

SCHOOLS FORUM - July 2013

Title of paper:	Increased Capacity at Westbury Special School	
Corporate Director / Director:	Candida Brudenell – Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families Tim O’Neill – Director of Families and Communities	Wards affected: All
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Summary The Local Authority (LA) has increasingly limited capacity in specialist maintained provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties whose needs cannot be met within mainstream schools. This issue is further compounded by the rising birth rate which is already putting significant pressure on primary places across the City. Without increasing the capacity of Westbury School, the LA will need to commission independent specialist day provision to meet the needs of this growing cohort of young people. £0.094m will be required to fund a modular building to accommodate 16 additional learners at Westbury.		
Recommendation:		
1. To approve funding the initial capital cost of £0.094m from the Statutory School Reserve.		

1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1 The LA has increasingly limited capacity in specialist maintained provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties whose needs cannot be met within mainstream schools.

The annual Statistical First Release (SFR) ‘Special Educational Needs in England’, published by the Department for Education brings together information available on Special Educational Needs in England, based on pupil level data collected via the School Census and LA level data collected via the SEN2 survey.

The SFR for January 2012 highlights the following:

- In Nottingham’s primary schools, the most prevalent needs are Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties (BESD), Speech, Communication and Language Needs, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

- In Nottingham's secondary schools, the most prevalent needs are BESD, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

1.2 Annual census data reports a proportional increase in pupils with BESD at statemented and school action plus of over 5% at primary age and over 10% at secondary age since 2008.

In addition:

- There has been a 29% increase in the number of 0 to 4 year olds, rising from 15,457 in 2001 to 19,959 in 2011.
- The number of annual births within the city has gone from 3,200 in 2000 to 4,500 in 2011.
- Significant inward migration has also impacted on the City population.
- The City school population has risen by nearly 3,000 (2,994) pupils since 2009 and looks set to continue increasing with a rising birth rate in the City. Our planning assumes a further increase in the city school population of 2,575 between now and 2016/17 giving a total increase of 5,569 pupils since 2009.

1.3 The cost of an additional place at Westbury School is £0.025m; comparable costs for an independent day placement are £0.050m. These figures do not include the additional costs incurred for example transport.

The LA proposes to increase the capacity of Westbury School by 8 places for the academic year 2013/14 and a further 8 places for the academic year 2014/15, this is an overall increase in capacity of 35%.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 A range of options has been considered to ensure that the LA has sufficient capacity in alternatives to mainstream school to meet the needs of this challenging cohort of young people. Increasing the capacity at Westbury School has emerged as demonstrating the best value for money, providing an appropriately robust curriculum to ensure that these young people achieve their highest possible academic and social outcomes.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 There are very few other providers within the 'travel to learn' area that are able to offer a sufficiently robust curriculum to maximise outcomes for this cohort. Eastwood Grange (£0.061m p.a.) and Ascot College (£0.045m p.a.) are the closest independent providers of BESD day provision, both in Derbyshire.

The most recent Ofsted report for Eastwood Grange categorises the school as inadequate. The May 2012 Ofsted report for Ascot College categorises the school as providing a satisfactory standard of education, however there has recently been significant staffing instability including a change of Head teacher and a number of the senior management team.

Holistic placement costs would be significantly increased by the individual home to school transport arrangements for pupils accessing their education at either of these establishments.

In contrast, the last two Ofsted inspections at Westbury School have defined the school as good with outstanding features, and have particularly singled out the school's outstanding curriculum for praise. Transport links within the City are flexible and provide a range of low cost solutions for home to school transport.

A further option considered was to increase the commissioning of alternative provision for this cohort of young people, but this was discounted for the following reasons:

- Alternative provision is not available for pupils of primary age.
- Secondary schools would commission alternative provision through the secondary schools partnership for pupils for whom it would be suitable, but the level of challenge posed by this cohort require staffing with specialist knowledge and skills in the area of behavioural, emotional and social needs, above and beyond what is normally available in alternative provision.
- The majority of this cohort of young people are working at age related expectations and require access to a comprehensive and robust GCSE curriculum not normally available in alternative provision.

4. OUTCOMES/DELIVERABLES

- 4.1 By September 2013 it is expected that the new modular building will be in situ and providing accommodation for 8 additional places for statemented young people with BESD between the ages of 7 and 16. By September 2014 the school will have developed the staffing capacity to offer a further 8 places.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 5.1 The initial funding of £0.094m could be provided from the SSR; this currently has an uncommitted balance, after risk mitigation, of £0.881m.
- 5.2 The costs incurred in 2013/14 by the additional pupils will be supported by the schools organisation contingency and/or the High Needs block contingency. This allocation will align to the contingency growth formula. This formula is included in the Schools Forum Report dated 18 July 2013.

The inclusion of these pupils will be noted on the schools roll through the census and will attract direct Dedicated Schools Grant funding from 2014/15.

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6. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

- 6.1 The LA has a duty under the Education Act to review its arrangements to make special educational provision, and ensure that sufficient capacity is made available.

Additional provision within Westbury school will provide this cohort with the best opportunity for achieving good grades at GCSE alongside vocational education accreditation. Given appropriate support, this cohort of young people has the potential to attain significant qualifications and the skills required to become economically active.

7. OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

Not applicable

8 HR Observations

HR have reviewed this report and there are no people/HR implications noted.

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9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An EIA is not required as this decision does not relate to new or changing policies, services or functions.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

None.

11. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

None.