

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting 16 January 2023

Report Title: School Organisation :The Dingle Primary School,
Haslington: Authority to enter into a construction contract
inclusive of pre-construction services

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's
Services.

Report Reference No: CF/56/22- 23

Ward(s) Affected: Haslington, Sandbach Elworth, Sandbach Ettiley Heath
and Wheelock, Sandbach Heath and East, Sandbach
Town

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The initial feasibility and design works for the expansion of The Dingle Primary School (maintained) to provide the accommodation required to increase the capacity of the school up to 2 forms of entry (2 FE) have been commissioned. This project will provide an additional 70 places to increase the capacity from 350 to 420.
- 1.2. Following completion of this phase of design work, which is due to be completed by the end of December 2022, approval is sought to tender for and appoint a design and build contractor to further progress the proposal with a view to overall completion of the construction phase during 2023. The next steps would involve pre-construction services, prior to award of a formal construction contract.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report outlines the steps taken to date in relation to the proposed expansion of The Dingle primary school, both in terms of consultation undertaken and scheme design development and seeks formal authority to

progress the proposal into final stages of design and construction phase with a view to full implementation of the expansion project.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Children and Families Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children’s Services to procure and award a construction contract for the expansion of The Dingle primary school to 2FE, inclusive of pre-construction services and any other agreements associated with or ancillary to the contract.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The proposed increase in primary school places in Haslington will enable Cheshire East Council to meet its statutory obligations. As the strategic commissioner of school places, Cheshire East Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places for children resident in its area and a commitment to allow local children to attend their local school wherever possible.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. If expansion at The Dingle Primary School site had proved not to be viable, then an alternative option would have been investigated for expansion at Haslington Primary School.
- 5.2. The Dingle Primary School is the catchment school for new housing developments that are generating the additional pupils.
- 5.3. Please see below an option appraisal for the above proposals:

Option	Impact	Risk
Expansion of The Dingle Primary school	The Dingle primary school is the catchment school for the new housing developments that are generating the additional pupils.	Issues with safe walking distance if children were offered an alternation school. The Dingle primary school has admitted over Pupil admission number (PAN) for the last 2 years, if this is not

		progressed there will be shortfall of accommodation.
Expansion of Haslington Primary School	The Dingle primary school is the more popular school with consistent admissions over PAN.	Less parents receiving their school of choice. Housing developments are in The Dingle primary school catchment area.

6. Background

- 6.1.** Following meetings with the Sandbach and Haslington headteachers, the local schools have previously supported the expansion of The Dingle Primary school to address the shortfall of places in this area which is as a direct consequence of housing developments within The Dingle primary school catchment area. Due to increasing demand, the school has been admitting over their Published Admission Number (PAN) of 50 over the previous years to meet the need in the Haslington planning area. The Dingle Primary school is currently rated as 'Good' by OFSTED.
- 6.2.** This admission over PAN has been agreed with the local authority and in some cases, it was to ensure that all 'In Area' applicants were offered a place. The forecast figures are showing additional places will be needed at The Dingle Primary school and therefore it is recommended to progress with increasing the PAN to 60 from 50, formalise the capacity of the school at 420 and undertake the necessary works to accommodate this increase.
- 6.3** Estates Property Projects Team were initially commissioned by Children and Families on 19 November 2021 to appoint consultants to develop the proposal through early concept design and feasibility stages. Further design development on the preferred option including undertaking a number of surveys and submission of a planning application was subsequently commissioned on 27 May 2022. Following discussions with the school and governing body representatives, the preferred proposal to expand the school incorporates the following works;

Conversion of an existing unsuitable internal classroom to a studio complete with folding partition wall to main hall;

- Conversion of year 3/4 classroom to create a chair and table store and two group rooms;

- Single storey extension with two classrooms and small store;
- Extension of parking area to provide 8 additional parking spaces;
- Improvements to pedestrian access including new cycle shelter;
- New Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with all-weather surfacing to corner of existing playing field to offset loss of hard surfaced play for extension and parking.

Also included in the scope of works is the replacement of high-level hall windows which was a planned scheme through the School Condition Allocation Programme.

7. Consultation and Engagement

7.1. This proposal was incorporated into a local member briefing paper on 'Proposals for Additional Primary Places in Haslington and Sandbach Planning Areas', as undertaken on 5 November 2021. A briefing was then held with local headteachers on 3 December to ensure effective consultation and agreements took place.

7.2. The proposed expansion does not fall within the category of a significant enlargement as it is less than 25% of existing capacity and is therefore not subject to formal school organisation procedures, which include statutory consultation. However, in order to ensure that the local community were made aware of the planned changes, the council requested that the governing body communicated its intentions and allowed time for any feedback. The proposal was therefore communicated via the school web-site and the Cheshire East Council School Organisation Consultation web-pages for the period from 24 June until 22 July 2022, however, no feedback was received.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal

8.1.1. In line with government and construction best practice, it is proposed to procure and award the required construction contract using existing regional frameworks. The council currently has access to the Northwest Construction Hub (NWCH), which is a regional framework agreement administered by Manchester City Council and can be used by local authorities and other public bodies in the northwest of England. The NWCH offers a range of value bands, including a low value framework for project of £500k and above, a medium value for projects between £2m and £10m through to high value framework for projects

over £10m, which can be utilised to offer the flexibility required for phasing and programme options. Based on pre-tender budget estimates for the proposed project at The Dingle primary school, this indicates the NWCH Low Value Framework would need to be used.

- 8.1.2.** The contract procurement and award will comply with the council's contract procedure rules.
- 8.1.3.** As the proposal provides a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) to mitigate the loss of playground space to accommodate the additional classrooms, notification was made the Department for Education Land Transactions Team for a class consent under Section 77 of The School Standards and Framework Act. This was acknowledged on 12 April 2022 and no further action is required.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1.** The project is included in the Education and 14-19 Skills Capital Programme and the MTFS 2022-26 and is a named scheme 'Haslington Planning Area - Primary.'
- 8.2.2.** The latest cost estimate as at July 2022, inclusive of construction costs and all professional and statutory fees is £1.217m. This will be principally funded via Section 106 contributions and Basic Need Grant (with the hall windows funded through the School Condition Allocation with a 10% school contribution.) Section 106 education funding contributions are those agreed with new housing developers specifically to fund the additional pupil places needed due to new housing development this is received in stages over many years. This funding estimate will need to be reviewed further as the more detailed cost programme is generated. However, the ongoing challenges to capital budgets must take into consideration what are the critical aspects of this build programme so that these are prioritised within the budget envelope.
- 8.2.3** There is currently a budget of £1.0m in the approved MTFS 2022/26 and an additional virement request funded from the Basic Need and School Condition Grant Allocations was made at the first financial review for 2022/23.

8.3 Policy Implications

- 8.3.1.** The local authority will determine the Published Admission Number (PAN) from pupils for year groups Reception to Year 6, in line with the

statutory timescales set out in the School Admissions Code (2021) The total capacity of the school will be 420 primary aged pupils. Standard PAN will be 60 per year group.

8.4. Equality Implications

- 8.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed for this proposal.

8.5 Human Resources Implications

- 8.5.1. Additional staffing resources may be required by the school to fully operate as a 2 FE school.

8.6 Risk Management Implications

- 8.6.1 If additional places are not provided in Haslington, parents of Cheshire East children, who are resident in the area, may be unable to secure places at their local school and may be required to travel over 2 miles to alternative Cheshire East schools requiring transport assistance.
- 8.6.2 A formal process including consultation of statutory consultees will be required as part of the planning application process.
- 8.6.3 All the building works will be planned carefully and contractors will work with the project team to ensure that works are scheduled to keep disruption to a minimum for staff, pupils and local residents.
- 8.6.4 If projected costs come in higher/increase, there would be a need to undertake a value engineering exercise and assess increased costs against wider budgetary needs.

8.7 Rural Communities Implications

- 8.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities. Additional places at The Dingle primary school will assist with reducing traffic around rural areas as the children from this development can attend their local school rather than travelling by car.
- 8.7.2. The additional places will provide the required places for the pupils from the locality, limiting the impact on smaller rural schools and enabling such schools to retain their rural character and not have to expand

8.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1. Providing additional places at this school will help ensure that local children, including cared for children, can be offered a place at their local school. An increase in capacity in the Haslington area would provide more places for families moving into the area particularly outside the usual admissions rounds and reduce pressure on families in managing their child’s journey to school and help them settle into their local community.

8.9 Public Health Implications

8.9.3 The additional places provide local school places which will assist in encouraging walking to school and for families to actively engage with the school on a range of community initiatives.

8.10 Climate Change Implications

8.10.1. The proposed scheme would need to comply with the Governments targets of nearly zero carbon as outlined within the Building Regulations and the Councils own currently approved policies to achieve carbon neutral targets.

8.10.2. Providing additional places at this local school will enable Cheshire East children, resident in the Haslington area, the ability to secure at place at their local school thus reducing the need to travel outside of the area which will reduce energy consumption and enabling pupils to walk to school promoting a healthy lifestyle.

8.10.3. Cheshire East Council are very aware of their environmental education and stewardship role and are very interested in promoting sustainability in general.

8.10.4. As part of the detailed design process, the design team are exploring how the building could be designed to minimize future running costs.

Contact Officer:	Mark Bayley: Head of Service Mark.bayley@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Building Bulletin 103 Area guidelines and net capacity - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) DFE Guidance on Land Transactions

	<p>Submit a school land transaction proposal - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Briefing Paper - Proposals for Additional Primary Places in Haslington and Sandbach Planning Areas - November, 2021</p>
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Services consulted on this report	Name of person consulted	Role of person consulted	<u>Date consulted</u>
Legal	Chris Hume	Lawyer(Solicitor) Contracts and Procurement Team	10/08/22
Finance	Sam Oakden	Principal Accountant – Finance and Projects Team	10/08/22