

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CALL IN PANEL
30 MARCH 2016
APPROVAL OF THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION AT FERNWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2016
REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Justifications as contained within the Executive Decision Call-In Request Form with respect of the allocation of funding for the provision of additional accommodation at Fernwood Primary School for September 2016.

2. Action required

- 2.1 This report is for clarification purposes.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The national shortage of primary school places has been reflected across the City and extra capacity has been added in many schools. In the Wollaton area there is a continued upward trend of pupil growth in the coming years due to an increased birth rate, the continuing popularity of the area particularly with families moving into the area and new housing developments. There was a significant shortage of reception catchment places in Wollaton for 2015/16 and the shortage is set to remain for 2016/17 onwards.
- 3.2 Consultation on the proposal to expand the school from 840 to 1050 places ran from 21 September to 18 October 2015, with parents, carers, staff and governors. The local Ward Councillors were also briefed in advance of this on 15 September 2015 and provided with the dates of the various consultation events. Ahead of this permanent expansion (subject to consultation) the Governing Body at the school agreed to accommodate a bulge year of 30 pupils for 2015/16. In order to accommodate these pupils the space used for breakfast club was converted into a classroom (DD 2184). The continued demand for catchment places within the reception age is explained and evidenced by colleagues in School Organisation Team in DD 2164.
- 3.3 For ease of reference, this report addresses the matters raised under the sub-sections 'Reason for requesting call-in' as contained within the Call-In report which are shown detailed below.

Reason for requesting Call-in

c) 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.”

d) Viable alternatives not considered

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

Relevant information not considered

- 3.4 This DDM is to request approval to allocate funding for the provision of two additional KS1 classrooms. Fernwood Primary already admitted a bulge year of 30 extra pupils in Sept 2015, who were accommodated in existing space within the school. For Sept 2015 admissions, there were an additional 18 on time catchment applications. If the school had not helpfully admitted an additional 30 pupils, these catchment children would have been refused admission to the school. The school support the need to take a further bulge year (30 extra pupils) this Sept 2016 to meet the need of the local catchment, however, there is no available classroom space to accommodate them, without provision of additional classrooms.
- 3.5 The DDM (to allocate funding for the provision of additional KS1 classrooms) has been submitted ahead of the Exec Board report on 22nd March. The reason being that, regardless of whether a permanent expansion is agreed or not, additional classroom space will still be required to accommodate the extra class joining in September, as the school have no remaining space. The timescale for this work programme is particularly tight in order to make provision for this September 16. If the building contractor does not commence on site by 4th April, completing the build in the required timescale is looking doubtful. The implications of this are significant for the school and the children and families they serve, in that there will be nowhere to accommodate the children joining in September.
- 3.6 The impact of the increased pupil numbers on traffic management has been raised and explored during the consultation process for the proposal to permanently expand the school, as this would involve a gradual increase of 210 pupils over the course of the 7 year period.
- 3.7 As detailed in the Executive Board report dated 22 Dec 2015, we are acutely aware of the traffic management concerns, which was one of the main themes raised during the consultation process on the proposal to permanently expand the school. The Exec Board report highlighted how the Council needs to balance such objections against

the long term need for school places, both for current and future pupils. A commitment was made that the traffic concerns will be considered in terms of prioritising any mitigating actions that are required to make the proposal work for all pupils, if it is approved. Although the proposal for permanent expansion has not yet been approved (being considered at Exec Board 22 March 15), work has already been happening to consider and address the impact of increased pupil numbers on traffic flow and parking. This is not an issue which is being ignored. We are making every effort to work with the school, Traffic Management, the Police and other relevant stakeholders, to assess and address any impact if required, exploring the viability of potential measures to mitigate any impact.

- 3.8 A “Week of Action” to raise awareness, to encourage responsible parking and driving and address traffic management issues is arranged for 25th-29th April, with the full support of the school
- 3.9 A pre-meet to organise the “Week of Action” took place on 22nd March, with a range of stakeholders, including the Ward Councillors for the area, the School, Police Community Support Officers, Traffic Management colleagues and School Organisation This was a positive and productive meeting to support and promote changes with the prime focus of making it safer for children travelling to school. Engagement will also take place with local residents during the “Week of Action.”
- 3.10 The School’s Travel Plan is being reviewed and updated, to raise awareness, reflect the issues and any solutions which are identified throughout this process.
- 3.11 A traffic assessment by an independent company is also undertaken as a legal requirement of the planning permission process. Any recommendations arising from this will be considered in conjunction with any other evidence of measures required to mitigate the impact of growing pupil numbers, which are already being explored, as above.

Viable alternatives not considered

- 3.12 The specific DDM in question, requests funding for the building of two KS1 classrooms by September 2016. The school are needing to admit another bulge year this Sept 16 for the second year running, otherwise there will be insufficient places for some children in the catchment area. Regardless of whether a permanent expansion is agreed or not, an additional classroom will still be required to accommodate the extra class joining in September, as the school have no remaining space. The alternative to building extra classroom space to accommodate an additional 30 children in Sept 16, would be to prevent the school from increasing capacity and therefore failing to address the school place need of the local catchment (as covered in the DDM ‘other options considered’).

- 3.13 Paragraph 3 of the EB report dated 22 Dec 15, which proposed a permanent expansion of the school, detailed the 'other options considered in making the recommendations.' It explains the other options considered and why they were not viable. The building of a new free school was considered as an option, as stated. This was not considered viable as, having explored the possibility of alternative sites, no suitable site is available.
- 3.14 Middleton Primary School also had to admit some additional children (10) in September 2015, otherwise there would have been insufficient places for children in their catchment. Discussions and feasibility work are still progressing with Middleton primary with regards to a permanent expansion, but are not yet advanced to a firm proposal.
- 3.15 Projections data and intelligence supports the rationale for two additional forms of entry in Wollaton. So regardless of whether the proposal to expand Fernwood Primary is agreed or not, we still require another viable solution to increase places in the area.

4. List of attached information

- 4.1 None.

5. Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None.

6. Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Portfolio Holder decision to commence consultation:
[http://resmodw2k121/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3409&\\$LO\\$=1](http://resmodw2k121/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3409&LO=1)
- 6.2 Portfolio Holder decision 2184 – Early Works including design development to allow Fernwood Infant and Junior to expand.
<http://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3430>
- 6.3 Executive Board report – 'Proposed expansion of Fernwood Primary School, Wollaton', 22 December 2015
- 6.4 Executive Board report - 'Proposed expansion of Fernwood Primary School, Wollaton', 22 March 2016

7. Wards affected

- 7.1 Wollaton West.

8. Contact information

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