

## **Cabinet**

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**Date of Meeting:** 8 September 2020

**Report Title:** Proposed Expansion of Wilmslow High School – Authority to Enter into a Construction Contract

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Kathryn Flavell – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

**Senior Officer:** Mark Palethorpe – Executive Director (People)

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### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. In April 2020 Cllr Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families, gave consideration to the proposed expansion of Wilmslow High School from 300 to 360 places per year group for years 7-11.
- 1.2. Having considered all the feedback received during the statutory 4 week representation period, the Portfolio Holder approved the expansion proposal for implementation in September 2023.
- 1.3 This report seeks approval to enter into a construction contract for works at Wilmslow High School, where the contract value will exceed one million pounds.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the procurement of a contract of works and authorise the Executive Director People to award a construction contract to facilitate the provision of additional places at Wilmslow High School, together with any other agreements associated with or ancillary to the contract.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. The proposed increase in places at Wilmslow High School will assist Cheshire East Council in meeting its statutory obligations to ensure sufficiency of school places.
- 3.2. Following Cabinet approval for the project, entering into a construction contract will enable the building project to commence following completion of full design, should the requisite planning permission be granted. Commencement on site would be proposed for early 2021.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Other options considered were detailed in the Portfolio Holder report entitled "Proposed Expansion of Wilmslow High School" which was approved by the Portfolio Holder, Children and Families on 6 April 2020.

### **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 Current forecasts for years 7 to 11 and covering the period 2019 to 2025 indicate an immediate shortage of 111 secondary school places in 2019 increasing year on year to 257 by 2025. These figures do not include the desired 2% level of operational surplus, which is intended to facilitate admissions mid year, some degree of parental choice and reasonable journey times to school.
- 5.2 Wilmslow High School is a popular and successful school rated "Good" by Ofsted at the last inspection in May 2019. For a number of years the Local Authority has received applications in excess of the 300 year 7 places available. In addition, the number of pupils resident in the school's catchment area remains consistently high, although it is acknowledged that not all of these pupils require a place at a local authority maintained school, as some will choose to attend local independent schools.
- 5.3 In response to this immediate shortfall, and to satisfy as many parental preferences for local children as possible the Local Authority, in agreement with the school, have for the last 3 years admitted above the school's published admission number (PAN) of 300 for entry into year 7. Interim arrangements for the admissions over PAN have been undertaken and various remodelling of the internal spaces have allowed the school to accommodate the additional pupils.
- 5.4 A feasibility study/option appraisal on an extensive scheme to re-model and enlarge the school has recently been completed; this is inclusive of a full curriculum analysis. The building project includes a single-storey extension to the main building, a further extension linking the existing Olympic Hall

and Sports Hall blocks plus significant internal re-modelling and other works as a result of the scheme development. The proposal will take a holistic view of the whole campus with the intention to better integrate departments/faculties and improve circulation and pupil flows through the creation of new routes that are of sufficient capacity to reduce "pinch points."

- 5.5 A full planning application for the expansion scheme was submitted in June 2020. The application was supported by a detailed Transport Assessment, which included proposed mitigation measures. A transport consultant has been working closely with the school to develop the Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan. For link to planning application and supporting documentation, please see item 9.4.
- 5.6 If recommendations in this report are approved the proposed timeline is as follows:-
- Contractor is proposed to be appointed for pre-construction following tender process, October 2020;
  - Installation of temporary decant accommodation as part of pre-construction (to enable the school to decant early) November-January 2021. A planning application for this temporary accommodation was submitted in June 2020;
  - Price stage 4 designs and agree Target Cost with contractor, February 2021;
  - Contracts and appointment of Contractor to undertake implementation, March 2021;
  - Contractor Mobilisation, April 2021.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1 Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1 In line with Government and construction best practice, it is proposed to procure and award the required construction works using existing regional frameworks. The Council currently has access to the North West 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 North West 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 works at Wilmslow High School, this indicates the High Value framework would need to be used.

- 6.1.2 A Framework enables the Council to meet its need for a service, supply of goods or works for a set period of time in order to obviate the need to undertake a wide competitive procurement process for each individual scheme. It complies with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules

## 6.2 Finance Implications

- 6.2.1 A feasibility study has been undertaken to identify a provisional budget for the proposal, currently a target cost of £12m inclusive of all professional and statutory fees has been identified.

- 6.2.2 Currently, included in the Education and 14-19 Skills Capital Programme is a named scheme 'Wilmslow High School BN', with a total approved budget of £12m. The proposed expansion is currently funded via Section 106 contributions, Basic Need Grant and Capital Maintenance Grant. 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.

- 6.2.3 Currently the project is funded as follows:-

- £0.660m of Section 106 contributions received;
- £10.791m Basic Need (potential to be changed to Section 106 funding once further contributions have been received);
- School Condition Allocation grant £0.549;

= Current funding available **£12m**. (Following approval to move funds from the addendum list to the main capital programme).

- Further Section 106 expected to be received is £2,839,302. As this is expected contributions from developers, this will initially be funded by Basic Need, as detailed above, in advance of receiving these monies.
- Section 106 Developer Contributions attached to this scheme are included in Appendix 1.

- 6.2.4 An increase in pupils during the year will mean the school qualifies for a Growth Fund payment to assist with additional running costs. This will be determined later in 2020.

6.2.5 Pupils on roll in October 2020 will determine revenue-funding levels from April 2021.

6.2.6 Increasing the size of the school will bring additional running costs for the school to manage.

### **6.3 Policy Implications**

6.3.1 The Local Authority will determine an increase in the PAN from 300 to 360 pupils for year groups 7 to 11, in line with the statutory timescales set out in the School Admissions Code (2014).

### **6.4 Equality Implications**

6.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in respect of the proposed expansion of Wilmslow High School. The assessment concluded that the proposal would have an overall positive impact on several of the areas - specifically parents and carers, young people and a neutral impact on the remaining factors.

### **6.5 Human Resources Implications**

6.5.1 There are no additional human resource implications for the Council as a result of this report, although the school are aware that increased numbers on roll could require additional staffing costs which would be funded through their formula funded budget.

### **6.6 Risk Management Implications**

6.6.1 The proposed expansion is identified to address a Basic Need for secondary school places within Wilmslow. This is in order to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places within 3 miles and with safe routes to schools.

6.6.2 If additional places are not provided in Wilmslow, parents of Cheshire East children, who are resident in the Wilmslow area, may be unable to secure places at their local school and may be required to travel over 3 miles to alternative Cheshire East schools requiring transport assistance, at a significant revenue cost to the local authority.

6.6.3 The proposed building works will be subject to the necessary planning and statutory permissions. If the required building work would be on land that falls within the DfE's definition of playing fields land, this would be a change of use requiring consent from the Secretary of State for Education under s77 of the School Standards and Framework Act.

The statutory provisions for the protection of school playing fields land would need to be adhered to. Sport England is a statutory consultee. Pupil numbers at the school and areas of the available playing fields land will be a relevant consideration in the consideration of such a proposal.

6.6.4 There are inherent risks with any construction project. Project team meetings ensure that these risks are identified and a risk register has been developed and is regularly reviewed by the project team. All risks have assigned owners who are responsible for mitigating and managing them.

6.6.5 The potential need for working restrictions, sequencing of works and availability of plant and materials due to Covid-19 may ultimately extend the contract period and associated increase in costs. This will be monitored closely as part of the Project Management process

## **6.7 Rural Communities Implications**

6.7.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

## **6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children**

6.8.1 Wilmslow is an area that has consistently experienced a number of “in year” applications from families moving into Cheshire East. Based upon current numbers on roll, all year groups across the school are already full or over subscribed. The school has accommodated additional numbers where possible and admitted over their Published Admission Number but some families have been offered places at the next nearest schools with places available which can be more than 3 miles away thus resulting in the authority incurring transport costs.

6.8.2 Providing additional places at this school will help ensure that local children, including cared for children, can be offered a place at a local school.

## **6.9 Public Health Implications**

6.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

## **6.10 Climate Change Implications**

6.10.1 Providing additional places at this local school will enable Cheshire East children, resident in the Wilmslow area, to secure a 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.

6.10.2 Cheshire East Council and Wilmslow High School are very aware of their environmental education and stewardship role and are very interested in promoting sustainability in general.

6.10.3 It is noted that the funding is for a capital project and not for the ongoing running costs. Therefore, as part of the detailed design process, the design team are exploring how the building could be designed to minimise future running costs.

6.10.4 The 2018 window replacement targeted a 15% improvement over and above the minimum standards in the Building Regulations for insulation and airtightness; this principle will be extended to the improvement of carbon emissions both for the new development and for any part of the external building fabric or services being renewed.

6.10.5 Systems that save on energy consumption will be considered, particularly for electricity, with absence detection being the preferred lighting strategy.

6.10.6 The building should be zoned for heating so when individual buildings or sections of buildings are opened for community use for example, the school can heat just that area.

6.10.7 Savings on water consumption will also be considered with WRAS (Water Regulations Advisory Scheme) certified.

## **7 Ward Members Affected**

7.1 Local ward members were informed of the proposal prior to and during the statutory representation period.

## **8 Consultation & Engagement**

8.1 In accordance with the guidance issued by the Department for Education, the statutory publication notice was published in the Wilmslow and Knutsford Guardian and the Wilmslow edition of the Manchester Weekly News on 16 January 2020 and the subsequent statutory four-week representation period ran from 16 January 2020 to 14 February 2020. Information was made available on the County website and the representation period was notified to key stakeholders including Ward Members, MP, and Diocese, Local Parish and Town Councils and the neighbouring authorities of Manchester City Council, Stockport Metropolitan

Borough Council and Trafford Council. Information was also emailed to all local schools together with a letter for distribution to their staff, governors and parents.

- 8.2 In addition, a public drop in session was held at Wilmslow Library on 21 January and representatives from the school and local authority attended to discuss the proposal and seek views.
- 8.3 Cabinet members are advised that this statutory process provides the opportunity for any person with an interest to submit representations, which can be objections as well as expressions of support for the proposals.
- 8.4 During the statutory representation period the council received 70 responses 14 supported the proposal and 51 do not support the expansion proposal, plus 5 no view including 2 responses commenting on the opening times of the public event.
- 8.5 All feedback received during the representation period was collated and presented to Portfolio Holder, Children and Families for consideration. Approval for the proposed expansion was confirmed on 6 April 2020. For link to the decision details, please see item 9.3.

## **9 Access to Information**

- 9.1 Further background information relating to this report can be obtained by contacting the School Organisation Team, Children and Families Directorate.
- 9.2 [DfE Guidance – Disposal or change of use of playing field and school land](#)
- 9.3 [Decision details – Proposed Expansion of Wilmslow High School](#)
- 9.4 [Planning Application – Wilmslow High School](#)

## **10 Contact Information**

- 10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Val Simons

Job Title: Pupil Place Planning Officer

Email: [val.simons@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:val.simons@cheshireeast.gov.uk)