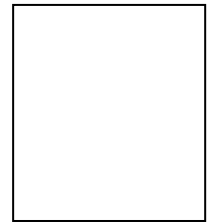




SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Cabinet Report



Report of: Jayne Ludlam

Date: 21st November 2012

Subject: Primary School Places in Sheffield

Author of Report: Joel Hardwick (Ext: 35476)

Summary:

The first new primary schools in Sheffield in a generation are now needed in order to meet the aspirations of Sheffield families for a place in a good local school. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are enough school places available for children in the area that need them. This report gives a full account of why more primary school places are needed, the Council's role in delivering new places, and the next steps required.

Reasons for Recommendations:

Having access to a good local primary school place is at the heart of ensuring successful outcomes for children and young people and making every area of Sheffield a great place to live. With the new primary schools proposed in this report children in the north east of Sheffield will continue to be able to get a place at a school in their community.

Recommendations:

Cabinet are requested to:

- i. Authorise the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning to work with the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, and in respect of the Skinnerthorpe Road site in consultation with Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods and the Executive Director for Place, to take all necessary steps to secure the additional primary school places.
 - ii. Approve the element of Basic Need funding required to enable recommendation (i) to be fulfilled on the Skinnerthorpe Road and Watermead sites.
 - iii. Agree that the Skinnerthorpe Road aspects of the Burngreave and Firvale Masterplan are no longer a material consideration in the planning process as far as they would be relevant to the proposals of this report
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Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by:
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Deborah Eaton
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES Cleared by: Bashir Khan
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
YES
Area(s) affected
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Cllr Jackie Drayton
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Children, Young People & Family Support
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
YES/NO

PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN SHEFFIELD

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The first new primary schools in Sheffield in a generation are now needed in order to meet the aspirations of Sheffield families for a place in a good local school. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are enough school places available for children in the area that need them. This report gives a full account of why more primary school places are needed, the Council's role in delivering new places, and the next steps required.
- 1.2 Demand for primary school places is growing nationally following the rise in the birth rate since 2002. Sheffield's population has followed this national trend and the Council has already undertaken a number of projects to expand schools, and over 2,500 primary places have been added to schools over the last five years (see Appendix 2). However, the pace of this demographic growth has increased since 2006 and with the level of births remaining high, the primary school system remains tight and many schools are at capacity.
- 1.3 The most significant area of growth is the north east of the city, covering the communities of Southey Green, Shirecliffe, Longley, Burngreave, Fir Vale, and Firth Park. The pre-school population in this area has continued to grow since a number of local primary schools were last expanded. The growth is such that there is a forecast deficit in places across the area in September 2013 and beyond. With local schools already at capacity and temporary expansions due to end, the proposal is to commission two new primary schools as the long-term response to the population growth in the north east of the city. The report describes the options for working within the new government framework to ensure a solution that meets the needs of Sheffield and these local communities.

2. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE?

- 2.1 Having access to a good local primary school place is at the heart of ensuring successful outcomes for children and young people and making every area of Sheffield a great place to live. With the new primary schools proposed in this report, children in the north east of Sheffield will continue to be able to get a place at a school in their community.
- 2.2 As well as providing equitable access to places, it is important to ensure the highest possible quality of education. The establishment of new schools offers the opportunity to create new provision with strong leadership, whilst protecting the quality and ongoing improvement of the existing local schools. Making sure there are enough local school places also has wider benefits. A local school place encourages good attendance, walking to school, community cohesion, and enables families to access services locally.

3. OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The Council's priority is to ensure the delivery of high quality services that families and local communities really need. Proposals to add school places must therefore complement strategies to improve outcomes for children and support parental preference. The new framework means that, in nearly all circumstances, a new school would be an Academy. It is important that any new school and potentially a new provider retain the collaborative ethos that underpins the Sheffield system. The outcome of this proposal should therefore be new school provision, working in partnership with other local schools, to ensure the success of all local children.
- 3.2 Forecasts indicate that the population growth is sustained for the foreseeable future. Should that change beyond the forecast period, all local schools, including the proposed new schools, would be of a sustainable size to withstand any reduction in the local population in the long term.

4. CONTEXT

- 4.1 The number of births has been rising nationally since a low point in 2001. Sheffield followed this national trend, with births rising steadily from 5549 in 2001/2 to 6602 by 2009/10. That means around 1000 more children seeking a primary school place in the city over a relatively short period.
- 4.2 As a result proposals have been brought forward over recent years to increase the number of primary school places in the city (see Appendix 2). Expansions in Burngreave and Fir Vale from 2006 were an early sign of the growing trend. In other areas of the city places that were previously surplus began to fill. The overall trend led to a citywide review in 2011 resulting in eleven primary schools expanding to meet the increasing need. The work continued in 2012 with two schools permanently increasing their intake and short-term bulge years at other schools.
- 4.3 Sheffield, like most other parts of the country, is operating in a tighter system as fewer surplus places means less flexibility to meet families' preferences for a school place. So far, with the extra places already put in, the city has managed to maintain the high level of successful first preferences, with around 90% of applicants getting their first preference and around 97% getting one of their three preferences over the last three years. It is important that action is taken where necessary to maintain this situation.
- 4.4 The 2,500 places added to the primary system so far have all been expansions of existing schools. With the population continuing to grow, this approach is not sustainable in the long-term. Expanding school buildings on small sites and increasing the number of children in a school can be challenging and it is right to consider new schools where the long-term demand is sufficient and sustainable.

5. THE FUTURE NEED FOR PLACES

- 5.1 The most significant area of population growth in the next period is the north east of the city, covering the communities of Southey Green, Shirecliffe, Longley,

Burngreave, Fir Vale, and Firth Park (see map at Appendix 1). This area currently has 15 primary schools offering up to 1,000 Reception places each year. Alongside an assessment of the population growth we also need to consider any existing problems for local families accessing school places, any planned local housing developments, and the current pattern of local schools. In order to see more localised trends the area is split into three sub-areas.

Population Growth

- 5.2 Southey/Longley/Shirecliffe: This area is served by Longley, Meynell, Southey Green and Watercliffe Meadow Primary Schools. Across these schools there are a total of 270 permanent Reception places offered each year. Longley, Meynell and Watercliffe Meadow all have bulge year groups where additional Reception places have had to be offered. The school populations have risen over the last seven years from around 200 in older year groups to over 300 pupils taking places in the latest Reception round.
- 5.3 Forecasts indicate that there will be demand for around 325-330 Reception places in this area in 2013/14. The growth in pre-school population is concentrated in the Southey catchment and around Watercliffe Meadow. This level of demand is expected to be sustained in the following two intakes, beyond which forecasts are not available as children are yet to be born. If no action is taken it would be expected that around 25-30 pupils would not be able to access a local place in September 2013 and this would rise to 50-60 pupils in the following two years. In these cases pupils would be referred to the nearest available schools outside this area. Historically the nearest available places would be at schools such as Fox Hill, Mansel, and Hartley Brook. The general growth in population and the number of pupils involved mean it is likely that a proportion of these pupils could be referred farther afield.
- 5.4 Burngreave/Fir Vale: This area is served by Byron Wood, Firs Hill, Owler Brook, Pye Bank CE, St Catherine's RC and Whiteways Primary Schools. Across these schools there are now a total of 360 permanent Reception places offered each year. The population in this area has been rising for some time and 90 of the current Reception places are the result of expansion proposals since 2006. The school populations have risen over the last seven years, in line with the number of places offered, from around 300 in older year groups to 360 pupils taking all available places in the latest Reception round.
- 5.5 Forecasts indicate that there will be demand for over 400 Reception places in this area in 2013/14. The forecasts are based on current uptakes and we know that in some years there have not been enough local places, this means that standard forecasts are expected to be an underestimate. The growth in pre-school population is strongest in Owler Brook catchment area. At present the level of demand is expected to vary over the following two intakes, beyond which forecasts are not available as children are yet to be born. If no action is taken it would be expected that of pupils applying on time for a reception place, between 20 and 45 pupils would not be allocated a local place in September 2013 and September 2014. In previous years when there have not been enough places, pupils have been referred to available places at schools in Darnall, Firth Park and Walkley. As for the area described above, the general growth in population and the number of pupils involved mean it is likely that a proportion of these pupils could be referred

farther afield.

- 5.6 **Firth Park:** This area is served by Beck, Hartley Brook, Hatfield, Hucklow, and St Patrick's. Places in this area are expected to be tight for the next three years. The current uptake includes small numbers of pupils referred to these schools from the neighbouring areas described above. Additional places in those areas would therefore relieve some of the expected pressure and the schools would be expected to have enough places to continue serving their local communities. Hucklow is the school where local population pressure is most likely to require extra places and is also the school with the closest ties to the community around Fir Vale. Additional places in Fir Vale would therefore offer a reasonable alternative for families in the Hucklow catchment.

In-Year Applications

- 5.7 On the standard measure of in-year pupil movement, the schools in this area, with the exception of the Catholic schools are all above the citywide average in 2010/11. This in-year movement has the potential to hide actual demand for local school places in this area. The Local Authority has coordinated in-year admissions for the last two years, so data on in-year preferences is in its infancy. In 2010/11, amongst those who applied in-year, around six children per year group in the Burngreave/Fir Vale area could not be offered a local place. Early analysis shows that this issue almost doubled in 2011/12. These problems extend to families arriving mid-year who may either not get a local place or be offered places for siblings across different local schools. Families who arrive from abroad are often some of the most vulnerable, and a lack of flexibility in the school system can impact directly on them, placing them at a disadvantage compared to others.

Late Applications

- 5.8 Late applications are proportionately higher in the North East than the city average with around 150-200 late applications each year, meaning this area accounts for nearly a third of the late applications received citywide. Applications received after the closing date are handled after all on-time applications have been allocated. Families who submit late applications for local schools are therefore at risk of losing out to on-time applications from outside the area. As with in-year applications, this is likely to impact on the most vulnerable families. In the 2011 intake, 35 late applications in the Burngreave/Fir Vale area have been allocated places at a number of schools outside the immediate local area. Mainly this is to schools within the North East such as Hartley Brook, but a handful have been allocated to schools in Darnall and Walkley. It is clear that, once late applications are taken into account, the current population level created demand for more places than were available in 2011.

Housing

- 5.9 A total of 800 new homes are planned across this area of the city between 2012 and 2027. Once complete, this could increase the demand for local school places further by approximately 25 pupils per year on Sheffield's average household size. The timing and impact of this is yet to be clear and forecasts must only be used with caution until the actual details of developments become clear.

Current Schools

- 5.10 The north east is covered by a mix of 2 Form Entry (60 places per year) and 3 FE

(90 places per year) schools. Pupil outcomes are improving in a challenging context, yet the majority of the schools in this area have been below floor targets in one or more of the last five years. The area also has the highest proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in the city.

- 5.11 It is the Local Authority's view, as the commissioner of school places and the advocate of families and young people, **that we have reached a point where simply continuing to expand the existing primary schools is not sustainable.** Taking these schools permanently beyond their current size would increase the challenge for those schools and this would be an unnecessary risk to the education of existing and future pupils. The local schools are all of a viable and a sustainable size to withstand changes to the local population in the long-term. The key question must be around providing enough local places in a pattern that best supports improving the outcomes for local young people.

Other Areas of the City

- 5.12 In recent years the issue of population growth has affected a number of areas of the city, with some areas requiring additional places in 2011 and 2012. While this report focuses on the north east of the city, pressure is being felt in other areas. A small number of schools turned away catchment applicants in 2012. They are Hucklow, Lydgate, Netherthorpe, Dore, Totley, and Watercliffe Meadow. In most of these areas additional places have been made available as they are a result of population growth. In Dore, Totley and Lydgate it was the result of changing patterns of preference rather than population growth, with a general increase in the number of applications for the local Community schools. Work is being undertaken to assess the impact should the increased uptake continue in future years. If necessary, this work would result in proposals for additional places being brought forward in those areas at some point in the future. The key factors that distinguish the north east are the extent of the expected shortfall in places, the likely distance to the nearest available school places, and the existing issues with late/in-year applications.

Summary

- 5.13 Sustained population growth is driving a need for new school places in this area. In Shirecliffe/Longley/Southey this growth alone demonstrates demand for an additional 50-60 places per year in the long-term. Although the population growth in Burngreave and Fir Vale is less consistent in the immediate future, when taken together with the existing undersupply, proposed new housing, and current late/in-year applications across the area it is clear that up to 60 additional places per year would be required in order to secure enough local places for all families in the long-term.
- 5.14 In order to safeguard and support the work being done by the local schools to improve outcomes, it is proposed that the required places are provided through two new 2 Form Entry primary schools, one in Shirecliffe/Longley/Southey and one in Burngreave/Fir Vale. This would be the most secure way of ensuring the provision of sufficient high quality local places for these communities in the long-term.
- 5.15 In order to support the progress and improvement of existing schools it is proposed to allow the temporary expansions that are currently in place to lapse following

their planned term in order to allow those schools who have extended to 90 reception places to revert to 60.

- 5.16 In advance of any new school provision being established, it will be necessary to address the issue of access to places in-year. Options are currently being explored to secure some additional places across the schools in the Burngreave/Fir Vale area in the short-term. These may involve some schools offering small numbers of places over their published number, or possibly the establishment of small additional groups across key stages. These options would not require statutory decision making processes, but may have capital implications and could require some additional revenue support. Appropriate decision making routes will be sought when options are clear.

6. DELIVERING NEW SCHOOL PLACES IN SHEFFIELD

Role of the Council

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for the local population. The priority is to provide the highest possible quality of services, however they are delivered. In order to deliver the places described in the previous section, the Council must work within the new framework set out by the Government, acting in its role as the commissioner of places. In practice this means that the Council's role is to establish where school places are needed and use its leadership and influence to ensure they are provided and meet local need.
- 6.2 In practice this means that, having identified the need for new school provision, the Council should seek expressions of interest from prospective providers to set up and run a new Academy. The Council cannot propose a new Community School financially maintained by the Council and must seek expressions of interest from external parties. All expressions of interest would be passed to the Secretary of State along with the Local Authority's recommendations. The Secretary of State would decide which one to accept and would then work directly with them to set up the new school.
- 6.3 In seeking expressions of interest the Council would ask all prospective providers to sign up to the Sheffield 'asks' as they would apply to a new school. They are that all schools:
- agree to deliver city wide services in consultation with the Sheffield "family of schools" and sign up to the City Wide Learning Body, for the benefit of all children across the city;
 - remain part of the common admissions policy, allowing for fair access and inclusive treatment of all children and young people;
 - act as the custodian for the land and premises, whoever owns the land, ensuring access to facilities for the children of the city as well as the local community;
 - welcome community and Local Authority representatives onto the school governing body and recognising the right of staff to trade union membership;
- 6.4 Any new school set up in this way would be an academy. The provider chosen by the Secretary of State would be the 'sponsor' of the academy, although not in the

sense of an underperforming school. Sponsors come from a wide range of backgrounds including other academies such as a local school, universities, businesses, independent schools and faith communities. The sponsor is responsible for setting up an academy trust, the legal body responsible for running the school. The trust ensures compliance with the statutory and contractual obligations placed on academies through legislation, and their funding agreements.

Options for Sites and Buildings

- 6.5 It has been important to assess all options for how the additional school places could be accommodated. This includes looking at the feasibility of new purpose-built facilities alongside whether any existing publicly-owned buildings could add to the local capacity. This means exploring the uses of buildings and spaces not conventionally used for education. It could also mean a link up with other local schools to get the best out of the sum total of publically-owned buildings in these areas. Work has been undertaken to date to identify potential sites and buildings within these areas that could provide the required land or accommodation. The map at Appendix 1 shows the sites and buildings.
- 6.6 Possible sites for a newly built primary school have been identified at Skinnerthorpe Road in the Burngreave/Fir Vale area and the former Watermead school site in the Southey/Longley/Shirecliffe area. Both are located in the right position to meet the increased demand for places.
- 6.7 The Skinnerthorpe Road site is included in wider plans for the regeneration of the Fir Vale area and the site was acquired and cleared using Housing Market Renewal funding. This would therefore offer a significant opportunity to join up with wider community regeneration aspirations and provide a boost to the local area beyond the positive impact of a new school. Cabinet approved acquisition of the site in January 2006 for redevelopment in line with the Burngreave and Fir Vale Masterplan which was approved as a material consideration in the planning process in May 2005. The proposed use for housing was however significantly limited when a large part of the site was designated by the Environment Agency as part of the flood plain. New school places are a key local priority and the impact of this designation is less restrictive for a school as it could be overcome through the design. The background of the site does bring three attendant requirements if it was to be used for a school. Firstly, in May 2005 Cabinet adopted a Residents' and Businesses Charter which provided that there should be discussions with the community about the redevelopment proposal. In this case, discussions with the local community on the future need for school places would include consideration of a joined up plan for wider regeneration. Secondly, there is a need to discuss any plans with the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) to ensure they would support the proposal and would waive any potential right to clawback the funding that was used to acquire the site, given that the funding was given to support housing market renewal rather than education. Thirdly, that the masterplan would need to be a material consideration in any planning application for the school. The identified issues with underground drainage and water services may require additional expenditure to mitigate, however pending the conclusion of discussions with the Environment Agency regarding the feasibility of construction on the flood plain, development is considered feasible.
- 6.8 The Watermead site has fewer issues in terms of development. The advice from

feasibility is that planning permission would not be given to add sufficiently to the existing footprint and the only way to add enough capacity on this site would be to redevelop the site with a new building. Further, the size, condition and space within the existing Watermead building mean that there is no significant cost advantage in attempting to incorporate this into a new school. Both of these sites are therefore deemed feasible for the development of new primary schools of the size required.

- 6.9 There are a number of Council-owned buildings in the Burngreave/Fir Vale area that are identified as potentially surplus. These include office space, a hostel site, the old Pye Bank school, Forum House and remaining space in Sorby House (if the plan to relocate other services to the lower floors of the building is approved). Of these, only the old Pye Bank school and Sorby House have enough floor space to accommodate a primary school of this size. The balance of need in this area is greater towards Fir Vale and therefore these buildings are not ideally located to meet the growth in demand. An initial assessment does highlight some issues with these buildings. For example, the former Pye Bank school building is listed, restricting the potential development internally and externally and increasing the estimated cost. A provisional estimate for refurbishment would be £4m with little difference between providing a 1 or 2FE as both would require refurbishment of the whole building. Sorby House has suitability issues, with no outdoor space beyond a car park and roof terrace and safeguarding issues with the number and type of other users having access to the building.
- 6.10 All of these buildings could add to the sum total of accommodation available to local schools. They could form part of a proposal linked to a local secondary school, possibly to add capacity such that space within the secondary school buildings are freed up. However, we would not expect primary-aged pupils to share space within the secondary buildings. Primary provision on a secondary site would need to be in separate areas, with separate access and playspace. It should also be noted that as more pupils start at primary school, more places are likely to be required in the secondary system seven years on. Any potential to increase capacity identified at this stage may therefore be more appropriately used to increase capacity for Year 7-11 pupils further down the line.
- 6.11 The only Council-owned potentially surplus building in the Southey/Longley/Shirecliffe area is the former Watermead school building itself. As described above, planning constraints on the site mean a new building would be required in place of the current building.

Local Views

- 6.12 In order to make sure that any new school meets local needs, the Council is keen to ensure a strong local voice and character within this process. Above all, any new places must be high quality and serve to improve outcomes for local children. It is also vital that any new provision is a good fit for Sheffield and the local community it would serve.
- 6.13 In seeking expressions of interest, this would mean holding a discussion with the local community and stakeholders to establish what qualities would be required from a new school and from those who express an interest in running it. At the end of the period for local discussion, the key desired qualities can be matched to the expressions of interest received. This could then be provided to the Secretary of

State as a commentary to provide a local voice in the decision-making. If appropriate this commentary could include identifying Sheffield's 'preferred' proposal.

Risks & Issues

- 6.14 Impact on existing schools: It is important that changes to the pattern of local provision serve to improve outcomes for children across the area. This includes those who would continue to attend the existing schools as much as those that would attend new provision. Creating new provision as the response to the additional need for places will support local primary schools in maintaining their focus on increasing and sustaining recent improvements. The alternative of expansion would add significantly to that challenge with an extra 210-420 pupils on the site.
- 6.15 It will also be important that the provider of any new provision is committed to working in partnership with local schools, the local community, and the Council. This will be important as the proposal progresses in working up the admissions policy, the ways of working, and ultimately in making sure new provision works in harmony with other local schools to support local families and improve outcomes for local children.
- 6.16 No sponsor comes forward: It will be important that potential sponsors are encouraged to come forward. The Council has the option to work with the Department for Education to seek out strong potential sponsors to express interest if necessary. If no sponsor came forward the next step in the new framework is to go down a formal competition route. This is unlikely as it would be expected that sponsors would come forward at the initial stage.
- 6.17 Further Population changes: At present there is no indication of a change to current trends. The local schools are all of a sustainable size to withstand the impact of a future reduction in the population. If that happened, there may be opportunities to reduce the sizes of schools that are already established permanently at 3 forms of entry. Should the population rise again, clearly consideration would have to be given to a further increase to the number of places.
- 6.18 New Schools do not fill: In order to gain the confidence of local parents, it is important that we engage in the early stages to get their input into shaping a proposal for a new school or ensure that the provider is already known to the local community. Families must also be convinced about the performance of the school and a strong known provider may help in securing that confidence.
- 6.19 New schools do not perform well: The process outlined is aimed to ensure a strong proposal can come forward, with a high calibre provider committed to working alongside other local schools to serve the local community. This should give the foundations for a successful proposal. The Council would continue to work in partnership with all local schools and, as with all schools, would seek appropriate routes for challenge if standards fall below expectation.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 The following table provides an overview of the next steps and key dates:

Need for primary school places established	
Local discussions	December 2012
New school places offered in short term	December-July 2014
Expressions of Interest	December 2012
Decision from Secretary of State	January 2013
New schools open	September 2014

Implementation

- 7.2 Work to assess the potential use of sites and buildings will continue in the interim period to ensure that places can be offered in appropriate spaces as soon as possible and that there is no delay to new buildings being fully operational.

Short-term Options

- 7.3 In order to ensure there are sufficient places in the short term for in-year applicants and for September 2013 Reception applications, work is underway to assess the options for providing small numbers of additional places at the local schools for this period. These will be considered and appropriate decision-making routes taken depending upon the options that come forward.

8. FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal

- 8.1 Local Authorities have a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure sufficient primary schools are available for their area. 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. It would then be for the Secretary of State to determine which, if any, proposals he determines should be implemented by way of entering in to Academy arrangements. In the case of existing Academies, any changes would be negotiated directly between the Academy and the Education Funding Agency.
- 8.2 In the event that sponsors did not come forward or proposals are made but are not approved by the Secretary of State and did not result in Academy arrangements being entered in to then pursuant to Section 11(A2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the Council may start a statutory competition process to find a suitable provider. The Council could decide to enter the competition by publishing its own proposals to establish a new community school. In that event the Adjudicator would be the decision maker under Schedule 2 of that Act and must have regard to the statutory guidance.

Financial Implications

- 8.3 The main source of capital available to the Council is the annual allocation for Basic Need. Recently this has been circa £2.6m per year but increased to £4.6m in 2012/13. In some areas amounts may be available from developer contributions where housing is planned. Where an existing secondary academy is applying to extend its age range to 5-16, they could also apply for capital from the Academies capital pot as part of their application to the Secretary of State.

- 8.4 The potential capital cost of a new 420-place primary school building is £5.5m. The potential call on the Council's Basic Need allocation is therefore £11m. Subject to the 13/14 allocation being at £4.6m, there will be more than sufficient funding to cover the costs of the new schools.
- 8.5 In order to maximise resources officers will work with schools to explore options for reducing the call on the basic need allocation. Supporting applications for 5-16 schools gives potential access to a different capital source held centrally by the DfE for Academies. The Council should also consider any opportunities to make use of existing buildings, both on and off school sites, to reduce the need for new buildings where possible.
- 8.6 It should be recognised that there will be other competing priorities in a dynamic capital programme. There would seem little option but to commit capital to a basic responsibility of the Council, that is providing sufficient pupil places. This is a duty which has been recently confirmed by the Secretary of State in the regulations concerning the Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services. However, we know there is a longstanding commitment to replacing the Tinsley schools, both because of their location and the need for pupil places. If this is to be completed, it should be noted that this is likely to be during the funding period 2014/15 to 2015/16. Additionally, from 2016 onwards, we know that the growing primary school numbers will start to feed into secondary thus causing the need for more places. To match the increasing numbers, there will be funding from the DfE so we can plan for this with the confidence that funding will flow through from the centre.
- 8.7 The feasibility, design, procurement and build process takes on average around two years, with flexibility required for consulting on designs and delays in construction. In order to achieve the expected completion date of August 2014, it is important to carry out an element of the feasibility, design and initial procurement work on the sites. This is currently taking place, which is being funded from the Basic Need Capital Allocation. The full capital allocation of £11m will be approved in the usual way through the capital report being submitted to Cabinet of 12th December 2012.

Human Resources

- 8.8 There are no direct Human Resource implications as a result of this proposal. Officers from the School Organisation Team would manage the local discussions, coordinating officer support and advice from other key departments within the Council as necessary.

Equality of Opportunity

- 8.9 The overall aim of this report is to ensure that access to quality primary school provision is available to all children of primary school age across Sheffield. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for this project.
- 8.10 This project will support the Council's priority to enable a better life for children and young people by providing access to an education and help to raise attainment and aspirations.

Environmental & Sustainability

- 8.11 Providing additional local school places will increase the number of families who

are able to go to their local school. This will reduce the number of longer journeys and should therefore increase the number of pupils who are able to travel to school in a sustainable way.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 One option would be to continue the expansion of existing schools. As described within the report, the scale of the additional demand, the current challenges, the existing school sizes, and the school sites combine to offer a strong argument that we have reached the point where expansion is no longer sustainable in the areas described.
- 9.2 A second option would be to take a 'free market' approach. The free schools programme could allow the Council to take a step back and see whether other providers come forward of their own volition to meet the demand. However, the Council is uniquely placed to offer a precise and considered assessment of the need for places. The free market approach would not be a secure way of fulfilling the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. Stepping back would also be to neglect the Council's ability to secure both a strong local voice and a strong educational voice in securing successful outcomes for local children.
- 9.3 A third option considered was support for existing secondary schools to expand their age range to become 5-16 schools. This option has the potential to build on the existing secondary schools as known providers in the locality which parents already know and have confidence in. However, by supporting a particular secondary school, the Local Authority may have prevented other providers from coming forward and expressing an interest in running new primary provision.
- 9.4 Finally, the Council could attempt to pursue the establishment of new Council-maintained Community schools. Under the new framework this can only happen in the event that the Secretary of State considers no suitable expressions of interest have been received. At that point the Council could start a formal competition process and only if no suitable proposal comes forward can the Local Authority propose a new Community school. If that were to happen, again the Secretary of State, through the Schools Adjudicator, would be the ultimate decision maker. Given the Government Academies programme and the number of potential sponsors currently in the 'market', it is very unlikely that a proposal would reach that stage. However, the first step in that process is the seeking of expressions of interest as outlined in this report and therefore this route, whilst unlikely, would remain open.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Having access to a good local primary school place is at the heart of ensuring successful outcomes for children and young people and making every area of Sheffield a great place to live. With the new primary schools proposed in this report children in the north east of Sheffield will continue to be able to get a place at a school in their community. The approach suggested would ensure a local voice within the new government framework.

- 10.2 In providing the places through new provision there are a number of key issues. The sponsor must have the strength and capacity to make the provision successful in terms of improving outcomes, the new places must work within and serve to strengthen the local family of schools, and the provision must start with confidence of local families.
- 10.3 In order to best meet the additional demand, make the most efficient use of resources and provide high quality primary school places, it is proposed that new buildings on the Skinnerthorpe Road site and the Watermead site are taken forward as the best locations for the new provision.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

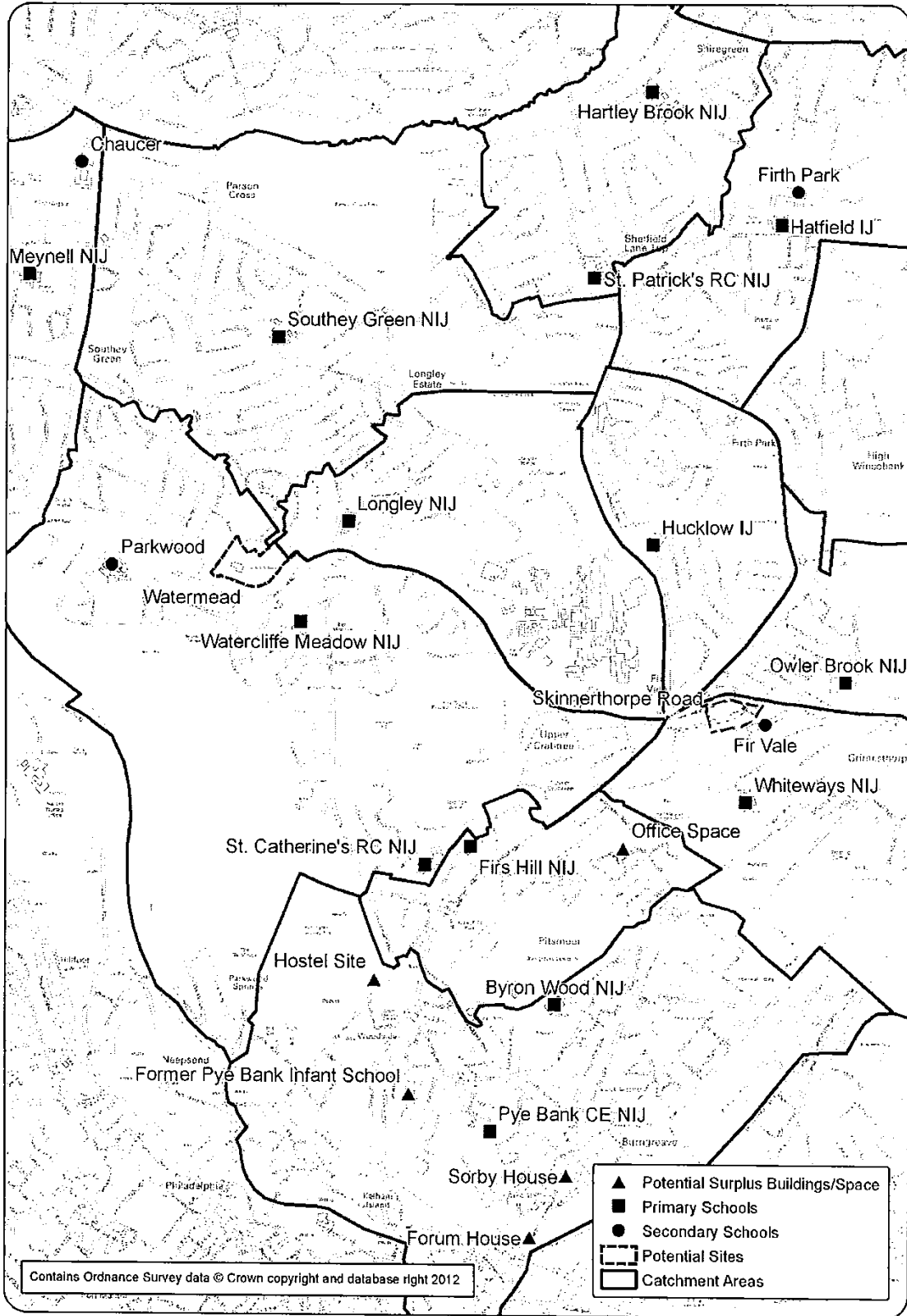
11.1 Cabinet are requested to:

- i. Authorise the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning to work with the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, and in respect of the Skinnerthorpe Road site in consultation with Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods and the Executive Director for Place, to take all necessary steps to secure the additional primary school places.
- ii. Approve the element of Basic Need funding required to enable recommendation (i) to be fulfilled on the Skinnerthorpe Road and Watermead sites.
- iii. Agree that the Skinnerthorpe Road aspects of the Burngreave and Firvale Masterplan are no longer a material consideration in the planning process as far as they would be relevant to the proposals of this report

APPENDICES

1. Map of current schools, potential buildings and sites
2. Recent expansion proposals

Appendix 1: Map of current schools, potential buildings and sites



Appendix 2: Recent Expansions Proposals

First Year	School(s)	Details	Places Added	
			Per Year	School(s) Total
2006/07	St. Catherine's RC Primary School	Initially temporary for 3 years, permanent from 2009/10	30	210
2009/10	Greystones Primary School	4 years in total: 1 year in 2009/10 and 3 years from 2011/12	30	120
2009/10	Meynell Primary School	3 years	30	90
2009/10	Owler Brook Nursery Infant & Whiteways Junior Schools	Permanent	30	210
2009/10	Pye Bank CE Primary School	Permanent	30	210
2010/11	Watercliffe Meadow Primary School	1 year	30	30
2011/12	Abbey Lane Primary School	Permanent	30	210
2011/12	Carfield Primary School	Permanent	15	105
2011/12	Longley Primary School	3 years	30	90
2011/12	Lowedges Primary School	Permanent	30	210
2011/12	Lowfield Primary School	Permanent	15	105
2011/12	Mosborough Primary School	Permanent	15	105
2011/12	Mundella Primary School	Permanent	20	140
2011/12	The Nether Edge Primary School	Permanent	15	105
2011/12	Walkley Primary School	Permanent	20	140
2011/12	Westways Primary School	Permanent	30	210
2012/13	Acres Hill Primary School	1 year	30	30
2012/13	Hillsborough Primary School	Permanent	15	105
2012/13	Hinde House Primary Phase	Permanent	15	105
2012/13	Oughtibridge Primary School	1 year	15	15
2012/13	Tinsley Nursery Infant	3 years	8	24
			483	2,569

Other schools have admitted above their published admission number during this period to accommodate peaks in demand, without additional capital work being required.

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