

13th December 2021

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND
SKILLS****BASIC NEED PROGRAMME OF SCHOOL EXPANSION 2022-23****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to take the list of projects identified in **Appendix 1** forward into detailed discussions with schools in the relevant planning areas, and potential 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 outlining the net capacity and projected levels of occupation in its schools. This School Capacity return informs the Education Skills and Funding Agency 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 2022-23 has been determined by the Education Skills and Funding Agency and Nottinghamshire has been allocated £1,198,811. This assessment is informed by the Department's judgement as to the sufficiency issues Nottinghamshire faces arising from the School Capacity returns.
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. Wherever possible, housing developer contributions available in the relevant planning area will be used to defray costs of projects funded using Basic Need.
9. 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

10. 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

11. 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

12. 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

13. 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.
14. A School Capital Programme report was considered at Children and Young People's Committee in November 2021. This included an update on the School Places programme and set out new school projects, expansion projects and recently completed projects within the programme. As at 1st April 2021, the approved capital programme included funding in excess of £44m to fund this programme of work which is forecast to be sufficient to cover costs incurred to the end of the 2023/24 financial year. It is then expected that a further multi-year Basic Need Grant announcement from the Department for Education will set out future year grant allocations.

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 (LPW 19/11/21)

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 19/11/21)

16. The School Places programme is included within the approved Children and Young People's Committee capital programme as set out in **paragraph 14**. Where additional Section 106 funding is identified to part fund a project there will be a requirement to seek approval to vary the capital programme through the usual channels. The forward funding of projects from the School Places programme is possible, subject to cash flow issues. Also, as set out in **paragraph 13**, if feasibility costs are incurred that do not lead to a capital project, the cost of the feasibility will need to be met from within Place Department revenue budgets

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 & Young People's Committee on 18th December 2017](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1523