

Executive

11 February 2016

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

Additional Primary School Places for Southbank

Summary

1. This paper considers the options for providing additional primary school places in the Southbank area of York.
2. A consistent rise in demand, alongside pressures and trends in the Southbank area, has led to the need to create additional primary school places.

Recommendation

3.
 - a. to agree to further public consultation on the options for the provision of school places in the Southbank area lasting four weeks
 - b. for the purposes of that consultation identify option (b) as the council's current preferred option
 - c. to ask the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills to bring a report to a future meeting of the Executive describing the outcome of that consultation and making a recommendation for a proposal to be subject to statutory consultation

Reason: This will fulfil the LA's legal obligation to ensure there is appropriate consultation that allows for the most effective solution to be identified.

Background

4. A consistent rise in demand, alongside pressures and trends in the Southbank area has led to the need to create additional primary school places.

5. LA projections indicate that an additional 21 reception places are required by September 2017 in the Southbank area. Additional places will be required year-on-year, as larger cohorts begin to move through primary year groups. It is anticipated that between 100 and 160 additional places will be required by 2022/23 academic year. The Office of National Statistics' (ONS) projected births for the city indicate that the reception cohort will continue to grow beyond this point until around 2025.

Consultation

6. The Southbank cluster of schools support this recommended option which has been produced following consultation with the cluster schools and with the Scarcroft governing body. Following these discussions Scarcroft and Millthorpe school governing bodies have also agreed the proposed recommendation in principle. Ward members have been consulted on a range of options over a period of time. The ward members have recently held a well attended ward committee to consult on this issue.

Options

7.
 - (a) provide no additional places in the Southbank area
 - (b) build accommodation for 210 (1 form entry each year) additional places, as an annex to Scarcroft Primary on the Millthorpe School site
 - (c) build a 210 (1 form entry) place primary school on the former Terry's Car Park site at Nun Ings
 - (d) build a 315 (1.5 form entry) place school on land behind The Grove and The Square off Tadcaster Road
 - (e) build a 630 (3 form entry) place school at either Bishopthorpe Infant or Archbishop of York CE Junior school sites

Analysis

(a) Provide no additional places in the Southbank area

8. The area is currently served by Scarcroft and Knavesmire primary schools. The demand for pupil places can no longer be contained within the existing primary schools in the Southbank area for the following reasons:

- an expansion project to provide additional places recently took place at Knavesmire Primary. Following this expansion, it is no longer possible to expand Knavesmire Primary as there is not enough playing space on the site to accommodate additional numbers
 - as a grade 2* listed building, Scarcroft Primary has very limited playing space and no playing field. It would also be very difficult to build enough additional classrooms at this site, which again is compounded by a lack of outdoor playing space
 - if no additional places were to be provided, transport would have to be arranged for pupils living in the Southbank area 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 but some distance away from Southbank
 - transport costs would be significant having to bus pupils to other parts of the city. 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
9. Therefore, in order to resolve the growing issues in this area, to do nothing is not an option.

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

10. This option is the recommended option for the following reasons:
- the position of the new 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
 - 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
 - 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), abnormal, exclusions and contingencies

- 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
- 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
- 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
- at present, Millthorpe School, Scarcroft Primary and Knavesmire Primary are considering converting to academy status and forming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). If the conversion takes place the Millthorpe site which is currently owned by the council will be leased on a 125 year lease. 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, it is expected that the schools will continue to agree to the recommendation for the provision of additional pupil places as described

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

11. 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

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

12. 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:
- the Wilberforce Trust, who own the land, informed the LA that they were not wanting to sell this land at present
 - the location was not suitable as the site is some distance from the Southbank area
 - there would be significant additional cost because the requirement of having to purchase the land

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

13. 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

Council Plan

14. 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

15. The main capital funding for pupil place expansion is the Department for Education Basic Need grant. At present, allocations have been confirmed up to, and including, 2017/18, totalling £37.75m, of which £13.4m has been spent, or is committed to ongoing schemes.
16. Initial high level planning had allocated a further £24.35m for schemes to alleviate place pressures across the city which will include this scheme.
17. As of November 2015, around £400,000 of Section 106 has been ear marked for the scheme. £21,000 of this has been received by the council, the remainder relates to outstanding payments for the Terry's site. Additional Section 106 may come forward for this area.

Equalities

18. A CIA/EIA is included with this report as Annex B.

Property

19. Please refer to the recommended option for comments.

Legal

20. The council has powers under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to propose such a significant enlargement of a maintained school. In making such proposals the council should have referred to guidance issued by the Secretary of State which includes as strong expectation of consultation with interested parties prior to the publication of a proposal which will be subject to statutory consultation processes. Consultation on a preferred option is a proper approach so long as the Executive maintains a willingness to contemplate other options.

Other Implications

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

Risk Management

22. As paragraphs 4 and 5 indicate, 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 **Date** 03.02.16
Approved

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All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A – Millthorpe Site Plan
Annex B – CIA