

# Public Document Pack



## Customers and Corporate Directorate

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Date: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Dear Councillor

### **Cabinet**

Further to the agenda for the meeting of the Cabinet to be held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015, please find attached an addendum to the report to agenda item 3, 'The Need for Extra Special School Places- Consideration of consultation responses and Publication of Statutory Proposals'

Yours Faithfully

**David Wilcock**  
**Head of Legal and Governance Reform**

#### Cabinet Membership 2015/16

Councillor Iftikhar Ahmed

Councillor Daalat Ali

Councillor Jacqueline Beswick

Councillor Allen Brett

Councillor Neil Emmott

Councillor Janet Emsley

Councillor Richard Farnell

Councillor Donna Martin E

Councillor Peter Williams

**Rochdale Borough Council**

**CABINET**

**Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS**

3. The Need for Extra Special School Places- Consideration of consultation responses and Publication of Statutory Proposals – addendum to the submitted report 1 - 4

## **Cabinet Monday 8th June 2015:**

### **The Need for Extra Special School Places- Consideration of consultation responses and Publication of Statutory Proposals**

1. The Cabinet report did not include the relevant minute of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8th April. This is set out below. A commentary on the comments and concerns raised by Members is set out in paragraph 3 below. Additionally a further response has been submitted by the Headteacher of Hamer Primary School (co-located with Springside Special School). This is also set out in paragraph 4.

2. Minute of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8th April 2015:

#### ***THE NEED FOR EXTRA SPECIAL SCHOOL PLACES***

165 *The Committee scrutinised a report of the Director of Children's Services that was seeking Members' views on proposals to increase the number of primary and secondary special school places in the Borough as part of a public consultation process.*

*The Committee were informed that there has been an increase in the number of children born in the Borough, and this would reflect in an increase in demand for special school places, as it has for mainstream school places. At the same time Redwood Secondary Special School has seen an increase in the number of children with statements transferring from mainstream settings into Year 7 and also an increase in demand from children joining the school at Year 12.*

*There were currently two primary special schools in the Borough, each with a 100 place capacity and they are both designated as generic special schools (200 places in all). Newlands Special School, in Middleton, as at January 2015 had 81 children on roll, and Springside Special School has 94 children on roll. In order to meet increased demand for places from 2016 onwards additional places will need to be provided. There is currently one secondary special school, Redwood Special School with 225 places, for 11 – 19 year olds, which were designated as generic special school places.*

*In considering the report Members of the Committee expressed their concerns at the consultation process running over the election period, the extra help that would be available for children at the schools and issues around the transportation of children to and from the schools in question.*

***DECIDED – That the report be noted.***

3. Response to comments and concerns raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

#### **(i) Is the accommodation to be provided permanent build or temporary accommodation?**

A temporary classroom is needed for this September at Redwood Special School because of the extra Year 7 children who have been allocated places there this year (as named in their Statements). Subject to permanent building work, this classroom will be on site for 1 year only. The main extensions at Redwood, Springside and Newlands will be permanent build.

#### **(ii) How has the number of 16 per classroom been calculated?**

Overall space requirements for children in special schools are different to mainstream schools, and guidance on this is set out in the Department for Education's Building Bulletin 102. Taking account of this guidance, *a classroom in a special school would be expected to accommodate up to about 10 children*, depending on their needs. Since we do not know at

this stage the nature of the needs of future children we have assumed that each classroom would accommodate up to **8** children, to allow for a higher level of pupil need.

Admissions to special schools are not based on a set intake for each year group. Children are admitted because a Statement of Special Educational Need (now an Education, Health and Social Care Plan) names the school, and this can be at any stage of the child's school career. Part of the additional pressure on the special schools is the increase in the number of children with a statement requiring a special school place who are currently in a mainstream setting.

Projecting future demand, therefore, is not as straightforward as planning for mainstream school places. For the two primary schools (Newlands and Springside) the information provided in the proposals shows there has been an increase in take up of places in recent years. Members will note that the total primary school age population will have increased by about 3000 children between 2007 (when the special schools were completed) and 2018- an increase of about 16%. With this in mind it would be reasonable to increase primary special school place capacity by the same level to ensure there are sufficient places in the future.

For secondary special places- Redwood is already oversubscribed and now needs extra capacity for both the 11-16 age range and the 16-19 age range. The proposal to increase 11-16 provision by 32 places (4 classrooms) on the current site will match the potential primary growth, and the provision of additional 16-19 capacity in Middleton will free up some additional accommodation at Redwood.

**(iii) City Learning Centre (CLC) building on the Middleton Technology School site- why this building and travel and safety of children**

The identification of the former CLC building for Redwood's post 16 development arose from a combination of 2 factors:

- \* the CLC closed at the end of August 2014 and the Authority had to consider alternative uses for an educational building on a school site; and
- \* Redwood Special School was looking for a site in Middleton to develop the post 16 offer around the Bridging Programme and Internship Programme.

The CLC is a good quality building, with flexible spaces and readily adaptable for the small numbers of students who would access the proposed Centre and is co-located with a secondary school. Redwood students whose programmes will be delivered from here would be expected to travel independently as part of their personal learning and development programme, or in particular cases may have to have transport provided because of the nature of their needs.

Redwood post 16 students on these programmes currently travel independently to their placement, and the school takes account of safeguarding matters as part of the arrangements for any placement. The Authority will support the school to produce an updated travel plan for the additional site.

**(iv) Consultation period and purdah**

Planning additional school places for September 2015 is very much a “business as usual” matter and there is no change in policy. The provision of school places is also a statutory duty for the Local Authority, and any change to a special school requires statutory proposals. Proposals such as these are not politically sensitive. There is no minimum consultation period specified but 4 weeks would be reasonable. However, the Authority has already taken the view that for these proposals the consultation period of should be 6 weeks to allow for the 2 week Easter break is reasonable.

**(v) Members seeing proposals before consultation:**

Cabinet (on 23rd March 2015) approved consultation on the proposals- the overall proposals were contained within the report on “Capital Investment in Schools and the Need for Extra Special School Places”. Informal Cabinet had agreed to consult on the proposals. Elected Members received an email on 8th April giving details of the information on the proposals. In future we will ensure that Members are given information as soon as possible, and before the start of consultation.

**(vi) Consultation with parents**

The consultation process specifically includes parents and students of the three schools, as well as staff, other schools and so on. For Redwood, the consultation meeting with parents will be held on 23rd April, and the meeting with Redwood Student Council will be 28th April.

**(vii) re p47 para 7.8 -what is the reference to Rochdale Hospital?**

The reference on page 47 of the report to Rochdale Hospital is that it is one of the organisations which currently provides placements for Redwood’s post 16 students.

**(viii) Redwood and Springside are both “Requires Improvement” are you putting additional pressure on these staff and what additional support are you providing to the school?**

The Authority is aware of the current OfSTED grade for each of these schools and is confident that the proposals will not distract them from the priority to move out of this category. The proposals for Redwood will help address some of the specific concerns about pressure on accommodation, and give an opportunity to develop post 16 provision. Each school has been visited by OfSTED and those monitoring reports for Redwood (16/3/15) and Springside (2/12/14) state that “School leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement”.

4. Comments on the proposal have now been received from the Headteacher of Hamer CP (2nd June) and are as follows:

(i) Car parking is already of a premium and we have shared-site issues with parents and staff constantly being blocked in and the relatively few disabled parking bays being occupied by non-blue badge holders. This causes tension between car park users at the beginning and end of each day already and this is largely due to more traffic than space. With additional numbers being admitted to Springside, this means more cars and potentially more that might need access to disabled parking bays so our hope is that some plan on the Springside part of the site is in place alongside the building of the extra classrooms.

(ii) The dining room is very busy and Springside children who are able and happy to eat in the main Hamer dining room currently join us as there is very stretched space already for the numbers of children that Springside currently have on roll in their dining room. Therefore, from a shared site perspective, is there also plans to increase space for Springside children to eat, in Springside?

(iii) The Sports/Assembly Hall is very stretched currently and there is barely enough time to deliver the PE National Curriculum for Hamer children as things stand. Also, healthy lifestyles and pupil premium enrichment agendas in the form of lunchtime clubs by paid sports professionals often take place in the sports hall at lunchtimes which means that the hall is already in use and timetabled for the entirety of every day. Has thought been given to assembly room and PE/needs for more “large space provision areas” as numbers increase along with the building of two extra classrooms so the offer to Hamer children is not compromised yet further?

..... CHS 04-06-15.....