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# **School Place Planning – Capital Investment for Primary Schools**

Decision to be taken by Assistant City Mayor – Children,  
Young People and Schools

Decision to be taken on: 16 June 2016

Lead director: Frances Craven and Frank Jordan

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## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Rob Thomas, Head of Children's Capital Planning
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- Report version number: 2.0

### **1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To seek approval for the release of capital funding to enable additional primary school capacity in high demand areas of the City.

### **2.0 Summary**

- 2.1 This report sets out progress on the implementation of the basic needs strategy for primary school and conclusions from detailed work with primary schools about increased capacity options and associated capital proposals needed for 2016 and 2017 academic years.
- 2.2 This report describes progress to date and sets out a timeline for future decisions on options and expenditure.
- 2.3 Most of this work has been based on the need identified in the summer 2015 projections. The first drafts of the 2016 projections are now available and these show little change from the position set out in 2015.
- 2.4 In the Primary phase the main challenge is an imbalance of primary school capacity, with central areas of the City seriously short of places, mainly but not entirely in the junior year groups.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 To release £3,741,500 from the basic needs capital policy provision to fund works set out in paragraph 4.1.5
- 3.2 To delegate gateway authority to the Interim Director of Learning in consultation with Assistant Mayor for Children, Young People and Schools for each individual scheme within the overall funding set out in 3.1 above.

### **4.0 Primary school places - process**

- 4.1.1 Expansions in previous years have ensured that overall there are sufficient school places in the city to meet demand at Reception. However, there is a mismatch locally between supply and demand, particularly in central areas. New arrivals magnify this problem for years 1-6. To address this, the net capacity data review of all primary schools was completed in December. With the support and assistance of the Leicester Primary Partnership (LPP) and

schools an active review has now been completed which identifies how to translate 'surplus' physical capacity identified in the net capacity review into real new school places. It also considered options for additional temporary capacity by provision of mobile accommodation.

- 4.1.2 This review is based on the planning clusters set out in the August report. (Appendix 1) These cluster assessments provide us with a view of projected unmet pupil place need, by national curriculum year group and academic year. They show the most intense pressure in those clusters closest to the city centre (central) together with those immediately adjacent to the central area – North 2, North 5, East 3, East 5, South 1, South 2, West 1 and West 3.
- 4.1.3 The review process was as follows:
- Initial letter to all schools in the cluster (heads and chairs of governors) Individual school visits to explore potential capacity in detail. These visits were carried out by a member of the school organisation team accompanied by a member of the property team. On site these officers discussed alternatives for use of the accommodation and listened to the schools' ideas as well as their concerns about some of the options being considered.
  - Each school then received a summary of the discussion.
- 4.1.4 Following visits to all schools within each cluster a subsequent meeting was held for all schools in the cluster in order to agree jointly which schools could offer additional capacity and for which year groups.
- 4.1.5 This process has now been completed for the clusters with the highest forecasted shortfall of school places and considering capacity in adjacent clusters. As the table in Appendix 2 shows, this work has led to a potential for up to 1146 additional places across all primary year groups. (Central – 360, North – 320, East – 65, South – 127, West – 274) The total capacity may increase as a number of schools are still considering their capacity options eg Whitehall, Merrydale Infant and Junior. The property team has provided estimated costs for the work required to make these places available (Appendix 3). These total £2,188,500 for 2016/17 and £1,553,000 for 2017/18 and it is requested that this be drawn from the existing brought forward policy provision of £4.9m. It is proposed that the Interim Director of Learning in consultation with the Assistant Mayor have delegated authority for gateway approval of each individual school project within the overall funding of £3,741,500.
- 4.1.6 In practice these places will not all be required during the current or the 2016/17 academic years. Phasing of additional capacity over academic years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years is subject to current consultation with the schools in each cluster and to the outcomes of discussions with adjacent clusters.
- 4.1.7 In a small number of schools (eg Spinney Hill and Medway) there were a number of minor works that emerged which, if immediately implemented, could relieve pressure in the current academic term. In consultation with the City Mayor and Assistant Mayor the Interim Director of Learning in consultation with Assistant City Mayor was authorised to approve expenditure on individual schemes up to £20,000 from existing policy provision.
- 4.1.8 The additional capacity created in 2016 and 2017 academic years is forecast to be sufficient based on current demand projections. The forecasts continue to be

regularly monitored against birth and health authority data, housing development and applications for school admissions.

- 4.1.9 Other opportunities for additional school sites or expansions may arise from the current Transforming Neighbourhood Services and Using Buildings Better reviews; this will be considered as discussions with cluster groups continue.

## **4.2 Capital funding**

- 4.2.1 Following submission of the School Capacity (SCAP) to the DfE in July 2015, the local authority has received confirmation of its Basic Need allocation for 2018/19 to support the provision of new school places in areas where they are needed. This amounts to £59.9m.

## **5.0 Financial, legal and other implications**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

In order to make additional primary school places available in the clusters with the highest forecast shortfall of places over 2016/18, this report is requesting the release of £3.7m from the carried forward policy provision for New Primary Places (Basic Needs) of £4.9m (as reported in the Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/16 Outturn report).

Martin Judson, Head of Finance

### **5.2 Legal implications**

The Council has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available. Finance will need to determine whether the funding requested can legitimately be released for the works proposed.

Julie McNicholas, Employment and Education Solicitor

### **5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications**

The Council has a corporate target to reduce its own operational emissions, including those from school buildings, by 50% by 2025, based on 2008/09 levels. Short term solutions of increasing capacity at existing school sites to deal with increasing demand for school places will result in an increase in carbon emissions from those sites. From a carbon perspective, it would be preferable for existing unused space to be converted to classrooms rather than increase provision of mobile classrooms, as these are less efficient to heat and are often located on areas of green space. If

existing internal space is not sufficient, extending the building upwards rather than outwards would be preferable as this is more energy efficient and increases insulation.

Implications for long term solutions will be provided for the December report.

Louise Buckley, Senior Environmental Consultant, 37 2293.

#### **5.4 Equalities Implications**

Our Public Sector Equality Duty, to have ‘due regard’ to equalities considerations of the decision at hand, extends throughout the whole planning and decision making process and is therefore relevant to this initial phase of the development of a school places strategy. While the methodology described in the report seeks to address equality of opportunity through provision of school places, it is less specific about how it will address potential discrimination (such as a disproportionate negative impact on a particular protected characteristic – for example, one racial group’s potential outcome – access to a school place – compared to another racial group) or the fostering of good relations between different groups which could be affected by differences in provision of/availability of school places across the city. Consideration to all potential issues related to our Public Sector Equality Duty should be given, and noted, throughout the development and decision making process.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext 374147.

#### **6.0 Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Primary Cluster Zones

Appendix 2 – Primary Cluster Additional Places Summary

Appendix 3 – Primary Cluster Estimated Costs Summary

#### **7. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

#### **8. Is this a “key decision”?**

Yes

#### **9. If a key decision please explain reason**

The proposals will have significant effect on citywide communities by the creation of additional school places and are part of capital proposals above £1m

#### **In determining whether it is a key decision you will need consider if it is likely:**

- to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.

- to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working *in two or more wards in the City*.

Expenditure or savings will be regarded as significant if:

- (a) In the case of additional recurrent revenue expenditure, it is not included in the approved revenue budget, and would cost in excess of £0.5m p.a.;
- (b) In the case of reductions in recurrent revenue expenditure, the provision is not included in the approved revenue budget, and savings of over £0.5m p.a. would be achieved;
- (c) In the case of one off or capital expenditure, spending of over £1m is to be committed on a scheme that has not been specifically authorised by Council.

In deciding whether a decision is significant you need to take into account:

- Whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.
- The likely extent of the impact of the decision both within and outside of the City.
- The extent to which the decision is likely to result in substantial public interest
- The existence of significant communities of interest that cannot be defined spatially.

