

Decision Report – Executive Lead Member Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/11/12

Decision Date – 04/06/2024

Key Decision – Yes

Confidential Information – Yes (Appendix A)



Proposed delivery of the expansion of St Paul's Junior School, Shepton Mallet.

Executive Member(s): Cllr Heather Shearer - Lead Member for Children, Families and Education

Local Member(s) and Division: Cllrs Bente Height & Martin Lovell – Shepton Mallet
Lead Officer: Phil Curd, Head of Education Places

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Summary / Background

1. Following on from the approval of the Council's Capital Investment Programme (2023/24), officers are now seeking authority to deliver a school project associated with the programmes. The Council has a statutory duty to supply sufficient good quality school places within statutory walking distance of a pupil's home address. Pupil numbers in the St Paul's Junior catchment area have been increasing steadily over recent years and the school population forecasts indicate pupil numbers will exceed capacity from September 2024 onwards.
2. This paper seeks authority to allow the Council to go out to tender and award a contract to deliver the expansion of St Paul's Junior School, Shepton Mallet, by 30 places to meet the demand for school places in the catchment area.

Recommendations

3. The Lead Member for Children, Families and Education:
 - a. authorises officers to commission the delivery of the expansion of St Paul's Junior School, Shepton Mallet by 30 places.
 - b. authorises the Programme Manager School Growth under delegation to commence delivery (including design, planning and early enabling works), in order to prepare the tender pack.
 - c. approves the appointment of the project management team (Strategic Asset Management/Futures for Somerset Ltd).
 - d. approves the LA to go out to tender to deliver the expansion of St Paul's Junior School, Shepton Mallet.

- e. approves the gross maximum project cost as detailed in Appendix A. These costs include allowances for Fees, ICT and furniture as required.
- f. approves the case for applying the exempt information provision and therefore to treat Appendix A in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.
- g. delegates authority to the Service Director – Strategic Asset Management in consultation with legal services, to finalise the contract documents and enter into the works with the preferred contractor.
- h. approves the appointment of Furniture, Fittings and Equipment and ICT contractors tendered in line with SC procurement policy, within the gross maximum project costs.

Reasons for recommendations

- 4. To meet the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places by approving the delivery of the expansion of St Paul's Junior School, Shepton Mallet, by 30 places.
- 5. To approve the project management and the contracting of this build following a competitive tender, as detailed in Appendix A.
- 6. Appendix A contains commercially sensitive information relating to the potential value of the scheme. Officers recommend that this is treated as exempt information. "Exempt information" is defined by section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, by Schedule 12A to that Act.

Other options considered

- 7. No alternative options were considered because there is only one junior school in Shepton Mallet and there is no alternative provision for children in years 3 to 6 within statutory walking distance. Doing nothing in response to the forecast growth would likely result in the LA failing to meet its statutory duty of providing sufficient school places and lead to unnecessary transport costs.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

- 8. This project links to the 'Fairer, Ambitious Somerset' priority of the Council Plan 2023-27.
- 9. Education outcomes in Somerset are not good enough, especially for children from lower income homes or those with additional needs. All children need access to good schools, colleges, further education, and higher education. This project supports that ambition.

Financial and Risk Implications

10. The Capital Investment Programme for 2023/24 identified the need for the expansion of St Paul's Junior School, Shepton Mallet, by 30 places. Corporate Finance have confirmed that this project is fully funded following approval of the 2023/24 Capital Investment Programme.

11.

Please enter risk description					
Increase in project costs due to unforeseen issues not picked up through the feasibility process.					
Likelihood	2	Impact	1	Risk Score	3
Please enter mitigation here					
To mitigate the risk of overspend the project will be designed with a set budget in mind and specifications reduced to ensure it is affordable; however, a contingency is built into every project based on the level of risk e.g. type of materials and ground conditions. A programme contingency is also held which can be deployed should the project contingency be exceeded.					

From September 2024, St Paul's Junior School will have more pupils on roll that its net capacity. This can have a huge impact on pupils, their ability to engage in learning and the wider performance of the school. Therefore, the greatest risk is this project not proceeding.

Legal Implications

12. Somerset Council has a statutory duty under s.14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that sufficient school places for primary and secondary education are available in its area. The delivery of this project will help to ensure that the Council meet this statutory duty.

13. Consultation has been undertaken with Procurement regarding the route for tendering this project.

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

HR Implications

14. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

Other Implications:

Equalities Implications

15. The proposed expansion will be fully accessible with the proper facilities and provisions in place to cater for disabled users, pursuant to statutory obligations set out in equality legislation and brought together under the umbrella provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

The attached Equalities Impact Assessment was reviewed and approved by the Council's Public Health Promotions Manager – Equalities on 22nd May 2024.

Community Safety Implications

16. Improved access to education will have a positive impact on community safety. Improved access to quality educational facilities could serve to reduce the likelihood of low level anti-social behaviour and improve children's chances to thrive long term.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

17. The additional places will serve the local community and therefore there will be no transport arrangements so that walking, cycling or scootering to school are the natural, logical and obvious choices.

The delivery of this project is intended to match the ambition of the Council's approved carbon strategy. Although the availability of funding will play a role in the level of carbon reduction and sustainability that can be achieved.

Health and Safety Implications

18. Risks involved in the proposed building works will be managed by the appointed contractor through their construction Health and Safety Plan required by all such projects.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

19. The project is being delivered to meet local demand so that walking, cycling and scootering to school are the natural, logical and obvious choices for the school journey.

Social Value

20. The value of this scheme will limit the amount of social value achievable. The tender pack will include a requirement to offer social value and commissioners will enter into negotiation with the chosen contractor to agree the final social value offering.

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

21. The proposed decision has been sent to the Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Children and Families, for information and comment.

Background

22. Somerset Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places within statutory walking distance of the child's home address.
23. St Paul's Junior School has an operating capacity of 297. In addition, they have two very small classrooms which are used as intervention spaces.
24. At October 2023 there were 322 pupils on roll with large year groups of 86 in year 3 and 91 in year 4. One of the intervention spaces is being used a classroom due to the increase in pupil numbers. This is only possible because the current year 6 cohort has just 66 pupils.
25. The latest school population forecasts indicate that the school will reach 348 in 2024 and 361 in 2025. With another large year group of 87 expected to start at the school in September 2024, pupil numbers at St Paul's continue to rise.
26. It should also be noted that an application for 569 dwellings is in the final stages of approval. These dwellings have **not been** included in the school population forecasts.
27. A feasibility has shown that a single classroom (30 places) can be added to the site which would ensure the immediate forecast demand can be met.

Background Papers

28. Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 – Schools Programme
29. 2023 School Population Forecast
30. October 2023 Census

Appendices

- **Appendix A - Confidential**




Assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	15/05/2024
Communications	Peter Elliott	23/04/2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	21/05/2024
Workforce	Alyn Jones	25/04/2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	17/05/2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Claire Winter	19/04/2024
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	25/04/2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Heather Shearer	16/05/2024
Consulted:	Councillor Name	

Local Division Members	Cllr Bente Height Cllr Martin Lovell	17/05/2024 19/04/2024
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Frances Nicholson	20/05/2024
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Leigh Redman	15/05/2024

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)	 Somerset Council	 NHS Somerset	 NHS Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
Version	V1	Date Completed	
Description of what is being impact assessed			
The expansion of St Paul’s Junior School, Shepton Mallet, by 30 places.			
Evidence			
<p>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the Office of National Statistics, Somerset Intelligence Partnership, Somerset’s Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA), Staff and/ or area profiles., should be detailed here</p> <p>The latest School Population Forecasts and Housing Land Supply Papers have been used to establish the need for the expansion of St Paul’s Junior School, Shepton Mallet by 30 places.</p> <p>The school census data provides the latest pupil numbers by year group.</p> <p>The school catchment map provides the area of Shepton Mallet that St Paul’s Junior School serves.</p>			
<p>Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?</p>			

The head teacher and governors have been consulted on this proposal and no issues were raised.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The additional places will be co-educational and for children aged 7 to 11 years of age. 	□	□	☒
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new classroom will be fully accessible with the proper facilities and provisions in place to cater for disabled users, pursuant to statutory obligations set out in Equality legislation and brought together under the umbrella provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Toilets will be accessible The main doors will be automatic but not all fire doors will be. Internal doors are generally on magnets that release in the event of a fire. Colour choices are decided with the school but a steer towards lighter walls and darker carpets is encouraged. Hearing loops whist not fitted as standard can be installed if required 	□	□	☒
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified 	□	☒	□

Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified 	□	⊗	□
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified 	□	⊗	□
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified 	□	⊗	□
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Paul's Junior School is a voluntary controlled school and is run for the benefit of the whole community, adopting admission arrangements that give priority to the local community, regardless of their faith or other affiliation. 	□	□	⊗
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data shows us that women are still the primary care giver and they are also less likely to have access to a car in a single car household. Expanding the existing primary school means primary education provision is locally accessible without the need for car usage. 	□	□	⊗
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified 	□	⊗	□

Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LA admissions arrangements ensure that armed forces children are not disadvantaged and therefore are compliant with the Armed Forces Covenant. 	□	□	☒
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding an existing primary school in a rural area means primary education provision is locally accessible without the need for car usage. Reasonable adjustments will be made regarding noise, physical accessibility and disruption for those with neurodiversity if any works are undertaken during term time. 	□	□	☒

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
The expanded classroom will be fully accessible	31/08/2024	MK/HW	On completion	□
The toilets provided will be fully accessible	31/08/2024	MK/HW	On completion	□
	Select date			□
	Select date			□
	Select date			□
	Select date			□
	Select date			□
	Select date			□

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Completed by: Helen Waring

Date 19/04/2024

Signed off by: Phil Curd

Date 19/04/2024

Equality Lead sign off name: Tom Rutland

Equality Lead sign off date: 22 May 2024

To be reviewed by: (officer name)

Review date:

