

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

28 May 2021

APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MAINSTREAM AUTISM BASE AT CHADDESLEY CORBETT ENDOWED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Relevant Cabinet Member

Councillor M J Hart

Relevant Officer

Interim Director of Children's Services

Local Member

Councillor M J Hart

Recommendation

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education is recommended:**
 - (a) to approve the publication of Public Notice of the proposal to establish a mainstream autism base at Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School in accordance with delegated authority to prescribed alterations to maintained schools;**
 - (b) to note that in accordance with the delegation of authority given by the Leader on 25 April 2018 the Director of Children Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education will determine the proposals following no objection to the Public Notice being received; and**
 - (c) to review all representations received during the Public Notice stage should objections be received in order to decide on the proposal.**

Background

1. To fulfil the statutory duties for the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), Worcestershire Children First (WCF) are seeking to expand provision for pupils with autism via extension of existing and/or establishment of new mainstream autism bases (MABs) at both primary and secondary level, across the County.
2. These resource provisions support vulnerable learners and their integration, as far as possible, with mainstream education, while allowing the child a safe, nurturing environment as needed to optimise the opportunities for these children to succeed. Development of further bases would enhance autism specific provision to WCF referred children, increase the ability for the MAB to offer

assessment/interim placements and continue to development of high level skills of staff and advisers, becoming centres of expertise. These outcomes respond to the principles of Worcestershire SEND Strategy and resource management of the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Management Plan.

3. Capital funding received in 2020 was matched to this priority and bids were requested from schools wishing to offer mainstream autism bases. The award was based on ten key assessment principals including inclusivity within the whole school, staffing and financial cost per place as well as timescales, and detailed delivery plans.
4. Expressions of interest were invited, and ten proposals were received from primary, middle, and secondary schools.

New provision

5. Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School (CCEPS) submitted a successful bid for a 10 place base to be open within the mainstream site at CCEPS for children aged between 4 and 11 years old. The school is a one form entry (PAN 210) Voluntary Aided primary school assisted by the Chaddesley Corbett Educational Foundation, a charity owning the land and buildings of CCEPS within the district of Wyre Forest. The school is rated Good by OFSTED (2019).
6. The school is situated in a rural village and draws pupils from a diverse area. It is a wholly inclusive school where diversity is celebrated, and with strong moral values underpinning its practice. Externally, the school enjoys 8 acres of open space, and the curriculum offers unique opportunities for outdoor learning, including forest school, sensory garden, and therapeutic horticulture.
7. The current school offer is very attractive for families seeking provision appropriate for children with autism and allied barriers to learning with a nurture room already available providing a base for the growing number of children with ASD and allied difficulties requiring a more nuanced blend of 1:1 and small group teaching with larger class provision for individuals struggling to progress. Self-referral processes accompany staff referral to allow children and families to explore what patterns of provision will enable optimal success.
8. This new provision will enable WCF to offer children a higher level of support ensuring that the most vulnerable stay within their community and reduce their travel distances.
9. Staff at the school are highly trained, and the school has a strong SEND inclusive practice with the SENCo recognised as a national Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) for SEND. It will positively augment the educational and social experience of all CCEPS children and promote career enhancing development for staff whilst better supporting their own well-being needs via engagement with, and support from, autism specialist staff.

Accommodation needs

10. The provision would require new accommodation on the school site. This would be built during 2021, with the 10 places being available to commission by WCF

from September 2022. There may be a reduced number of places available from January 2022 in a partial opening of the provision at that stage.

11. It is proposed to site the building at the rear of the music room and to link it to the main building. Additionally, within the main school a “portal” room will be established which will serve both children based in the MAB and children from existing classes. Plans are being drawn up by a local property consultant and will be made available on the school website.
12. The feasibility report identifies that £380,000 will be required to develop the classroom space and ancillary facilities.

Consultation

13. An informal consultation was led by the school from 15 March 2021 to 25 April 2021.
14. Five responses were received following two public meetings via Zoom where parents and different stakeholders were shown a short presentation and allowed time to discuss the proposal. Four of the five responses were positive and agreed to the proposal and one response was negative. The negative response was based on a child's experience with an autistic child and their concerns were discussed individually with the school leaders. The school feels issues raised during the consultation have been addressed and reasons put forward for not wanting the base have been resolved.
15. The school has worked continuously to establish an ethos of true inclusivity and celebration of diversity and is well known for its attention to maintaining strong trusting relationships with all stakeholders.
16. The governors took note of issues raised during the consultation and at the full Governors meeting on 28 April 2021 agreed to submit a formal proposal to expand the school to include a mainstream autism base.

Recommendations

17. In April 2018 the Leader of the Council delegated authority for the publication of statutory proposals for prescribed alterations to maintained schools to the Director of Children Services and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education (Previously Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) as set out in Appendix 1. This delegated authority was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2020.
18. Given the above information, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education is recommended to approve the publication of public notices for this proposal and approve the publication of the representation stage documents for a significant change in line with the prescribed alterations regulations.
19. The Public Notice period is proposed to begin on 7 June 2021 and will end at noon on the 4 July 2021, following which, a final decision on the approval of this proposal will be made, taking into account any representations received during this period.

20. If no objection is received in this period, then the final decision will be made by the Interim Director of Children's Services in accordance with the agreed delegation. Should objections be received, all representations will be reviewed by, and final decision made by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

21. The facility will operate from a new building being funded from the capital allocation awarded to WCF by the DfE in March 2020 to create new places for children with SEND. The building will meet school standard, BB104 and be delivered by experienced property surveyors under a school led project. Any additional funding required, above the £380,000 proposed by the feasibility, will be the liability of the school.
22. WCF will commission places and revenue funding in line with current rates will be paid for each place. An element of this funding will be enhanced pupil need specific allowances. This level of funding reflects the needs of the child and enable to school to fully support the needs of the child to access education.
23. There are no HR implications for current staff. Further teachers and support staff will be recruited to deliver the provision in line with WCF service specification.

Privacy and Public Health Impact and Equality and Diversity Implications

24. A Joint Impact Assessment (JIA) screening was completed in respect of the new facilities at Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School (Appendix 2). The screening identified that a full Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment is needed (Appendix 3). As building work is included in this proposal, a full Environmental and Sustainability Assessment is also required (Appendix 4). This indicates the need for discussions with the Surveyor and Contractors when appointed, to ensure mitigation of environmental impact.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Delegation of authority given by the Leader on 25 April 2018, endorsed by the Cabinet on 30 January 2020
- Appendix 2 – Joint Impact Assessment Screening
- Appendix 3 – Equality and Public Health Assessment
- Appendix 4 – Environmental and Sustainability Assessment

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Interim Director of Children's Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

'Prescribed Alterations' regulations: *Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers October 2018*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756572/Maintained_schools_prescribed_alterations_guidance.pdf