

Portfolio Holder Decision

Consultation to increase capacity and the establishment of specialist resourced provision at St John's Primary School

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Education
Date of decision	8 September 2023
	Signed

1. Decision taken

1.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Education agrees to the commencement of a consultation in line with the statutory process required for an expansion by 210 places and the establishment of a specialist resourced provision (SRP) to cater for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at St John's Primary School.

2. Reasons for decisions

2.1 Current pupil number forecasts show that the Kenilworth area is facing significant pressure over the coming years due to housing development.

2.2 To address this shortfall, the Local Authority are looking to expand St John's Primary School by one form of entry (1FE). This will permanently increase capacity by an additional 210 places across the school over the next 7 years.

2.3 The Local Authority are also proposing to establish specialist resourced provision for up to 14 primary aged pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) whose primary needs are social, emotional & mental health (SEMH). The introduction of this specialist resourced provision aims to increase the offer of local specialist provision in the area to reduce travel times and out of area placements.

2.4 In line with the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education, 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools', any proposals to establish, remove or alter SEN provision (including specialist resourced provision) and any proposed enlargement of the capacity of the school premises requires the local authority to undertake a statutory process including a consultation period of at least 4 weeks. In order to commence a consultation the approval of the Portfolio Holder is required in line with the Council's constitution.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Current and proposed housing development in Kenilworth Town is forecast to increase reception cohorts and applications to other year groups over the next five years. It is proposed to increase the number of primary places in Kenilworth by expanding St John's Primary School from one form entry (210 places) to 2 form entry (420 places).
- 3.2 In order to meet forecast demand and build on the local offer of specialist provision the local authority is continuing the development of specialist resourced provision across the county whereby pupils, who are cognitively able to access the curriculum, can have their needs met and benefit from being located on site alongside a mainstream school environment.
- 3.3 There are currently 16 SRPs attached to mainstream primary provision in Warwickshire – 2 in North Warwickshire, 5 in Nuneaton & Bedworth, 5 in Rugby, 1 in Warwick and 3 in the Stratford on Avon area.
- 3.4 Admissions to the specialist resourced provision would follow a different process from that operating for the rest of the school. Admissions into the specialist resourced provision will be through the WCC process for specialist admissions.
- 3.5 If the proposal is agreed, capital works would be initiated to ensure additional accommodation is in place to allow the school to operate with increased numbers and for the specialist resourced provision to open in September 2024.
- 3.6 In line with the timing of provision it is anticipated that the consultation would need to take place between September and November 2023. Parents at the schools will be consulted using the school's established form of communication, other schools and stakeholders will be notified of the proposal and further information will be placed on WCC consultation platform 'Ask Warwickshire'.
- 3.7 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in respect of final proposals following the consultation. The final recommendations will be taken through the appropriate Council governance and approval processes.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from a decision to undertake this consultation.
- 4.2 However, if after the consultation there is a decision to go ahead with the expansion and specialist resourced provision there will be capital costs to the Local Authority in order for additional teaching and ancillary space to be provided.
- 4.3 Initial feasibility assessments have indicated that the works associated with the proposed development would include several new extensions of the existing school along with internal remodelling works to the existing building.

- 4.4 The capital project would be funded via relevant developer contributions received and Education Capital Funding as required.
- 4.5 Feasibility work will continue with final costings and identified funding presented to Cabinet for approval at a later date.
- 4.6 Pupil places in the specialist resourced provisions are funded at a higher rate so that pupils additional learning needs can be met. The level of funding will be broadly in line with how pupils are funded in the County's special schools. A service level agreement between WCC and the school will confirm the exact arrangements and expectations

5. Environmental implications

- 5.1 In terms of any proposed capital works, wherever possible the existing structure should be left intact and utilized to minimise the use of new structural materials and therefore the environmental impact. Consideration will be given to limiting the embodied carbon generated by the structural works by efficient use of materials. Sustainable materials and recycled components will be considered where relevant and appropriate. Consideration will be given to utilising thermal mass to reduce operational carbon emissions subject to suitability and co-ordination with building services engineers.
- 5.2 There is also the positive impact of the expansion of mainstream places and the increasing development of specialist resourced provision aiming to provide more 'local' education provision, reduce journey times for the learner, and limit the need to access places in neighbouring areas which increases the requirement for transport.

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Director	Johnny Kyriacou, Director of Education
Executive Director	Nigel Minns, Executive Director for People
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kam Kaur, Portfolio Holder for Education

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

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kaur

Corporate Board – Nigel Minns

Legal – Guy Darvill

Finance – Brian Smith

Equality – Delroy Madden

Democratic Services – Isabelle Moorhouse

Councillors – M. Humphreys, Roodhouse, Brown

Local Member(s) – Cllr Richard Spencer