

**SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE OF CABINET
– 11th MARCH 2021**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Proposed Increase in the Number of Pupils at Sunningdale Primary School

Author(s): Executive Director of Neighbourhoods

Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to request a decision on the proposal to increase the number of primary school aged pupils at Sunningdale Primary School from 108 to 120.

Description of Decision: School Organisation Committee of Cabinet is asked to:

Note the responses to the statutory and pre-publication consultations and consider the statutory proposal which is to:

- Increase the number of pupils at **Sunningdale Primary School, currently located at Shaftoe Road, Sunderland, SR3 4HA** from 108 places to 120 places with effect from 1st September 2022.

Under the provisions of the relevant Regulations, the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification or may reject them.

The Committee is requested to approve the proposal as detailed above.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Reason for the Decision

Sunningdale Primary School is operating above capacity in all year groups. Building Bulletin 104 identifies that classes for primary aged children with Severe Learning Difficulties should accommodate between six and eight children. The demand for special educational needs places, from within the city and neighbouring authority areas, has led to a gradual recruitment above that number, with the school currently operating class sizes of between nine and 11 pupils. Based on current estimations the school is five class bases short of the capacity required to meet the needs of those currently on roll at the school. A proposal to relocate and rebuild the school at a new site at the junction of Silksworth Road and Doxford Park Way to respond to the overcapacity and condition issues with the current school buildings was approved by the Cabinet of Sunderland Council in March 2020.

Sunningdale Primary School provides the city's only primary aged maintained school setting for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Physical Disabilities (PD). Pupils attend from across the wider Sunderland area. On that basis any new housing proposals across the city will place pressure on the sufficiency of existing school places.

In addition to this, demand for primary Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) provision from within the current school age population continues to grow. As an outstanding school parental demand for places at Sunningdale Primary School is particularly high. However, given the current school building is operating over capacity, the Council has neither the capacity nor additional support resources within Sunderland to support this ongoing oversubscription.

This proposal seeks to increase the number of pupils at Sunningdale Primary School when it opens at the new site at the junction of Doxford Park Way and Silksworth Road. The new school will have the capacity to accommodate those currently on roll in appropriate class sizes, will increase the support resources for the pupils at the school and will increase the capacity of the setting by a further 12 pupils in the primary aged year groups in order to meet the demand for local placement of a greater number of local pupils.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

- Retain existing Sunningdale Primary School capacity of 108 places at existing site
- Relocate Sunningdale Primary School with existing capacity of 108 places

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PUPILS AT SUNNINGDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to request a decision on the proposal to increase the number of primary school aged pupils at Sunningdale Primary School from 108 to 120.

2. Description of Decision

2.1 School Organisation Committee of Cabinet is asked to:

Note the responses to the statutory and pre-publication consultations and consider the statutory proposal which is to:

Increase the number of pupils at Sunningdale Primary School, currently located at Shaftoe Road, Sunderland, SR3 4HA from 108 places to 120 places with effect from 1st September 2022.

Under the provisions of the relevant Regulations, the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification or may reject them.

The Committee is requested to approve the proposal as detailed above.

3. Current Position

3.1 Sunningdale Primary School is a maintained special primary school maintained by Sunderland City Council. It provides education for children aged between 2 and 11 with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Physical Disabilities (PD). The school currently has an Ofsted grading of Outstanding. It is also designated as a teaching school.

3.2 However, the current school buildings are currently operating above the recommended capacity. It is estimated that the school requires a further five class bases provide the correct average class sizes of six to eight pupils per class. The school is currently operating with between nine and 11 pupils per class. A number of the classrooms within the current build are smaller than the recommended physical size for six pupils.

3.3 The current buildings require major capitalised repair with structural, electrical and mechanical and resource requirements across the school site currently estimated at £2.0m.

4.0 Numbers on Roll and Impact of Planned Housing

4.1 At October 2020 Census there were 108 children on roll at Sunningdale Primary School with a further 16 children attending nursery provision at the school. The school buildings do not currently have the capacity to support this level of pupils while also maintaining recommended class group sizes for cohorts with the level of need demonstrated by Sunningdale's pupils.

4.2 The development of new housing in the Sunderland area is anticipated to further increase demand for places. Despite its South Sunderland location, Sunningdale Primary School is a citywide resource with most children accessing home to school transport support to travel to and from school each day. Increased development of new homes that result in an increase in primary aged children anywhere in the city would lead to a proportional increase in children with special educational needs and, consequently, increase demand for places at settings such as Sunningdale Primary School.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 In July 2020 Cabinet approved a proposal to commence the School Organisation processes required for the enlargement of Sunningdale Primary School.

5.2 A pre-publication consultation was live between 12nd October and 27th November 2020. The pre-publication consultation contained the Council's proposal to both increase the number of pupils at the school and the proposal to relocate the school. It should be noted that as the new school is within 2 miles of the current Sunningdale Primary School no statutory proposals are required by the relevant School Organisation Regulations to facilitate the relocation of the buildings.

5.3 Consultation was carried out with the following groups

- Parents of pupils attending Sunningdale Primary School
- Current staff
- The wider local community
- Neighbouring local authority areas with children currently placed at the school

In total the Council received 40 responses to the pre-publication consultation. Of the 40 responses received;

- 36 individuals responded to the proposal to increase the capacity at Sunningdale Primary School of those 32 (89%) agreed with the Council's proposal
- While not a requirement under School Organisation regulations, the Council sought views relating to the proposal to relocate Sunningdale Primary School to a new site at the Junction of Doxford Park Way and Silksworth Road. Of the 37 responses received 27 (73%) agreed with the Council's proposal. Responses are collated as Appendix 1 of this report.

5.4 The Council published notification of the statutory proposal for the enlargement of Sunningdale Primary School on 25th January 2021. The statutory notice period ended 21st February 2021. The statutory notice was published in the following places:

- Sunderland City Council's website

- Sunningdale Primary School's website
- The Sunderland Echo

The notice was also displayed at the entrances of the current buildings used by Sunningdale Primary School.

5.5 In addition to the publication of notices the following groups were consulted with as part of this process:

- Parents of pupils attending the school
- Current staff
- Neighbouring local authority areas with children on roll at the school

5.6 The Council has received no responses to the notice. The statutory notice and the full proposal document are attached at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

6.0 Next Steps

6.1 The Council applied for planning permission for the new, relocated school build project on 8th January 2021. Subject to approval of both this proposal and the Council's planning application the Council will seek to award a contract for delivery of the new school in April 2021. It is anticipated that the successful contractor will commence works on site in June/ July 2021 with works to be concluded in August 2022. The new, expanded build is projected to open in September 2022.

7. Reasons for the Decision

7.1 Sunningdale Primary School is operating above capacity in all year groups. Building Bulletin 104 identifies that classes for primary aged children with Severe Learning Difficulties should accommodate between six and eight children. The demand for special educational needs places, from within the city and neighbouring authority areas, has led to a gradual recruitment above that number, with the school currently operating class sizes of between nine and 11 pupils. Based on current estimations the school is five class bases short of the capacity required to meet the needs of those currently on roll at the school. A proposal to relocate and rebuild the school at a new site at the junction of Silksworth Road and Doxford Park Way to respond to the overcapacity and condition issues with the current school buildings was approved by the Cabinet of Sunderland Council in March 2020.

7.2 Sunningdale Primary School provides the city's only primary aged maintained school setting for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Physical Disabilities (PD). Pupils attend from across the wider Sunderland area. On that basis any new housing proposals across the city will place pressure on the sufficiency of existing school places.

8. Alternative Options

Retain existing Sunningdale capacity of 108 places at existing site.

8.1 It is considered that the buildings currently require significant capital investment, are currently operating significantly above capacity, are no longer suitable to meet the specialist needs of the pupils attending the school and retaining the existing buildings would not result in the required increase of school places in the city.

Relocate Sunningdale Primary School with existing capacity of 108 places

- 8.2 This will not resolve the projected need for additional special school places that will be required to meet the increased demand across the city and is therefore not recommended.

9. Impact Analysis

Sustainability – The above proposal will ensure the provision of special school places in Sunderland is sustainable for future years. It will also provide infrastructure support for new housing in the area, contributing towards the Council's identified priorities.

Equalities Analysis – The proposal is not projected to disadvantage any individual, social group or organisation. The Equalities Assessment is attached as Appendix 5.

10. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- 10.1 **Co-operative values** – At Annual Council in May 2015, it was resolved that the following statement be included in the Constitution to reflect the values of the “Co-operative Council”.

“Sunderland City Council is a co-operative council and in being so will act ethically in all its actions while adhering to and actively promoting its co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values will underpin its decision making and actions.”

10.2 Financial implications

The budget for the estimated capital cost for the provision of a new build was approved by Cabinet in March 2020. There is provision within the current Capital Programme for the projected £13.6m required to deliver the programme.

10.3 Legal Implications

Throughout the process, from informal consultation to the publication of the statutory proposals, the Council has complied with the requirements of the applicable legislation (the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013) and has also adhered to the Department for Education's 2018 Statutory Guidance 'Making Significant Changes ('Prescribed Alterations') to Maintained Schools'.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Pre-Publication Consultation Outcomes
Appendix 2 – Statutory Notice to Enlarge Sunningdale Primary School
Appendix 3 – Full Proposal Document
Appendix 4 – Equalities Assessment

12. Background Papers

July 2020 Cabinet report - Publication of Statutory Notices related to School Organisation