

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF RUSHCLIFFE SCHOOL

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of secondary school places in the West Bridgford planning area to meet future projected need by approving the funding of master planning and feasibility work looking into the ability of Rushcliffe School to expand to 12 forms of entry.

Information

2. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) has a statutory duty to secure a sufficiency of school places for all children of statutory school age (5-16 years old) whose parents want them to be educated in a state-funded school. As the Local Authority's role shifts to that of being a 'commissioner' of school places, it will be necessary to work in a different way with a diverse range of providers and different models of governance. The future landscape of education provision in Nottinghamshire is expected to be a 'mixed economy' approach, characterised by a wide variety of schools, academies and other providers.
3. In April 2019 Policy Committee approved a report investing £500,000 towards the planned expansion of Rushcliffe School to ensure a sufficiency of secondary school places in the West Bridgford planning area for September 2019. It was reported that to house 330 year 7 pupils in September 2019 the school needed to provide necessary classroom and specialist areas over the summer 2019. It was also noted that plans for the future further expansion of the school were being developed in partnership with the Trust and proposals, including cost estimates, would be brought forward for consideration by Policy Committee.
4. The report also updated Members on the emerging proposals to secure a medium to long term plan to ensure a sufficiency of secondary school places in the West Bridgford planning area by September 2025 and Committee requested further updates on this. On 18th September 2019 a further report to Policy Committee considered the provision of secondary places in the area further and approved the principle of Basic Need funding to allow the expansion of Rushcliffe School to 12 forms of entry in the short and medium term, the costs of demolishing the former Rushcliffe Leisure Centre to be taken from the Council's wider demolition programme and the principle of the construction of a third secondary school.

Way Forward

5. The Trust has undertaken some high-level master planning of the school site to look at options for the delivery of the required works to meet the additional proposed places and this has given sufficient confidence that there is potential for a successful outcome. Members will be aware that the former leisure centre sits centrally within the site and its demolition would form

part of any reconfiguring and development of the site. The school site is indicated edged on the attached plan with the Council's retained ownership coloured grey which includes the gym and former leisure centre.

6. In order to move proposals forward it is now necessary to undertake detailed master planning and feasibility work which will be commissioned by the Trust. It would be intended that this would result in draft designs, programme and costings with a view to a further report to Policy Committee to confirm the outcomes and potentially to seek further funding for delivery. The initial work has been costed at £250,000. Arc Partnership has considered the proposed costs for the individual elements of work involved and confirmed they are reasonable. It is proposed that Arc will continue in a monitoring role through this stage of work at a cost of £10,000.
7. The Council has pupil place issues for September 2022 and to achieve additional places at Rushcliffe by then to meet this demand the first phase of proposed works, the provision of a new sports hall and classrooms, would need to be complete. To achieve this it will be necessary to prepare a planning application to point of submission simultaneously with the master planning work at a cost of £90,000. The consequence of not undertaking this work now will be to slip the additional capacity to September 2023 although this expenditure could ultimately prove abortive dependant on the results of the master planning.

Other Options Considered

8. As detailed in this and previous reports the options to deliver secondary school places have been considered and the proposed expansion of Rushcliffe School plays a role in the delivery of the overall places needed. Not progressing at Rushcliffe would lead to a short fall of places needed to be found elsewhere.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of school places across the county. The West Bridgford planning area is an area that will require additional school places.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Implications for Service Users

12. The provision of additional school places within the West Bridgford planning area will help to ensure pupils can be accommodated at their school of choice.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

13. The provision of schools serving the immediate local area will reduce the need to travel.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That approval is given to:

- 1) The completion of a funding agreement with the Spencer Academy Trust to provide funding of £340,000 for the master planning and feasibility of the development of the school site for extension of the school to 12 forms of entry and preparation of a planning application to submission stage to achieve first release of additional places for September 2022.
- 2) The commissioning of Arc Partnership to undertake an assurance role through the course of the funding agreement at a cost of £10,000.
- 3) A further report to be brought to Policy Committee on the results of the master planning and feasibility works.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS, MBE
Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Neil Gamble, Group Manager, Property Asset Management, t: 0115 977 3045; e: neil.gamble@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (SS 16/03/2020)

14. Policy Committee is the correct Committee to consider and decide on this report.

Financial Comments (GB 24/03/2020)

15. The £0.35m capital expenditure identified in this report can be accommodated within the School Places Programme which is already approved within the Children and Young People's Committee capital programme. If the feasibility works undertaken do not result in a capital project the costs will be classed as abortive fees and will need to be funded from a revenue budget. If this is the case, these costs will be met from within the Corporate Property budget.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Proposed Basic Need Programme of School Expansions 2018/19 – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18th December 2017
- Basic Need Allocation for the Rushcliffe School - report to Policy Committee on 24th April 2019
- Secondary School Provision in West Bridgford – report to Policy Committee on 18th September 2019

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- West Bridgford North Councillor E Plant
- West Bridgford South Councillor J Wheeler
- West Bridgford West Councillor G Wheeler