

AMALGAMATION OF EASTFIELD INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL AND WESTFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL, ST IVES

- To:** Children & Young People’s Committee
- Meeting Date:** 13 November 2018
- From:** Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Executive Director: People & Communities
- Electoral division(s):** St Ives South & Needingworth, St Ives North & Wyton
- Forward Plan ref:** Not applicable **Key decision:** No
- Purpose:** To advise the Committee on the relevant costs of the three options for the capital project to replace temporary with permanent accommodation and achieve the physical amalgamation of Eastfield Infant & Nursery and Westfield Junior Schools, St Ives.
- Recommendation:** The Committee is asked to:
- a) Note and comment on the option appraisal analysis and the respective cost implications for the Council; and
 - b) Advise on which option the General Purposes Committee should be asked to approve to be taken forward to implementation, subject to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator’s decision on the amalgamation proposal.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Eastfield Infant & Nursery and Westfield Junior Schools were built in 1969 and 1964 respectively and have been supplemented over time with a number of mobile classrooms. Eastfield Infant & Nursery School currently provides early years education and childcare for children aged 2 to 4 years, all of which is currently delivered in the mobile accommodation. In addition, there are deficiencies with both schools' current accommodation which need to be addressed.
- 1.2 In October 2012, following a review of education provision in St Ives, the Council's Cabinet agreed to replace all temporary accommodation at the Eastfield Infant & Nursery School and Westfield Junior School, with permanent, whilst at the same time increasing the number of places at both schools to provide for 90 children in each year group. Currently the published admission number (PAN) is 80 at both schools.
- 1.3 In the autumn of 2017, the governing bodies of both schools agreed in principle to amalgamate the two schools. Local informal consultation on this proposal has received overwhelming support. The statutory consultation period for this proposal closed on 3 October 2018 and the final decision is awaited from the Office of the School Adjudicator.
- 1.4 At its meeting in September, officers presented three options to the Committee which were the result of a study commissioned by the Council from Atkins for delivering primary and early years education to children living in the catchment area of the existing Eastfield and Westfield schools.
- 1.5 The Committee agreed in principle to the establishment of an all through primary school, amalgamating the existing Eastfield Infant & Nursery and Westfield Junior Schools, subject to more detailed information with regard to the business case for each of the options being brought back to the Committee in November 2018.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 Site Information

- 2.1.1 The minimum total site area specified in the Department for Education (DfE) Building Bulletin 103 guidance for a 3FE primary school with early years provision is 3.113ha. The two existing school sites total 3.464ha (Eastfield 1.154 ha, Westfield 2.310ha). The difference of 0.3ha, is equivalent to just over half the size of a junior football pitch (5000m²).
- 2.1.2 An aerial view of the two sites can be found at the end of this report.

2.2 Condition of the two existing schools

- 2.2.1 There is a deficit in existing accommodation at both schools. In particular at Westfield:
 - there is insufficient space to deliver the wide range of interventions and small group support required by pupils

- the staff room is undersized, able to seat only 16 of the 35 staff (of a total of 50) who need to use the room at any given break or lunchtime
- there is a lack of spaces for confidential meetings for example, those between the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and visiting specialists
- it is difficult to store supplies and cook within the limited space available

2.2.2 A condition survey report of Eastfield Infant & Nursery School and Westfield Junior School was commissioned in order to prepare a 10 year property plan. Of the many issues it identified the following were the most significant and fall in the category of works which, if investment in improvement was not made, could lead to a school not being able to operate on health and safety grounds.

- roof covering is reaching the end of its design life
- boilers are reaching the end of their life expectancy
- the drainage system for the toilets is not adequate for the numbers using them

2.2.3 Other considerations which would be addressed by new buildings, relate to accessibility legislation and fire regulations. For example, current fire regulations mean that in new schools, cloakroom facilities (hooks and benching) are not sited in corridors.

2.3 Option Appraisal

2.3.1 Option One:

To expand both infant and junior schools, providing a 3FE infant (270 places) and a 3FE junior (360 places) plus out of school club and nursery. The total cost, £10,816m would include £3,146m for a 10 year condition maintenance programme/property plan to maintain both schools.

This would continue the current arrangement of two individual schools i.e. separate infant and junior establishments

2.3.2 Option Two:

To create an all-through primary school but operating on two sites. The distance involved is 160m. The Eastfield site would function as early years facility with nursery and Reception classes and also provide wrap around care through the existing out-of school provision on the site. An expanded/altered Westfield site would offer 3FE primary provision for KS1 and KS2 classes. The total cost would be £9,715m including £3,146m for a 10 year condition maintenance programme/property plan for both schools.

There are no other models like this in Cambridgeshire. The nearest approximation are the Foundation Units which operate in some schools, integrating pre-school and Foundation Stage/Reception classes but none of these operate on separate sites from the rest of the schools of which they are a part. There could be some positives to be gained pedagogically from a space dedicated to the Foundation Stage, but it would create a transition point between Reception and KS1.

This would not address any of the existing condition issues at the Eastfield site.

The mobiles at Westfield would have to be moved during the capital works to ensure continued provision of education during the project period, before their final removal at the end of the works.

2.3.3 **Option 3:**

To build a new 3FE primary school with early years provision, located on the existing school site. The original cost estimate for this was £15,130,000, including demolishing the two existing schools. The final cost is more likely to be in the region of £14m because the project was initially costed against government Guidance (Building Bulletin103). The Guidance has subsequently been revised and the build project would now be undertaken using the new guidance which reflects a reduction in the size of teaching areas. The new guidance has not resulted in any changes to site areas.

2.3.4 All three options:

- involve replacing mobiles with permanent accommodation
- would require increased capital investment above the £7m originally allocated to the project, and revenue costs associated with the additional prudential borrowing which would be incurred

As the project progresses and costing becomes more detailed at each stage, it is expected, as in all capital projects, to see further reductions on the original cost estimates. As stated in 3.2.3, this has already been achieved in the case of Option 3.

2.3.5 Options 1 and 2 would:

- entail intrusive and extensive work to improve and expand accommodation which will involve costs associated with disturbing asbestos which could only be carried out when the schools are not operating
- highly likely require the provision of additional work, as yet uncosted, to install enhanced electrical services as the current circuits are at capacity. This is based on experience of other expansion projects.

2.3.6 The table attached at **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of costs.

2.3.7 Officers have also explored a 4th option, a hybrid approach, whereby one of the two schools would be demolished and the other extended. Early indications from the Design & Build contractor are that such an approach would involve significant and costly decant into mobile accommodation and disruption over a two year period. Officers could not support this option given the impact it would have on the education of the children during the decant/construction period.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

Providing access to local and high quality education and associated children's services should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

If pupils have access to local schools and associated children's 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 access more readily out of school activities such as sport and homework clubs and develop friendship groups within their own community. This should contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

Providing access to local primary education and childcare services will ensure that the services delivered will meet the demands of those families within the respective catchment areas.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

4.1.1 Following revisions to the DfE's capital funding formula, the Council has limited funds available and, therefore, must prioritise school sites where failure to address the poor condition of existing facilities could result in risk of closure of the school, for example, where the boiler needs replacing or the roof repairing. Realistically, therefore, a new primary school project is likely to be the only way to secure significantly improved facilities for pupils at both Eastfield and Westfield.

4.1.2 The following criteria were adopted in 2009 to inform decisions on the relative priority for capital funding.

1. Investment, where required on the grounds of health and safety, where it would avoid the closure of a school or the loss of school capacity in an area where such places are required.
2. The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places (basic need).
3. The implementation of statutory changes, for example, an increase in the age range which a school serves.
4. Investment to support the implementation of recommendations resulting from a review of educational provision, for example the amalgamation of an infant and junior school to create an all-through primary school.
5. Implementation of new statutory duties or education policy for which there are no other sources of funding available, for example, the need to increase capacity to enable the Council to provide sufficient and suitable free early years and childcare places for children aged 3 and 4 in line with the requirements of the 2006 Childcare Act.

4.1.3 Currently there is provision for this project in the 2018-19 Capital Plan for £7m prudential borrowing funding. Officers recognise the financial challenges the Council currently faces and the significance of seeking up to a further £7,200,000 of borrowing; the additional amount currently identified as required to fund Option 3. The associated revenue cost based on an asset life payback period of 35 years for this sum would be

£3,364,200. The decision on whether to approve this increase would rest with the General Purposes Committee (GPC). Should agreement from GPC not be forthcoming, in light of the challenging financial position the Council faces, officers would need to review the project options.

4.1.4 The Educational Building Development Officers' Group (EBDOG) represents local authorities on all issues associated with education, property and capital planning. EBDOG provides expert advice to Government about education and capital planning issues, including benchmarking on education infrastructure costs to which the Council also regularly contributes data. The revised project estimate for Option 3, the most expensive of the three, gives a cost per pupil which would fall just below the 20th centile, (the lower quartile), of EBDOG nationally benchmarked cost per pupil for a new 3FE/630 place primary school.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

4.2.1 All new schools which are designed and built by the Council are done so under its framework arrangements.

4.2.2 Eastfield Infant & Nursery School provides early years education and childcare for children aged 2 to 4 years. CLUB4U, a voluntary, committee-run setting, currently provides out of school care and mornings-only early years sessional provision (Playgroup) for children from 2 years old. CLUB4U would be offered a lease on similar terms as part of the amalgamation proposals. Any arrangements resulting in new contracts being awarded will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

4.3.1 With regard to the amalgamation proposal, the Council has complied throughout with the relevant DfE statutory guidance. Officers have responded to all questions and queries raised during the process. The Council published a statutory notice on 5 September 2018 to give effect to the amalgamation proposal. This commenced a four week period during which anyone with an interest in the proposals could make representations to the Council.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.4.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) are able to attend their local mainstream school where possible, with only those with the most complex and challenging needs requiring places at specialist provision.

4.4.2 The accommodation provided by the Council will fully comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and current Council standards.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

4.5.1 The statutory consultation period regarding the proposed amalgamation of the two schools period closed on 3 October 2018 and was preceded by local informal

consultation.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

4.6.1 In addition to two public consultation meetings held for the schools' parents/carers and the local community regarding the amalgamation proposal, the Local Member (St Ives South & Needingworth Division) has been kept apprised by officers of each stage of the process and its outcome.

4.7 Public Health Implications

4.7.1 It is Council policy that schools:

- should be sited as centrally as possible to the communities they serve, unless location is dictated by physical constraints and/or the opportunity to reduce land take by providing playing fields within the green belt or green corridors;
- should be sited so that the maximum journey distance for a young person is less than the statutory walking distances (3 miles for secondary school children, 2 miles for primary school children)
- should be located close to public transport links and be served by a good network of walking and cycling routes
- should be provided with Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs) and all weather pitches (AWPs) to encourage wider community use of school

4.7.2 There is also an expectation that schools will provide access to and use of the school's accommodation for activities e.g. sporting, cultural, outside of school hours.

Site plans for the existing infant and junior schools



Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Paul White
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	No Name of Legal Officer:
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Jo Dickson
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	No Name of Officer:

Source Documents	Location
<p>Opening and closing maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers. April 2016</p> <p>Complete proposal document</p> <p>The Future Pattern of Education Provision in St Ives, report to Cabinet 02.10.2012</p>	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools</p> <p>www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/east-field-westfield</p> <p>https://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/committeeMinutes/committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=425</p> <p>Clare Buckingham, Octagon 2nd floor, Shire Hall, Cambridge</p>