

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Date of meeting:** 16 December 2020

**Subject:** School Modernisation and Sufficiency Programme Update

**Report by:** Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education

**Wards affected:** All wards

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of:

- Urgent school condition projects
- Mainstream school sufficiency schemes aimed at increasing school place capacity within the city
- Special school sufficiency schemes aimed at ensuring that schools can take children with more complex learning needs.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Cabinet Member notes the progress on the school modernisation "urgent condition" projects, the secondary school sufficiency projects and the special school sufficiency projects.**
- 2.2 **It is recommended that the schemes agreed with the Lead Member since the last report are formally approved.**

**3. Background**

**School modernisation (urgent condition) projects**

- 3.1 The urgent condition projects have been identified through Asset Management Plan meetings, condition surveys and recommendations by Education officers concerning the needs of specific pupils.

- 3.2 Funding for urgent condition projects was approved by the Council at the start of the financial year, plus a contingency allowance for urgent emerging works.
- 3.3 Although some of the more intrusive and disruptive works are normally undertaken during school holiday periods, this year has seen some projects delayed due to the impact of Covid19. These works will be reprogrammed to take place at the earliest opportunity whilst assuring school safety and social distancing arrangements are not compromised.
- 3.4 Where projects have been delayed due to Covid19, surveyors have revisited these works to ensure that the delay in implementation has not led to a deterioration of the identified repair. The following schemes are yet to complete:
- Southsea Infant School - Repairs to Western Elevation (brickwork and windows)
  - Wimborne Primary School - Repairs to South Elevation
  - Craneswater Junior School- Pipework replacement
- 3.5 In addition to the projects previously agreed, the following urgent condition schemes have been identified and require Cabinet Member approval:
- Craneswater Junior School - Disabled shower room adaptations
  - Craneswater Junior School - Heating system remedial works
  - Mayfield School - Boundary wall repairs
  - Milton Park Primary School - Roofing repairs
  - Portsdown Primary School - Power failure

### **Primary sufficiency schemes**

- 3.6 Between 2012 and 2017 the focus has been on expanding primary school places in response to the unprecedented rise in demand fuelled by rising birth rates, inward migration, reductions in the number of children accessing education outside of Portsmouth or accessing independent education and the impact of regeneration schemes and housing developments. In response over 1600 additional primary school places have been created since 2012. The birth rate is now falling and as a result surplus capacity is now a feature in Year R and is becoming so in Year 3. A summary of the latest position for primary is given below:
- **Year R** forecasts currently show a total pupil number of 2363 which equates to 5.5% surplus capacity at Year R. With the decrease in birth rate and the decrease in in-migration combined with the number of pupils attending out of city schools and independent schools and in line with population projection figures, a further reduction is forecast year on year until 2023/24 at which point there will be 11.5% surplus capacity in Year R.



- **Year 3** pupil numbers are due to peak in 2020/21 with 2424 pupils which will give a surplus capacity of 2.3%. The pupil number is then forecast to reduce and by 2023/24 there will be a surplus of 6.8% at Year 3.

- 3.7 Detailed analysis and forecasting has confirmed that the number of pupils requiring primary schools places is within the current capacity for the next four years. This is based on a range of demographic indicators. Further pressure on capacity could be driven by potential housing developments and the schemes will be closely monitored to assess progress. Taking account of the reduction in demand as indicated by demographic indicators and the slower progress with housing developments, no action is required at this point in relation to the sufficiency of primary school places.

### **Secondary sufficiency schemes**

- 3.8 Detailed analysis and forecasting has confirmed that the number of pupils requiring secondary school places will continue to rise until 2024/25, placing pressure on school place capacity. In line with the forecast reduction in primary numbers, secondary numbers are forecast to fall from 2025/26, providing surplus capacity, however, this position could alter if there was significant housing development in the intervening period. The position will be reviewed again next year.
- 3.9 Capacity is already increasing at Trafalgar School, Admiral Lord Nelson School, Charter Academy, The Portsmouth Academy, and St Edmund's School. Despite the implications and challenges of Covid 19, all projects continued and were completed to the agreed programme.
- 3.10 There are consequential costs associated with the Admiral Lord Nelson project required to meet the need for additional highways works and car parking and a budget of £600,000 is required, this can be funded from within the existing capital programme, where there is funding for provision of new school places.
- 3.11 Action is required to address a modest pressure on places in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Expansion plans will need to ensure that space can be used flexibly to account for future potential uses if secondary numbers fall and surplus capacity is available in future years. Options are being finalised for consideration.

### **Special school sufficiency schemes**

- 3.12 The council has previously approved funding for special school provision sufficiency schemes. There is an increasing demand for SEND places.



- 3.13 Despite the challenges of Covid 19, works at Redwood Park Academy completed on time to ensure that pupils with more complex SEND can be accommodated. However, to meet the additional number of pupils starting school in September 2020 with complex educational needs, additional funding of £120,000 is required for additional sensory facilities both internally and externally at the Cliffdale site, this can be funded from within the existing capital programme.
- 3.14 Detailed design work has progressed as planned on the new 66 place Wymering Special School, the project is funded and managed direct by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and a planning application is due to be submitted in December 2020, the project is scheduled to complete by September 2022. Due to a historic right of way being identified across the site entrance area in favour of the NHS, negotiation has taken place to re provide the area of the right of way and with associated access works required to the schools site, a sum of £150,000 has been identified within the existing capital programme to cover this overspend.
- 3.15 A Strategic SEND Review of Accommodation was undertaken in spring 2019 which assessed the physical capacity in current SEND provision and put forward a range of recommendations and considerations, this included a new 140 place special school for complex plus pupils. This recommendation was challenged, due primarily to reflect the direction of travel that this would take the authority, moving the city away from more inclusive provision. As a consequence a review of alternative options to address the shortfall of places for children and young people with special education needs to support a more inclusive agenda is underway and will consider the opportunities to both expand existing special schools whilst also developing SEND facilities within mainstream schools. The emerging proposals from this review will be considered through the annual capital allocations process.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 Despite the implications and challenges of Covid 19, all projects to provide additional school places were completed to the agreed programme, enabling additional pupils to commence at the schools from September 2020. Additional funding implications identified for both urgent priority condition works and sufficiency of school places can be met from within the existing capital programme.
- 4.2 Pupil numbers at primary school level have recently been decreasing, however, there remains a continued need for both secondary and special school places as outlined within this report.



## **5. Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 The implementation of the school modernisation programme (urgent condition) and the secondary sufficiency programme (phase 2) will not have a negative impact on any of the areas of equality and diversity, communities & safety, regeneration & culture, environment and public space.
- 5.2 The programme will improve access to schools for all equality groups, particularly with regard to those pupils who have learning difficulties and / or a disability.
- 5.3 Each individual capital project/scheme includes an equalities impact assessment.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, a local authority has a duty 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 the LA to have regard to the need to secure that special educational provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- 6.2 A local authority is also required under the Children and Families Act 2014 to keep under review its educational, training and social care provision for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities and to consider the extent to which the provision is sufficient to meet need.
- 6.3 The recommendations contained in this report and set out in paragraph 2 above are being sought with the intention of furthering the above duties and are within the Cabinet Member's powers, as set out in Part of the Council's constitution.

## **7. Director of Finance's comments**

- 7.1 Financial monitoring of the capital programme is reported within the quarterly budget monitoring report. The quarterly monitoring report will be brought to the December meeting.
- 7.2 The additional condition projects and sufficiency projects can be met within the existing budgets for those schemes.
- 7.3 For condition projects, schools will be expected to use their Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocations to support these key priorities, in keeping

with government expectations of the use of this funding. The expected contributions from schools' will be based on the agreed contribution methodology.

- 7.4 Any on-going revenue implications will be met by individual schools through their individual budgets which are funded from the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

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Signed by:

#### **Appendices:**

#### **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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>

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

.....  
Signed by: