

15th March 2021

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

BASIC NEED PROGRAMME OF SCHOOL EXPANSION 2021-22

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to take the list of projects identified in **Appendix 1** forward to feasibility.
2. The report also seeks Committee approval to use Basic Need to forward fund projects for which housing developer contributions will be available, but not at the time at which additional school places are required. Furthermore, it seeks approval to use Basic Need funding to cover the shortfall between the total cost of a project and the total housing developer contributions that are available.

Information

3. Nottinghamshire County Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places for children resident in the County.
4. On an annual basis the Council makes a statutory return to the Department for Education (DfE) outlining the net capacity and levels of occupation in its schools. This School Capacity return (SCAP) informs the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) allocation of the level of 'Basic Need' grant for new school places in the County due to population growth.
5. The assessment of Basic Need for the period 2021-22, has been determined by the ESFA and Nottinghamshire has been allocated £16,403,975. This assessment is informed by the Department's judgement as to the sufficiency issues Nottinghamshire faces arising from their analysis of the School Capacity return which was made in Autumn 2019.
6. Basic Need funding is not ring fenced and comes with no recommendations as to which schools or planning areas should be allocated capital funding. It must be deployed to address capital issues and cannot be used to address revenue issues.
7. Officers in Pupil Place Planning work in close conjunction with partner services in School Admissions, Planning, Place, and Information and Systems to interrogate all available data in respect of projected demand for places and identify where the most pressing and appropriate sites for expansion lie.

8. In the past the Council has been required to organise mobile classrooms to meet urgent teaching requirements with temporary planning permissions. On a predictable basis these come to the end of their permission or to the end of their viable life. The Basic Need allocation has been used over the years to replace these with permanent classrooms where data indicates that places are still required.
9. Projections data indicates that the primary 'bulge', first noted in 2011, has moved through the primary phase into the secondary phase.
10. Project feasibility studies will establish the risks associated with all the proposals identified in **Appendix 1**. The outcomes of feasibility will inform Elected Members as to where proposed projects are undeliverable, poor value for money or appropriate and meet service needs.

Other Options Considered

11. Projects could proceed to planning without feasibility, but this would not then allow risks to be identified and is therefore not considered to be a viable option.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. Feasibility costs represent good value for money when compared with the costs associated with abortive planning and design costs which would be incurred without prior feasibility establishing the suitability of proposals.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. 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

14. Where the feasibility works result in a capital project, the costs of the feasibility will be funded from the approved Basic Need school places capital programme. Where a capital project does not ensue, the cost of the feasibility works is not able to be funded from capital resources. As such, these costs will need to be met from within the Place department revenue budget.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) gives approval for the list of projects identified in **Appendix 1** to be taken forward to feasibility.

- 2) gives approval to use Basic Need to forward fund projects for which housing developer contributions will be available, but not at the time at which additional school places are required. Furthermore, it gives approval to use Basic Need funding to cover the shortfall between the total cost of a project and the total housing developer contributions that are available.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 16/02/21)

15. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (GB 16/02/21)

16. The 2021/22 Basic Need allocation of £16.4m is already approved within the Children and Young People's capital programme. If the feasibility costs set out in this report result in a capital programme they will be funded from the School Places programme. Where a capital project does not ensue the costs will be abortive in nature and will need to be met from the Place department revenue budget. Where the Council receives additional section 106 contributions, the capital programme will need to be varied in line with the usual capital approval processes.

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.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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