

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**DATE: 16 JULY 2019**



**REPORT OF: MRS JULIE ILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL-AGE LEARNING**

**LEAD OFFICER: PETER HOPKINS, LEAD ASSET STRATEGY MANAGER  
DAVE HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES,  
LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE**

**SUBJECT: CREATION OF A NEW SPECIALIST CENTRE AT WORPLESDON  
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FREEMANTLES  
SCHOOL PROVIDING 21 PLACES FOR PUPILS WITH HIGH  
COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION NEEDS**

#### **SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To agree the proposal for a new specialist centre to be developed at Worplesdon Primary School in partnership with Freemantles School. This would create places for primary pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have Communication and Interaction Needs (COIN) in Surrey. The specialist centre will be based at Worplesdon Primary School and operated in partnership with Freemantles School.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended:

1. That Cabinet agree the proposal to build a specialist centre at Worplesdon Primary School in partnership with Freemantles School, in principle, and the project will proceed subject to a full public consultation and statutory notices.
2. That the funding for this project is allocated from the Special Education Needs & Disabilities Capital Grant of £10.7m and the scheme is added to Capital programme, as detailed in Part 2 of this report.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A new specialist provision centre at Worplesdon Primary School would meet the demand for additional places for children and young people with communication and interaction needs (COIN). This is the first centre in Surrey that is being developed in partnership between a special school and a mainstream primary school. The two schools working in partnership ensure pupils benefit from the expertise of a special school as well as inclusion in a mainstream primary school.

**DETAILS:**

1. Demand for specialist centre provision in the south west area for pupils with special educational needs is high, particularly for pupils with COIN. As a result, other specialist provision in the local area is operating at or above capacity. The provision of an additional specialist COIN centre will help support local families who would otherwise have to travel further afield. This will not only enable local provision for local children, but also decrease home to school journey times and associated costs.
2. Worplesdon Primary School is a primary school in the borough of Guildford in Surrey with a two form entry for infants and three form entry for juniors. The school has a 'good' Ofsted rating and does not currently have a specialist centre. Freemantles School is a special school in the borough of Woking in Surrey catering for the needs of children and young people with complex social communication needs. The school has an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating.
3. It is proposed that Freemantles School and Worplesdon Primary School work in partnership to host a specialist Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) centre for 21 pupils on the site at Worplesdon Primary School. The staff would benefit from supervision and training as employees of Freemantles School but would be based in the centre at Worplesdon Primary School. All pupils admitted to the centre would have an EHCP specifying the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs.
4. It is anticipated that the centre would be organised with three places per year group, although. A bespoke building would be provided for the specialist centre and located within the school grounds.
5. Appropriate pupils for this provision would be identified and placed at this specialist COIN centre using the Education Health Care Plan and subsequent review pathways.

**CONSULTATION:**

6. The Headteacher and school governors of Worplesdon Primary School and Freemantles School are engaged and supportive of the expansion proposals.
7. A planning exhibition was held at an open evening on 15 May, to which parents, staff and residents were invited. There were 20 attendees. The project proposals received overwhelming support with no objections being lodged.
8. A council-led public consultation on the educational rationale of the project will run until the end of the summer term. There will be an open public meeting during the consultation period. Statutory notices will be published in September which the Cabinet Member for All Age Learning will be asked to determine on 5 November.

**RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

9. This report is proposing Cabinet agree the proposal in order for property services to go to tender. The final approval for the project would be subject to consultation results, statutory notices and determination through single member decision.

10. There will be a partnership agreement between Worplesdon Primary School and Freemantles School to ensure effective governance for future sustainability and manage any potential divergence between the two parties.

#### **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

11. The project will be subject to robust cost challenge and scrutiny to drive optimum value as it progresses. Further financial details including potential cost avoidance and revenue savings are set out in the report circulated in Part 2 of the report. These details have been circulated separately to ensure commercial sensitivity, in the interest of securing best value.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY**

12. The Council is facing a very serious financial situation, whereby there are substantial savings to be achieved to establish a balanced budget with regard to expenditure funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. As such, the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) supports the initiative to reduce reliance upon Independent, Non Maintained Independent Sector (NMI), schools and colleges through the creation of additional units in local authority maintained schools. The creation of the unit at Worplesdon is estimated to save approximately £9,000 per child per year through containing provision locally in maintained settings. Further initiatives will need to be pursued to contain and then reduce High Needs Block expenditure.
13. The cost of the scheme is estimated to be £1.1m funded from the SEND Capital Grant and whilst there is no official rate of return, in comparing the likely full-year savings to the cost of the project, costs will be recouped within approximately 5 years. The report seeks to allocate £1.1m of resources using this fact as the business case and to proceed to public consultation and procurement to deliver the places for September 2020.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER**

14. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on a Local Authority (with responsibility to education) to ensure sufficient primary and secondary education provision is available to meet the needs of the population in its area.

#### **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

15. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been started in respect to the proposal.

#### **CORPORATE PARENTING/LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IMPLICATIONS**

16. This proposal would provide increased provision for primary places for children with communication and interaction needs (COIN), which would be of benefit to the community served by the school. This means it would therefore also be of benefit to any Looked After Children who have an Education Health and Care Plan identifying their communication and interaction needs.

## SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ADULTS IMPLICATIONS

17. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in all Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The schools will continue to apply good practise in the area of safeguarding as they are currently. In addition, safeguarding is a key area for monitoring when Ofsted carries out inspections.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

18. The design philosophy is to create buildings that will support low energy consumption, reduce solar gain and promote natural ventilation. Any new infrastructure will be built to the local planning authority's adopted core planning strategy

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

If approved, to proceed to commence the tender process for the project, through to contract award, via delegated decision.

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### Contact Officer:

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### Consulted:

Kareen O Brien, Headteacher, Worplesdon Primary School

Justin Price, Headteacher, Freemantles School

Parents of children attending Worplesdon Primary School

Staff members and Governors at Worplesdon Primary School

Residents

Cllr Keith Witham, Councillor for Worplesdon

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