

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**PROVISION OF A REPLACEMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL, WEST BRIDGFORD AND EXPANSION OF RUSHCLIFFE SCHOOL****Purpose of the Report**

1. To outline progress with site identification and feasibility works in the West Bridgford planning area for a new secondary school and Lady Bay Primary School; and progress with the proposed expansion of Rushcliffe School.

Information

2. A core commitment in the County Council Plan 'Your Nottinghamshire Your Future' is to give all children and young people the best start in life. The Council is proud that over 85.9% of schools in Nottinghamshire are 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and the Council continues to support parents, children and young people with the choice of attending their preferred school. The County Council has the statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places are available and acts proactively wherever there is need across the County.
3. At its meeting on 18th September 2019 Policy Committee received a report looking at the future secondary school requirements in the West Bridgford pupil place planning area. The Committee approved that the Council identifies land that could accommodate a new secondary school within that planning area. The Committee also gave, in principle, approval to seek appropriate funding commitments for the build costs through Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.
4. At its meeting on 12th February 2020 Policy Committee received a further report that outlined unmet primary school place demand in the West Bridgford planning area. The report highlighted that the existing Lady Bay Primary School could not be expanded to meet its share of the projected demand due to the restricted nature of its site. It was anticipated that new secondary and primary schools could open between 2023-2025. It was therefore approved that the Children's and Young Peoples capital programme be varied by £445,000 to enable detailed analysis, site surveys and feasibility studies to be undertaken to determine the deliverability and estimated costs for the proposed construction in the West Bridgford planning area of a new secondary school and a relocated and enlarged Lady Bay Primary School.
5. At its meeting on 13th May 2020 Policy Committee considered a report on the need for further expansion of Rushcliffe School to 12 forms of entry as part of proposals, along with the proposed third secondary school, to ensure a sufficiency of school places in the West Bridgford planning area by September 2025. It was agreed to provide funding of £340,000 to Spencer Academy Trust for master planning and feasibility of the development of the school to 12 forms of entry and preparation of a planning application to submission stage.

6. The reports already brought to Policy Committee as outlined above were all based on the ongoing need to address concerns over the sufficiency of school places at both primary and secondary levels within the West Bridgford planning area into the future. This is an area of high housing growth and continues to attract families relocating into the area and the relocation of Lady Bay Primary School to enable its expansion, the expansion of Rushcliffe school and the provision of an additional secondary school form the Council's approach to providing sufficiency. Even with the recent opening of Rosecliffe Spencer Academy projections still indicate a shortage of primary school places of 115 by 2024-25 and at secondary level for the same timescale there is a projected deficiency of 816 places with that to continue to rise through the decade. The Council can and will take action to prevent a shortage of school places and this report provides a plan to mitigate the existing demand in the West Bridgford area.
7. The first stage of the work on the proposed third secondary school has been the identification of a long list of possible sites with an analysis of their suitability against the Council's criteria such as developable site area, deliverability and proximity to the catchment area. The Council's Planning Policy Team has undertaken a detailed site assessment of the options in and around the West Bridgford area that could accommodate:
 - a new primary school (site requirement 3 hectares)
 - a new secondary school to house a 5 FE school (750 statutory places) and a 200 place 6th form with a potential to expand to a 7FE (950 statutory places) with a 250 place 6th form (site requirement 7.5 hectares) and/or
 - a campus development (site requirement 7 to 10 hectares).
8. A number of potential sites were originally considered as identified on the attached plan and judged against criteria such as location, land ownership, constraints and future development within the area. This led to three sites being considered for further consideration against additional criteria including planning policies, access and strategic transport, nature conservation, built heritage and other observations. The sites considered further were land at Adbolton playing fields (site A), land at Regatta Way (site C/D) and land at Tollerton Lane, Gamston (site F).
9. Following this work, it became clear that a parcel of land within the ownership of the County Council, provided a unique opportunity to develop a new campus. It also provides the potential for both schools to be built at the same time, and well within a one-mile radius of the existing primary school and in a green and pleasant setting. Furthermore, a new campus development would allow improved continuity and transition between primary and secondary school and prove to be more convenient for those families with children at both primary and secondary age living in the local community.
10. The campus approach offers a multitude of practical short and long term benefits from initial construction cost savings to reduce running and maintenance costs as well as shared facilities for both the primary and secondary schools. Its biggest benefit however, is that it would enable both schools to be built in an accelerated timeframe to meet the significant demand for both primary and secondary school places in the area. Clearly a campus style development would be designed sympathetically to ensure that there is still a clear separation of both schools on the site and that the identity of the Primary School is maintained.
11. The Council has considerable experience of campus style settings, most recently in East Leake where Lantern Lane Primary and East Leake Academy share a site and previously in Calverton on the site of Colonel Frank Seeley Academy and its associated Infant and Junior schools. The schools have been highly successful in separating all phases of children from a

safeguarding point of view through physical measures and temporarily with reference to the timing of the school day to ensure effective joint use of facilities and a staggered day to avoid overlap and congestion.

12. Following due consideration against all the criteria it was concluded that the Council owned land off Regatta Way in West Bridgford provides the most suitable option for a number of reasons as summarised below:
 - Close proximity to Lady Bay community and accessible on foot, cycle and public transport routes for current and future pupils;
 - The Tollerton Lane site would only be capable of taking Secondary School pupils for the area and so unable to achieve the benefits outlined in this report of building and operating both schools as a campus;
 - Significant infrastructure required to enable the crossing of the A52 by pupils from the Ladybay, Gamston and West Bridgford areas which is not at present adequately provided for and is still at an early stage of planning in terms of the wider development at Tollerton and Gamston;
 - Sufficient size to house both of the schools in a campus style development; and,
 - The land is already within the Council's ownership and development could be progressed for provision in the timescale necessary to meet the pressure on school places.
13. Site C/D has therefore been identified as being potentially suitable and, following a desk top analysis and some intrusive survey work undertaken to date, Site D (the land to the east of Regatta Way) is the preferred option at this stage. Site C (the land to the west of Regatta Way) has a number of waterways and courses that run through the site which would restrict the developable areas for the school campus, and as shown by the recent heavy rainfall, is liable to flooding.
14. The Council now needs to commission works to deliver a concept design (RIBA Stage B) as well as specialist reports and an advisory team to take forward development of the proposals for the new schools. This includes; a hydrology study, planning consultancy and specialist highways advice. This is necessary to obtain pre-application advice and demonstrate the special circumstances that require the building of the new schools for Lady Bay and West Bridgford at this site. In addition to this, the further development of the proposals will allow the design team to engage with all stakeholders and the current tenants to assess their requirements and how these can be incorporated in the masterplan for the site.
15. In relation to the shorter term provision required in the West Bridgford planning area, the Spencer Academy Trust had already commissioned a project team to progress master planning and design of the proposed expansion of Rushcliffe School and the Council has commissioned Arc to consider the findings. This process continues as the parties seek to identify an agreed way forward to address the issues of expanding on an already constrained site.
16. There is work still ongoing with the Academy and their construction advisory team and the Council is still to agree a final design and cost for the scheme. Should agreement be reached between all parties however, the Academy and their advisory team would be looking to submit a planning application in August 2021 with a construction start date of January 2022. For a planning application to be submitted however, an additional £480,000 will be required for detailed designs to be developed, which is in addition to the £340,000 that was originally approved by Policy Committee to enable feasibility, survey and massing work to be concluded.

Other Options Considered

17. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of this report detail the options considered in respect of the sites appraised for the new campus development. The attached plan details the sites considered as part of our option appraisal.
18. The design development of the Rushcliffe School has moved to RIBA Stage 2 and there are no other options due to the need for school places in the West Bridgford planning area.

Reasons for Recommendations

19. The existing Lady Bay primary school is unsuitable to meet future education requirements. The age and moreover the Listed status of one of the main buildings is proving to be highly restrictive to the required expansion of the school. Indeed the school has outgrown its' existing accommodation some years ago and consequently, portable buildings have been utilised for many years. More recently, the Council has experienced obstacles at a planning level in the attempted replacement of these portable buildings and a refurbishment of these has needed to suffice. Beyond this, the accommodation of the heritage building is restrictive to the needs of modern-day education with an inherent inflexibility to deliver modern education teaching methods such as the provision of group and intervention spaces. The significant separation of the school and its playing field facilities is a further negative aspect to the existing arrangements. Due to the small footprint of the current site, the listed building and planning constraints makes a replacement school on the existing site almost impossible. It is therefore apparent that the requirement for a replacement Lady Bay primary school within proximity to the current site is becoming an increasingly important issue.
20. Following the analysis of sites for a replacement primary school and new Secondary School in West Bridgford, the land at Regatta Way has clear advantages over and above all other potential sites in the vicinity for this requirement. The Council has investigated and explored all other options and is satisfied that this scenario presents the best solution available and it is recommended that further work is now undertaken to progress a planning application for the preferred site. Due to there being some outstanding survey and design work to complete and the need to engage with all stakeholders and existing tenants, it is recommended that a future report be brought back to Committee outlining progress to date and seeking further funding for the next design stages.
21. The provision of further funding for fees towards the expansion of Rushcliffe School will enable this scheme to progress towards a project to capture all required elements of the scheme that will include new build, refurbishment and repurposing of existing spaces and demolition, that provides the least disruption to pupils.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

23. The Ladybay Primary School proposals will require a statutory consultation in respect of the expansion of the school. Due to this being at an early stage in the design development process, it is recommended that this process be detailed in the next Policy Committee report when more detail will be available.

Financial Implications

24. The proposals highlighted within this report will require a further £980,000 of funding to enable further design work. This figure is made up of £500,000 of funds required to enable the new Secondary School, West Bridgford and Ladybay Primary School to be developed and £480,000 will be required for detailed designs to be developed for the Rushcliffe School to enable a planning application to be submitted to the Council (subject to agreement in respect of the final design). All of the funding identified will be allocated from the Nottinghamshire basic need allocation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That Committee approve, in principle, the relocation of Lady Bay Primary School to a new campus at Site D Regatta Way, alongside a third Secondary School for West Bridgford subject to further survey and design works;
- 2) A further report be brought back to Committee following completion of the survey and design work outlining progress to date and seeking further funding for the next design stages to enable the submission of a planning application;
- 3) That a further £500,000 be allocated to ensure the further design development of the new Secondary School, West Bridgford and Ladybay Primary School; and
- 4) That subject to agreement with the Service Director, Investment and Growth around the final design and cost of the Rushcliffe School, approval be given for the Council to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement to provide an additional £480,000 to Spencer Academy Trust for the purposes of submitting a planning application.

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts
Leader of the County Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Matthew Neal, Service Director – Investment and Growth Tel: 0115 977 3498

Constitutional Comments (SSR 19/02/2021)

25. The recommendations set out in the report are matters which fall within the scheme of delegation to Policy Committee.

Financial Comments (CT 03/03/2021)

26. The proposals highlighted within this report will require a further £980,000 of funding in order to enable further design work. This figure is made up of £500,000 of funds required to enable the new Secondary School, West Bridgford and Ladybay Primary School to be developed plus £480,000 required for detailed designs to be developed for the Rushcliffe School to enable a planning application to be submitted to the Council (subject to agreement in respect of the final design). All of the funding identified will be allocated from the Nottinghamshire basic need allocation.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- Report to Policy Committee 18 September 2019
- Report to Policy Committee 12 February 2020
- Report to Policy Committee 13 May 2020

Electoral Division and Member Affected

- Radcliffe on Trent Councillor Kay Cutts MBE