

Executive Decision Report

SEND PHASE 2 | Additional School places at Knighton Fields Centre and SEND Temporary Accommodation

Decision taken by: Assistant City Mayor
Education and Housing

Decision taken on: 14 October 2021

Lead Director: Tracie Rees

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
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- Report version number: v2.2

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Following an executive decision on 11th May 2021 to progress with the expansion of Ellesmere College by annexing the Knighton Fields Centre, this report seeks the approval of the capital funding required to complete the build scheme ready for occupancy in the Autumn 2021 term.
- 1.2 Additionally, it seeks to release funding to enable siting of temporary accommodation at the main Ellesmere College campus which enables 60 pupils to transition from a mainstream setting into specialist SEND provision.
- 1.3 It proposes to add £2.8m to the capital programme from government grant provided for SEND places
- 1.4 These proposals create an additional 60 SEND places at KFC which supports the City Council's strategy to increase the number of SEND school placements by 135 pupils by April 2022.

2.Summary

- 2.1 Leicester City Council has a strategy to increase its provision of SEND placements within Leicester to provide for future growth in demand, avoid out of city travel and improve the lives of young people. The strategy has seen an investment to date of £20.5m creating new specialist learning centres across the city and expanding existing schools.
- 2.2 The vacant Knighton Fields Centre was approved for refurbishment in December 2018 for the Special Schools Expansion Programme. This decision provided £3.979m for the essential enabling works to create a school environment from the redundant building. Initially this was intended to be an expansion of the neighbouring Millgate School however detailed analysis of SEND needs and subsequent consultation concluded that allocation of the building to Ellesmere College would be a better option. It will be used to provide for children between the ages of 5 and 19 with complex Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- 2.2 The Council has been working closely with Ellesmere's leadership team to determine the appropriate specification for both the building, its external spaces and long-term site management to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils by creating high quality learning environment.

- 2.3 Due to the KFC site being shared with Millgate School agreements have been made for a campus-wide management approach focussing on safeguarding, transport, fire strategy, and facilities management. The property implications of these are factored into the proposed build costs of this report.
- 2.4 The school will be completed ready for opening at the end of September 2021. A short-term arrangement is proposed to provide for temporary accommodation at the main Ellesmere College campus which will be used as a teaching space for the cohort until the completion of the KFC site. After these pupils' transition is then planned to use this accommodation to accelerate the progression of the next cohort of pupils from mainstream schools into Ellesmere until the full completion of SEND phase 2 in the summer of 2022. This approach supports the SEND strategy of provision of education locally in Leicester.

3.Recommendations

- 3.1 The Executive is recommended to:
- a) To approve the addition of £2.8m for works required at the Knighton Fields Centre, to be funded from government grant provided to support additional SEND school places.
 - b) Approve the earlier transitioning 60 pupils from mainstream settings into Ellesmere college.

Context and Background:

Knighton Fields Centre

- 4.1 There is currently a significant Special Schools Expansion Programme underway in the City to accommodate the growing numbers of children and young people with Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). The Knighton Fields Centre (KFC) was identified as a suitable vacant asset for the provision of education to children between the ages of 5 -19 and with complex ASD.
- 4.2 Having been vacant for over 10 years, significant enabling works began in 2019 to provision the building for re-occupancy at a cost of £3.57m. These works included upgrade of the roof, windows, and doors to make the building watertight. Internal mechanical and electrical works included upgrading of the hot and cold-water systems, the electrical system, fire detection system and alarms. The lighting system was obsolete and was replaced with a new LED lighting system. Patch repairing was undertaken to the carpark and some of the external doors and gates replaced.

4.3 An additional £350k was allocated in 2020 to allow KFC to have its own preparation kitchen to provide school meals for its pupils. This is because the kitchen of Millgate was deemed insufficient to provide for the extra capacity and pupil dietary needs.

4.4 The current total allocated budget for the scheme is £3.923m

Impact of C19 and risk realisation

4.5 Whilst the scheme began on site successfully in 2019, it was heavily impacted by Covid-19 from March 2020 which has led to construction delays of several months and increasing costs. The compact nature of the site proved challenging and the resulting social distancing measures meant a staggered works programme and elongated hours to maintain momentum. This in combination has meant the project has taken longer to reach completion than planned and resulted in additional prolongation 'time' costs of £245k which the Council is contractually responsible for. Furthermore, the costs of Covid-19 control measures have added another £67k to the project, making the combined direct impact of the pandemic on this scheme to be £312k above the original budget allocation.

4.6 Rising materials costs have also impacted this scheme. The council has been successful in avoiding further cost increases by fixing the contract sum with the contractor.

4.7 The site is complex and undertaking the early stage intrusive work has exposed many unforeseen issues. The impact of these across the project is £355k above the previous budget allocation.

Completion costs

4.8 Operating the schools independently within the same campus requires investment into the site infrastructure. Considerations include safeguarding internally within each site, traffic management, utilities, and fire safety.

4.9 To mitigate the local traffic impact a travel plan will be produced for the campus before it is opened. This will account for both staff and pupil travel during the school day and focus on sustainable methods and reduction of local congestion. Taxi and bus transfers are unavoidable in a SEND school and must be accommodated on site. To ease movements, increase turning areas and improve safety on site it is proposed to demolish and tarmac 2 x existing store buildings and tarmac their footprint. The cost of this will be £80k

4.10 The original proposal for this site was to share outdoor play space across the campus. However, with the schools running independently this will no longer be possible. It is therefore intended to allocate £300k into the works budget for the provision of sensory play equipment, play panels, and a safety

surfaced courtyard playground. This budget will also allow for the upgrade of footpaths surrounding the building to serve as accessible routes for pupils.

- 4.11 To enable the school to run independent of Millgate the ICT infrastructure is to be separated with its own server and provided a separate ADSL line. Consequentially the costs have increased and an allocation of £300k is proposed to fund this along with the operational ICT needs of the school.
- 4.12 It is proposed to create 2 x sensory rooms for the campus at a combined cost of £50k. One of these will serve the Millgate School and the other KFC. These are an essential client requirement for complex ASD pupils.
- 4.13 The cost the internal 'second fix' to meet the curricular needs of the school is £858k. This includes an extensive list of adjustments and adaptations need for the school including: -
- A revised toilet and changing space layout which includes a hoist system
 - Revised classroom layouts
 - Changing / adding of anti-slip floor coverings
 - Inclusion of 'safe' rooms
 - Amended reception layout
 - Supervision rooms
- 4.14 The furniture and equipment proposed budget has risen to £150k for KFC, partially because of the need to provide a full reception and dining space fit out but also because of the curricular needs of the school.
- 4.15 It should be noted that the construction industry is facing rising material costs and extended delivery periods which is impacting schemes across the UK. Because of this it is proposed to allocate a further risk allowance of £100k to this scheme. Should this remain unspent on completion this will be returned to the Council's reserves and re-allocated to other school projects.

Cost summary

- 4.16 The cost summary for the completion of this scheme is as below: -

| COVID 19 COSTS | £,000's |
|--|----------------|
| TIME LOST (PRELIMS) | 245 |
| COVID 19 MEASURES | 67 |
| A) SUB TOTAL | 312 |
| UNFORSEEN AND ABOVE THE RISK ALLOCATION / CONTINGENCY | |
| B) REALISED SITE ISSUES | 350 |
| ADDITIONAL WORKS | |
| INTERNAL SCOPE CHANGES TO ACCOMMODATE ELLESMERE | 858 |
| OUTDOOR SPACES | 300 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| SENSORY ROOMS | 50 |
| DEMOLITION AND TARMAC WORKS | 80 |
| ICT | 300 |
| FF&E | 150 |
| RISK | 100 |
| C) SUB TOTAL | 1,838 |
| TOTAL COST (A+B+C) | 2,500 |

Return on investment

- 4.17 Based upon this final cost plan the total construction including all works and overheads in para. 4.4 will be £6.4m. The cost of an out of city placement for ASD provision is approximately £67k per annum (excluding transport costs). This scheme creates reinvestment back into locally delivered complex ASD education and provides for a capital payback in under three years (excluding revenue costs). This combined with the benefits of educating pupils close to their home setting in Leicester suggests this is a good long-term option for the Council. It will provide a high quality, purpose-built school environment that is an asset to the Council's educational estate.
- 4.18 The completed building will include many sustainability measures which contribute toward the Council's declaration of climate emergency and 2030 net carbon zero plan. These include new double-glazed windows, improved roof insulation, energy efficient heating, and LED lighting systems.
- 4.19 SEND forecast data completed in March 2021 indicated a gap in provision within the city for children and young people with complex ASD and other communication and interaction needs. The use of the KFC building is critical to filling this gap, to fulfilling our statutory duty to provide suitable full-time educational provision and meeting the needs of these children and young people.
- 4.20 A key vision for SEND in Leicester City is children and young people to live and learn in their local communities wherever possible. By increasing our local Special School capacity, we are enabling this vision for 60 children and young pupils who otherwise may need to be educated out of authority.

Temporary accommodation

- 4.21 The intake of KFC will be educated at the Ellesmere site in temporary accommodation for the autumn term of 2021 until a transition to the new KFC in October. This is advantageous as it immediately enables these pupils to be educated in a dedicated SEND facility within the City. The temporary accommodation will then be used for the next planned intake to transition early. The cost of this hire, enabling works and support will be £250k over the full term until April 2022.
- 4.22 Due to delays in the SEND capital programme caused by COVID, mainstream schools have been asked to support 60 pupils until their special

school placements become available. This places significant additional pressure on both mainstream schools and the council as we have a statutory duty to provide suitable full-time education for all of these pupils. Therefore, the maintenance of the temporary accommodation at Ellesmere and the capacity to move these pupils into their special school placements several months earlier than anticipated would be well received by mainstream schools and families and relieve pressures on the wider SEND system.

5 Financial

The report proposes to add an additional £2.8m to Knighton Fields Centre to be funded from government grant provided to support additional SEND school places.

Amy Oliver, Interim Head of Finance – Extn. 37 5667

6. Legal

There will be procurement and legal implications in respect of the works and officers should take early legal advice. Any proposed works are subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (Regulations) and the Council's internal Contract Procedure Rules and as such the Council's Procurement team and Legal services will need to be engaged to provide advice and ensure such works are procured in accordance with the Regulations.

Ongoing legal assistance should be sought as and when required.

Seema Patel, Solicitor, (Commercial, Property and Planning) – Extn. 37 1406

7. Equalities

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

If the report recommendations are agreed it will help the council to ensure it is meeting the needs of children across the city with special educational needs and helping to increase the number of school places to ensure we keep up with demand.

This combined with the benefits of educating pupils close to their home setting in Leicester suggests it will provide a high quality, purpose-built school environment that is an asset to the Council's educational estate.

Accessible and inclusive design will support the general aims of the PSED and will be beneficial particularly in removing barriers to participation. An equalities impact assessment is being carried out so that the consideration of equalities impacts has been taken into account in the development of the proposals and as an integral part of the decision-making process.

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4148

8. Climate change

Schools are a major source of carbon emissions in the city. Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and the development of the council's Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan, addressing these emissions is vital to meet Leicester City Council's ambition to reach carbon neutrality.

As noted within the report, many of the works carried out as part of this project will directly contribute to increasing the energy efficiency of the site, including the identified need for the window replacement programme and roof works, as well as the installation of energy efficient heating and LED lighting systems. As well as reducing carbon emissions, these measures will also reduce energy bills and make the buildings more comfortable for students and teachers. Within the identified need for replacement of mechanical and electrical systems and additional power provision any available opportunities to further increase energy efficiency should also be explored.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

9. List of Appendices

None

10. 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

11 Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?

Yes. Expenditure exceeding £1m is proposed which has not been specifically approved by Council.