teaching and intervention areas that are inaccessible, cannot be used or incorrectly located around the school building. Clifton Green Primary serves one of the most disadvantaged wards in York. The 2019 English indices of deprivation (2019) show that the school is located in amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The neighbourhood data shows that the school is within the 10% most deprived areas in the country when factoring in the areas of education, skills and training.
6. Over 13% of Clifton Green pupils speak English as an additional language which is higher than the Local Authority's city-wide average of 8.9%.
7. The number of children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs is routinely high but this has noticeably increased due to the impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. This requires enhanced pastoral provision and spaces for children to regulate their emotions and process their experiences on a 1:1 and small group basis.
8. The Rapid Improvement Group made specific reference to the organisation of school space where there is a lack of intervention space, intervention spaces in the right places to support year groups and children with SEN. A review of the use of the building was requested and following several meetings with the Head teacher they

proposed a re-organisation of space to allow rooms, Early Years, KS1 and KS2 groups and room adjacencies work more logically within the confines of the area of the school building.

9. The Rapid Improvement Group made specific reference to the concerns around security and safeguarding at the site. The subsequent discussions and review of the school site have included proposals to address the issues at both the front and rear of the site, as follows:
  - a. The openness of the playing field to the rear of the site creates some significant safeguarding issues for school. It is proposed to install a fence around the perimeter of the field which will also prevent anti-social behaviour.
  - b. The installation of a fence will allow school to use the field without the risk of others accessing it at the same time.
  - c. At the front of the site, there is no protection to the grassed area leading to the main entrance of the school, so children are not protected from running into the car park. The installation of fencing will help to prevent this.
  - d. At the front of the site, one classroom exit door, opens straight onto the car park. The installation of fencing will help to prevent this.
  - e. The car park is shared with those using the Children's Centre which is a multi-use facility that includes essential early years delivery for the community. The car park has no obvious turning area so installation of metal fencing will direct children and adults to only using pedestrian paths.
  - f. The only place for school and Children's Centre to congregate during fire evacuations is to the front of the site using a single path to access a bank to the side entrance to the car park. The installation of fencing will help organise the movement of people to the muster points.
  - g. The main entrance to school does not currently offer a secure 'waiting space' and adaptations would mean access in and out is easier and staff and children are better protected.

- h. An autism hub has recently been located to the Children's Centre. The open site, number of vehicles using the site and lack of turning space adds to the issues of security. Fencing that separates pathways from the car park will resolve this issue along with an assessment of how the car park is being used, by whom and at what times of the day to work out how it can be better managed.

## **Consultation**

10. Consultation has taken place with the Head teacher at Clifton Green Primary, who in turn has discussed the issues with staff and school governors. A close working relationship with Clifton Green Primary is already in place and is essential to ensure the current building can be adapted and changed in to meet the needs of the pupils attending the school.
11. Local Authority officers and school are also in discussion with regards to the challenges from sharing the site and how to keep all users of the site safe and secure.

## **Options**

12. Option 1 – do nothing
13. Option 2 - re-organise internal rooms and spaces only. This option is estimated to cost approximately £1.28m.
14. Option 3 – re-organise internal rooms and spaces and address safeguarding and security issues that affect the external areas within the school site. This option is estimated to require a budget of £1.5m.

## **Analysis**

15. Option 1 - It is not possible to fully meet the needs of the pupils given the current room and space arrangement in the school building. This has led to an increased use of alternative provision for some pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is also not possible to ensure continued safeguarding or security based on the current external building arrangements. Doing nothing is therefore not a recommendation.

16. Option 2 - School uses internal and external spaces for curriculum teaching. To only re-organise and change internal areas would mean teachers and pupils who are isolated in areas with no or insufficient or inadequately sized intervention rooms, a waiting area where staff and pupils are less protected, areas where there are toilets without changing facilities and areas that challenge staff's ability to keep children safe and secure would remain.
17. Option 3 - All of the areas causing concern are interlinked. Addressing all of the areas causing concern will allow the school to meet the multiple needs and challenges they face both internally and externally and will reduce the number of pupils that need to access other provision around the city. It would further support the school's improvement journey by securing their recent 'good' Ofsted judgment to possibly 'outstanding' in the future as they will be better able to meet the needs of children with SEND.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

18. It is proposed that the funding for the work required at Clifton Green Primary School be provided from the currently unallocated Basic Need budget in the Children and Education Capital Programme. There is currently an amount of £9.9m available within this budget. If the recommended option (Option 3) is approved the unallocated amount will be reduced to £8.4m.
19. Making the changes at the school will reduce the demand on other more costly specialist primary provision as more children will be able to remain in their local mainstream setting.

### **Risk Management**

20. If this work does not go ahead, many children will not be able to continue to access education at their catchment school and will need to be accommodated at other settings around the city potentially increasing transport costs.
21. Works will need to take place in two phases across two summers, and therefore will need to be carefully prioritised for each summer period. The market conditions for works have been assessed by quantity surveyors and inflation has been accounted for up to and including

quarter 3 of 2024. A risk allowance has also been included within the project budget.

## **Council Plan**

### **A greener and cleaner city**

22. The re-organisation at Clifton Green Primary School will minimise the number of pupils being transported to other settings.

### **Safe communities and culture for all**

23. The works will secure and safeguard the site, creating a safer environment for children, their families and the wider community.

### **A better start for children and young people**

24. The spaces being created at Clifton Green Primary School will provide appropriate and safe provision for pupils with high levels of need.

### **An open and effective council**

25. This re-organisation proposal has been put together following discussion and concerns that were highlighted within the Council's Rapid Improvement Group.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

26. There are no HR implications.

### **Equalities**

27. The Council needs to take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions). An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is annexed to this report at Annex A.

28. The scheme will maximise pupils' opportunities, provide support and enable staff to carry out their duties efficiently.

## **Legal**

### **Procurement**

29. Any proposed works will need to be commissioned via a compliant procurement route under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. At £1.5m the value of the works for Clifton Green Primary School outlined above fall significantly below the relevant threshold for the procurement of works under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (i.e. £5.3m), therefore a full procurement exercise under the Regulations will not be required in this instance. However, a competitive process for quotations will still need to be advertised and run under the Contract Procedure Rules, and an appropriate form of contract will need to be drafted and completed with support from Legal Services.

### **Education**

30. The Council has a legal obligation to ensure the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein, must be maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012). In addition, the Equalities Act 2010 requires all schools to prepare and implement an accessibility strategy to improve the physical environment of the school for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. This should include consideration of their particular health and safety needs on the school premises and how these can be met.

### **Crime and Disorder**

31. There are no crime and disorder implications.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

32. There are no IT implications.

### **Property**

33. Clifton Green Primary is maintained by City of York Council.

## Contact Details

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All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers

### Annexes

Annex A - Equalities Impact Assessment

### List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

EHCP - Education Health and Care Plan  
FSM - Free School Meals  
PAN - Pupil Admission Number  
RIG - Rapid Improvement Group  
SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health  
SEN - Special Educational Needs