



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet Report

Report of: Jayne Ludlam

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 17th February 2016

Subject: School Places in Sheffield

Author of Report: Alena Prentice (ext. 53418)

Key Decision: YES

Reason Key Decision: Expenditure/savings over £500,000
Affects 2 or more wards

Summary: This report makes recommendations on the next steps in meeting the pressing need for new primary and secondary school places in the north east and the south west of the city following public consultation. It includes a summary of the response to consultation, an appraisal of the options, and proposals for the next stage.

Reasons for Recommendations: The proposals put forward in this report represent the best outcomes when balancing the various priorities including: ensuring access to great, inclusive schools in every area of the city, getting value for money, protecting green spaces, and meeting housing needs. This has been thoroughly tested through the consultation and the process of appraising the various options since the consultation.

Recommendations:

Authorise the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, and where necessary in consultation with the Executive Director, Place to, take all necessary steps, including bringing forward the necessary capital approval submissions to Cabinet, to:

- i. Commission a new 11-18 school on the car park area of the former Bannerdale site as described in this report.
- ii. Support the temporary expansion of Silverdale to provide an additional 60 secondary school places in 2016/17 and 2017/18 as set out in this report.
- iii. Undertake a 4-week consultation on a proposal to expand Ecclesall Infant School to become a through primary school offering 90 places per year as set out in this report.
- iv. Commission a new 2-18 school on the former Pye Bank School site as described in this report.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: Dave Phillips
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Nadine Wynter
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO Cleared by:
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO Cleared by:
Human Rights Implications
NO Cleared by:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO Cleared by:
Economic Impact
NO Cleared by:
Community Safety Implications
NO Cleared by:
Human Resources Implications
NO Cleared by:
Property Implications
YES Cleared by: Simon Green
Area(s) Affected
All
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead
Cllr Jackie Drayton
Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Children & Young People
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press Release
YES

REPORT TO THE CABINET

SCHOOL PLACES IN SHEFFIELD

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report makes recommendations on the next steps in meeting the pressing need for new primary and secondary school places in the north east and the south west of the city following public consultation. It includes a summary of the response to consultation, an appraisal of the options, and proposals for the next stage.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 The decisions contained within this report are essential in ensuring that there are enough school places for every school age child in Sheffield. This is a fundamental statutory responsibility of local government and it is essential to Sheffield City Council's focus on enabling children to have a great start in life, achieve their full potential, and contribute to the success of the city. At the heart of the vision for increasing school places in Sheffield is the Council's role in enabling excellent education outcomes and equitable access for all to high quality education.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The outcome would be a programme to ensure that there are enough primary and secondary school places to meet population demand in 2016 and beyond in areas where there has been sustained increases in the pupil population over a long period. This includes an assessment of whether the solutions are sustainable in the long term (including the impact on the sustainability of other schools in the city) and their fit with the Council's strategic objectives around education, value for money, housing, green space, alleviating congestion, and considering air quality.

4.0 CONTEXT

- 4.1 The cabinet received a report on 22 July 2015 which set out an outline programme for the provision of primary and secondary places in two key areas of need: the north east and south west of the city. The cabinet agreed that consultation should be undertaken on a range of proposals to meet the need for places. This consultation has been carried out and the results are reported below.

The Strategy

- 4.2 The Council's published vision is for all Sheffield families to have access to great, inclusive schools in every area of the city. This means schools working in partnership to ensure each child reaches their potential, equal access for the most vulnerable children to high quality education, schools at the heart of their communities, and getting best value from all funding opportunities. This must be delivered through each project brought forward under this programme.

- 4.3 The starting point for the strategy is to provide sufficient places in areas of major population growth. The strategy must acknowledge the strong expectation that parents will be able to gain a place for their child at a good local school and be founded on a strong vision of excellence that will support and encourage the aspiration of parents.

The Need for Places

- 4.4 It is important to emphasize the scale of the population growth that the Council is seeking to respond to through these proposals for increasing school places. Births in Sheffield have risen by 25% since 2002 with 1000 more children per year now coming into Reception. The children born in 2012 are the largest birth cohort in the city since 1991. A small reduction of 5% in 2013 has been followed by a levelling off in 2014 and 2015. Throughout this period of growth, places have been added in the areas of pressure. As a result of this work we have been able to retain a very high proportion of families being offered a place at a preferred school – 97% in 2015/16.
- 4.5 The most recent birth cohorts will come through into Year 7 in the middle of the next decade and we can be confident in the need for places at a city level over this period. Longer term is more difficult to predict. The 2013-15 birth pattern could be seen as a sign of stabilisation and Office for National Statistics' projections show a steady increase in births until 2023. Historically the pattern of crests and troughs in birth numbers continues a picture seen since the post-war baby boomer generation. It is possible that births could reduce in the future, consistent with the fall and rise pattern seen in previous decades. However, it is important to be aware that births are only one driver of demand for school places, particularly when looking at smaller local areas. Both the southwest and northeast have an established pattern of young families moving in, which add to existing high levels of demand. If these established patterns of migration continue then school places will continue to be needed most in the areas identified in this report.

Timescale and Decision-Making

- 4.6 As outlined prior to the consultation, decisions are required in the next period to ensure that the places need is met. In the north east, primary places remain under pressure and places will be required from 2017 onwards. In the south west a long-term solution to the primary places need is required from 2017 onwards, following temporary agreements in 2015 at Dobcroft and now for 2016 at Ecclesall. In secondary the growth follows a similar pattern across the two areas, with temporary provision needed in the run up to the most significant growth in 2018 and 2019 and beyond.

5.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 5.1 A six-week consultation was carried out from 5 October to 20 November in line with statutory requirements for school organisation proposals. This was extended by a further week to allow all parties to submit their responses and, in particular, to comment on the alternative options that had been put forward

during the consultation. The response was extensive and the Council was grateful to the many respondents who were involved in the consultation process, offering detailed views and putting forward alternative proposals.

- 5.2 The consultation process offered opportunities for all those affected by the proposals to comment and feedback in ways that suited them. Ten workshops were held at a range of venues and different times of day and all were well attended. The main themes of the discussion were captured at each event. The majority of those who participated in the workshops were parents from the south west area. In order to ensure that parents in the north east were involved, officers arranged a number of coffee morning sessions in Pye Bank and Byron Wood Primary Schools so that parents there would have the opportunity to respond to the school proposals for their area. A meeting of the Local Area Partnership also considered the proposals. Officers also attended community group meetings and a number of parent meetings arranged by governors, including several at Holt House Infant and Carterknowle Junior School, along with a well-attended meeting arranged by parent governors of Sharrow, Nether Edge, Lowfield and Porter Croft Primary schools.
- 5.3 Consultees could also fill in an online survey, submit comments via a web-form, or simply e-mail to the consultation inbox. Many also e-mailed the Executive Director for Children Young People and Families, Jayne Ludlam, MPs, the Cabinet Member, Jackie Drayton, the Council Leader, Julie Dore, and other Cabinet and Ward Members. These emails were all included alongside other responses to the consultation.
- 5.4 In the second half of the consultation, the Council sought to acknowledge and seek comments on the variety of alternative options put forward by consultees and the Council. A further survey about these options was made available on 11th November and one of the main reasons for the consultation extension was to allow sufficient time for participants to fill this survey in. When people submitted a specific, detailed alternative plan, it was shared via the Council website.
- 5.5 There was a high level of engagement with the consultation from governors, school staff, parents and local residents. Overall 1400 responses were received, which is one of the largest ever responses the Council has had about a schools issue. Responses received via each of the consultation routes were as follows:

Type of response*		No received
Online survey responses	Comments on specific proposals (original survey)	294
	Statistical responses (new survey)	306
Web forms and email responses	Sent directly to in-box and sent on from other recipients (see 5.3 above)	224
Workshop feedback	Post-its – first half consultation (original proposals)	3 workshops, 150 attendees
	Post-its – second half consultation	6 workshops, 200+

	(new options)	attendees
	Feedback forms – general comments handwritten	75
	Feedback forms – new options handwritten	10
Community meetings	Carterknowle public meeting, NE Local Area Partnership, Sharrow school area meeting (interpreters), Carterknowle Millhouses Group, Bannerdale site meeting with stakeholders, school coffee mornings	140+ attendees
Alternative plans/submissions	Site plans/proposals submitted as consultation responses	5
Petition(s)	900 signatures	2

The Proposals for Consultation

- 5.6 The Council opened the consultation on 5 October setting out the proposals that were endorsed in the Cabinet paper of 22 July in a consultation document published on the Council's web page. The proposals were considered against the impact on children's outcomes, equality and the needs of the most vulnerable, meeting the need for places, value for money, and the impact on the community including traffic and air quality. The proposals were as follows:

North East area
A new secondary school on the former Pye Bank site
Create new primary places by expanding a local primary school, building a new standalone primary school, or a primary phase of the secondary school

South West area
A newly built secondary school co-located with a merged Holt House and Carterknowle Primary in new or extended buildings on the Holt House site
An expansion of Silverdale secondary
A permanent expansion of Ecclesall Infant School and enlargement of Clifford Infant into a through primary by relocating to the Carterknowle Junior site

- 5.7 In the first three weeks of the consultation process there was a very good response to the consultation with many detailed and thorough responses. There were several clear messages coming through about the original proposals, in particular strong concerns around the site/location of primary and secondary provision on the Holt House site and opposition to Clifford moving away from Psalter Lane.

- 5.8 The Council considered this initial response and, in the week commencing 2 November, which was the start of the second half of the consultation, the Council announced that it would be prepared to reconsider the use of the Bannerdale Centre footprint site as a location for a new school, and also asked people involved in the consultation to consider a 3-18 through school as a possible model for the new school. The Council also reiterated that it was important to achieve all of its corporate priorities in the way that the Bannerdale site would be developed, including the development of housing, retention and enhancement of the green space, and consideration of traffic and air quality issues, alongside the development of a new school.
- 5.9 In order to be responsive to the feedback in the consultation, the main alternative options that had been put forward were acknowledged and listed on the Council's website (see appendix 1). Views on these alternatives were then sought through the consultation workshops and subsequently through an online survey made available through the Council's website.

6.0 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE PROPOSALS AND OPTIONS

North East Proposals

- 6.1 Through the feedback from parents/carers and members of the community in the North East it was clear that the need for more school places was supported and that a new school would be a highly positive outcome for the area. The emphasis was on the importance of establishing an outstanding school offering high quality teaching and learning and of finding a sponsor who would understand and meet the needs of a very diverse community. There were no strong views expressed about how to provide the necessary primary places. The possibility of a primary phase for the new secondary school was discussed at the meetings and the benefits for children and families of receiving a through primary and secondary education under one sponsor and leadership team were endorsed, with some parents keen to stress the importance of appropriate separation between younger and older children. It was recognised that the choice of the Pye Bank site would present an opportunity for regeneration and enhancement of local community facilities, but it was also stressed that the preservation and enhancement of existing recreation space, particularly the Nottingham Cliff Recreation Ground was important to the community.

South West Proposals

- 6.2 The reaction to the Council's initial proposals for the location of a secondary school on the Holt House Infant site, alongside a merged and rebuilt Holt House Infant and Carterknowle Junior met with strong resistance from parents and members of the community. Many were concerned about the proximity of primary and secondary education on a constrained site; others put forward the case that a new school under these circumstances would not be competitive with existing successful local schools. The main alternative cited was to position the new secondary somewhere on the Bannerdale site, possibly in the area of the former footprint of the Bannerdale Centre which had been earmarked for housing. The other secondary proposal, an expansion of Silverdale, was largely

met positively, recognising the benefits of expanding an outstanding local school. However, some contested that Silverdale was the right location for this expansion given that it was King Ecgbert or High Storrs that was more likely to be oversubscribed from their catchment areas. There was also debate about the overall number of secondary places needed to serve the area and whether it would be better to provide all the extra capacity needed in the new school and avoid permanent expansion of one of the existing schools.

- 6.3 In terms of the proposals for primary places, the expansion of Ecclesall Infant school was positively supported in the consultation, although there were some emerging concerns about the potential impact for traffic and parking in the area if there were more children on the Ecclesall Infant site. The Diocese and Governing Body of Clifford Infant firmly rejected the proposal of a move to Carterknowle Junior site and presented their preferred alternative of purchasing the property adjacent to the school on Psalter Lane and adapting it to provide the junior phase space.

Alternative options for the South West

- 6.4 A number of alternative options were raised by participants in the consultation. The Council was keen to note and acknowledge these alternatives, and in the second half of the consultation, offered opportunities for comment on them both at the workshops and through an online survey.
- 6.5 The main alternative to the proposed location of a new secondary school on the Holt House site was to use part of the Bannerdale site. Most respondents thought this was a better location for a new school so as to have a larger, prominent site with access to green space. Amongst those who wanted to see a successful new school established, this was seen as the best way to ensure that it could be established to be competitive with the other highly popular and performing south west schools. However, there were also concerns about: whether the Bannerdale site could accommodate both housing development and a new school; about preserving access to green space for the community; and a possible increase in traffic and reduction in air quality on adjacent roads.
- 6.6 The Council was keen to seek views on the option of a 3-18 through school model for the new school on the Bannerdale site and put this forward as its own alternative option in the second part of the consultation. The Council continues to be supportive of the educational benefits for children of all through provision and published evidence in support of this proposal. However, the feedback on this alternative was universally not supportive. Again it was pointed out that parents did not wish to see close proximity of primary and secondary pupils, and that the replacement of Holt House Infant and Carterknowle Junior by a primary phase of a through school would sever all links with those existing schools and effectively close and replace an outstanding infant school.
- 6.7 There were a considerable number of parents who were worried about the prospect of a new school, that it could not be as good as the existing schools and that it would be better to expand those schools. One way suggested was to use a new site as an annex to create an expanded, split site school with an upper and lower site.

- 6.8 The feedback from parents about the proposals for Holt House and Carterknowle revealed that many parents with children at the Junior school hold the Carterknowle building in high esteem and therefore did not support relocating from the site. Neither was there strong support for extra buildings on the Holt House Infant site, which is considered to provide a precious open green space environment for the younger children. Local residents too were worried about the prospect of more pupils on the Holt House Infant site, the impact on air quality and traffic of increased car journeys to the site and of having more children on the site close to the junction with Abbeydale Road. An arrangement of joint governance and leadership for the two schools was supported by both governing bodies and by the majority of parents. The option of doing so on separate sites was also put forward.
- 6.9 The main response from Clifford school and parents was opposition to relocation away from Psalter Lane. The Clifford Governing Body and the Diocese of Sheffield made the argument that moving from Psalter Lane would sever the school's current links with their community and their linked Church, St Andrews. This position was supported by parents. The alternative put forward was for the school to remain on the Psalter Lane site and to purchase the adjacent property for adaptation as space to accommodate a junior phase. A further alternative was also put forward which would mean enlarging Ecclesall Infant School to become a through primary and to continue to use Ecclesall Junior as the junior phase for Clifford. This was the preferred option of the Ecclesall Infant and Junior Governing Body. The option of building a new stand-alone primary school was not strongly supported and is actually limited by the fact that there are no available sites in the locality.

Other Main Themes

- 6.10 A key issue that arose in relation to the provision of a new school in the south west was the issue of catchment areas. Understandably, there was much anxiety from parents about whether a catchment area created for the new school would include areas already feeding to the existing schools in the area. This stemmed from worries about whether a new school would be competitive with the existing schools with established track records which are already highly popular with parents. For many parents there is a strong link between catchment areas and where they have chosen to live, and the prospect of this changing is unsettling.
- 6.11 Parents were given assurances throughout the consultation that there was no preconceived plan for a change to admissions arrangements. Only once a sponsor is on board and a vision for a new school established would options be drawn up for the admissions arrangements for the new school. Furthermore, these would be subject to a full consultation before any final decision. The timescale for a consultation on admissions arrangements would be Autumn Term 2016 for a new school opening in September 2018.
- 6.12 The other main theme to note in the consultation feedback was the high numbers of responses about traffic congestion and air quality. These particularly related to the impact of development on the Bannerdale and Holt

House sites including both housing and school development, but latterly also to the Ecclesall Infant site once local residents became aware of the possibility of the number of children on the site increasing. Were the proposals to go ahead, these specific issues about the impact of development would be addressed during the planning stages and would be subject to their own statutory consultations. However, due to the level of sensitivity, particularly around the development of the Bannerdale site, an initial assessment of traffic and air quality has been commissioned early following the concerns raised during consultation. This will include analysis of the potential impact of the proposals, and details of indicative mitigation measures. Consultation feedback relating to these issues will continue to be fed into the design work as it develops to help secure building and site proposals that seek to address local needs.

7.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 7.1 Following the consultation, work was undertaken to draw together all of the consultation responses so as to ensure that all feedback could be taken into account. This included both the original proposals and the alternative options that arose during the consultation. The Cabinet Member e-mailed all fellow members of the cabinet to inform them that a file had been collated with every response in full. This was made available to Cabinet Members from December 2015 onwards in order to ensure the every response has featured at the heart of the Council's decision making.
- 7.2 The analysis of each option considered all of the key priorities outlined throughout the consultation. These were the Council's commitment to creating excellent new local schools that parents want their children to go to, while also meeting its responsibilities around value for money, affordable housing, maintained green spaces and addressing traffic congestion and air pollution, within timescales and capital availability. A recommendation for primary and secondary places in the north east and south west areas is set out below alongside a rationale for the recommendation and any further process required.

Secondary and primary in the North East

- 7.3 The feedback from the consultation acknowledged that there was a need for more school places in the north east at both primary and secondary level. There was broad support for providing a new secondary school in answer to the need, with a post-16 offer. Options for additional primary school places were discussed and the response was generally positive about the option of a primary phase of a new school and the opportunity this would provide for continuity of education and links between families, the community and the school. Parents were keen to emphasise the importance of strong educational leadership, facilities and high quality teaching and learning in the classroom. It was seen as critical that a new school should meet the high aspirations parents in the area have for an excellent quality of education. One important element in sustaining success for the long-term would be that any new school undertakes proactive engagement with the local community and understands the different cultures and needs of its pupils and families. The regeneration of the former Pye Bank school building was seen as a benefit to the area, with some keen to maximise the potential benefits to local recreation facilities through a new school in this

area.

- 7.4 In line with the local response, the recommendation through this report is therefore to commission a new 2-18 school to serve this area of the city through the refurbishment and extension of the former Pye Bank school building. The school would have a minimum of 210 primary school places and 750 secondary school places, alongside a post-16 offer (that may be provided on a separate site once further design has been undertaken). It would open in September 2018. As with all new schools, the design of the building would seek to be flexible to allow for future expansion to meet a demographic need if required.
- 7.5 Through the commissioning process the Council is committed to securing the best sponsor to meet the local aspiration for an outstanding local school. The buildings and design would be commissioned by the Council and it remains vital that this makes a success of the location in terms of an outstanding school facility that supports and enhances recreation space for the local community. And finally, the Council, the new school sponsor, and local stakeholders, would need to work together to develop proposals for a new catchment area that supports access to high quality places and equity with the existing local secondary schools.
- 7.6 Through these proposals and further work the Council is confident it can secure the vision for a new secondary in the north east that meets high local aspirations and provides a positive local development for the area. Further work would need to be undertaken to assess primary places demand and options for short-term expansion ahead of a new school opening.

Secondary in the South West

- 7.7 The need for places at secondary level in this area was largely understood and endorsed during the consultation. The response to consultation was extensive, mainly focussed on the new school proposal, and no single solution was universally supported. Many people saw that a new secondary school with a strong local reputation, equal to the existing local schools, would be a positive for the area and part of the consultation focussed on the elements that would be needed to secure that vision. One important element in sustaining this for the long-term would be that any new school has an intake and pupil body that truly reflects the local community and replicates the track-record and reputation for quality of the existing neighbouring schools. The key issues are therefore around the confidence of parents in the school in terms of leadership and ultimately performance alongside the extent to which the buildings, site and facilities are attractive and match the existing schools. Understandably there were also many local concerns around traffic, access, pollution and the impact on local residents. It is not clear that any of the alternative options for providing school places in the proposed location or elsewhere would serve to reduce overall journeys across the area or have a significantly lower impact.
- 7.8 In line with the views of many respondents, the recommendation through this report is therefore to commission a new 11-18 school to serve this area, away from the existing primary schools. This would be achieved through the development of school buildings on the former Bannerdale car park area and

enhancements to the surrounding green space. The school would have 900 secondary school places initially, alongside a post-16 offer. The design of the building would be flexible to allow for future expansion to 1200 11-16 places if required by future growth in numbers of pupils in the area. It would open in September 2018.

- 7.9 There are then a number of elements of the proposal that need to come together prior to opening that work to ensure the success of a new school. The buildings and design would be commissioned by the Council and it remains vital that this makes a success of the location in terms of an outstanding school facility that supports and enhances local green and recreation space for the local community. And finally, the Council, the new school sponsor, and local stakeholders would need to work together to develop proposals for a new catchment area that supports access to high quality places and equity with the existing local secondary schools.
- 7.10 In view of the risks that were highlighted during the consultation about starting a new school in an area already served by successful and popular schools, there is a need to ensure that the new school can attract a strong initial intake of pupils. This is key to a successful start, and to enabling the school to develop a stable and equitable base from which to grow. The recommendation is therefore to proceed with the temporary increase of places at Silverdale for 2016 and 2017 to provide the places needed across the area in those years, with a further review of the permanent increase of places. This will also allow time for the sponsor of the new school to be identified, and for that to be considered as part of the pattern of provision across the area.
- 7.11 A number of people asked whether it was viable to expand the local schools to meet the long term need. We need to provide around 240 extra secondary places per year by 2020, with the potential for further growth into the next decade. Providing 180 places at the new school in 2018, with potential for future expansion is the best way to secure the new school's intake from opening, whilst retaining the flexibility to meet later growth in the right location at the right time. The alternative of expanding all schools to the limits of site capacity or desirability would not leave the flexibility to expand further in the future. It would also mean that any future deficit could not be met by a new school. This is because any shortfall that remained once all existing schools have been expanded is very unlikely to be big enough to allow a viable new school to be developed. Expansion is also dependent on individual schools and academies agreeing to increase their intake and the council cannot be confident that this would be the case in the future.
- 7.12 Through these proposals and further work the Council is confident it can secure the vision for a new secondary in the southwest that has the confidence of local families and provides a positive local development for the area.

Primary in the South West

- 7.13 It is clear that 30 more primary school places are needed to serve the area broadly defined by the catchment areas of Ecclesall, Dobcroft and Greystones. The consultation feedback continued to confirm Ecclesall Infants as the

preferred location for extra places to meet this growth. The feedback from Clifford Infants was clearly against any move away from Psalter Lane.

- 7.14 One option that was put forward to achieve the extra places in Ecclesall was to by create a through primary school of 90 places per year on the Ecclesall Infant site. The governing bodies of both Ecclesall Infant School and Ecclesall CE Junior School favour this option because of the educational continuity it would provide with a single staff team in one set of buildings.
- 7.15 Having listened carefully to the many responses, the recommendation in this report is to propose the option favoured by the Ecclesall governing bodies to create a through primary school on the Ecclesall Infant site. Therefore a further 4-week consultation on a proposed expansion of age range at Ecclesall Infant School would be undertaken prior to a final decision. All necessary steps are being taken to ensure that 30 temporary places are available in September 2016 as planned. The Council is committed to ensuring that these children, once admitted to Ecclesall Infant, will be able to transfer to a place in Y3 within the Ecclesall catchment.
- 7.16 Under this proposal, Clifford Infant would therefore stay on its Psalter Lane site and pupils would be able to continue transferring to Ecclesall CE Junior School as is the current position.
- 7.18 There were also discussions around the proposals for Holt House and Carterknowle. In line with the views of local people, it is recommended that neither a secondary school building on Holt House, nor the move of Clifford away from Psalter Lane, is taken forward. Given the views expressed from Holt House and Carterknowle parents and the fact that there is no specific requirement for additional places in the Holt House/ Carterknowle catchment area, the recommendation is to leave these schools as they are on their current sites.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 If the recommendations are accepted then the following next steps would be required in the next phase:
- Proposed new 2-18 school in the northeast:
 - i. A rapid process to seek an outstanding sponsor
 - ii. Further development of the design leading to planning permission
 - iii. Once a sponsor is on board a discussion of catchment areas leading to public consultation in Autumn 2016
 - iv. Work would also be undertaken with other local post-16 providers to ensure a new post-16 provision complements existing provision to ensure a great combined local offer.
 - v. Ensure sufficient places for local children in northeast area in 2017 through the existing agreement with the local secondary schools to provide sufficient places ahead of the new school opening
 - Proposed new 11-18 in the south west:
 - i. A rapid process to seek an outstanding sponsor

- ii. Further development of the design leading to planning permission
- iii. Once a sponsor is on board a discussion of catchment areas leading to public consultation in Autumn 2016

- Ecclesall Infant: Publish a statutory notice and consult for 4 weeks on the proposal to expand and increase the age range prior to a final decision. Development of the design leading to planning permission.
- Silverdale: proceed with offering 60 extra places temporarily in advance of the new school opening in 2018. Undertake further discussions with the school and the secondary sector, including the sponsor of the new school once known, about the scheduling of further permanent expansion to meet expected long term demand in the south west

8.2 The process of finding the right sponsor for the new schools is an important step in meeting the aspirations of the Council and local families. The Council would run a rapid process in partnership with the Department for Education to invite expressions of interest with the final decision being passed to the Secretary of State in line with the statutory process. The Council will be in a strong position to emphasise the key points made by both communities, particularly around securing a sponsor that commands the full confidence of local parents from the outset.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 9.1 Local Authorities have a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient school places are available for their area. Proposals to reorganise maintained school provision to meet this requirement, such as expansion and changes to age range, are governed by the procedures set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 (“Prescribed Alterations Regulations”), and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 (“Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations”) and relevant statutory guidance. In the case of existing Academies, any changes would be negotiated directly between the Academy and the Education Funding Agency. The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the legislation and the relevant statutory guidance and this is detailed in section 5 above.
- 9.2 In terms of new schools, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as amended by the Education Act 2011, if the Council thinks that a new school needs to be established it must first seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy. The Council would evaluate the proposals and it would then be for the Secretary of State to determine which, if any, proposals they determine should be implemented by way of entering into Academy arrangements.

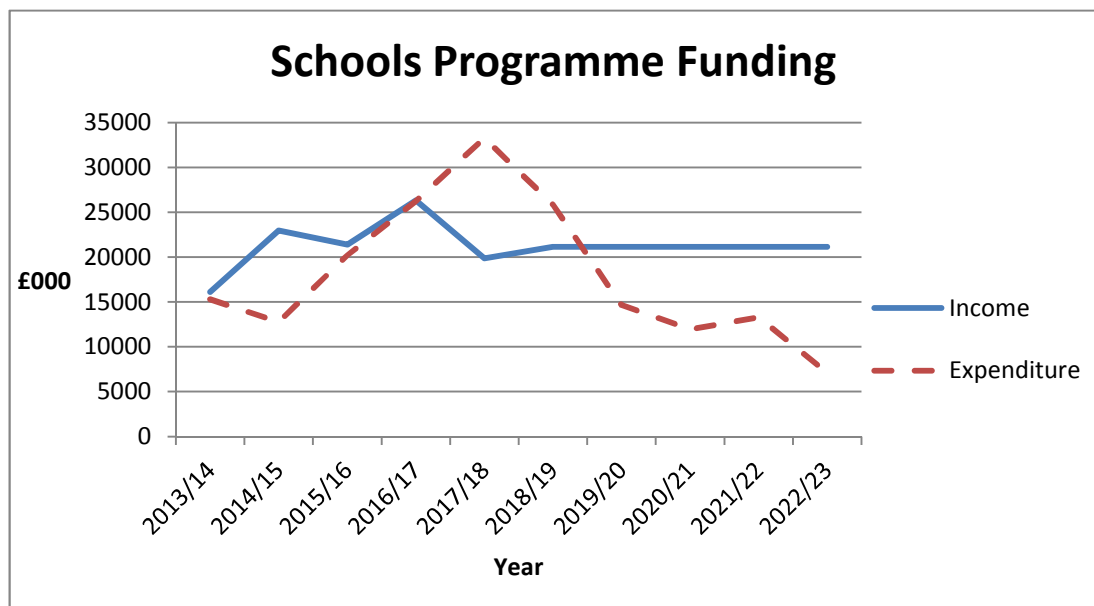
Financial Implications

- 9.3 The Council receives an annual capital allocation from central government to provide school places known as ‘Basic Need’. Sheffield was allocated £17.2m for 15/16, £21.4m for 16/17, and £15.7m in 17/18 to meet predicted demand.

Central Government has also made available additional “Targeted Basic Need Funding” to tackle specific priorities, and, funded its own programmes through the Education Funding Agency.

9.4 The budget estimate for the schemes proposed in this report is assessed at £46m. This is a high level estimate based on the DfE’s average unit costs to provide a pupil place. This estimate is in advance of any detailed design, site and condition surveys and is not a definitive cost. Past experience has shown that schools which are listed buildings or have been out of use for some time do incur considerable expense when renovated.

9.5 It is cost effective to provide additional school capacity in fixed blocks creating some underutilisation until all years have come into the education system. Given that the places will be provided in advance of take up, the construction work will be undertaken ahead of the receipt of the funding from Central Government (the Basic Need expansion grant is calculated on the rise in incremental pupil numbers each year). Based on the target budget estimates, and projections of other pupil numbers, it is likely that the Council will face a short term funding gap over the years 2017-18 to 2019/20 inclusive because of the scale and pace of building could outstrip the receipt of grant. This could be between £5m and £12m over a period of four years based on the current projections of pupil numbers, levels of grant and estimated building costs. The cost of funding this borrowing is estimated to be up to £850k over the period 2017-21 based on current interest rate projections. This is an additional pressure on the Revenue Budget above the projections in the Council’s current Medium Term Financial Strategy and will have to be funded from measures yet to be identified. However, given the construction lead times for new pupil places, this is a risk the Council must take in advance of receiving future government funding allocations beyond the current known values up to the end of 2017/18.



9.6 The above projections also assume that the Building Condition programme spending will be held at the level of DfE Maintenance Grant (currently just over £4m p.a.). In previous years spend has averaged £6m - £7m per year and there

is a backlog of maintenance work to complete (estimated at £100m). Given this position, containing the spend to £4m may require a *reactive* rather than *planned* approach to maintenance where plant and infrastructure is replaced as it fails. As the plant and infrastructure age, the probability of equipment failure increases and priority would be given to heating and electrical plant which are critical to keeping buildings open.

- 9.7 The Council can apply a number of other mitigations to cope with the scenario if central government grants do not keep pace with the construction programme. These would include bearing down on non-construction costs such as project consultancy fees, tighter procurement if market conditions allow, and, seeking additional resource from central government. The Council could consider using its own limited funds such as the New Homes Bonus. The Community Infrastructure Levy is another possibility as well as other appropriate developer contributions for education purposes, but any CIL revenues may be committed to other projects until at least 2018/19. More detailed feasibility will be undertaken as schemes are developed further. The full impact of this will be reported to Cabinet in future reports seeking capital expenditure authorisation.
- 9.8 A key requirement of central government is that it recognises the long term, front loaded nature of school construction and commits to an appropriate funding stream.
- 9.9 The Council's capital strategy is to fund programmes like Schools using the grants made available from central government for that specific purpose. This leaves whatever resources the Council can gather from land sales for those programmes which receive no central funding but are a priority for Members. As described in paragraph 9.11 below, housing development on the former Bannerdale Centre footprint is expected to proceed. Any change to that may deprive the Council of a proportion of the anticipated capital receipt. Capital receipts are used to fund capital projects which have no other source of funding or support Member priorities. Given that Bannerdale was a prime development site, this receipt has been factored into the long term capital programme. It follows therefore that any diminution of this receipt will require some degree of prioritisation within the programme with the consequent delay to, or postponement of, proposed projects.

Property Implications

- 9.10 The commissioning of a new 2-18 school on the former Pye Bank site will enable the reuse of a landmark listed building, providing a high quality school building and recreational facilities that will contribute to the regeneration of the surrounding area. The topographical challenges of the site and the conversion of a listed building will contribute to the cost of the scheme but represent a significant investment to the upgrading of facilities for the local community.
- 9.11 The Council has fully explored the options available for development of a secondary school building on the Bannerdale site, including the significant response from the consultation on this issue. The proposed siting on the current car park area would enable a well-designed, high quality building to be positioned prominently but sympathetically within the site. This would enable the identified housing development on the former Bannerdale Centre footprint to

proceed, subject to further discussion with the Council's preferred residential developer, and for the capital receipt from the sale of that site to be realised. Liaison with local stakeholders would continue in order to detail the joint access and community usage of the green spaces and sports facilities.

Environmental Implications

- 9.12 Clearly the environmental impact of developing the buildings and sites would need further assessment as designs progress. These will be tested in a more formal manner through the related planning permission processes. In each case the issues raised during consultation would be used to assist the development of plans. This will include an assessment of how issues can be mitigated and reduced and whether existing issues in the local neighbourhood could be addressed through a new school. An example of this could be providing parking for out of hours community use of the green space or access routes, paths or drop off points that could potentially be used for the neighbouring primary schools at Bannerdale.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The recommended proposals for the provision of school places have been subject to considerable amounts of formative discussion and a formal and extended consultation with schools, parents, and the local community. All original options and new options coming through the consultation have been considered equally through this process. Where new secondary schools have been proposed, the alternative option of expanding existing schools has been fully considered in every aspect and deemed insufficient, unfeasible, or educationally unviable to provide the capacity increase needed across the secondary sector in the programme up to, and beyond, 2020.
- 10.2 The option of doing nothing or delaying delivery of the provision proposed is not feasible. It poses significant risks to the Council in not providing sufficient statutory school places and to parents in not being able to secure a school place for their child.

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The proposals put forward in this report represent the best outcomes when balancing the various priorities including: ensuring access to great, inclusive schools in every area of the city, getting value for money, protecting green spaces, and meeting housing needs. This has been thoroughly tested through the consultation and the process of appraising the various options since the consultation.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Authorise the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, and where necessary in consultation with the Executive Director, Place to, take all necessary steps, including bringing forward the necessary capital approval submissions to Cabinet, to:

- i. Commission a new 11-18 school on the car park area of the former Bannerdale site as described in this report.
- ii. Support the temporary expansion of Silverdale to provide an additional 60 secondary school places in 2016/17 and 2017/18 as set out in this report.
- iii. Undertake a 4-week consultation on a proposal to expand Ecclesall Infant School to become a through primary school offering 90 places per year as set out in this report.
- iv. Commission a new 2-18 school on the former Pye Bank School site as described in this report.

Alena Prentice
Head of Access & Pupil Services
February 2016

This page is intentionally left blank