

## **CABINET MEMBER DECISION**

### **22 OCTOBER 2018**

## **SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING (BROMSGROVE AREA) – FAIRFIELD FIRST SCHOOL**

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### **Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr M J Hart

### **Relevant Officer**

Director of Children, Families and Communities

### **Local Members**

Ms S A Webb

### **Recommendation**

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills is recommended to:**
  - (a) note the details of the School-held consultation during the period 30 October 2017 to 8 December 2017;**
  - (b) note that formal notice to quit has been served upon the tenant of the Council-owned farm land adjacent to Fairfield First School;**
  - (c) note that there is also a need to replace two temporary mobile classrooms as part of this proposed Published Admission Number (PAN) expansion project;**
  - (d) authorise the Director of Children, Families and Communities to take all necessary steps to finalise and implement the publication of the statutory proposal and Public Notice to expand Fairfield First School from a PAN of 23 to 30 from September 2020, to include the replacement of the two temporary classrooms; and**
  - (e) notes the final decision will be made by:**
    - (i) the Director of Children, Families and Communities in relation to proposals in respect of which no objection is received; or**
    - (ii) the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills in relation to proposals in respect of which objection to the Public Notice is received.**

### **Background**

2. In October 2017 the Leader of the Council delegated authority for the publication of statutory proposals for prescribed alterations to maintained schools to:

- (a) the Director of Children, Families and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills, to take all decisions on behalf of the Cabinet acting as the Executive in respect of initial consultations for statutory proposals relating to prescribed alterations to maintained schools including school places and organisation changes;
- (b) the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills to take all decisions on behalf of the Cabinet acting as the Executive in relation to the publication of a Public Notice of statutory proposals relating to prescribed alterations to maintained schools including school places and organisation changes;
- (c) the Director of Children, Families and Communities to decide the proposals in respect of which no objection to the Public Notice is received; and
- (d) the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills to decide proposals in respect of which objection to the Public Notice is received.

3. The County Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places for all children resident in the county who wish to attend a state-funded school. In the September 2016 Reception Year intake the Council had sufficient places to meet immediate demand in the Bromsgrove area. However, it is now unable to accommodate children moving into the area (in-year changes).

4. The total number of places available in September 2017 was exceeded by four. Numbers now suggest that as this cohort passes through the first school phase, this demand will likely peak to an increase of 10.

Admission	Year Group	Published Admission Number	Current and forecast cohort using average intake rate	Surplus places
September 2016	Reception	730	729	1
September 2017	Year One	730	734	-4
September 2018	Year Two	730	739	-9
September 2019	Year Three	730	738	-8
September 2020	Year Four	730	740	-10

5. To address this, seven pupils have so far been offered places at surrounding out of area schools, four of which have been placed in Rubery schools, one in Droitwich, one in Wythall, and one has opted to be home educated. A further six applicants moving into Bromsgrove chose to remain in their original out of county school whilst awaiting vacancies. Officers of the Directorate's Provision Planning & Accommodation Team have been in consultation with Bromsgrove first schools to find a solution that will enable further numbers in this particular cohort to be able to attend a school within the Bromsgrove District.

6. Any applications for Year 1 places, which is an existing year group in schools, are outside the normal admissions round. Children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other alternative school within a reasonable distance are exceptions to the infant class size legislation and schools were requested to take some children over the Published Admission Number (PAN). This however, does not provide a long-term solution. Therefore, following initial discussions

with First School Head Teachers, the Council has looked to create more places within those schools without waiting lists. Five Bromsgrove First Schools (Catshill, Dodford, Fairfield, Finstall, and Hanbury) were approached in May 2017 by the Council to consider longer term expansions. To this end, three schools (Dodford, Fairfield, and Hanbury) volunteered for consideration, with St Andrews CE First School, Barnt Green requesting inclusion late on.

7. Of these, Fairfield First School was rated 'Good' by Ofsted during its last inspection in March 2015; Hanbury CE First School was rated 'Good' in October 2014; Dodford also received a 'Good' rating in December 2016 and St Andrews CE First School, Barnt Green was rated 'Outstanding' in December 2013.

8. In accordance with the DfE's guidance '*Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained School Places – Statutory Guidance for Proposers & Decision-Makers*' dated April 2016 local informal pre-publication consultations were undertaken during October to December 2017 to measure school and community stakeholder support for possible expansion. The responses from these consultations in relation to Fairfield First School are summarised at Appendix A.

9. Following these consultations, further discussions with the interested schools took place, in which St Andrews subsequently withdrew their interest. Given current demand for places within the bulge year group, only Fairfield and Hanbury schools confirmed that on the condition that they are expanded they would be able to admit up to 30 pupils each in the bulge year group from September 2018, which enabled the Local Authority to meet the needs ahead of completing lengthy necessary building alterations. Dodford were unable to commit in this respect and given that the 10 new places required could now be created at Fairfield (7) and Hanbury (3), in agreement with the Headteacher, Dodford were withdrawn from further consideration. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills on 26 April 2018 therefore agreed to the expansion of Hanbury First School by three places to a PAN of 30 per year group to alleviate some of the pressures in this year group; however it is felt that further expansion in the area is still required, with Fairfield being able to meet the balance of this need.

10. As with most school expansions, there were concerns raised by local residents about the impact of additional children on traffic congestion at the start and end of the school day. This was particularly the case at Fairfield First School where the issue has been exacerbated by the location of the school on the main road of the village, and previous changes to parking in the local area. The school is proactive in encouraging parents and pupils to use sustainable methods of travel to school and to be mindful of local residents. A travel plan will be submitted as part of any planning application for the necessary building works and will consider appropriate measures to mitigate the impact on local residents.

11. In relation to the potential expansion of Fairfield First School, the proposal will also require the Council to utilise some of the neighbouring farm land, currently owned by the Council but leased to a tenant for farming purposes. The tenant had raised an objection to his possible loss of livelihood if the expansion was to go ahead on land currently leased to him. Following further consultation with the tenant and the Council's property agents, Place Partnership Ltd, a notice to quit has since been served with a termination date of 24 March 2019. The vacant site will therefore revert back to the Council as of 25 March 2019.

12. In addition, there are two ageing temporary mobiles at Fairfield First School that will require replacing with permanent accommodation in the near future. The proposal would be for these works to be undertaken alongside those required to expand this school from a PAN of 23 to 30; making the project a three new classroom scheme.

13. As part of the statutory guidance for making school organisation changes, where the Council is seeking to expand a school by a total of 30 pupils or more, the Council must follow the prescribed process as defined by the DfE. The increase of Fairfield First School from a PAN of 23 to a PAN of 30 would result in an increase in the capacity of the school by 35 places. Therefore, if the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills agrees to support this proposal, the Council would need to publish formal statutory proposals and public notices. Stakeholders will then have a final opportunity to comment or object within the four-week representation period. Notices would then be published in the local press and displayed outside the school concerned. At the end of the four weeks if objections are received the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills will make the final decision, if no objections are received the Director of Children, Families and Communities will make the final decision.

14. The Directorate commissioned a feasibility study via Place Partnership Ltd to assess likely building options, costs, and timelines. The feasibility report is summarised in Appendix B.

### **Recommendation**

15. On the basis of the information contained in this report, and taking account of the feedback from the consultation in Appendix A, it is recommended to authorise the Director of Children, Families and Communities to take all necessary steps to finalise and implement the publication of the statutory proposal and Public Notice in relation to expanding Fairfield First School from a PAN of 23 to 30 effective from September 2020, to include replacement of the two temporary classrooms.

16. Expanding Fairfield First School should not have a detrimental impact on other schools in the area as the Council is forecasting increased local need.

### **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

17. Funding is available to support this project within the Council's Basic Need Capital Programme 2018/19.

### **Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments**

18. A Privacy Impact Assessment Screening was completed in respect of the expansion proposal. The screening did not identify any potential Privacy considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

19. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential Equality considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

## **Supporting Information**

- Appendix A – Summary of Responses to Informal School Consultation
- Appendix B – Analysis of Feasibilities Data

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

April 2016 – DfE Publication - Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained School Places – Statutory Guidance for Proposers & Decision-Makers.

Autumn 2017 – Public Consultation Information for Dodford First School, Fairfield First School, Hanbury CE First School, and St Andrews CE First School, Barnt Green.

Cabinet Member Decision report of 26 April 2018