

## **Proposed changes to St. Mary's Fields Infant School**

Lead Strategic Director: Elaine McHale

Lead Director: Trevor Pringle

Timeline:

Directorate Management Team: 11 December 2013

Lead Member Briefing: 17 December 2013

Scrutiny Commission: 6 January 2014

Assistant Mayor Decision to proceed: 7 January 2014

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### **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields
- Report author: Rob Thomas (School Organisation Manager)
- Author contact details: Rob Thomas – 0116 3737469
- Report version number: 1.5

## **1. Summary**

Following consideration of a report on Primary Pupil Place Planning (Phase 2) on 29 October 2013 the Assistant City Mayor agreed for the Council to consult on extending the age range and expanding St. Mary's Fields Infant School to create an all-through primary school. The current age range is 3 – 7 (nursery age to Year 2) and it is proposed that the age range will be 3 – 11 (nursery age to Year 6).

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the outcome of the consultation stage of the proposals and seeks approval to proceed to the next stage of the process which requires the issue of a statutory notice, followed by a 6 week representation period.

## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that approval is given to proceed to issue a statutory notice in regard to the prescribed alteration outlined in section 3 below. There will then follow a 6 week representation period before a final decision is taken by the council executive.

An indicative timeline is included in section 3 below which would ensure that approval for the prescribed alterations is achieved by the end of March 2014.

## **3. Background information**

### **The proposal / prescribed alteration**

It is proposed to change the age range and expand St. Mary's Fields Infant School from the current age range of 3 – 7 to an age range of 3 – 11, thus creating an all-through primary school. The proposal, if agreed, would take effect from September 2014.

### **Process**

The process to be followed is defined in "The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007" and in the DfE documents - "Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (Other than Expansion, Foundation, Discontinuance & Establishment Proposals). A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies."

### **The consultation process**

- The consultation commenced on 4 November 2013 and closed on 15 December 2013.

- The consultation involved the distribution of consultation leaflets to a wide range of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, staff and their representatives, governors, diocesan authorities, all city schools and governors at all city schools.
- Responses to the consultation were also sought from Leicestershire County Council and local Members of Parliament.
- The consultation was available on the council's website which allowed for online responses to be submitted.
- To support the consultation process meetings were held at the school with staff and their representatives, governors and parents/carers/ general public. At each meeting the proposals were explained and those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions.
- Those who were consulted were advised that this was not a vote or a referendum, but a chance to make their views known so that they could be taken into account when a decision was made.

#### **Results of the consultation**

- By the close of the consultation on 15 December a total of 42 responses had been submitted online or through paper responses.
- Analysis of the responses shows support for the proposal. 97.6% (41 respondents) of responses support the proposal, with the remaining 2.3% (1 respondent) not expressing a specific view.
- Some of the main comments for supporting the proposal include:
  - Benefits to the children (17)
  - Making life easier for parents (removing element of multiple schools, admission applications etc.) (4)
- A number of comments were made regarding concerns about the proposal:
  - Pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements (4)
  - Ability to accommodate increased numbers of pupils in interim period before Junior block becomes available (1)
  - Any potential job losses due to duplication of roles (1)
- Additionally, three comments were received regarding the need for additional facilities for pupils and staff to accommodate the expansion.
- In addition to the comments received through the online consultation and paper responses, formal responses were received from the school and the governing body expressing their support for the proposal.
- The school undertook engagement with pupils through class discussions and

class votes regarding the proposal.

- In the class votes, 100% of pupils were in favour of the proposal in all year groups.
- A selection of comments from pupils can be found below:
  - *I think is it a good thing for St Marys to become a primary school so we can stay here until we are 11. (Year 3)*
  - *I think it's great that St Mary's is getting bigger because I love this school. (Year 3)*
  - *I think it is a good thing because everyone is kind at St Mary's (Year 3)*
  - *I can't wait to be a Year 3 at St Mary's. (Year 2)*
  - *We love St Marys and we want to stay. (F2 class)*
  - *It will be good to have our young brothers and sisters with us at St Mary's. (Year 2)*
  - *I think it is good idea so we can play with younger children who are our friends. (Year 3)*
  - *I think it's a great idea because the school is kind. (Year 3)*
  - *I think it's a good idea because I don't want to lose my friends. (Year 2)*
  - *I don't want to leave my friends. (Year 2)*
  - *I will miss my friends and the teachers if St Mary's didn't get bigger. (Year 3)*
- A formal response was also received from Leicestershire County Council noting the proposal and stating that the authority had no objections.
- Appendix 1 provides a summary of all responses received to the consultation.

### **Conclusions and next steps**

- The outcome of the consultation shows strong support for the proposals.
- Following the outcomes of the consultation, combined with the educational arguments for creating an 'all through' primary school, it is proposed to proceed to the next stage which requires the publication of a statutory notice followed by a 6 week period for statutory representations. At the end of the 6 week period a further decision will need to be taken by the council to determine whether to

implement the proposal or not.

### **Proposed timeline**

7 January 2014 - Assistant Mayor Decision to proceed  
20 January 2014 - issue of Statutory Notices (6 week statutory representation period)  
2 March 2014 - last day of statutory representation period  
11 March 2014 - Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission  
w/c 17 March 2014 - Stage 4 Executive Decision  
September 2014 - implementation date

## **4. Details of Scrutiny**

As detailed above, the purpose of the report is to advise on the outcome of a consultation process to make changes to St Mary's Fields Infant School. The consultation process included meetings with stakeholder groups together with opportunities to ask questions and the completion of response forms either online or through the post/collection from the school.

The planned expansion and change to the age range was considered and endorsed by the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission on 29 October 2013 alongside other proposals contained in a report on Primary Pupil Place Planning (Phase 2).

## **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

### 5.1 Financial implications

St Mary's have been awarded additional funding to support the two class expansion in 2012/13 from the Schools Facing Exceptional Cost Pressures fund within the Dedicated Schools Grant. The school will need to bid into this fund for a further 3 years until the school is at capacity. This is because the census data on which the school's budget is calculated is always one year behind the academic year.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance (Ext: 397500)

### 5.2 Legal implications

The requirements for making these changes follow a five stage process of consultation, publication of proposals, allowing for a period of representations, making a decision and implementing the decision. It is important to note that all that is being sought at this stage is approval to progress to Stage 2. This requires merely consideration of the views expressed during the consultation period before reaching a decision on whether to publish statutory proposals. Making of the actual expansion decision is not sought, and the Council must be clear not to express too firm a view upon the merits of the ultimate decision(s) at this early stage.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards (Ext: 37 1401)

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There is no climate change implication associated with the consultation or statutory representation process. Climate change implications may result in the future if any building alterations take place.

Mark Jeffcote, Environment Team (Ext: 372251)

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

The main protected characteristic affected by the proposal is age (children). The consultation just completed involving main stakeholders identified no adverse impacts potentially arising from the proposal and were in support of the proposal. Stakeholders will have an additional opportunity to comment in the next stage of the decision making process.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead (Ext: 374147)

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

**6. Background information and other papers:**

**7. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1: Summary of responses to the consultation

**8. 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

**9. Is this a “key decision”?**

No

**10. If a key decision please explain reason**

Not applicable.