

## **Children and Families Committee**

---

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	19 September 2022
<b>Report Title:</b>	School Organisation: Update on the proposal for a Primary School, Basford East, Shavington, following consultation
<b>Report of:</b>	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CF/54/22- 23
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	Weston/Basford Shavington Willaston and Rope

---

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the previous committee paper, considered by the Children and Families Committee on 10 January 2022, on the establishment of a new primary school in Basford, Shavington.
- 1.2 At the 10 January 2022 Children and Families Committee meeting, it was agreed that an update would be provided to members of the committee on the outcomes from the informal consultation which is a required stage in the Department for Education (DfE) free school presumption process. This report and appendix 1 provide the detailed information for consideration and noting.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The data analysis indicates the need for additional school places, Reception

to Year 6, as a result of the development at Basford East, Shavington. These additional places would be provided by the establishment of a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (with the option for a 30 Place Nursery), opening in September 2025.

- 2.3. At the Children and Families Committee meeting on 10 January 2022, consideration was given to a report which sought approval to proceed with undertaking the free school presumption process to identify and obtain agreement for a new school sponsor relating to the Basford East housing development. It was noted and approved that a period of informal engagement would be undertaken including briefings with local ward members, school leaders and wider stakeholders at the beginning of the process to help inform the specification of the school. It was agreed that the service would provide an update to be presented to the committee following this activity.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That the committee notes, the summary of the feedback received, including the proposed mitigations, following the 4-week informal representation period which is a required stage in the DfE free school presumption process to allow the opening of a new primary school at Basford East, Shavington.
- 3.2. That the committee agrees to the progression of the prescribed free school process in the generation and submission of the draft specification for the new school to the DfE.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1. This recommendation is made based on the increased pupil forecasts for Shavington planning area for September 2025 and to ensure that Cheshire East Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for children in their community.
- 4.2. To allow the service/directorate to ensure there is a reasonable timescale to implement the necessary statutory processes, procurement, and planning to deliver the new school in readiness for September 2025.

### **5. Other Options Considered**

- 5.1. Other options considered were detailed in the committee paper that was presented at the 10 January 2022 committee meeting. These

options included doing nothing which is an option which cannot be considered due to the need to ensure sufficiency of school places within the local area.

- 5.2. Weston Village Primary School is the only primary school within a 2-mile radius of the new school. Weston Village Primary was assessed for expansion however site restrictions mean that it was not deemed a viable option. Weston Village Primary had also requested and had confirmed a reduction in their pupil admission number (PAN) from 38 to 30 as from September 2022.

## **6. Background**

- 6.1. A detailed committee paper was presented at the 10 January 2022 committee meeting where a series of recommendations were approved:
  - 6.1.1. The service to proceed with the free school presumption process which will include undertaking a consultation, in accordance with the Department for Education guidelines, with the local community, local schools, local councillors, town council and local MP. This is not the formal statutory consultation which sponsors are required to undertake.

## **7. Consultation and Engagement**

- 7.1. In accordance with the free school presumption advice for local authorities and new school proposers issued by the DfE (November 2019) to open a new school, local authorities must follow this process when considering opening a new school.
- 7.2. Before launching the competition to identify the sponsor to run the new school, the local authority will undertake consultation and engagement sessions.
- 7.3. This is not the formal statutory consultation which sponsors are required to undertake under section 10 of the Academies Act 2010, which takes place during the pre-opening phase i.e., after the sponsor has been selected.
- 7.4. As part of the consultation and engagement process, Cheshire East has undertaken the following:
  - A formal briefing with local councillors.
  - A presentation and meeting was held with local schools.
  - A four-week representation period ran from 25 April 2022 to 22 May 2022 and a public notice was issued in the local press.

- Information was available on the Cheshire East website and during the representation period stakeholders, including Ward Members, MP, Diocese, and Town Council, were informed of the process.
- Information was emailed to all local schools together with a letter for distribution to their staff, governors, and parents.
- Two public drop-in sessions were held at Shavington Village Hall and Weston Village Church Hall with representatives from the Cheshire East Council School Organisation Team in attendance to discuss the proposal and seek views from parents and the local community.

7.5. Feedback gathered through consultation is summarised in Appendix 1 and this will be used to help formulate and finalise the Cheshire East Council's specification for a new school before its publication to invite expressions of interest from sponsors. Below is a summary of the feedback received: -

7.5.1. During the 4-week representation period a total of 38 responses were received: -

- 30 did support the proposal and left comments.
- 7 did not support the proposal and left comments.
- 1 no view provided.

7.5.2. Key issues raised from the consultation included: -

- Drop off and pick up/parent parking
- Children's play area close to the school grounds
- Safe road crossings near the school and pedestrian footbridges
- Cycle and walking routes linking the new developments in Basford area
- A full range of recreational facilities for the community and after school clubs

7.6. The DfE free school presumption process for proposing a new school has seven key stages, as set out in the table below. A proposed timescale for the remaining stages has been included for this specific new primary school for Shavington:

Stage	Process	Detail	Proposed Timescale
Stage 1	Notification	Notification to the DfE to trigger the process - <b>This has been completed</b>	December 2021

Stage 2	Informal Consultation	Consultation of the proposal with local schools, parents, carers, staff, pupils, school governors and trustees, Diocese representatives, local community, and ward members – Minimum of 4 weeks recommended - <b>This has been completed.</b> Feedback received will help formulate the specification for the school and complete the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	April – May 2022
Stage 3	Draft Specification	Draft specification and EIA submitted to DfE for approval	October 2022
Stage 4	Formal Specification for the school published (In-line with DfE requirements)	Following DfE approval, the LA and DfE publish the specification and invite potential sponsors to submit their applications. Recommended to allow 6-8 weeks but if time allows 12-14 weeks may be more appropriate	January 2023
Stage 5	Assessment Phase	The decision-maker (usually the LA) assesses/scores the applications, may invite potential sponsors for interview. This process is supported by the DfE regional leads.	February – March 2023
Stage 6	Sponsor Approval	The LA submits preferred sponsor to the RSC, which is taken to the Headteacher Board for potential approval.	April 2023
Stage 7	Implementation, pre-opening.	LA and approved sponsor work together to ensure the school opens as per the specification. This stage includes the approved sponsor undertaking Statutory Consultation prior to any funding agreement being issued.	May 2023

## 8. Implications

### 8.1. Legal

8.1.1. No additional legal commentary is required for this update report. Please refer to the previous detailed paper for legal implications.

### 8.2. Finance

8.2.1. Included in the Education and 14-19 Skills Capital Programme is a named scheme 'New School Shavington', with a total approved budget of £5m. This figure has not changed since the previous report was considered by committee; however, the recent MTFs review and inflation costs exercise will require an uplifted budget allocation for this scheme following the completion of future feasibility tasks.

8.2.2. The proposed new school is currently funded via Section 106 contributions

and Basic Need 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, this is received in stages over many years.

8.2.3. The funding profile is as follows:

- £2.568m Section 106 contributions agreed.
- £2.432m Basic Need

8.2.4. At this stage, a provisional budget of £5 million inclusive of all professional and statutory fees has been allocated to the project. Design development will be commissioned to identify more accurately the costs of implementation of a standard 1 Form of Entry with the built infrastructure to expand to a 2 Form of Entry in the future primary school in line with BB103 requirements and the DfE's standardised design principles.

8.2.5. Revenue funding for schools is provided through the schools' block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

8.2.6. The new and growing school will be funded through the schools funding formula in place at the time and in line with the relevant minimum per pupil funding levels.

### **8.3. Policy**

8.3.1. In accordance with the free school presumption process, departmental advice for local authorities and new school proposers issued by the DfE (November 2019), to open a new school, local authorities must follow this prescribed process.

### **8.4. Equality**

8.4.1. A detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be completed and submitted as part of Stage 3 'Specification' of the DfE Free School Presumption process.

### **8.5. Human Resources**

Please see the previous report for implications relating to the new school.

### **8.6. Risk Management**

Please see the previous report for implications relating to the new school.

### **8.7. Rural Communities**

Please see the previous report for implications relating to the new school.

## 8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1. Please see the previous report for implications relating to the new school.

## 8.9. Public Health

8.9.1. Please see the previous report for implications relating to the new school.

## 8.10. Climate Change

8.10.1. Please see the previous report for implications relating to the new school.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Mark Bayley Head of Service – Achievement and Attainment <a href="mailto:mark.bayley@cheshireeast.gov.uk">mark.bayley@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Summary of Feedback Basford East
Background Papers:	<a href="http://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s91167/3c.%20School%20capital%20organisation%20-%20Basford%20new%20school%20proposal%20-%20Copy.pdf">http://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s91167/3c.%20School%20capital%20organisation%20-%20Basford%20new%20school%20proposal%20-%20Copy.pdf</a>

Services consulted on this report	Name of person consulted	Role of person consulted	Date consulted
Legal	Mandy Withington	Legal team manager	22/7/22
Finance	Sam Oakden	Senior Finance lead	28/7/22
Strategic Programme Board	Full Board meeting	Chaired by Jacky Forster	19/7/22
CLT	Corporate leads		24/8/22
Committee	C&F Committee		19/9/22