

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Proposed Enlargement and Lowering of the Age of Admission at Hetton Primary School

Author(s): Executive Director of Neighbourhoods

Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to request a decision on the proposals to enlarge Hetton Primary School and to lower the age of admission from 4 years old to 2 years old.

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 proposals which are to:

Enlarge the premises which will increase the capacity of Hetton Primary School, Moorsley Road, Hetton, DH5 9ND from 140 places to 210 places with effect from 1st September 2021.

Lower the age range of Hetton Primary School, Moorsley Road, Hetton, DH5 9ND from 4 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1st September 2021

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 proposals 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

Hetton Primary School is currently over capacity in four of seven year groups. The current school has neither the capacity nor additional support resources to support this ongoing oversubscription.

The current building has insufficient physical capacity to provide one classroom per form of entry, with five general class bases for seven year groups. The proposed expansion of the school will provide a 1935m² school with sufficient class bases and supporting areas for a 210-place school, with potential to increase the admission number further should this be required in future years

New housing proposals in the Hetton area will place pressure on the sufficiency of existing school places. Within one-mile statutory walking distance of Hetton Primary there are proposals for in excess of 500 new homes. This level of housing development is estimated to require over 100 school places, the equivalent of half a form of entry at a primary school.

The proposal to increase the capacity of Hetton Primary School is associated with the already approved proposal to provide the school with a new building at the current school site. This proposal was approved by Sunderland City Council's Cabinet in March 2020. This proposal is to increase the physical capacity of the new build to provide initially 70 places from September 2022, with potential for up to 175 places with marginal future adaptation over those currently available within the school's current buildings in order to meet demand for places in the area.

The Council is also proposing that a nursery provision, providing places for 2,3 and 4-year olds, is established at the school. The school does not currently have a nursery provision. This results in a requirement for parents who have both a nursery and primary aged child to carry out two drop offs each morning. It also does not allow the opportunities for parents who wish for their child to have a single transition at Hetton Primary School from nursery through primary age groups to do so.

The Council's recent consultation on proposals for Hetton Primary School identified that a majority of parents and other consultees would welcome the additional nursery provision at the school for the reasons outlined above. However, the Council has also noted the current financial position of other local nursery settings, where costs that are unique to providers in that sector are leading to increasing levels of financial deficit at maintained nursery schools. While not a driver of this proposal, the development of a school based setting, where the financial requirements of delivery would be lower due to shared economies across a wider educational offer, would provide the ward with an alternative nursery delivery model to ensure that nursery places can be maintained at least at the current level of sufficiency across a range of good providers in the long term should any setting become unsustainable.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

- Retain the existing Hetton Primary School capacity of 140 places
- Rebuild Hetton Primary School with existing capacity of 140 places
- Retain the current age of admission at Hetton Primary School

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 ENLARGEMENT AND LOWERING OF THE AGE OF ADMISSION AT HETTON 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 proposals to enlarge Hetton Primary School and to lower the age of admission from 4 years old to 2 years old.

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 proposals which are to:

Enlarge the premises which will increase the capacity of Hetton Primary School, Moorsley Road, Hetton, DH5 9ND from 140 places to 210 places with effect from 1st September 2021.

Lower the age range of Hetton Primary School, Moorsley Road, Hetton, DH5 9ND from 4 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1st September 2021

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 proposals as detailed above.

3. Current Position

3.1 Hetton Primary School is a maintained primary school maintained by Sunderland City Council.

3.2 Hetton Primary School is to relocate to a new school building on the current school site in September 2022. The current school accommodates 140 primary aged children

3.3 Hetton Primary School is currently over capacity in four of seven year groups. The current school has neither the capacity nor additional support resources to support this ongoing oversubscription.

3.4 The school does not currently have a nursery provision with reception the earliest point of entry.

4.0 Numbers on Roll and Impact of Planned Housing

- 4.1 At October 2020 Census there were 152 children on roll at Hetton Primary School, with the school oversubscribed in four of seven year groups.
- 4.2 The development of new housing in the Hetton area is anticipated to further increase demand for places with an excess of 500 new homes either with planning permission or planned within statutory walking distance of the Hetton Primary School site. It is projected that over 100 primary school places will be required to meet the demand from new housing in the area. The expanded Hetton Primary School would have the facility to offer the required places at a suitably located setting while also ensuring that nursery capacity in the area remains sufficient.
- 4.3 The Council considers this proposal meets the needs of the area in both the requirement for current capacity and for future capacity.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 In July 2020 Cabinet approved a proposal to commence the School Organisation processes required for the enlargement of and the lowering of the age of admission at Hetton Primary School.
- 5.2 A pre-publication consultation was carried out between 30th November 2020 and 15th January 2021. The pre-publication consultation contained the Council's proposal to both expand the existing capacity and lower the age of admission at the school. It should be noted that as the new school is within 2 miles of the current Hetton 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 Hetton Primary School
 - Current staff
 - Trade Union Representatives
 - The wider local community

In total the Council received responses to the pre-publication consultation from 75 individuals. Of those;

- 60 individuals responded to the proposal to increase the capacity of Hetton Primary School with 61.67% agreeing with the Council's proposal and
- 73 individuals responded to the proposal to lower the age of admission at Hetton Primary School. Of those 53.3% agreed with the Council's proposal. Responses are collated as Appendix 1 of this report.

- 5.4 The Council published notification of the statutory proposals for the enlargement of and lowering of the age of admission at Hetton Primary School on 25th January 2021. The statutory notice period ended 17th February 2021. The statutory notice was published in the following places:
- Sunderland City Council's website
 - Hetton Primary School's website
 - The Sunderland Echo

The notice was also displayed at the entrances of the current buildings used by Hetton 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
- 5.6 The Council received 14 responses to the notice. The statutory notice and the full proposal document are attached at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 and the responses are attached as Appendix 4.
- 5.7 There were 13 objections to the proposals. Those objecting to the proposal predominantly noted a separate proposal published on 23rd February 2021 to discontinue Hetton le Hole Nursery School. While the development at Hetton Primary School would provide alternative places should that proposal proceed the two are not interdependent. Should the decision be taken during 2021 to retain the provision at Hetton le Hole Nursery it remains proposed that the development of a nursery at Hetton Primary School continues as a complementary provision for the local area that would help to serve parents seeking an all through provision at one institution and those seeking places from developments adjacent to the new primary school building.

6.0 Next Steps

- 6.1 Planning permission for the new build was submitted on 26th January 2021. Subject to approval of this proposal and the required planning approval the Council will seek to award a contract for delivery of the new school in May 2021. It is anticipated that the successful contractor will commence works on site in June/July 2021 with works to be concluded in July 2022. The new, expanded build is projected to open in September 2022.
- 6.2 In the interim the Council will procure temporary class facilities to provide suitable accommodation for overcapacity year groups. Subject to the consideration of other proposals this may also include the delivery of the proposed nursery provision from September 2021. Should the nursery provision be established from 2021 it will be delivered from the current main school buildings for the 2021/22 academic year.
- 6.3 There is currently a proposal under consideration to discontinue a local maintained nursery provision in August 2021. Should that proposal be agreed the Council is proposing the age range at the school is lowered for the start of the 2021 academic year. This will enable the Council to offer an equal number of alternative local nursery places in the Hetton Ward to the number that will be removed through the discontinuation of that provision. Should that proposal not be agreed it is proposed that the lowering of the age range at Hetton Primary School is implemented for the 1st September 2022.

7. Reasons for the Decision

- 7.1 Hetton Primary School is currently over capacity in four of seven year groups. The current school building has neither the capacity nor additional support resources to support this ongoing oversubscription.

- 7.2 The current building has insufficient physical capacity to provide one classroom per form of entry, with five general class bases for seven year groups. The proposed expansion of the school will provide a 1935m² school with sufficient class bases and supporting areas for a 210-place school, with potential to increase the admission number further should this be required in future years
- 7.3 New housing proposals in the Hetton area will place pressure on the sufficiency of existing school places. Within one-mile statutory walking distance of Hetton Primary there are proposals for in excess of 500 new homes. This level of housing development is estimated to require over 100 school places, the equivalent of half a form of entry at a primary school.
- 7.4 The proposal to increase the capacity of Hetton Primary School is associated with the already approved proposal to provide the school with a new building at the current school site. This proposal was approved by Sunderland City Council's Cabinet in March 2020. This proposal is to increase the physical capacity of the new build to provide initially 70 places from September 2022, with potential for up to 175 places with marginal future adaptation over those currently available within the school's current buildings in order to meet demand for places in the area.
- 7.5 The Council is also proposing that a nursery provision, providing places for 2,3 and 4-year olds, is established at the school. The school does not currently have a nursery provision. This results in a requirement for parents who have both a nursery and primary aged child to carry out two drop offs each morning. It also does not allow the opportunities for parents who wish for their child to have a single transition at Hetton Primary School from nursery through primary age groups to do so.
- 7.6 The Council's recent consultation on proposals for Hetton Primary School identified that a majority of parents and other consultees would welcome the additional nursery provision at the school for the reasons outlined above. However, the Council has also noted the current financial position of other local nursery settings, where costs that are unique to providers in that sector are leading to increasing levels of financial deficit at maintained nursery schools. While not a driver of this proposal, the development of a school based setting, where the financial requirements of delivery would be lower due to shared economies across a wider educational offer, would provide the ward with an alternative nursery delivery model to ensure that nursery places can be maintained at least at the current level of sufficiency across a range of good providers in the long term should any setting become unsustainable.
- 7.7 The Council is proposing the age range at the school is lowered for the start of the 2021 academic year

8. Alternative Options

Retain existing Hetton Primary School capacity of 140 places at existing site.

- 8.1 As noted in para 4.2, on assessing the suitability of the current school site in relation to planned future housing developments in Hetton it is considered that there is both a projected need for additional school places in the area, projected capacity shortfall currently at Hetton Primary School and that Hetton Primary School is appropriately located to the proposed new homes to provide any required additional places. This option is therefore not recommended.

Relocate Hetton Primary School with existing capacity of 140 places

- 8.2 This will not resolve the projected need for additional primary school places that will be required to meet the need of increased housing in the Hetton area and is therefore not recommended. It is also noted that from September 2020 the existing Hetton Primary School currently has more pupils on roll than the current building's capacity of 140.

Retain the current age of admission at Hetton Primary School

- 8.3 This would not address the comments in the Council's recent consultation that identified that parents of both nursery and school age children would value the opportunity to access provision from a single setting. Additionally, the opportunity to provide sustainable nursery places within the new build (planned for 2022) will ensure that early years provision can be safeguarded in the Hetton Ward at least at its current level in future years while minimising any potential increased capital requirements should this provision need to be developed at a later date.

9. Impact Analysis

Sustainability – The above proposal will ensure the provision of nursery and primary school places in the Hetton Ward is sustainable for future years. It will 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 estimated capital cost of £5.740m for the provision of a new build is included in the Council's current approved capital programme.

The city operates a 'Growth Fund' mechanism to support the provision of additional school places when delivered as part of the Council's wider school place sufficiency requirements. This funding is available to schools rated as Good and Outstanding by Ofsted. Subject to School's Forum agreement Hetton Primary School will be eligible to access this funding for all pupils above the current PAN of 20 for reception cohorts from September 2021 - 2027

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 for Hetton Primary School
Appendix 3 – Full Proposal Document
Appendix 4 – Responses to Statutory Notice
Appendix 5 – Equalities Assessment

12. Background Papers

14th July 2020 Cabinet report - Publication of Statutory Notices related to School Organisation