

CABINET MEETING – 8 October 2008 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET - PART 1	
Title of Report:	SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE/PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE
Author(s):	Director of Children's Services
Purpose of Report:	<p>The purpose of the report is to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i Update on progress with School Place Planning for the Future ii Set out options for reducing surplus places in specific clusters of primary schools and seek approval for those options to be the subject of formal consultation iii Set out proposals for the redesignation of SEN Special schools iv Set out the proposed timescales for consultation and reporting on the final stages of the reviews. v. Set out responses to the Primary Strategy for Change consultation. vi. Seek Cabinet endorsement of the Primary Strategy for Change
Description of Decision:	<p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i Note the progress made with School Place Planning for the Future ii Agree that the proposed options for reducing surplus places in specific primary schools be the subject of formal consultation iii Agree that the proposals for redesignation of SEN special schools be the subject of formal consultation iv. Agree the timescales for the final stages of School Place Planning for the Future v Note the responses to the Primary Strategy for Change consultation vi. Endorse the Primary Strategy for Change
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes	
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework	

Suggested reason(s) for Decision

- i. By agreeing the options for formal consultation the School Place Planning for the Future exercise will progress to stage three, as agreed by Cabinet in February 2008.
- ii. The variation to the timescales for the final stages of consultation will respond to requests from members and parents at stage two consultation meetings and will maximise the engagement of all interested parties and allow more time to give due consideration to responses and carry out further work before formulating final proposals.
- iii. By agreeing the proposals for redesignation of SEN special schools for formal consultation, the review of SEN provision will progress to the next stage of consultation.
- iv. Endorsement of the Primary Strategy for Change will ensure it progresses to the next stage of approval by DCSF.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

There are no alternative options to consider.

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

Is it included in the Forward Plan?
Yes

Relevant Review Committee

Children's Services

**SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 On 26 June 2008, Cabinet agreed that:

- i Officers should work with clusters of schools in Group B – those with high numbers of surplus places which require significant attention and intervention, and bring forward options to this meeting.
- ii. That the draft Primary Strategy for Change be the subject of wider consultation.

1.2 On 9 July 2008, Cabinet agreed the principles to be used in the formulation of proposals for special schools designations for further consultation.

1.3 This report:

- i Updates on progress with School Place Planning for the Future.
- ii Sets out options for reducing surplus places in specific clusters of primary schools and seeks approval for those options to be the subject of formal consultation.
- iii Sets out proposals for the redesignation of SEN Special schools following previous consultation
- iv. Sets out the proposed timescales for consultation and reports on the final stages of the reviews.
- v. Sets out responses to the Primary Strategy for Change consultation.
- vi. Seeks Cabinet endorsement of the Primary Strategy for Change

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE DECISION

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- i Note the progress made with School Place Planning for the Future
- ii Agree that the proposed options for reducing surplus places in specific clusters of schools be the subject of formal consultation
- iii Agree that the proposals for redesignation of SEN special schools be the subject of formal consultation
- iv. Agree the timescales for the final stages of School Place Planning for the Future.
- v Note the responses to the Primary Strategy for Change consultation
- vi. Endorse the Primary Strategy for Change

2.2 Cabinet should be aware that in approving any future proposals for School Place Planning relating to primary schools, the funding and delivery of proposals for new schools will be dependent on approval of the Primary Strategy for Change by Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the capital funding that approval will release.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential and ensuring that there are sufficient schools in their area, and promoting diversity and increasing parental choice. Local authorities have a duty to take action when a school's surplus places are 25% or more. There is also an expectation that there should be no more than 10% surplus places across the City. Cabinet received a report on 26 June 2008 which analysed the outcomes of Stage 2 of the School Place Planning for the Future Review. It set out primary school clusters arranged in three groupings to reflect their differing positions in relation to surplus places. The Group B clusters of schools are those with very high numbers of surplus places, in most cases significantly above the target 10% threshold, with several having, or predicted to have, surpluses in excess of 25%.
- 3.2 Cabinet agreed that individual schools within these clusters require significant attention and intervention to reduce the surplus position. Cabinet further agreed that officers work with schools to discuss the need for long term solutions and that a set of options would be reported to the September meeting of the Cabinet.
- 3.3 Cabinet received a report on 9th July which analysed the outcomes of consultation meetings regarding the redesignation of SEN special schools held in June and agreed the principles to be used in formulation of proposals for further consultation.
- 3.4 At their 26 June 2008 meeting Cabinet approved the draft Primary Strategy for Change to be the subject of wider consultation. The consultation period ran from 4 -31 July 2008.

4. CURRENT POSITION

School Place Planning for the Future

- 4.1 The Group B clusters of schools referred to above are:

Hetton cluster: Easington Lane Primary Eppleton Primary* Hetton Lyons Primary Hetton Primary*	Houghton cluster: Bernard Gilpin Primary* Burnside Primary Dubmire Primary East Rainton Primary Gillas Lane Primary* Newbottle Primary Shiney Row Primary	Castle View cluster: Bexhill Primary* Castletown Primary* Hylton Castle Primary* Town End Farm Primary*
Hylton Red House cluster: Bishop Harland CE Primary Hylton Red House Primary Southwick Primary Willow Fields (formerly Witherwack) Primary*	Monkwearmouth cluster: Dame Dorothy Primary* Fulwell Infant Fulwell Junior Grange Park Primary* Redby Primary* Seaburn Dene Primary*	

- 4.2 All schools in Group B have been contacted since the Cabinet meeting in June. The schools asterisked have been visited and a telephone discussion has taken place with the acting headteacher of Hylton Red House Primary School. These are the schools which either require significant attention and intervention, or are affected by a neighbouring school's position.
- 4.3 Meetings were also held to allow ward councillors from the Group B clusters of schools to offer views and consider possible options.
- 4.4 The options for Group B schools are attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.5 Subject to Cabinet approval, the following process is proposed:
- i. For those schools where no change is proposed or where the option is a straightforward reduction of the Published Admission Number (PAN) or realignment of net capacity, it is proposed that further discussion takes place with headteachers and governors to agree the process for implementation.
 - ii. For schools with significant surpluses and/or those affected by a neighbouring school's position, a range of options are included in Appendix One. The range of options will require further formal consultation with headteachers, governors, parents, carers and other key stakeholders. These schools are:-

Bernard Gilpin Primary
Gillas Lane Primary
Eppleton Primary
Hetton Primary
Willow Fields Primary
Hylton Red House Primary
Southwick Primary
Grange Park Primary
Bexhill Primary
Town End Primary
- 4.6 The timescales set out in a previous report to Cabinet proposed that the outcome of Stage Three consultation would be reported to Cabinet in November. However, in response to requests from Members and parents at stage two consultation meetings, and to maximise the engagement of all interested parties, it is proposed that the timescales for stage 3 and 4 consultation are revised and extended. The purpose of a revised timetable is to secure a longer period of time for schools, parents, carers and others to consider the options and respond. It will also allow more time to give due consideration to those responses and carry out further work before formulating final proposals. The proposed revised timescales are set out below:

Stage Three Consultation – School Place Planning for the Future

W/b 29 September 2008	Parents notified of dates, times and venues of stage three consultation meetings. Notification to include options contained in the Cabinet Report. Advertisement in Sunderland Echo the on day Cabinet report becomes public (around 1 October) giving early notice of scheduled meetings and details of options contained in the Cabinet report
8 October 2008	Cabinet meeting
20 - 23 October 2008	Meetings held at schools with staff, governors and parents
21 November 2008	Final date for submission of consultation responses

Stage Four consultation – School Place Planning for the Future

W/b 5 January 2009	Parents notified of dates, times and venues of stage four consultation meetings. Notification to include proposals contained in the Cabinet Report. Advertisement in Sunderland Echo on day Cabinet report becomes public (around 5 January) giving early notice of scheduled meetings and details of proposals contained in the Cabinet report
14 January 2009	Final proposals presented to Cabinet, seeking approval for Stage Four consultation
26 – 29 January 2009	Meetings held at schools with staff, governors and parents
20 February 2009	Final date for submission of responses to proposals
11 March 2009	Responses to proposals presented to Cabinet. Final decision on proposals to proceed to statutory notice, if required.
18 March 2009 onwards	Publication of statutory notices, if required. Timescales for publication will need to be set to fit with the final proposals. Details will appear in subsequent Cabinet reports.

- 4.7 Implementation of those proposals ultimately approved will begin from September 2010 at the earliest.

School Place Planning for the Future – SEN Special Schools

- 4.8 Following discussions with heads and chairs of governors and the wider public consultation, officers have considered proposals for the future designation of the four SEN Special schools. These proposals are consistent with the principles agreed by Cabinet in July and take full account of the responses to consultation.

- 4.9 The proposals for redesignation for each school are set out below:

- 4.9.1 Columbia Grange School – No change to current designation

- 4.9.2 Sunningdale School – Change in age range from age 3 – 11 to age 2 – 11.

- 4.9.3 Portland College – Change in the special needs provision from children with severe learning difficulties to children with severe learning difficulties/profound and multiple disabilities

- 4.9.4 Barbara Priestman School – Change in the age range from 3 – 19 to 11 – 19 and a change in the special needs provision from children with physical difficulties and associated learning difficulties to children with an autistic spectrum disorder and/or significant complex learning difficulties.
- 4.10 Should Cabinet agree to the proposals, public consultation will be carried out in October with the outcomes reported to Cabinet in December 2008 to agree the final proposals for statutory consultation in January/February 2009.

Primary Strategy for Change (PSfC)

- 4.8 The draft Primary Strategy for Change was forwarded to DCSF by the 16 June 2008 deadline date. At the Cabinet meeting on 26 June, it was agreed that the draft strategy be posted on the Council's website, all key stakeholders informed and invited to offer views by 31 July 2008. The full consultation process and responses are attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.9 The responses, as in the previous round of consultation, were generally supportive of the strategy. The responses from both Diocesan Authorities endorse the strategy.
- 4.10 There are no proposed changes to the draft strategy considered by Cabinet at their June meeting. Cabinet is therefore asked to endorse the draft strategy and agree that it be confirmed with DCSF as being the final document to be considered for approval. Successful approval will guarantee capital funding of £4,092,393, in 2009-10 and £6,470,393 in 2010-11, with further funding beyond that yet to be announced.

5. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 5.1 By agreeing the options for formal consultation, the School Place Planning for the Future exercise will progress to stage three, as agreed by Cabinet in February 2008.
- 5.2 The variation to the timescales for the final stages of consultation will respond to requests from Members and parents at stage two of the exercise by ensuring that the engagement of all interested parties is maximised, and allow a substantial period of time for staff, governors and parents to prepare their responses to the options.
- 5.3 By agreeing to the proposals in 4.9 the review of special schools will progress to the next stage of consultation which will inform the formulation of final proposals for statutory consultation.
- 5.4 If Cabinet endorse the final version of the Primary Strategy for Change for submission to DCSF and it is subsequently approved, it will secure capital funding for improvement of the primary school stock in the city over the next 14 years.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 An alternative option for school Place Planning would be to do nothing and maintain the status quo. The Local Authority has a duty to take action where an individual school's surplus place position is 25% or more. There is also an expectation that there will be no more than 10% surplus places across the

city. If no action is taken the current surplus place position in the City will continue rise and the Council will be failing in its duty to reduce surplus places and ensure available resources are used effectively to support raising attainment. The options presented for further consultation will ensure the next stage in School Place Planning for the Future will be progressed.

7. RELEVANT CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The outcomes of Stage Two consultation process were reported to Cabinet and to Children's Services Review Committee in July 2008. Proposed revised timescales for the final stages of consultation are set out in this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Any financial implications arising from proposals as they develop will be set out in further reports to Cabinet.

9. LEGAL ISSUES

- 9.1 As the process progresses and proposals for school re-organisation are developed the legal issues associated with the issue of statutory notices will be outlined in future reports. The comments of the City Solicitor have been incorporated in the report.

10. BUILDING/SITE ISSUES

As proposals are developed for both primary mainstream provision and special schools, issues around buildings and site suitability and availability will be considered.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Cabinet report 14 Feb 2007
Cabinet Agenda 14 March 2007
Cabinet Agenda 25 July 2007
Cabinet briefing 8 November 2007
Cabinet report 13 February 2008
Cabinet report 26 June 2008
Cabinet report 9 July 2008