Report of: Director of Children and Schools
Date: 17 July 2014

REGULATED ALTERATION TO JOHNSTON CP SCHOOL – ADDITION OF SEN PROVISION

At the Cabinet meeting held on 4th November 2013 consideration was given to the report of the Director of Finance & Leisure concerning the County Council’s 21st Century Schools Programme. This report included details of the preferred options for the four capital projects referred to as Phase 1 schemes, of which a new school for Johnston CP School with additional SEN provision was a preferred option. The resolution of the Cabinet was as follows:-

“Cabinet approves the Minutes of the 21st Century Schools Programme Management Board Committee on 24th September 2013, including the Strategic Outline Case and Business Justification Case for the schemes scheduled within Phase 1 Projects.

Reason for Decision:
To progress 21st Century Schools Programme”.

Under the School Organisation Code, the addition of SEN provision to a mainstream school constitutes a Regulated Alteration; consequently statutory procedures are required where proposals must be published. The proposal is therefore as follows:

i. Make a Regulated Alteration to Johnston CP School by adding SEN provision at the school;
ii. The additional SEN provision will be recognised by the Council as being reserved for pupils with SEN.

1. CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

(a) The Consultation Document for the above proposal was published on 17th February 2014; this was followed by a six week consultation period ending on 31st March 2014. The Consultation Document is referenced as Document A.

(b) In accordance with the School Organisation Statutory Code, the Consultation Document was distributed to all statutory consultees (shown on Page 2 of the Consultation Document) and was published on the County Council website.
2. CONSULTATION REPORT

(a) The School Organisation Statutory Code requires a Consultation Report to be published within 13 weeks of the end of the period allowed for responses; this should:

- Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees;
- Provide a response to the above by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons;
- Set out Estyn's view of the overall merits of the proposal.

(b) All statutory consultees and any respondents to the consultation who have requested notification will be provided with a hard copy or link to the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report was published on 13th June 2014 and is referenced as Document B.

3. MATTERS RAISED DURING FORMAL CONSULTATION

A small number of responses were received during the consultation period and these are summarised as APPENDIX 3 of the Consultation Report (Document B).

(a) All respondents indicated that they were supportive of the proposal.

(b) Whilst there is unanimous support for the proposal, the correspondence received reveals some specific issues of concern; in the main, these are in relation to traffic and road safety matters:

i. The need for road junction improvements on the junction of Langford Road with the A4076; issues in relation to congestion and delays.
ii. The need for the provision of adequate footpaths to the new site, including the consideration of safe routes to school for both pedestrians and cyclists.
iii. The need for traffic calming, in view of excessive speed.
iv. The likelihood of additional traffic as a result of the new SEN provision.
v. Provision of appropriate drop-off and pick-up areas, and sufficient parking space at the new school site.
vi. Exposed position of proposed site and the need for this to be considered as part of the design process.
vii. Potential for additional cost of training and support of staff in relation to SEN for the Health authority.
viii. The need for age-appropriate zoned playground areas.

(c) Estyn's opinion of the proposal is that it is unlikely that the proposed action will have any impact on the current standards of education in the area.
4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Detailed assessments have been undertaken to assess the impact of the proposal on the community of Johnston and Equalities. The assessments can be seen in the appendices of the Consultation Report (Document B). However, the main points arising from these assessments are as follows:

- A high percentage of in-catchment pupils attend Johnston CP School;
- Johnston CP School hosts a variety of cultural, sporting and enrichment opportunities for pupils. In addition, the school is increasingly becoming a meeting place for various community groups. The new school premises will maintain and enhance this;
- The Johnston Institute is the main community venue in the village and this is used extensively. The other main community facility in Johnston is the Pavilion which is used by some of the various sports associations;
- The main community safety issues arising from the consultation are:
  - Parents’ and residents’ concerns at the likely increase in traffic due to the relocation of the school and the introduction of a Multiple Needs SEN Unit
  - Concerns at the need to introduce traffic calming measures to Langford Road
  - The need to include safe routes to school for pedestrians and cyclists
  - The ongoing issue of congestion at the junction of Langford Road with the A4076
The architects for this project have provided a response regarding these concerns. Should the proposal proceed, a Traffic Impact Assessment will be undertaken and actions will be taken as part of the design process to minimise the impact of these concerns;
- There will be no negative impacts on equality matters as a result of the proposal. The provision for disabled people will be improved as the new school will be fully accessible.

5. A WAY FORWARD
The following points should be considered in determining a way forward for this proposal:

- The key business needs for the strategic development of this project are:
  - Education provision in a building that is structurally safe and sound and fit for purpose;
  - To provide a resource base to support pupils with complex learning needs across the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2
  - To provide a 21st century learning environment which will provide an improved standard of education and which will allow for flexibility for expanding need;
  - Provide up to date facilities for community use and wrap-around care provision
- There is an identified need to realign the amount of specialist placements for Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and complex learning needs across the county to ensure the appropriate allocation of provision is accessible to learners
within the north, south and central areas. There is a greater need for placements within the central area of the county and Johnston is well placed to accommodate the needs of learners with complex learning needs;

- There is strong support for the proposal from parents, staff and local residents;
- The concerns expressed in relation to traffic and road safety will need to be addressed as part of the design process of the new school and associated highways works;
- The Strategic Outline Case has now been approved by Welsh Government and offers a high degree of certainty of investment.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That the Director of Education and Children’s Services be authorised to issue a Statutory Notice under Section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, giving notice of the Council’s proposals to:

i. Make a Regulated Alteration to Johnston CP School by adding SEN provision at the school;

ii. The additional SEN provision will be recognised by the Council as being reserved for pupils with SEN.

Background Documents:

Documents A - B relating to Consultation
School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
School Organisation Statutory Code – Welsh Government (July 2013)
Education Inclusion Policy and Strategy (August 2013)