

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE AND EXPANSION
LAND - NORTH OF GATEFORD PARK WORKSOP****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of primary school places in the Worksop (Bassetlaw) planning area to meet future projected need by approving the purchase of and the funding required to secure the proposed Primary School site and expansion land at Harlequin Drive, Gateford Park, Worksop and to install security fencing to the entire perimeter.

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 May 2015, Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council signed a Section 106 Agreement with Land Improvement Holdings (LIH) Landmatch, relating to a development of up to 750 new homes known as Gateford Park. The Agreement provides that upon completion of the 450th dwelling the County Council is able to acquire the serviced 1.1 hectare site indicated edged on the attached plan for the sum of £1.00 (one pound), upon which to initially develop a 210-place primary school which would be capable of expansion if required. In addition, a £2,567,000 (Two Million, Five Hundred and Sixty-Seven Thousand Pounds) contribution towards the construction cost of the school is included in the Agreement. The first 10% of the funding available has already been received by Bassetlaw District Council. The next 40% will be paid upon the Council securing planning consent to build the school; 30% upon completion of Phase 1 of the school; and the final 20% to be paid 12 months after the completion of the school. Therefore, the ability to secure and receive the outstanding 90% of the contribution is reliant upon the Council securing a planning consent and constructing the new school.
4. The Agreement also includes a clause enabling the County Council to acquire an adjoining additional piece of land of 0.4 hectares as indicated hatched on the attached plan limited to use as school expansion land for the sum of £40,000 (forty thousand pounds). The purchase of this land would give the Council greater flexibility into the future for the provision of a larger school at this location to meet potentially increasing demand for places. It is to be noted that from date of purchase the Council will have 5 years to bring the site into use for a purpose

associated with the primary school or will be required to offer the land back to the developer at the same price as purchased for.

5. There may be a delay in between acquiring this site and starting development of the school. Arc is currently preparing a planning application for a security fence which will enclose the primary school land and the expansion land. These costs are estimated to be approximately £150,000. In addition to fencing the site will be subject to regular security inspections and subject to maintenance to keep clean and tidy.
6. Nottinghamshire County Council will be required to forward-fund this project from its Basic Need programme, with tranches of Section 106 money being received on completion of the triggers outlined above.
7. There is a significant risk that the construction cost of this school will exceed £4 million, based upon recently-completed school projects. Any additional budget will need to be found from the Council's Basic Need education budget.
8. It is anticipated that the land acquisition (£40k) and fencing works will be completed during the 2020/2021 financial year; there is some uncertainty as to when the new school will be required, however it is anticipated that construction will start in 2022, with a 52 week build period.

Other Options Considered

9. The housing development associated with this proposal is in the catchment of Gateford Park Primary School. A detailed site analysis has demonstrated that further expansion on this site is impossible. The site is too small. Consideration has been given to allowing the school places required by this development to be delivered by other schools in the Worksop planning area. The distances to other schools and the size of the roads that parents would be required to cross have caused this option to be dismissed.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of school places across the county. The Worksop planning area is an area that will require additional school places. By securing ownership of a larger site the future growth at the new school is made more deliverable. The Department for Education has indicated that wherever possible local authorities should commission the building of larger schools i.e. schools bigger than 1 form of entry (210 places). The availability of a 1.5 hectare site for a new school has scope for further expansion, whereas one on a 1.1 hectare site has no scope for further growth.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. 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

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

Implications for Service Users

13. The provision of additional school places within the Bassetlaw/Worksop planning area will help to ensure pupils can be accommodated at their school of choice.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

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

RECOMMENDATION/S

That approval is given to:

- 1) The purchase of approximately 1.1 hectares of land at Gateford Park in the sum of £1 for school construction to meet pupil place need in the planning area, the purchase of 0.4 hectares of adjacent expansion land in the sum of £40,000 (forty thousand pounds) and £150,000 of costs associated with the security fence.
- 2) The purchase to be forward-funded from the Council's Basic Need education budget.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS, MBE

Leader of the Council

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Constitutional Comments (SS 07/08/2020)

15. This report is appropriate to be considered by Policy Committee.

Financial Comments (GB 11/08/2020)

16. It is proposed that the £190,001 costs set out in this report will be forward-funded from the Basic Need capital programme, which is already approved within the 2020/21 capital programme at a value of £13.3m, until the S106 contributions are received by the Authority.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- Electoral Division(s): Worksop West - Member(s): Councillor Sybil Fielding