

Decision maker Cabinet Member for Education

Subject: SEND capital funding for special school places

Date of meeting: 10th July 2017

Report from: Alison Jeffery
Director of Children, Families and Education

Report by: Caroline Corcoran
Head of Sufficiency, Participation and Resources
Education Service

Wards affected: All Wards

Key decision (over £250k): No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress and costs of the works required to adapt the accommodation at both Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy to support the remodelling of the Special Schools and to support children with more complex needs.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that:

- a) the project at Cliffdale Primary Academy be completed in full. This recommendation would enable Cliffdale Academy to be fully equipped with sufficient and appropriate provision for primary aged pupils with more complex needs. The completion of the Cliffdale project will also enable modern modular accommodation to move to Redwood Park Academy, providing a medium-term temporary solution addressing the majority of the phase 1 requirements at Redwood Park Academy.**
- b) £896,000 of capital funding is re-allocated from Redwood Park Academy to Cliffdale Primary in order to provide the necessary funding (of £3.096m) to complete the Cliffdale project and relocate the modular buildings.**
- c) power be delegated to the Deputy Director of Children, Families and Education - Education, to approve the entering into contract for capital works set out in this report.**

3. Background

- 3.1 On 9th February 2016, Full Council allocated £1.2m towards the works required to adapt the accommodation at Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy.
- 3.2 In addition to this, on 24th February 2016, Schools Forum endorsed a proposal to allocate £2m from the Dedicated Schools Grant carry-forward. This funding was allocated for the purpose of supporting the remodelling of the Special Schools to provide for children with more complex needs within the City, and ultimately reduce out of city placements. This proposal was subsequently approved by the Secretary of State for Education in June 2016.
- 3.3 Therefore, the total funding available to develop provision across the two sites was £3.2m.
- 3.4 A report to the Schools Forum in October 2016 noted that detailed feasibility studies had been undertaken at both schools to determine the scope and scale of works required to remodel the accommodation. The feasibility work had confirmed that the overall cost to fully remodel both schools would be in excess of £5m. Detailed designs were being prepared so that both schemes could be completed using a phased approach as and when further funding became available.
- 3.5 In Autumn 2016, detailed designs were costed for Cliffdale, confirming that a total budget of £3.2m would be sufficient to complete the works. The works at Redwood Park have not progressed to detailed design and there is not a formal cost estimate at this stage. However, an initial assessment of an undefined scope of works, based on the area multiplied by the average square meterage rate indicates that the costs would be in the region of £4.5m. More detailed work will be required in due course to establish a formal cost estimate.
- 3.6 The Council has been working with Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy (both part of Solent Academies Trust) to ensure that the two schools can take more complex cohorts of pupils. As full funding was not in place at the outset, it was agreed that a phased approach to any building works would be needed to ensure that both schools were kept operational with a clear strategy in place for when future funding opportunities become available.
- 3.7 Following discussions with the Solent Academies Trust, the projects have been designed in a way that enables a phased approach to be taken to maximise the accommodation that is currently available whilst providing a sustainable operational delivery model for both schools whilst awaiting the opportunity to apply for future capital funding to deliver all, or phases of the future project.
- 3.8 At the same time, the Council has been working with mainstream schools to develop more inclusive mainstream education (as part of the agreed Inclusion Strategy) for pupils with less complex needs.

- 3.9 Pupils would usually progress from Cliffdale Academy at primary phase to Redwood Park Academy at secondary phase. Providing for the complex needs of the changing cohort requires a significant remodelling of the teaching accommodation at both schools. The remodelling works will also address both suitability and condition issues due to the age of the buildings.
- 3.10 No further budget source has been identified at this time. To date £150,000 of the overall budget has been spent on initial feasibility and improvement works. This leaves a remaining total available budget of £3.05m.
- 3.11 The developments at Cliffdale and Redwood Park were initiated with the intention of reducing spending on out of city placements. There has not been a reduction in costs so far, and there has been a continued increase in the number of children with complex needs. The Council will continue to closely monitor this trend of increased numbers being referred for special school places, in particular for children with severe learning difficulties and complex needs, as this is putting pressure on our currently commissioned provision.
- 3.12 Further steps have been taken to address the pressures on provision including:
- The successful bid for funding to build a special free school, in partnership with Hampshire County Council. This school will provide 40 additional places for children with Autism/Social Communication Needs and other associated difficulties.
 - The commissioning of a strategic review of SEND provision in partnership with Southampton City Council to look at meeting the increasing need for specialist placements within the resources that are available. This review will be completed by March 2018 and will explore ways in which provision could be commissioned differently to better meet identified needs.
 - The establishment of an Inclusion Group, which reports both to the Portsmouth Education Partnership and SEND Board to look at the support that mainstream schools need to effectively meet the needs of the increasing numbers of children who are remaining in mainstream provision with additional needs.

4. Cliffdale Primary Academy

- 4.1 As the needs in the City have changed and mainstream schools have become more inclusive, Cliffdale Academy has taken on more complex needs including autistic spectrum conditions. The accommodation has not changed to support this. Pupils with complex needs require an increased level of multi-sensory work and support spaces to allow groups of varying sized to take part in different therapy activities.
- 4.2 The original intention for Cliffdale was a two-phased delivery option, with the first phase estimated at Cliffdale Academy in the region of £2m and the second phase (when funding became available at a later date) estimated at £1.1m.
- 4.3 Once the feasibility works were costed, an initial assessment of an undefined scope of works indicated that the costs would be in the region of £4.5m to complete the 4 phases at Redwood Park, with phase 1 requiring an extension of 5 additional classrooms to accommodate the required pupil numbers. Based on this assessment, Phase 1 would not have been affordable within the budget and the available funding would not enable any substantial and required works to be completed.
- 4.4 In considering alternative options, it was noted that the £3.2m available was sufficient to complete phase 1 and phase 2 at Cliffdale Academy, together with the costs incurred to date. By completing both phases at Cliffdale Academy, 4 temporary classrooms could be moved from Cliffdale Academy to Redwood Academy, with a fifth temporary classroom becoming available for Redwood Academy at a later date (upon completion of a Priority School Building Project that will replace accommodation at Arundel Court Primary School).
- 4.5 This alternative option would benefit both schools. All works would be completed at Cliffdale Academy in one project, thus limiting building disruption at this site whilst the movement of the modular buildings would provide the appropriate number of teaching areas required at Redwood Academy to meet the current demand. This option was also affordable within the overall budget available.
- 4.6 Therefore, it is proposed that £896,000 is transferred from the allocation for Redwood Park to the allocation for Cliffdale, making a total of £3.096m funding to complete the Cliffdale project. This will ensure that the school will be fully equipped and complete with sufficient and appropriate provision for primary aged pupils with complex needs, and will provide a complete and current facility on the Cliffdale site.

5. Redwood Park Academy

- 5.1 An outcome from the Cliffdale project is the relocation of four modern modular classrooms from Cliffdale to the Redwood Park School site, thus addressing the immediate and urgent requirement for appropriate teaching spaces at the school. In addition, one further temporary classroom would be made available to Redwood Park upon the completion of the Arundel Court Primary School rebuild (currently estimated at Easter 2019). The additional accommodation would address the majority of the phase 1 requirements at Redwood Park providing a suitable medium-term temporary solution
- 5.2 The Redwood Park project could then be fully funded when budgets are available to permanently integrate the 5 classrooms plus specialist spaces required.
- 5.3 Fully funding the project at Cliffdale will provide a complete and current facility on the Cliffdale site, and modular accommodation at Redwood Park to meet that school's urgent and immediate need for additional classrooms.
- 5.4 The City Council successfully bid for a new Special Free School which will cater for children with social communication needs and /or Autism and associated challenging behaviour and/or sensory needs. The new school would provide 40 places (8 at key stage 2, 24 places at key stages 3 and 4 and 8 places at post 16) and will be located as a standalone provision within the grounds of Redwood Park Academy.
- 5.5 The phasing of the Cliffdale works first, with the Redwood Park Academy works at a later date, means that any works on the new free school will be designed and implemented without compromising a future Redwood Park project. This will ensure that both provisions can operate successfully on adjacent sites maximising joint opportunities where possible.
- 5.6 This approach could also provide an opportunity to review the Redwood Park design and, where appropriate modify/mitigate the design proposals, if the original plans are affected by the new Special Free School (due to open in 2020).

6. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 6.1 Undertaking capital works at both Cliffdale Primary Academy and Redwood Park Academy will improve access to schools for all equality groups, particularly with regard to those pupils who have learning difficulties and / or a disability. There will be no negative impact on any of the equality groups.
- 6.2 Each individual capital project includes an equalities impact assessment.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Section 13A of the Education Act 1996 requires a local authority to exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to educational opportunity and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient primary and secondary schools in their area, sufficient being in relation to number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education and requiring them to have regard to the need to secure that special educational provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- 7.2 In addition section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to keep the arrangements for SEN provision made by them under review and section 27 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep their educational and training provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities under review.
- 7.3 The planned works to adapt the accommodation at both Academies in support of the remodelling of SEN provision will assist in meeting the duties outlined above.
- 7.4 Under Part 2, Section 3, of the City Council's constitution the Cabinet Member for Education has the authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

8. Finance comments

- 8.1 Within the capital programme that was approved on 14th February 2017, £3,191,560 has been set-aside for the SEN capital works at both Cliffdale Primary Academy and Redwood Park Academy. To date expenditure in the region of £150,000 has been incurred on initial feasibility and improvement works.
- 8.2 The recommendations contained within this report seek to re-allocate £896,000 of capital funding from Redwood Park Academy to Cliffdale Primary in order to provide the necessary funding (of £3.096m) to complete the Cliffdale project and relocate the modular buildings; leaving £96,000 to meet the costs incurred to date at Redwood Park. To complete the remaining proposed works at Redwood Park Academy, it is estimated that a further £4.5m of capital funding would be required.

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Signed by:
Alison Jeffery
Director of Children's Services

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Asset Management Plan files	Housing Property Services
Condition Survey Reports	Housing Property Services – Concerto database

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: