


Portfolio Holder Decision

Consultation on Age Range Change - Brownsover Community School

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Children, Families & Education
Date of decision	13 April 2022
	Signed  Pp

1. Decision taken

- 1.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education agrees to the undertaking of a public consultation on changing the age range at Brownsover Community School

2. Reasons for decisions

2.1. In partnership with the Governing Body of Brownsover Community School, WCC are looking to consult on the proposal to extend the age range of Brownsover Community School from 3 to 7 to 3 to 11. This would allow Brownsover Community School to progress from a two form entry infant school to a one form entry primary school

2.2. Any proposed changes to the age range of a community school must be carried out in accordance with the Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools.' The guidance requires the local authority to undertake a statutory consultation for a period of at least 4 weeks, with the proposals published both online and in a local newspaper, as well as to the governing body, the parents of registered pupils at the school, and anyone else considered appropriate. The local authority should make its decision within 2 months of the end of the consultation period

3. Background information

3.1. The Griffin School on The Gateway development (1300 homes) has an opening date of September 2023. This one form entry school is the preferred option to meet the demand for pupil places from this development in the short to long term.

3.2 Alongside the opening of The Griffin School in September 2023, WCC is proposing to convert Brownsover Community School from a 2FE infant school to a 1FE primary school. This proposal aims to:

- As a result of decreasing cohort numbers in the local area this proposal looks to provide reassurance to the DFE in relation to the opening of new provision and the potential impact on existing schools. This is required to ensure the funding agreement for The Griffin School is signed and the school can open.
- Provide long term sustainability for the school. Just over 40 offers were made for Reception 2021 and a similar number is estimated for Reception 2022.
- Address an imbalance in infant and junior provision which creates sufficiency issues during periods of high numbers on roll. A total of 150 infant places comprising Brownsover Community School (PAN 60) and Boughton Leigh Infant School (PAN 90) feed into Boughton Leigh Junior School offering 120 places. Following the first year 3 intake in September 2026, Boughton Leigh Infant School and Boughton Leigh Junior Schools PANs will align with demand in the area.

3.3 It is proposed the first intake into year 3 would be September 2026. Before the school can admit children into year 3, they need to reduce their PAN to 30 in reception from September 2023.

3.4 In order to meet the timescales to reduce the PAN for September 2023, consultation on expanding the age range needs to take place between April and May 2022. Should a decision be made to expand the age range of the school then authority from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator will be sought by WCC officers for a variation in the published admissions number for the 2023/24 academic year, and a proposal will also be brought forward to alter the school's published admission number permanently from the 2024/25 academic year onwards, subject to further consultation.

3.5 The local member for the area is aware and supportive of the proposal

4. Financial implications

4.1. Capital works are required to provide a Key Stage 2 learning environment and achieve the minimum classroom size guidelines and ancillary space through internal re modelling. These capital works have been estimated at circa £900,000 and will be funded through a combination of developer contributions and basic need grant. Should a decision be made to expand the age range of the school then capital approval for these works would be required from Cabinet and included in the same report as the change to age range.

4.2 The school is facing continued budgetary challenges as a 2FE infant school. Financial modelling has demonstrated that in the medium to long term the school would be more financial sustainable as a 1FE primary than a 2FE infant.

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5. Environmental implications

5.1 Ensuring The Griffin School can open on The Gateway Development will promote sustainable travel from home to school and reduce travel time and distance for some families

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Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Children, Families & Education

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

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Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor

Corporate Board – Communities Director

Legal – Yes

Finance – Yes

Equality – Yes

Democratic Services – Yes

Councillors – Cllr Morgan, Cllr Timms

Local Member(s): Cllr Simpson-Vince