

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - CALL IN PANEL

MINUTES of the meeting held at LB 31 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 30 March 2016 from 10.00 - 11.14

Membership

Present

Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Anne Peach
Councillor Andrew Rule

Absent

Councillor Azad Choudhry

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Jim Armstrong	- Call-in co-signatory
Robert Caswell	- Programme Manager
Councillor Georgina Culley	- Call-in co-signatory
Lucy Juby	- Project Manager
Rav Kalsi	- Senior Governance Officer
Nick Lee	- Acting Head of School Improvement
Councillor Sam Webster	- Portfolio Holder for Schools

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

10 CONFIRMATION OF VALIDITY OF CALL-IN

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair) explained the procedure for the hearing to the attendees. He outlined the reasons for the call-in and requested the Panel to confirm its validity. Councillor Parbutt also requested for Councillors to not refer to the exempt appendix, whilst the public were in the room.

RESOLVED to confirm the call-in request as valid on the following grounds:

(1) Relevant information not considered:

The impact of the increased capacity on the surrounding area in terms of traffic flow and parking provision is not addressed in either the business plan or Delegated Decision.

(2) Viable alternatives not considered:

The building of an additional school in Wollaton to increase provision in the area.

11 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-IN REQUEST

Following the report from the Head of Democratic Services, the Committee was asked to:

- consider the information provided in relation to Delegated Decision 2370 and the reasons given for requesting a call-in of that decision and use that information to inform questioning and discussion;
- focus on the reasons for the call-in as given in the call-in request form, and based on the evidence from the Portfolio Holder, his supporting colleague(s), and the councillors who requested the call-in decide to either:
 - i) require that the decision is reconsidered, and make recommendation(s) as to what should be taken into consideration; or
 - ii) agree that the decision does not need to be reconsidered and can be implemented.

Councillor Sam Webster, Portfolio Holder for Schools, presented the Panel with the following information in relation to the reasons for taking the decision:

- (a) Consultation on the proposal to expand Fernwood School from 840 to 1050 places ran from 21 September to 18 September 2015, with parents, carers, staff and governors. There was a significant shortage of reception places in Wollaton for 2015/16 and the shortage is expected to remain for 2016/17. The relevant ward councillors have also been briefed in advance of the decision;
- (b) Ahead of the planned permanent expansion to a 1050 place school, the Governing Body at Fernwood Primary School agreed to accommodate a bulge year of 30 pupils for 2015/16;
- (c) Fernwood Primary School supports the need to take a further bulge year of 30 pupils in September 2016 in order to meet the need of the local catchment; however there is no available classroom space to accommodate them without additional classrooms;
- (d) The Council is acutely aware of the traffic management concerns around Fernwood Primary School and it was one of the main themes raised and explored as part of the consultation process to permanently expand the school. There is a need to balance the objections against long-term expansion and the need for school places in the area. The Council will be making every effort to work together with the school, Police and other relevant stakeholders, to assess and address any impact and whether further measures are required to mitigate any impact;

- (e) Fernwood Primary School has no remaining space available therefore, the additional classroom for the bulge year is required. Local authorities no longer have the power to build new maintained schools however they do have a statutory duty to provide school places.

The call-in signatories responded with the following information:

- (f) Traffic and parking in the area will be exacerbated by expansion - an over intensification of the site;
- (g) Questions remain over the size of the classrooms, and the provision of additional meals;
- (h) The Primary school currently has over 100 pupils outside the catchment area attending the school – accommodating this number of children from outside of the catchment area does mean that local children will have to look elsewhere or go on the waiting list;
- (i) Councillor Jim Armstrong raised concerns that he has been contacted by a number of parents who were unaware of the consultation process. Councillor Jim Armstrong added that 57% of people that responded to the consultation were against the proposals to expand Fernwood Primary School;
- (j) The Council had missed the opportunity to build on other available sites in the City, such as the Sandfield site, despite projections in 2009 reporting that 2,000 more school places would be required in the coming years. The call-in signatories argued that the proposed expansion would have an adverse effect on the quality of school dinners as lunch periods will be rushed and overstretched.

In response to the points raised, members of the Call-in Panel made the following points:

- (k) Nottingham City Council has a legal responsibility to provide sufficient school places in Nottingham. There are traffic concerns around most schools in the city and the Council has to strike a balance between providing local school places for children and managing traffic issues in the City;
- (l) The Council does not have the power to build new maintained schools in the City. Councillors from all political backgrounds on the Local Government Association have lobbied the national government to restore this power to local authorities;
- (m) Applications for free schools are made to the Department for Education (DfE), not the relevant local authority and the DfE may contact the Head of Access and Learning at Nottingham City Council in relation to this. Ultimately, free school applications are progressed by national government.

RESOLVED to agree that delegated decision 2370, 'Approval of the allocation of funding for the provision of additional accommodation at Fernwood Primary

School for September 2016' does not need to be reconsidered and can be implemented for the following reasons:

- **the Portfolio Holder for Schools carried out consultation with teachers, staff, parents and the relevant Ward Councillors. This was supplemented with views from the community and statutory notices were produced and displayed in the area;**
- **the Portfolio Holder for Schools has committed to continuing to work with the schools' governing body to address traffic concerns, whilst acknowledging that traffic and parking concerns adjacent to school sites is a city-wide concern, not just in Wollaton.**

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item(s) in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs in the public interest in disclosing the information.

13 CONFIRMATION OF VALIDITY OF CALL-IN

RESOLVED to note the information contained within the exempt appendix.