

REVIEW OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CAMBRIDGE CITY

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 28 February 2017

From: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Interim Executive Director; Children, Family and Adult Services

Electoral division(s): Abbey; Arbury; Castle; Cherry Hinton; Coleridge; East Chesterton; King's Hedges; Market; Newnham; Petersfield; Queen Edith's; Trumpington; Romsey; West Chesterton; Cottenham, Histon & Impington; and Fulbourn.

Forward Plan ref: **2017/013** *Key decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **To:**

- **Describe and explain the growing demand for secondary education provision across Cambridge City; and**
- **Present and seek approval for the proposed strategy for commissioning additional provision to meet this demand.**

Recommendation: **Members are asked to:**

- a) **Endorse the six principles in Sections 1.5 and 1.6 identified for reviewing and commissioning provision across the City;**
- b) **Endorse officers continuing to work with the Local Planning Authorities to secure site(s) for new school(s) as needed in line with Local Plan policies;**
- c) **Support the expansion and redevelopment of Chesterton Community College with a planned completion date of 2019/20, noting its willingness to come to a mutual agreement with the Council, the RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner), and CMAT (Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust, the sponsor of NCA, the North Cambridge Academy) about the timing at which new places beyond its current intake of 210 will be opened up;**

and

- d) **Support the proposal that officers work with North Cambridge Academy to develop plans for the expansion of the school to meet anticipated further growth in demand.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>	
Name:	Rob Lewis
Post:	0-19 Area Education Officer
Email:	Robert.lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 699789

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state-funded sector. The Education Act 2011 and the government's academies and free schools programme have led to a changed role for the local authority to that of a commissioner rather than a direct provider of schools. This change places greater emphasis on partnership working with existing and new providers in planning school places to meet identified demand.
- 1.2 In 2007, the Council undertook a detailed review of the pattern of secondary provision across the City reflecting the major development proposals known about at the time. This led to decisions to provide a 150 place extension to Coleridge Community College effective from September 2015 and two new schools: Trumpington Community College, which opened in September 2015 as a Foundation School and the Northwest Fringe, currently planned to open in 2020, which will be part of the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT).
- 1.3 Since 2008, the Council has faced significant pressure on primary school places in Cambridge, as a result of a rise in the birth rate. This has led to the expansion of, and opening of new schools providing an additional 9.5 forms of entry (FE) across the City. This does not include the new capacity secured as part of the major urban fringe housing developments.
- 1.4 Starting in 2013, officers held the first of several meetings with City Secondary Headteachers, both collectively and individually, to examine options for increasing secondary school capacity in preparation for the transfer of larger primary school cohorts. Officers presented their initial conclusions for discussion in late 2014. It was envisaged that a strategy for securing the additional provision required would be presented to Members in 2015. However, before this strategy could be finalised, officers were asked to review their work in light of changes which had emerged in relation to education provision and patterns of development. This work also provided the opportunity to re-examine a number of assumptions within the demographic forecasts.
- 1.5 In the discussions with the Secondary Headteachers, the following principles were identified to inform and underpin the future planning of provision across the City:
1. All Cambridge City pupils should be able to attend a secondary school in the City.¹
 2. There should be minimal turbulence for young people and communities as a result of the commissioning and implementation of education provision.
 3. Schools should continue to play a central role and act as a community resource within the communities which they serve.

¹ Whilst this principle has been identified by City secondary headteachers it is recognised that well established patterns of parental preference for schools outside Cambridge exist. It would be inappropriate to disregard these patterns, it is important to also consider that increasing demographic demand within these schools' catchment areas may reduce the extent to which these can continue. For this reason the impact of potential capacity at schools around the City, notably Impington has been considered.

4. Sustainable travel to school should continue to be supported through the commissioning of additional school places.
 5. Commissioning additional school places should not undermine the viability of existing schools.
- 1.6 Officers have subsequently identified a sixth principle of securing appropriate flexibility as being of particular importance if the unpredictability of demand is to be managed effectively, taking account of:
- The historic recommendation from the National Audit Office that Local Authorities should plan to have around 5% surplus school places across local areas. This was predicated on needing to retain flexibility to accommodate mid-phase transfers, linked to inward migration. This is particularly relevant to areas, such as Cambridge, where there is a highly transient population.
 - The need to accommodate significant cohort change arising from major housing developments.

2.0 CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 In the period since the previous review of secondary education provision in 2007 and the subsequent work commenced in 2013 there have been a number of changes in circumstances, including:
- Delays in the adoption of the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils' Local Plans.
 - Potential for an early review of Local Plans linked to City Deal.
 - Changes in the pattern and pace of major housing developments:
 - Delays to commencement of the Darwin Green housing development.
 - Review of the potential for housing development in the Northern Fringe East, linked to the new Chesterton Station.
 - Emerging development proposals in Cambridge East.
 - Emerging City Deal and Devolution agendas and implications for continued and extended housing development pressures.
- 2.2 **Appendix A** provides an overview of the current position and changes associated with the major development sites around the City. The map in **Appendix B** shows the location of the development sites in relation to existing secondary schools.
- 2.3 The uncertainty arising from these changes has reinforced the need for the sixth principle set out in section 1.6 of ensuring that the wider planning of secondary school provision allows flexibility to meet changes in demand. This is particularly important in the context of new housing development, where experience demonstrates that the timescales and pace of development can vary significantly.

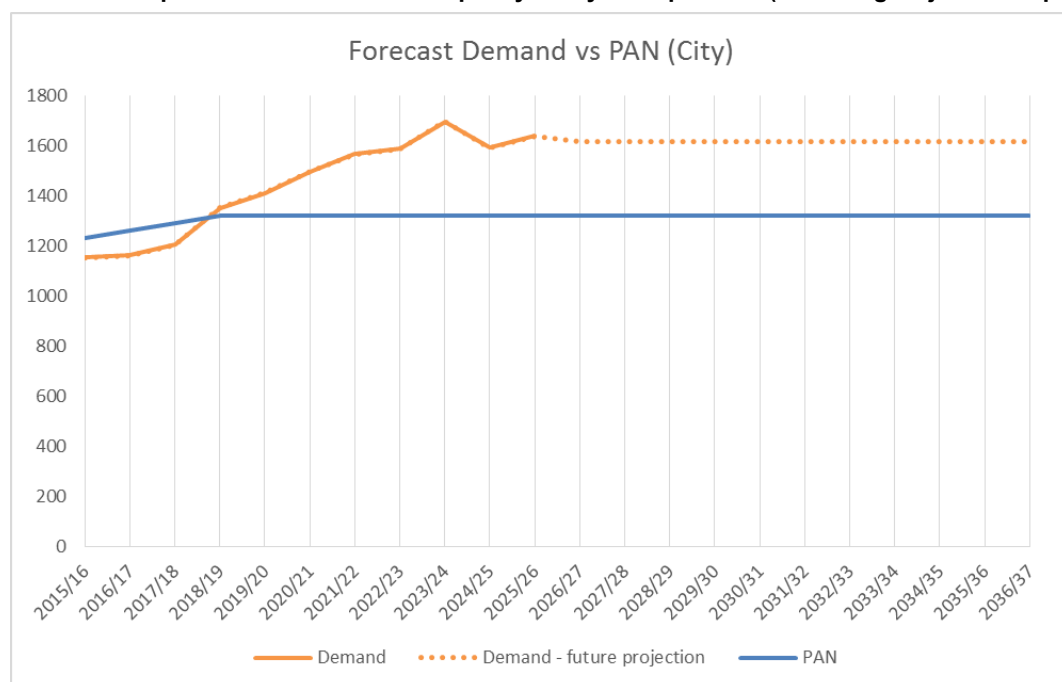
3.0 SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC MODELLING WORK

- 3.1 In the period since 2012/13 the Council has undertaken and commissioned reviews of the demographic forecasts and underpinning assumptions. This included an independent review undertaken by Cambridge Analytics as well as work undertaken by the Council's Research Group. In each case, the broad

outcomes of the review of future demand demonstrated that the growing demand for places would create a shortfall in provision across the City towards the end of the current decade.

- 3.2 Following the conclusion of the Cambridge Analytics work, officers have undertaken further more detailed assessment of how the demand for places may grow. This includes reflecting on the potential impact of parental preference on demand for specific schools. It also allows for different scenarios for the major housing developments, and delivery of associated schools, to be modelled.
- 3.3 **Appendix C** provides a more detailed overview of the work which has been undertaken and the conclusions reached. An assessment of the current baseline position in relation to school capacity and anticipated demand is shown in Chart 1 below. This reflects catchment level data, outlined in **section 3.3.4 of Appendix C**, and provides a comparison of the forecast year 7 cohorts with the current Published Admission Numbers (PANs) of schools in the City, as set out in **section 6.3 of Appendix C**.
- 3.4 It should be noted that this includes Impington VC, as outlined in **Appendix C, paragraph 4.5**. It also takes account of St Bede's, which as the county's only Ecumenical Secondary School, does not operate a catchment area. As admissions come for a wide geographical area it is possible that the actual shortfall in provision could be greater than shown.

Chart 1: Comparison of demand and capacity – City-wide position (excluding major developments)



- 3.5 This baseline analysis does not include the impact of the new housing developments, other than those in the Southern Fringe which are well advanced. It does not, therefore, include the proposed new schools as part of these developments. The increase in PAN between 2015/16 and 2019/20 accounts for the anticipated growth of Trumpington Community College in response to demand for places from the Southern Fringe developments it has been established to serve.
- 3.6 This analysis demonstrates that the demand for school places across the City would be expected to exceed the capacity across the existing schools from

2018/19. The detailed charts in **section 9 of Appendix C** illustrate that the in-catchment demand exceeds the current PANs of all of the current City schools.

- 3.7 A more detailed analysis of the forecasts, including the impact of new housing developments and associated secondary schools is set out in **section 7 of Appendix C**. This explores a range of different scenarios, specifically regarding the rate at which the housing developments may progress and the impact that these may have on the delivery of new school sites. This work suggests that, even accounting for the new schools, there could be expected to be a further shortfall in places unless action is taken to secure additional capacity through the expansion of existing schools.

4.0 SITE ASSESSMENTS AND OPTIONS APPRAISALS

- 4.1 As part of the review process, officers have undertaken an assessment of the potential for expansion of the capacity of existing secondary schools. This work, a summary of which is set out in **Appendix D**, reflects desktop site assessments commissioned by the Council and consultations with Headteachers and Trust representatives since 2013 around their aspirations and views in relation to expansion.

- 4.2 This review of potential opportunities for the expansion of existing provision suggests that there is:

- limited potential for expansion of existing provision in the south of Cambridge; but
- potential for the expansion of both existing schools in the north of Cambridge.

4.3 South of Cambridge

- 4.3.1 The only opportunities for the expansion of existing provision are:

- 1FE increase in PAN at Coleridge – accommodation has already been secured. Agreements are in place with the Trust to increase the school's PAN as demand increases; and
- 1FE expansion at Trumpington Community College – to meet increased demand from the Cambridge Southern Fringe developments.

- 4.3.2 Given the limited opportunities for expansion of existing schools, and reflecting the outcomes from the 2007 Review, the need to identify a site for a new school has been identified. The Council has undertaken an extensive review and assessment of potential site options as part of discussions around the Local Plans. A summary of this work, undertaken in consultation with housing developers and the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), is included as **Appendix E**. The stage reached with this work is that agreement has been reached in principle with the LPAs of a potential secondary school site being provided as part of the North of Cherry Hinton development, shown on the map in **Appendix E**. This is subject to the adoption of the Local Plan.

- 4.3.3 It is recognised that this site is not ideally located in terms of improving the geographical balance of secondary school provision in the south of the City. However, this is likely to be the only site on which a new school could be delivered in the near future given the Cambridge Green Belt restrictions. The

Council remains open to working with the LPAs to identify alternative sites if there is a review of the local planning policy framework. However, it is likely that the new school will be needed ahead of any such review.

4.4 North of Cambridge

- 4.4.1 Assessment of existing sites shows that there is potential to expand both Chesterton and North Cambridge Academy (NCA). When combined with the new school planned as part of the Northwest Fringe housing developments, for which CMAT is the approved sponsor, there is sufficient potential capacity to address the additional demand in the north of Cambridge.

4.5 Chesterton

- 4.5.1 Chesterton Community College is a popular and frequently oversubscribed school. It consistently delivers high quality outcomes and strong exam results. However, in recent years there has been no meaningful investment in the school to address historic condition and suitability concerns.
- 4.5.2 Following the commencement of the review work in 2013, Chesterton was one of only two schools, the other being St Bede's, which expressed an interest in working with the Council to provide additional secondary school places. A feasibility study was subsequently commissioned to determine the potential for expansion of the school to provide a total of 1200 places (8FE). Further work on proposals was initially placed on hold in 2015 in response to concerns raised about the demographic forecasts. Officers have been clear from the outset of discussions that final decisions regarding the proposed expansion would be subject to review of the forecast information and pupil numbers.
- 4.5.3 In 2015, Chesterton made over admissions above their PAN of 180, to provide places for up to 210 young people, to meet increased demand from the Milton Road Primary catchment area. The school also made over admissions in 2016 and has indicated that they will continue to admit up to 210 pupils in the future.
- 4.5.4 A summary of the expansion proposals is set out below:
- The development at Chesterton would allow the school to increase its PAN by 60 to 240; enabling the school to accommodate in-catchment demand, as set out in **section 9 of Appendix C**.
 - A new build, as well as replacement and refurbishment of existing accommodation: addressing condition and suitability concerns as well as providing additional capacity at a cost of around £10m.
- 4.5.5 In recognition of the fact that the Council would need to commit to prudential borrowing of around £6m to meet the shortfall between the available Basic Need funding and the total project cost, officers propose to work in collaboration with the Trust to support them to submit a bid for Grant Funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The focus of such a bid would be to address the school's identified, long-standing condition needs. Any funding secured from the EFA would be used to reduce the level of the Council's prudential borrowing.
- 4.5.6 This approach for expansion and redevelopment schemes for secondary schools is one which the Council has previously adopted in partnership with other academy trusts. Other schools where projects have been supported,

successfully, include; Bottisham Village College, City of Ely College and Swavesey Village College.

4.6 North Cambridge Academy

4.6.1 The Manor School, the predecessor to NCA, suffered from poor parental perception. However, since NCA opened, as part of CMAT, in September 2013, the Trust has effected significant change, providing parents with greater confidence in the school. For example, it has:

- improved NCA's Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) rating to 'Good'
- improved educational outcomes for pupils, including exam results; and
- overseen the significant redevelopment of the school site.

4.6.2 In 2015, CMAT, raised concerns about the potential adverse impact of the proposed expansion of Chesterton, combined with the opening of the new Northwest Fringe Secondary, on pupil numbers and, therefore, the financial viability of NCA.

4.6.3 They also indicated that there could be potential for the expansion of NCA as a means of meeting the growth in demand across the north of the City. This has previously been acknowledged by the Council as evidenced by the financial support provided to enable corridors in NCA's new build to be widened to facilitate future expansion. The proposals they have suggested for the school can be summarised as:

- A 1FE expansion by adding a new teaching block.
- Potential future expansion utilising land currently leased to Bellerby's, an International College that occupies part of the site, and if agreed by the EFA, capital from sale of part of the site. Costs would be lower than Chesterton, in part because the recent rebuild has removed major condition issues.
- Smaller year groups higher up the school could allow an initial increase in intake prior to delivery of new accommodation.
- It would enable the school to accommodate in-catchment demand, as set out in **section 9 of Appendix C**.

4.6.4 The design of the new buildings would facilitate the delivery of a 1FE expansion with relative ease. The potential for further expansion is linked to the expiration of the Bellerby's lease, in 2021, and demolition of this accommodation. This means that it would be unlikely that any further expansion of the school could be delivered until 2023 at the earliest, though this is subject to confirmation.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The demographic forecasting demonstrates that the demand for secondary education provision in the City is increasing and will exceed the capacity of existing schools.

5.2 With regards to provision in the south of the City:

- There is limited potential for expansion of existing provision beyond that which has already been commissioned but has not yet been implemented.

Whilst it is expected that these schemes will help to mitigate some of the additional demand, these will not be sufficient to accommodate the overall growth in demand. This is especially the case when considering the demand from proposed housing developments.

- Officers are committed to working with the LPAs and developers to secure a site for a new secondary school as soon as possible within the context of the proposed Local Plan policies and allocations for the East of Cambridge. Opportunities for exploring alternative sites are restricted to future reviews of the Local Plans.

5.3 With regards to provision in the north of the City:

- The principle that commissioning additional school places should not undermine the viability of existing schools means that the timing of the proposed expansion at Chesterton is a critical consideration.
- The number of children living in Chesterton's catchment area exceeds its intake from 2018/19 (**Appendix C, Section 9**) but not all of its catchment children attend the school.
- Therefore, a reasonable interpretation of the data suggests that its proposed expansion is needed in 2019/20. This is the point at which projected demand exceeds capacity in both the north and south of the City (**see charts 1 and 2 in Section 7 of Appendix C**), and only 1FE can be accommodated in the south (see **Appendix D**).
- Should its expansion be approved by Committee for 2019/20, Chesterton has confirmed its willingness to come to a mutual agreement with the Council, the RSC and CMAT about the timing at which new places beyond its current intake of 210 will be opened up.
- The Council's funding from the DfE is to meet basic need. However, there is an opportunity to increase capacity and address historic condition issues at Chesterton, which has not had significant investment. Whilst there can be no assurance that a bid for EFA Grant Funding would be successful, the fact that this opportunity exists provides a potential way to offset some of the additional costs of the expansion. There is no guarantee that this funding stream would be available in the future.
- The potential for further development and expansion at NCA would provide a more cost-effective way of meeting basic need. This opportunity is significant post 2021 when the Bellerby's lease arrangement ends. Officers are committed to work with NCA to develop plans for the expansion of the school to ensure that any further increases in demand from anticipated further housing development can be accommodated in a local school judged Good by Ofsted.

In summary, officers are recommending a two stage strategy: expanding Chesterton in 2019/20 for the reasons outlined above and working with NCA to develop plans to meet anticipated further increases in demand.

6.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 6.1.1 Providing access to local and high quality mainstream education will enhance the skills of the local workforce.

6.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 6.2.1 If pupils have access to local schools and associated services, they are more likely to attend them by either cycling or walking rather than through local authority provided transport or car. They will also be able to more readily access out of school activities such as sport and homework clubs and develop friendship groups within their own community. This will contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles.

6.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 6.3.1 Providing a local school will ensure that services can be accessed by families in the greatest need within its designated area.

7.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource Implications

- 7.1.1 The approved Capital Programme identifies £18 million for expansion of secondary school provision across the City. This would provide for the proposed expansion and redevelopment at Chesterton as well as works commissioned at St Bede's.
- 7.1.2 The Council does not have a statutory duty to fund investment to meet parental preference or to address condition and suitability issues for academies. However, as set out in paragraph 4.5.6, the Council has a record of working closely with academy trusts to combine Basic Need and improvement projects to enable better utilisation of funding and support Trusts in applying for grant funding to address condition issues. Taking this approach for Chesterton would enable the Trust to apply for EFA Grant Funding; which, if successful, would allow either:
- A reduction in the level of borrowing, or
 - The reallocation of this money to other capital projects, subject to Member approval.
- 7.1.3 The Council has secured contributions from each of the major development sites currently approved. There is the expectation that negotiations on future sites would also enable the Council to generate additional contributions. The Council would need to demonstrate that this funding was being utilised to mitigate the impact of the proposed housing developments. Basic Need funding would be required to meet the expansion of provision to meet demand from demographic change.
- 7.1.4 The strategy proposed relies on delivering the new schools at their ultimate size in a single construction phase. Whilst this approach would be expected to deliver savings on the capital project, it would require expenditure in advance of the S106 contributions being received. Some elements could require the Council to undertake borrowing at risk against housing developments which do not currently have planning consent, being approved. This approach would, therefore, require additional levels of prudential borrowing to be made, with the associated impact on revenue budgets. As the decision to forward fund this work would need to be made in advance of the housing development being delivered, the Council would not be in a position to secure interest payments from developers.

- 7.1.5 The demand for an additional school in the south of the City will require further capital funding to be secured. It is anticipated that the growth in demand across the City would enable the Council to secure capital allocations as part of the annual SCAP (School Capacity) return process to the Department for Education. However, it is possible that the SCAP allocation would not be sufficient to meet the level of capital investment required to deliver the new schools, as well as meeting wider demand across the county. This could add to borrowing pressure within the capital programme.
- 7.1.6 Finally, the future revenue implications of opening new schools are unknown. Currently, the Council, through the Schools Growth Fund – top sliced from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), provides significant revenue support for new schools as they open and grow. As this money is top sliced from the DSG allocation, it reduces the level of funding available to existing schools across the county. The future funding arrangements for new schools are subject to the outcome of the national funding reforms, currently underway. This could have significant implications for the funding of both new schools and existing schools.

7.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 7.2.1 The Council has a duty to secure a school place for all children and young people of statutory school age whose parents want them educated in the state-funded sector. The current capacity and growth in demand for school places mean that the Council would be unable to meet this duty without an increase in capacity across the City. This duty does not extend to meeting parental preference.

7.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.3.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are able to attend their local mainstream school where possible, with only those children with the most complex and challenging needs requiring places at specialist provision.
- 7.3.2 Accommodation provided by the Council complies with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and current Council standards.

7.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 7.4.1 Since 2013 officers have undertaken consultation with Headteachers to identify appropriate mechanisms for increasing capacity across the City. Throughout this time a number of detailed briefings have been offered to local Councillors, both County Members and those from the City Council and affected South Cambridgeshire wards.

7.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 7.5.1 See comments in paragraph 7.4.1 above.

7.6 Public Health Implications

- 7.6.1 Schools will be accessible to pupils as either pedestrians or cyclists. If children had to attend secondary schools some distance away (more than 3 miles) they would be provided with free transport in accordance with the

Council's statutory duty. This expansion will put extra pressure on the Public Health commissioned School Nursing service.

Source Documents	Location
Cambridge Analytics Review of demographic pressures – including presentation to Cambridge City Heads Cambridgeshire County Council Review of demographic pressures	Octagon, 2 nd Floor, Shire Hall, Cambridge