

Report to: Schools Forum

Subject: Re-modelling of Redwood Park Academy

Date of meeting: 28th February 2018

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

Report by: Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion, Education Service

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Schools Forum agree to use DSG balances to contribute towards the capital funding needed to undertake re-modelling work at Redwood Park Academy which will enable the school to meet the needs of children with increased complexity of special educational needs.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Schools Forum agree to the request to allocate £1m from DSG balances to contribute to the re-modelling work at Redwood Park Academy in order that the full scheme can be completed. This would supplement an allocation of £2m from Portsmouth City Council.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Portsmouth Education Strategy and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy set out the need to ensure that there is sufficient, good quality, special educational provision available for children with a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), so that their needs can be met and outcomes improved.
- 3.2 There are a growing number of children with identified SEND, who require specialist educational provision to enable them to access the curriculum and make progress. In particular, there are growing numbers with complex needs. Whilst most children with SEND are educated within mainstream schools, there are a significant and increasing number whose needs require specialist provision over and above what is ordinarily available in mainstream schools.
- 3.3. Cliffdale Primary and Redwood Park special academies have been re-designated to cater for children with complex needs and autism. Increasingly the children requiring placement in these schools have complex needs,

including severe learning difficulties, speech, language and communication issues, and autism. Currently, 60% of pupils at Cliffdale Primary (who transfer to Redwood Park) have identified severe learning difficulties and autism plus associated challenging behaviours. They require specialist teaching and a specialist learning environment with a class size of 6-8 pupils. Many pupils require 1:2 or 1:1 adult support to access learning/support their behaviour and have social and emotional issues.

- 3.4 On 9th February 2016, Full Council allocated £1.2m towards the work required to adapt and re-model the accommodation at Redwood Park and Cliffdale Primary academies. In addition to this, on 24th February 2016, Schools Forum endorsed a proposal to allocate £2m from DSG balances which was subsequently approved by the Secretary of State in June 2016. This provided a total of £3.2m. In Autumn 2016, detailed designs were costed for Cliffdale Primary Academy, confirming that a total budget of £3.2m would be sufficient to complete the works. At this stage the works at Redwood Park Academy had not progressed to detailed design and there was not a formal estimate available. On 12th July 2017, Schools Forum noted that the project at Cliffdale Primary Academy would be completed in full and that the modern modular accommodation at Cliffdale would move to Redwood Park to provide a medium term temporary solution. Funding previously allocated for Redwood Park Academy was re-allocated to Cliffdale Primary in order to complete the project in full.
- 3.5 Construction works at Cliffdale Primary Academy are about to commence and the re-modelling works are due to be completed In 2019.
- 3.6 Following detailed feasibility work at Redwood Park Academy a bid was submitted to Council Members in Autumn 2017 requesting £3.1m to complete the necessary re-modelling of Redwood Academy to allow the school to cater for the increasing numbers of children with more complex needs. This would provide:
- dedicated classroom space for each class (pupils need to be taught using a primary model of education for much of their curriculum)
 - up-to-date specialist spaces so they can safely access: Art; Music; DT; Food Studies; and Environmental Science
 - specialist spaces to meet their specific needs: sensory integration/physio spaces; and small group rooms for pupils needing to calm in much smaller groups.
- 3.7 The scheme will involve:
- a new build extension to the satellite block to provide 4 additional classrooms.
 - refurbishment of an existing block to provide 5 classrooms, WCs and group rooms
 - extension of the hall to provide drama and more dining space
 - refurbishment of a single storey satellite block to meet the needs of the changing curriculum

- 3.8 If these issues are not addressed, then pupils with more complex needs may have to be educated outside of the city, with the associated increased costs (average cost per out of city placement is £54,000 per annum), the additional costs of home to school transport and the impact this may have on the pupil and their family.
- 3.9 If the current school building is not re-modelled than it is likely that the Approved Pupil Number (APN) will have to be reduced from 140 to between 80 and 90 pupils within the next 4 years due to the fact that the school will be receiving pupils with more complex needs from Cliffdale Primary Academy who will require more space in which to learn and be supported.

4. Current position

- 4.1 As stated above, a bid for £3.1m was submitted to Council Members to re-model Redwood Park Academy. Members gave the bid very careful consideration against a background of multiple demands on a limited capital budget. At Full Council on 13th February 2018 Members allocated £2m for the Redwood Park Academy scheme at the expense of a number of other demands, appreciating the need for the investment.
- 4.2 Whilst this is positive news it does mean there is a shortfall. In recognition of this, Schools Forum is being asked to consider a 50% match through DSG balances. The council's view is that this is a reasonable proposal given that there should be a positive impact on all school budgets in the long term from the proposed capital investment, through reduced pressure on the High Needs Block. Work is also underway to re-look at the scheme and to ascertain if any changes could be made to reduce the costs without compromising the overall objectives of the scheme.

5. Equality impact assessment

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 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.

- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Under the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2018 the Schools Forum may approve the allocation referred to in the recommendation in this report.

7. Head of Finance comments

- 7.1. In February 2016 the Education Department took a report to Schools Forum requesting permission to utilise £2m of the 2015-16 carry forward to support the reconfiguration of Cliffdale Primary Academy and Redwood Park Special School. This funding was in addition to the £1.2m provided by the Local Authority via the Capital programme. Following the agreement of Schools Forum the authority received the required approval from the Secretary of State for Education to utilise the DSG for capital purposes.
- 7.2. Following the funding approvals further feasibility work was completed on the two projects and it was agreed with Schools Forum that to implement both projects to the required specification to meet pupils was unaffordable and it was agreed to transfer the £2m solely for the use on the reconfiguration of Cliffdale Primary Academy.
- 7.3. As stated in the report; reconfiguration of Redwood Park academy is now required to ensure the school is able to provide appropriate accommodation for those pupils who will transfer from Cliffdale Primary to Redwood Park in future years.
- 7.4. The request to utilise £1m of the 2017-18 carry forward if agreed will be combined with the £2m capital funding provided through the authority's 2018-19 Capital Programme to form a £3m budget.
- 7.5. At its meeting in January 2018, Schools Forum was advised that the DSG carry forward is expected to be approximately £3.1m at the end of 2017-18. When setting the 2018-19 budget Schools Forum committed to the use of the carry forward, for the following items.

	£m
Estimated brought forward from 2017-18	3.100
Schools specific contingency (earmarked reserve)	(0.132)
High needs block pressures	(0.413)
The Harbour School	(1.000)
Estimated DSG reserves	1.555

7.6. Since agreeing the 2018-19 budget, further 2018-19 High Needs pressures have been identified which increase the high needs block pressures from £412,000 to £855,000. The impact of these pressures and the Redwood Park proposal is set out in the table below.

	£m
Estimated DSG reserve	1.555
Further high needs block pressures	(0.443)
Redwood Park Academy	(1.000)
Estimated DSG reserves	0.112

7.7 As with the original request, under the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2018 the authority is not able to utilise DSG for capital purposes without the specific approval of the Secretary of State for Education. Should Schools Forum agree to the proposal a request will be sent to dis-apply the regulations to enable the authority to transfer the funding from revenue to capital.

Signed by: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education

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

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

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Signed by: