

Cabinet – 13 December 2017**Special Schools Expansion**

Portfolio: Councillor Nawaz – Children’s Services and Education

Service: Children’s Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

Proposal to significantly enlarge: Old Hall School, Shepwell Short Stay School, the Jane Lane School (from 1 September 2018); Oakwood School and Mary Elliot school (from 1 September 2019).

Proposal to significantly enlarge and alter the designation of: Castle College of Business and Enterprise (from 1 September 2018).

This proposal provides relevant information in accordance with the *School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013*.

1. Introduction

The Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for resident children who want a school place. A local authority has a general duty, under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, to secure that there are available in its area sufficient schools “in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education”.

The proposal is to increase the number of places at Jane Lane School, Castle Business and Enterprise College, Shepwell Short Stay School, Old Hall School (all from September 2018); and at Oakwood School and Mary Elliot School (both from September 2019). Additionally, Castle Business and Enterprise College are proposing to alter the school’s designation to better reflect the type of special educational needs provision they make.

At their meeting on 25 October 2017, Cabinet approved proposals to provide additional special school places at the schools named above. They also approved a process of statutory consultation on each of the proposals, under school organisation regulations. This consultation started on Thursday 2 November 2017 and closed on Thursday 30 November 2017. The outcome of this consultation forms the basis of this report.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet approve the proposals to significantly enlarge Old Hall school, Shepwell Short Stay School, The Jane Lane school (from 1 September 2018); Oakwood school and Mary Elliot school (from 1 September 2019); and the proposal to significantly enlarge and alter the designation of Castle College of Business and Enterprise to that of ‘Communication, Cognition and Learning’ (from 1 September 2018).

3. Report Detail

The proposal at each of the schools was as follows:

3.1 Old Hall Special school

Old Hall School is a special school in Short Heath ward. It caters for children of nursery and primary school age with complex special educational needs. The school is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated Good by Ofsted. In terms of physical capacity, it currently has 60 places though 80 places have been commissioned/funded from April 2017. There were 4 nursery age children and 75 primary age children on roll in May. There were some internal adaptations to the school over the summer that created 8 additional teaching spaces.

The proposal is for a significant enlargement of the school of 16 places by September 2018.

3.2 Shepwell School

Shepwell School is a short stay school (medical needs) principally for pupils of secondary school age with provision for children on the Autistic spectrum (ASC). It provides home and hospital provision plus SEN outreach to other schools in the borough. It is in Willenhall South ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Good by Ofsted. There are currently 30 short stay places and 15 places in the provision for students with ASC.

The proposal is for a significant enlargement of the school of 15 places to 60 in total by September 2018.

A consultation will follow on a potential change in designation of the school which will continue to provide short stay places mainly for pupils of secondary school age (retaining also its home and hospital provision and SEN outreach).

3.3 Castle Business & Enterprise College

Castle Business and Enterprise College is a school for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and additional special educational needs. It provides places for children and young people aged 7-19. In May 2017, there were 29 primary age pupils, 79 secondary age pupils and 20 post 16 students at Castle. It is in Bloxwich West ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 100 with around 120 commissioned places.

The proposal is to significantly enlarge the school's capacity by 30 places to 130 places from September 2018.

Additionally, it is proposed to change the school's designation from that of 'Business and Enterprise College' to 'Communication, Cognition and Learning' to better reflect the types of special educational needs it meets. The school will be re-named Castle School:

"At this time of significant and exciting change and expansion it is time to move away from the College status, as this does not reflect the current ethos and

standing of our school. We are an 'Outstanding' School and wish to be identified as such and would like the consultation to take this into consideration" (Headteacher).

3.4 The Jane Lane School

The Jane Lane School is a school for pupils with Cognition and Learning Difficulties. It provides places for children and young people aged 7-19. In May 2017, there were 26 primary age pupils, 66 secondary age pupils and 37 post 16 students at Jane Lane. It is in Bentley & Darlaston North ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Good by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 120 with around 130 commissioned places.

The proposal is to increase capacity at the school by 30 places to 150 places by September 2018.

During consultation, the school defined itself as 'a school for cognition and learning with additional resources for autism and other communication problems'.

3.5 Oakwood School

Oakwood School is a school for nursery and primary age pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) plus Medical Needs. In May 2017, there were 7 nursery age and 67 primary age pupils on roll. It is in Aldridge North & Walsall Wood ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 66 places with 75 commissioned places this year. 6 new places have been created in the school this year by creating a meeting room in a 'shepherd's hut' in the school yard. The proposal is to provide an additional 32 places in all – 6 have already been created and a further 26 places are proposed for the longer term.

The proposal is to increase capacity at the school by 32 places to 98 places by September 2019.

3.6 Mary Elliot School

Mary Elliot School is a school for secondary age pupils with complex special educational needs and learning difficulties. In May 2017, there were 86 Year 7 – Year 11 pupils on roll and 40 post 16 students. (Many children from both Old Hall and Oakwood schools transfer to Mary Elliot). It is in Birchills Leamore ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Good by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 110 places with 127 commissioned places this year.

The proposal is to provide 30 additional places at Mary Elliot School to 140 by September 2019.

3.7 Consultation & Decision Making

Where the local authority is the proposer of a change for a community special school and it wishes to increase by 10% or 20 pupils, or decrease numbers, it must follow a statutory process for making 'prescribed alterations' that includes a public consultation lasting 4 weeks.

Proposals to increase the size, age range or designation of schools, including special schools, are to be subject to a process of statutory consultation. For local authority maintained schools, the requirements are set out in the School

Organisation Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools, England, Regulations 2013.

The Council as the decision maker can reject the proposal; approve the proposal without modification; approve the proposal with modifications, having consulted the governing body; or, approve the proposal – with or without modification – subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.

Statutory Guidance on school organisation called ‘The Decision Makers Guide’ sets out the criteria by which ‘prescribed alterations’ are evaluated. These are set out in the consultation document for all six schools (**Appendix 1**) and were described in the report to Cabinet (25 October 2017) on the expansion proposals. These include:

3.8 Evidence of Demand & Effect on Other Schools in the Area

Additional places are needed in order to meet an increasing demand for special school places in the Walsall Borough the proposed expansion of these six special schools will enable the local authority to meet its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools and school places available in each of the planning areas and will not jeopardise the viability of any other school, special or mainstream.

3.9 Quality of Provision/parental preference

The proposals in this report include some to expand provision at a number of maintained special schools in Walsall. All special schools in Walsall are rated either as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Statutory guidance is clear that “it is expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’”. The proposals will create additional quality places to meet changing needs that parents and young people will find attractive and which will create conditions that will help to improve the educational outcomes for those young people.

3.10 Costs and Value for money

The report to Cabinet on 25 October set out the financial implications of the proposed expansions and showed that the capital funding (for the buildings) and the revenue funding (for the additional school places) would be in place. In each case, the school’s funding will increase proportionately and in line with the increase in pupil numbers and, as a consequence, additional teaching staff may then be employed. There is also additional funding for furniture, fittings and equipment in each school’s capital scheme.

3.11 Consultation Exercise

Consultation ran from 2 November to 30 November.

The statutory notice and the composite consultation document together with a bespoke proposal for each of the six special schools were posted on line in the Admissions and School Organisation section of the Council's website and on the Local Offer. The notice was published in a local newspaper and was displayed in the reception areas of each of the schools.

The notice and the consultation document were sent to 'statutory consultees':

- All schools in Walsall
- The colleges
- The dioceses
- Other local authorities in the area
- The Regional Schools Commissioner; and also to
- Parents' groups

Meetings were held at each of the special schools. In most cases, there was a separate meeting for parents, staff, governors and the school council. In some, there was a single meeting for all interested parties.

Meetings for parents:

Old Hall school	Wednesday 15 November 16.30 pm
Shepwell school	Tuesday 21 November 16.30 pm
Mary Elliot school	Friday 17 November 10.00 am
Castle school	Thursday 23 November 14.30 pm
Oakwood school	Tuesday 28 November 14.30 pm
Jane Lane school	Tuesday 21 November 16.00 pm

A meeting was also held with parents' groups (led by FACE Walsall) on Tuesday 21 November 2017 from 10.30 in the visitors' centre of the Arboretum.

Responses were recorded by:

- Simple questionnaire – in favour of the proposal; not in favour of the proposal; undecided, with scope for written response/ comments.
- Minutes taken at each of the meetings.
- Written/email responses.

3.12 Summary of Responses

There have been no objections from any of the 'statutory' consultees to the proposals to significantly enlarge Old Hall School, Shepwell Short Stay School, The Jane Lane School (from 1 September 2018); Oakwood School and Mary Elliot School (from 1 September 2019); and the proposal to significantly enlarge and alter the designation of Castle College of Business and Enterprise to that of 'Communication, Cognition and Learning' (from 1 September 2018).

Of the written responses (the questionnaires) 83% supported the proposal; 14% were 'unsure' while 2% were against the proposal.

A number of respondents expressed the views that this was good news and was a good investment in the schools concerned.

- “It is awesome. It will provide greater and wide scope of opportunity to children who have such definite [special] needs”
- “much needed enlargement to an excellent school”
- “an enlargement would greatly benefit children from around the borough”.

The summary of questionnaire responses is shown in **Appendix 2**. The notes of the consultation meetings showed that there was support for the proposed expansions (also in **Appendix 2**).

There was a small number of responses where respondents were either ‘unsure’ or did not support the proposal. Views were expressed that:

- A particular school could not cope with its existing numbers, so should not increase, as well as expressing concerns over the effect of increased transport and the effect of building works
- There were worries of larger classes and the need to ensure there was sufficient staffing and resourcing for the school;
- There was a risk (at another school) to the school’s small school ethos through expansion, with a preference for a completely new school on another site.

Other issues raised in the consultation centred on the building options for some of the expansion schemes, as distinct from the proposal to enlarge each school.

One example in particular concerns one of the options for the expansion of Old Hall School that would involve the demolition of the caretaker’s house that is on the site to make way for a classroom extension and additional parking. Old Hall is one of a few schools in Walsall where the caretaker’s house is occupied by the caretaker/site manager. A number of respondents pointed to the benefits of retaining the caretaker on site and expressed a preference for another building option that would provide a smaller classroom extension.

Many respondents asked about the building programmes for their schools and how that would be managed and the evident need to consider the needs of children (those with special educational needs in particular) when construction is underway. The answer to this is twofold: first, that a Design User Group will be established at each school to oversee and shape the project, and that, secondly, in the main, preparatory and construction work will be carried out during school holidays.

Children with autism– some respondents have said that, while the additional special school places are welcomed, the Council is not recognising sufficiently the needs of all children with autism. This was raised also at a meeting of Scrutiny Overview Committee on 21 November.

4 Council Priorities

4.1 The Council’s purpose is to ‘Reduce inequalities and maximise potential’. Its four priorities are:

- Pursue inclusive economic growth
- Make a positive difference to the lives of Walsall people
- Children are safe from harm, happy and learning well with self-belief, aspiration and support to be their best
- Safe, resilient and prospering communities.

- 4.2 The proposals in this report contribute most directly to the Council priority of ensuring that ‘Children are safe from harm, are happy and learning well, with self-belief, aspiration and support to be their best’ and indirectly to the other three priorities.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 There is a need to ensure there are sufficient specialist school places to meet local demand. A shortage means that children may not be able to access a place at their nearest appropriate school, with placements being made in out of borough schools, including independent non maintained schools.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Existing Specialist School Alterations/Expansions: Cabinet on the 26th April 2017 approved the recommended expansion for capital works necessary to secure the additional special school Key Stage 1 provision required from September 2017. The required alterations identified are estimated to cost £0.834m (as detailed in the below table) of which £0.554m is profiled to be spent in 2017/18 and £0.280m in 2018/19.

Regarding funding, Schools Forum previously agreed, at their meeting on 9 December 2014, to allocate £1m of DSG revenue balances to be utilised to create additional SEN places, and a request to dis-apply the regulations (and utilise revenue funding for capital costs) was then made to the Secretary of State who formally approved the use of up to £1m of DSG revenue balances to be utilised for capital purposes. The total costs remain within this funding envelope without a need to utilise any further Basic Need funding, and once completed, any remaining balance can contribute towards any further specialist school capital works identified.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 and The Special Education and Disability Regulations 2014 requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities under review (including its sufficiency), working with parents, young people and providers (SEND Code of Practice, January 2015 Chapter 4).
- 7.2 A local authority has a general duty, under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, to secure that there are available in its area sufficient schools “in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.”

8. Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 8.1 The existing framework arrangements that the Council has in place will be used for school alterations and expansions over the next 5 years.

9. Property Implications

- 9.1 The proposals involve expansions and/or alterations at the schools identified and described in this report.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 10.1 The most relevant Marmot principle is the principle of enabling all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.

11. Staffing Implications

- 11.1 Additional teaching and support staff will be recruited to provide for the additional children to be admitted to the school.

12. Equality Implications

- 12.1 Ensure access to suitable, high quality specialist school places that is attractive to parents and young people and which meets their needs and improve educational outcomes. An EqIA (Equalities Impact Assessment) has been updated since the report to Cabinet on specialist school places in April. Where possible, analysis of children/families affected by or potentially benefiting from the specialist educational provision should be carried out by 'protected characteristics' including, for example, ethnicity or different forms of disability. This is included as **Appendix 3**.

13. Consultation

- 13.1 Proposals to increase the size, age range or designation of schools, including special schools, are to be subject to a process of statutory consultation. For local authority maintained schools, the requirements are set out in the School Organisation Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools, England, Regulations 2013. The results from this consultation exercise are summarised in the main body of the report and in **Appendix 2**.

Background papers

Cabinet 4 February 2015, Agenda Item 10:	Special Educational Needs and Disability Review.
Cabinet 8 February 2017, Agenda Item 16:	Proposed Implementation of the Five-Year Sufficiency Strategy plan.
Cabinet 26 April 2017, Agenda Item 12:	Specialist School Place Planning.
Cabinet 25 October, Agenda Item 12:	Special School Place Planning

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Signed
Sally Rowe
Executive Director
5 December 2017



Signed
Cllr A Nawaz
Portfolio Holder
5 December 2017



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This proposal provides relevant information in accordance with the *School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013*.

School Details:

Old Hall School Bentley Lane Walsall WS2 7LU	Shepwell Short Stay School Bilston Lane Willenhall WV13 2QJ	CastleBusiness & Enterprise Odell Road, Leamore Walsall WS3 2ED
The Jane Lane School Churchill Road, Bentley Walsall WS2 0JH	Oakwood School Druids Walk, Walsall Wood Walsall WS9 9JS	Mary Elliot School Leamore Lane Walsall WS2 7NR

Local Authority Details:

Walsall Council - Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TP

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL:

Introduction

The Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for resident children who want a school place. A local authority has a general duty, under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, to secure that there are available in its area sufficient schools “in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education”.

The proposal is to increase the number of places at Jane Lane School, Castle Business and Enterprise College, Shepwell Short Stay School, Old Hall School (all from September 2018); and at Oakwood School and Mary Elliot School (both from September 2019). Additionally, Castle Business and Enterprise College are proposing to alter the school’s designation to better reflect the type of special educational needs provision they make.

Architectural feasibility studies have been carried out at the six special schools. Delivery of these schemes is subject to a formal consultation on each of the proposals to significantly enlarge the schools and, in some cases, alter their designation. This consultation started

on Thursday 2 November 2017 and will close on Thursday 30 November 2017. The outcome will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December 2017.

Special Educational Needs Profile

The proposal to enlarge six of Walsall's special schools forms part of the Council's 5 Year Pupil Place Planning Strategy.

There are over 51,000 pupils on roll in Walsall schools. Over 7,800 (15.2%) have some form of special educational need.

Just over 620 pupils are on roll in Walsall's existing special schools. That is 1.23% of the total number on roll.

The needs of most children with special educational needs are met in mainstream schools. 1,798 pupils or 3.5% of the total pupils on roll had a statement or Education Health and Care plan. There is also specialist provision for children with special educational needs within mainstream schools. There are 110 places in ARPs (additional resourced provision) in Walsall's mainstream schools. These meet a range of special educational needs and, in each case, support inclusion, as up to 80% of a young person's time may be spent in mainstream education.

Of the 7,849 pupils with some form of SEN, by far the largest category was MLD (Moderate Learning Difficulty) representing 38.4% of SEN pupils, followed by SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs) at 18.2%; then SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs) at 12.3%. Like many other local authorities, Walsall has seen an increase in the number of diagnoses of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) in recent years. There are now over 600 children with ASD in Walsall schools, 7.7% of the total number of pupils with SEN in schools.

Why these schools?

The Children and Families Act 2014 says that children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) should be educated in mainstream schools and other mainstream provision unless their SEN require more specialist provision.

The total school age population of Walsall (in all schools) will continue to increase over the next 10 years – it is increasing by just under 1% a year, adding around 400 young people a year to the school age population.

There is a *pro rata* increase in the number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Around 15% of children have some form of special educational need. In Walsall, 3.5% have significant special educational needs and have either a statement or an Education Health and Care plan. Whilst the vast majority of children with SEN are in mainstream schools, the general increase in the school age population alone is enough to justify over 100 additional specialist places.

There has been an increase in the numbers of young people identified as having some form of SEND and the marked growth in particular types of SEND, such as ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) - an increase of 15% over a 5 year period- and other more complex special needs.

No local authority is or ever will be self sufficient in its SEN provision. However, typically, there are over 200 children and young people a year going out of borough to school placements in other authority areas. Many are the nearest appropriate placement in

neighbouring areas; others are in regionally based specialist provision, while around 70 or so a year are in independent specialist provision. Placement costs are typically higher than those in-borough, even more so when transport costs are added.

There is a decline nationally in the proportion of pupils with a statement or Education Health and Care plan who are in mainstream school settings. Also nationally, the Department for Education, forecast a significant (30 %+) increase in the number of special school places that will be required in England up to 2024.

Virtually all Walsall's existing special schools are technically 'full' (in some cases, they are over capacity), the basic justification for the proposed increase in places. A surplus of between 5-10% of school places is also usually considered to be 'prudent'. Sufficiency and capacity studies were carried out at three of the special schools with visits and surveys of the other three schools before the feasibility studies were commissioned.

Old Hall Special School

Old Hall School is a special school in Short Heath ward. It caters for children of nursery and primary school age with complex special educational needs. The school is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated Good by Ofsted. In terms of physical capacity, it currently has 60 places though 80 places have been commissioned/funded from April 2017. There were 4 nursery age children and 75 primary age children on roll in May. There were some internal adaptations to the school over the summer that created 8 additional teaching spaces.

The proposal is for a significant enlargement of the school of 16 places by September 2018.

(One of the design solutions offers 16 additional spaces plus a space that could be used either as a further classroom or library)

Shepwell School

Shepwell School is a short stay school (medical needs) principally for pupils of secondary school age with provision for children on the Autistic spectrum (ASC). It provides home and hospital provision plus SEN outreach to other schools in the borough. It is in Willenhall South ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Good by Ofsted. There are currently 30 short stay places and 15 places in the provision for students with ASC.

The proposal is for a significant enlargement of the school of 15 places to 60 in total by September 2018.

A consultation will follow on a potential change in designation of the school which will continue to provide short stay places mainly for pupils of secondary school age (retaining also its home and hospital provision and SEN outreach).

Castle Business & Enterprise College

Castle Business and Enterprise College is a school for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and additional special educational needs. It provides places for children and young people aged 7-19. In May 2017, there were 29 primary age pupils, 79 secondary age pupils and 20 post 16 students at Castle. It is in Bloxwich West ward. It is a

local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 100 with around 120 commissioned places.

The proposal is to significantly enlarge the school's capacity by 30 places to 130 places from September 2018.

Additionally, it is proposed to change the school's designation from that of 'Business and Enterprise College' to 'Communication, Cognition and Learning' to better reflect the types of special educational needs it meets. The school will be re-named Castle School:

"At this time of significant and exciting change and expansion it is time to move away from the College status, as this does not reflect the current ethos and standing of our school. We are an 'Outstanding' School and wish to be identified as such and would like the consultation to take this into consideration".

The Jane Lane School

The Jane Lane School is a school for pupils with Cognition and Learning Difficulties. It provides places for children and young people aged 7-19. In May 2017, there were 26 primary age pupils, 66 secondary age pupils and 37 post 16 students at Jane Lane. It is in Bentley & Darlaston North ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Good by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 120 with around 130 commissioned places.

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Oakwood School

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The proposal is to increase capacity at the school by 32 places to 98 places by September 2019.

Mary Elliot School

Mary Elliot School is a school for secondary age pupils with complex special educational needs and learning difficulties. In May 2017, there were 86 Year 7 – Year 11 pupils on roll and 40 post 16 students. (Many children from both Old Hall and Oakwood schools transfer to Mary Elliot). It is in Birchills Leamore ward. It is a local authority maintained school and is currently rated as Good by Ofsted. It has a current capacity of 110 places with 127 commissioned places this year.

The proposal is to provide 30 additional places at Mary Elliot School to 140 by September 2019.

Quality of Provision

The proposals are to significantly enlarge six special schools in Walsall that are 'maintained' by the local authority. All special schools in Walsall are rated either as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Statutory guidance is clear that "it is expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'". The proposals will create additional quality places to meet changing needs that parents and young people will find attractive and which will create conditions that will help to improve the educational outcomes for those young people. The Council's Head of School Improvement and her team have been consulted on each of the special school expansion proposals.

Consultation

Where the local authority is the proposer of a change for a community special school and it wishes to increase by 10% or 20 pupils, or decrease numbers, it must follow a statutory process for making 'prescribed alterations' that includes a public consultation lasting 4 weeks.

Proposals to increase the size, age range or designation of schools, including special schools, are to be subject to a process of statutory consultation. For local authority maintained schools, the requirements are set out in the School Organisation Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools, England, Regulations 2013.

Effect on Other Schools in the Area

Additional places are needed in order to meet an increasing demand for special school places in the Walsall Borough the proposed expansion of these six special schools will enable the local authority to meet its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools and school places available in each of the planning areas and will not jeopardise the viability of any other school, special or mainstream.

The other two special schools in Walsall are not included in this proposal. One, Phoenix school, is an academy. The second, Elmwood School is local authority maintained. Both provide places for pupils with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues). We need to increase the number of places for young people with SEMH in Walsall, although no proposals are brought forward in this proposal at this time. We are working with both 'SEMH' schools and other providers in Walsall to develop provision in the borough.

Site Arrangements

No new or additional sites will be required. Building work will be undertaken as necessary on the existing sites at the schools. A slight exception is at Oakwood School where it is proposed to expand the site of the school by taking a small proportion of the public open space to the south of the site to allow for the expansion.

Programme Costs and Funding

The proposed expansions will involve extensions, alternations, remodelling or new buildings on all six school sites. The estimated cost of each of the proposed expansions and a brief description is as follows:

- Old Hall Special School: £1,388,700 (including 20% contingency & fees):
The proposal in the feasibility study is to create 16 additional places at the school. The preferred option (D) involves the demolition of the caretaker's house, building a new larger scale (than in other options) new build classroom block with 3 classrooms and support facilities (medical, therapy) and extra car/bus parking in its place. This option includes more parking, an enlarged school entrance and a covered pupil drop-off canopy as well as an enlarged classroom in the main body of the school. The second option (B) provides a smaller classroom block to the eastern side of the school, taking over some of the garden space of the caretaker's house which is retained. It also provides the enlarged school entrance and canopy but delivers fewer additional parking spaces than option D.
- Shepwell School: £1,478,214 (including 20% contingency & fees):
The preferred option from the feasibility study is to create 15 additional places principally for ASC young people by creating an extension to the existing building. The existing building requires remodelling to improve the existing teaching spaces and this preferred option provides a new main entrance. Additional parking and play spaces are also proposed.
- Castle Business and Enterprise College: £1,754,463 (including 20% contingency & fees):
The preferred option from the feasibility study is to create 30 additional places through classroom extensions and/or new classroom blocks, with covered walkways built between the teaching blocks at the school. Each option is for an extension at different areas around the school and all are of a very similar cost. The school's preferred option is one that sees most of the new accommodation being built on the south side of the site.
- The Jane Lane School: £1,601,887 (including 20% contingency & fees):
There are two main options brought toward. Both are for a new three classroom block creating 30 additional places with a choice of locations and also for a single class extension in addition at the north west of the main building. There are sub options that include covered walkways across the school site.
- Oakwood School: £1,107,331 (including 20% contingency & fees):
Three main options are brought forward to achieve a further 26 places, one of which is for a new 3 classroom block attached to the main school with dining areas in-filled and using some of the very limited hard play area at the school. The other two options both involve extending the site of the school to take a small proportion of the Council owned public open space to the south of the school. The existing school site is very constrained; it can only be adequately extended if further land is acquired.
- Mary Elliot School: £2,128,601 (including 20% contingency & fees):
Three building options were offered in the feasibility study. Option B is preferred by the school, giving 4 large classrooms and support facilities, but also increased parking provision as well as an extension to the existing dining hall. It has the least impact on both the existing building and the external pupil areas and it gives a degree of 'future proofing' by providing 30 rather than 20 additional places.

The total cost of all six schemes (including 20% contingency and fees) is £9,459,197.

Funding will be primarily from the Basic Need Capital fund though this will be supplemented by around £1million's worth of funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) revenue balances that was agreed by the Schools Forum in Walsall at its meeting on 9 December 2014. The Basic Need capital grant is allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) to local authorities, based on projections of the demand for additional school places and the capacity of schools to meet those demands. The local authority must demonstrate that there is a 'basic need' for additional school places in its area to attract the funding. Also, each of the six special schools will be asked to contribute towards the scheme with funding from their Devolved Formula Capital (DFC). The DFC is allocated from the DFE to the Local Authority and is sent directly to the schools on an annual basis to contribute towards school capital schemes.

Implementation

The proposal would be implemented from 1 September 2018 in the cases of Old Hall school, Shepwell short stay school, Castle Business and Enterprise College and the Jane Lane school; in the cases of Oakwood and Mary Elliot school, from 1 September 2019.

Details of How to Respond to the Proposal:

The formal consultation period begins on Thursday 2 November 2017 concluding on Thursday 30 November October 2017.

Copies of the proposal and a specific proposal for each school can be obtained by visiting https://go.walsall.gov.uk/school_organisation or from: Claire Goss, Head of SENDI (Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion), Tel: 01922 655761; email Claire.goss@walsall.gov.uk) or from Philip Wells, SEND Projects, Tel: 01922 655897; email Philip.wells@walsall.gov.uk

Comments on the proposal should be made in writing to the following address:

Alex Haigh – School Organisation Manager
Admissions and Pupil Place Planning
Zone 2E Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TP

Alternatively, by email to: alex.haigh@walsall.gov.uk

Consultation Responses

A. Questionnaires returned

'Do you support the proposal to expand/alter the designation of the school?'

1. All Schools

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	-	-	-
Governor	1	-	-
Staff	-	-	-

2. Old Hall

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	-	-	-
Governor	-	-	-
Staff	1	-	-
Visitor	1	-	-

3. Shepwell

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	-	-	-
Governor	1	-	-
Staff	1	-	-

4. Castle

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	1	-	-
Governor	1	-	-
Staff	10	-	-

5. Jane Lane

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	8	2	-
Governor	1	-	-
Staff	-	-	-

6. Oakwood

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	8	-	-
Governor	-	-	-
Staff	1	2	-

7. Mary Elliot

	Yes	Unsure	No
Parent/carer	-	2	1
Governor	1	-	-
Staff	-	-	-

B. Consultation Meeting Notes

1. Old Hall School

Location:	Old Hall School
Meeting with:	Parents, Staff, Governors
Date:	Monday 14 November 2017
Time:	4.30pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Old Hall School:
Philip Wells, SENDi projects officer Paul Venn, schools capital projects officer	Clive Padgett, Headteacher
	27 staff members, 2 visitors (Unite union)

Philip Wells gave a presentation on the Council's proposal to enlarge six special schools in Walsall. We were in a process of statutory consultation under school organisation regulations that was running through November. The results of the consultation would be reported back to Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December. That consultation included meetings in schools with parents, staff and governors.

Philip outlined the statement of case that justified the proposed expansion of the special schools, citing the growing school age population in Walsall, the increase in the numbers of children identified as having some form of special educational needs and the numbers and cost of pupils going to often specialist provision outside of Walsall.

The proposal was to expand Old Hall school by an additional 16 places, mainly for young people of primary age with complex special educational needs by September 2018. 8 additional places were created over the summer.

A feasibility study had been carried out at the school. A 'short list' of two building options would create teaching accommodation at the school – options B&D. One option (D) involved the demolition of the caretaker's house on the site.

Questions, Comments & Responses:

- A visitor raised the issue of the terms and conditions of school employees who were resident on school sites and the case of the caretaker at Old Hall who would lose his residence on the school site if Option D was pursued.
- Paul Venn explained that there were options and there were pros and cons of each. The consultation was on a) whether to expand the school and b) how we expand the school. The options had been narrowed to B & D. No decision has been made. Factors to consider include site options, constraints on the site as well as consultation with both (town) planners and the Department for Education. Secretary of State approval was needed to develop any 'soft' open space/playing fields around the school.
- The union representative pointed to the need to support the caretaker who was in tied property and the detriment he would suffer if he was forced to move out and would, in future, have to travel to the school

- There was discussion of what options B& D would 'look like'. Officers said that option D would offer more accommodation and parking to the school while taking up less open space. Option B would of course mean the caretaker's house would be retained. A suggestion was made that Option B could be designed so it abutted the house.
- A number of staff members said that if the caretaker's house were to be demolished, the school would be more open to vandalism and burglary. There were benefits to having the site manager living on site. The recent flood damage at the school would have been worse had he not been on site.
- Information was provided on the date and time of the Cabinet meeting. Cabinet would decide whether or not to approve the school expansions, not individual building schemes
- There were some concerns expressed about the potential increase in numbers and whether the school could cope. Staff felt they could not take more than 8 pupils in class, given the needs of children at this school.
- The LA commissions places in consultation with the school. Numbers can vary year by year, given the varying needs and complexity of children's special educational needs
- There was discussion of the school's requirements from the expansion scheme in terms of toilets and specialist facilities. The potential contribution of the schools Devolved Formula Capital would add to the 'pot' of money available. Option D would attract a larger capital allocation than Option B.
- Other suggestions from the meeting included – digging into the embankment at the front of the school to create more parking spaces; making the new building, under Option B, 2 storey; using parking spaces in the adjacent school entrance; creating a classroom in the central courtyard of the school and further expansion of open space – some of which could not be used by children anyway
- The LA had already 'taken soundings' with the Planning department over what was likely to be acceptable on the Old Hall school site while the feasibility study had shown what was achievable.
- The issue of highway safety was raised – there was no speed restriction on the road outside the school. It was agreed that School Safety zone issues would be raised with Highways as part of the project.
- Staff were keen to avoid disruption for the children. It was likely that groundwork would take place over Easter, with construction over the summer holidays.
- Would the school close if no option was agreed? No, there's a growing demand for special school places at Old Hall and elsewhere in Walsall.

Two written responses, while supporting the proposal to enlarge Old Hall school, have said they do not support the option of demolishing the caretaker's house

2. Shepwell School

Location:	Shepwell School
Meeting with:	Members of Staff
Date:	Monday 14 November 2017
Time:	4.30pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Shepwell School:
Philip Wells, SENDi projects officer	Stephen Pritchard-Jones, Headteacher
	30 staff members/governors

Philip Wells gave a presentation on the Council's proposal to enlarge six special schools in Walsall. As with the other schools, he outlined the statement of case that justified the proposed expansion of the special schools, citing the growing school age population in Walsall, the increase in the numbers of children identified as having some form of special educational needs and the numbers and cost of pupils going to often specialist provision outside of Walsall.

The proposal was to expand Shepwell school by additional 15 places, mainly for young people of secondary age with ASC (autism spectrum) by September 2018. The school's designation would not be altered just yet, but there would be further consultation with the school and its governing body on the possibility of Shepwell becoming a special school with short stay attached rather than a short stay school with an ARP attached.

Questions, Comments & Responses:

1. Support for the proposal

A number of members of staff commented positively on the proposed expansion of the school. It was very welcome and long overdue. The headteacher commented positively on the progress being made by the local authority to meet the demand for additional special school places.

2. Would we still carry on providing hospital education and outreach?

Very much so. The ARP (Additional Resourced Provision) for children with ASC had been added a couple of years ago. The number of places would be doubled by 15 to 30. But the number of short stay places would remain the same and the school would continue to provide hospital tuition and outreach. It would in effect become a special school of up to 60 places, with short stay, hospital and outreach included.

3. What about the building?

A feasibility study had been produced that provided for both an extension to the main part of the school and extensive alterations and refurbishment internally. The budget for the scheme was around £1m. The drawings for the scheme were by no means fixed and final. Consultants were soon to be appointed to deliver the whole

programme (six special and six primary school expansions). We would expect them to engage with the school communities in the design of each scheme to make sure that final design best met the needs of the school and its pupils. The scheme would also involve 'recovering' the land to the east of the school that had previously been within the school's boundary.

4. We will need to prepare the children as the building work could be disruptive

Absolutely. With other special school expansions, there are single storey classroom extensions on relatively large sites. With Shepwell, the site is small and there will be a lot of improvements made to the existing building. It is likely that the school will need to 'decant' to another location in the summer term if September completion is to be achieved.

Location:	Shepwell school
Meeting with:	Parents and governors
Date:	21 November 2017
Time:	16.30

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	School:
Philip Wells, SENDi projects officer	Stephen Pritchard-Jones, Headteacher
	1 governor

Questions, Comments & Responses:

1. General discussion of the proposal. Welcomed proposed expansion.
2. Young person's experience of being educated at Shepwell. Very positive. Shepwell as a small specialist provider for children with a range of special educational needs.
3. Discussion of the building plans and the programme of work.

3. Castle Business & Enterprise College

Location:	Castle School
Meeting with:	The School Council
Date:	Thursday 23 November 2017
Time:	2.00pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Castle School:
Philip Wells, SEND Projects Officer, Jackie Ross, SENDI support, Walsall Council	2 members of staff
	The School Council: 14 young people

The School Council had examined the feasibility study and had been on a 'site visit' to look at where the new classrooms were likely to be built at the school. They had re-assembled in a classroom and, following introductions, were asked by the team: 'Who's excited?' by the plans for the new classrooms. The initial response was that the School Council were '50/50' excited by the plans – half were excited, half less so. Points made by the School Council:

- I'm excited because it means more classrooms and more children and more people in the school. It will make more room for the pupils
- I'm excited because children are coming. They will be welcome. I'd like them to come round
- It will mean more friends and new friends
- There will be new classrooms. I will be excited to see them in the classrooms
- It will make the school bigger
- I'm not excited because, on rainy days, we have to stay inside. The new classrooms will take up the tarmaced area. There will only be grass to play on
- There will need to be wheelchair access
- There will be new teachers – they will need car parking
- There will be more children in the dinner hall – and in the playground area
- ..need more toilets
- The caretaker and the cleaners will have more work to do – the caretaker needs more support
- Where will the primary department go?
- The car park is full now – what will happen in the future?

- Will there be a new gym? How about fitness equipment?
- Do you [LA officers] do the building work? [Answer: No]
- How do they do the aerial photos (used in the feasibility study)?
- What about spare rooms, security and alarms at night?

Location:	Castle School
Meetings with:	Parents and staff
Date:	Thursday 23 November 2017
Time:	2.30pm- 3.30 pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Castle School:
Philip Wells, SEND Projects Officer, Jackie Ross, SENDI support, Walsall Council	Christine Fraser, Headteacher
	6 staff – drop in

The proposal is to increase the number of places at the school by 30 places for children of statutory school age from 100 to 130 from 1 September 2018. Also, at the request of the school, the proposal is also to change the designation to that of 'Communication, Cognition and Learning' (from Business & Enterprise College) to better reflect the needs the school meets. There was the wider context of the increase in demand for school places – including special schools – and Castle was one of six special schools where expansions were proposed.

Questions, Comments & Responses:

- 1) General discussion of the proposal and the options in the feasibility study
- 2) Proposals welcome, including the change in designation of the school..
- 3) ..and for scope for carrying out other improvements at the school as part of the overall project
- 4) Questions over timing of the work – recognised that Castle a relatively easy site to access for new building
- 5) Questions for the headteacher about the organisation of the school once the new build completed.

Subsequently, an email was received from the Primary department of the school making the following points

"I am writing on behalf of the Primary Department at Castle Business & Enterprise College regarding the proposals for the alterations of our school.

As a department we have had a team meeting and identified the follow concerns which could impact on the teaching and learning of our pupils.

1. The reduction of the size of Primary 2 (Yellow Class) when children with Special Educational Needs require the extra space to use the learning environment in exploration. Especially when we are expecting an increase in Primary numbers throughout the year.
2. Flow of traffic through the hall will increase which will impact on PE lessons.
3. Similarly the noise will impact upon children's learning in the Primary Department.
4. We will also be losing our extra space outside the classrooms due to the proposal of a corridor. This existing space is essential to our department as children often need time out of the classroom and use this space to work outside the classroom but are still inclusive as they feel part of the team.
5. We have major concerns regarding the toilets. At the moment girls have to travel through the hall and along a corridor to frequent the bathroom. Primary children need to go as soon as they ask and as a team we are currently finding it very challenging due to TAs having to escort children to the toilet. Needless to say, this interrupts teaching and learning.
6. The reduction of the Primary playground 'dry' space that children use to play football and team games during winter as they cannot use the field due to wet conditions.
7. We would like to stay together as a Primary Department as we work very closely together.”

Response: These are matters for the Head and the Design User Group that will oversee the building project at the school.

Location:	Castle School
Meetings with:	Governors
Date:	Thursday 23 November 2017
Time:	4.45 pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Castle School:
Philip Wells, SEND Projects Officer	Christine Fraser, Headteacher
	10 governors

In response to the presentation on the proposed expansion and the change in designation, governors made the following points:

1) The proposal

There was support for both aspects of the proposal

2) Devolved Formula Capital contribution

The LA's request that the school apply its DFC to the project was noted. However, the GB pointed out that the LA had deducted £5k from the schools DFC budget for pipe works, without consultation.

3) Covered walkways

Additional walkways were needed in the scheme.

4) Sports facility

The school had an ambition to develop disabled sports facilities at the school. Response: Basic Need capital did not stretch that far, though the project would not jeopardise the school's plan and the LA was willing to work with the school to develop a scheme, including signposting potential sources of funding.

4. The Jane Lane School

Location:	Jane Lane School
Meeting with:	Members of Staff, parents, Governors
Date:	Tuesday 21 November 2017
Time:	4.00pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Jane Lane School:
Paul Venn, schools capital projects officer, Walsall Pete McCarthy,	Headteacher – Tony Milosorov
	30 staff members, 1 parent, 1 x parent Governor.

Paul Venn gave a presentation on the Council's proposal to enlarge six special schools in Walsall. We were in a process of statutory consultation under school organisation regulations that was running through November. The results of the consultation would be reported back to Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December. That consultation included meetings in schools with parents, staff and governors.

Paul outlined the statement of case that justified the proposed expansion of the special schools, citing the growing school age population in Walsall, the increase in the numbers of children identified as having some form of special educational needs and the numbers and cost of pupils going to often specialist provision outside of Walsall.

The proposal was to expand Jane Lane school by additional 30 places as agreed with Head (20 initial), mainly for young people of secondary age by September 2018. School's exact designation to be confirmed. Also looking at age 19-25 but Mary Elliot are helping with this.

Work is planned for Easter and Summer holidays to minimise disruption. 13 weeks for planning application means we will continue to progress preferred option even during the consultation period so if that option is chosen it gives maximum chance of delivery ion time.

Questions, Comments & Responses:

1) Will KS1 and KS2 return to the school?

Head explained that may be able to include KS1 at a later date. PV explained that we may be able to change the designation at some schools.

2) If numbers are increasing by 25%, how can parents be reassured of continuity of funding?

PV explained that there is additional staff funding from the Gov't (not just capital funding). Tony explained that the new funding formula coming in Sep 18 will be based on child's needs so will ensure funds are available. Council finance are

aware of plans and only 20 places will be introduced in Sep 18 so there should be a lot more space needed to start with.

3) School is already oversubscribed, will this not make it worse?

Can tweak some current resources as well as expanding. Some good work has already been completed at the school.

4) Will funding cover equipment for each classroom?

Capital funding will be used to cover furniture, dining areas, PE eq't, hoists etc. Books will come from revenue funding.

5) Playground space

Tony explained that main pipeline may impact on the build but Sport England etc. will ensure space is not lost anyway.

6) Will the building currently on the playground be of limited quality as it is now?

Will be opportunities for staff to be involved in the new building internal design etc. New Building will be proper bricks and mortar.

7) Is there still a risk of housing being built at the back of the school

Bryan from the school explained that that was on hold for 25 years.

8) Question raised about Section 77 as referred to by Paul Venn.

Paul Venn explained the requirements of S77 (use of school playing fields for development..

9) Can local business get involved / help as well (e.g. Warburtons)?

Yes.

5. Oakwood School

Location:	Oakwood school
Meeting with:	Governors
Date:	28 November 2017
Time:	11.00

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	School:
Philip Wells	Governors 12
	Kay Mills. Headteacher

Presentation of the case for significant enlargement of Oakwood school and the other 5 special school in this round of expansion to separate meetings of governors, parents/carers and staff. . Discussion of the building options set out in the feasibility study.

Questions, Comments & Responses:

1) Where does this fit in the Council's plans?

Answer: It is part of the Council's 5 year strategy to expand schools in Walsall in the light of the increase in the number of pupils needing school places. In the current round, there are plans to expand six special schools, of which Oakwood is one, as well as six primary schools this year.

2) Future proofing

It would be good to see if we could 'future proof' the expansion as the population might increase further. It would be sensible to expand and take in more land and, if there is controversy, have it once rather than twice.

Answer: that can be looked at, but there is a limit to how much this school can expand on this site with the strain that a large expansion could put on shared facilities like the hall and dining and, outside, like parking.

3) Numbers of pupils

We are concerned about the numbers going to 98. We are struggling for space now. We are over capacity and have no flexibility. Also, we have reservations and are concerned that we will be required to admit pupils to a level we are not happy with. We want reassurance that this will be done in consultation with the school.

Answer: It will be in consultation with the school. There are three numbers here- the physical capacity of the school (its 'PAN' or published Admission Number); the number of places that are commissioned and funded by the LA for children of statutory school age; then there is the actual number on roll – which, for instance, will include nursery age children. With the proposed expansion of Oakwood, we recognise that the school is technically overcrowded, so there is some 'catch up' with the additional places being provided. But the actual numbers admitted each year will always be done in consultation

with the school. Numbers may vary each year depending on the severity of need of the children involved.

4) Types of spaces

We need break out spaces for more complex needs. We need to think about moving the groups around. One suggestion was for a second storey on the extension for admin/staff room.

Answer: the feasibility study simply showed possibilities. The actual design will be based around the needs of the school, in the way that governors have just described. We want to take a whole school approach to make best use of the capital budget. Greater value can be added if the school were to contribute some of its Devolved Formula Capital money to the scheme.

5) Timing - Why 2019 rather than 2018 completion?

Answer: because of uncertainties over the acquisition of the land adjacent to the school.

6) Infrastructure

Is there money for infrastructure improvements like servers and phones?

Answer: there is provision for furniture, fittings and equipment in the budget that could include IT facilities.

Consultation Meeting Notes - Parents and grandparents of Oakwood Pupils

Location:	Oakwood School
Meeting with:	Parents
Date:	Tuesday 28 November 2017
Time:	2.30pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Oakwood School:
Philip Wells ,SEN projects officer, Walsall Peter McCarthy, Walsall Council	4 x parents, 1 grandparent, 1 toddler, Head Teacher

Questions, Comments & Responses:

Initial Comments: some open space will be lost, no-one really uses the open space, Parking and footfall may be issues because of buses and heavy vehicles are in the area. What about money for extra teachers as the school is already overcrowded? How will you ensure money for sustainability over next 10-20 years, will there be additional nursing staff? Answer: £10,000 per place will be available for each extra child wit top up funding of up to £14k per child depending on their needs.

1) Does the school handle its own budget separate from the council etc.?

Yes, the Governors have the delegated responsibility for the funding received from government via the local authority

- 2) What other funding support can parents receive and if so why have we not been advised about this – can we claim back any funding missed, such as home to school transport personal budgets?**

Transport cost support is available for children who qualify. However, transport funding is a totally separate budget from schools. It is held by the Council. Schools or parents cannot control this or claim back any savings.

- 3) Has increased footfall in the area been taken into account in the feasibility study? We have concerns now even before the expansion.**

Health and Safety issue is a concern. The Head Teacher advised that this is her responsibility and this is managed within the school, now and with the extension.

- 4) Our children are very vulnerable and I think there is a need for the school to make sure it is safe around the school.**
5) Is it possible to have wheelchair access separate from children who may have “meltdowns” to prevent frightening situations for all children.
6) We have concerns about school bus safety and are not confident in the buses.

Head Teacher advised she will look at how things can be made easier for children at home time to address the issues raised by parents..

A new 'whole school' transport contract starts in January with one contractor working with and for the school.

- 7) Will space become more limited for leaving walking frames etc.** Yes.
8) How much green space will be taken up – about 10% of the current space.
9) Are you putting in a second floor? It's an option but may not be feasible.
10) How will the building take place with children present. During holidays.
11) Could Oakwood specialise in just autism? – that is one possible option.
12) When will additional children join the school? September 2019 is the current plan.

Other Notes from speaker: some high-functioning pupils with autism may need extra provision and Shepwell may be used. Attempts to open a free school have failed unfortunately.

Consultation Meeting Notes - Staff at Oakwood School

Location:	Oakwood School
Meeting with:	Oakwood staff
Date:	Tuesday 28 November 2017
Time:	3.30pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Oakwood School:
Philip Wells, SEN projects officer, Peter McCarthy, School Organisation Project Manager	Kay Mills, Headteacher
	23 staff

Questions, Comments & Responses:

Comments

We currently need common areas / break-out spaces to allow for climbing and ball pool activities. Can we have sliding stores to save space and make it safer? Is there a plan for additional parking in the area for parents collecting pupils?

As this is the only school in the area, we must take advantage of this opportunity

It may be that the building work will not impact the children and doesn't need to take place during the holidays. Could we use "modular buildings" which are already constructed to prevent hazards of construction and allow the buildings to be delivered on in place earlier?

1. **Will the new school definitely open in September or could it open at Easter?** It is possible but will confirm this. Ground works likely over Easter; main building works over summer period. Potential to use non-traditional building methods, with sections constructed off-site.
2. **What if planning permission is refused? Can the school appeal?** Yes
3. **Do the plans show what new buildings will look like?** There are 3 new rooms. The final design will be agreed with the school
4. **Will we get additional toilets and storage for walkers etc.** There will be toilets but not necessarily that kind of additional storage space. Value added if the school contributes its Devolved Formula Capital funds to the 'pot'.

.6. Mary Elliot School

Location:	Mary Elliot School
Meeting with:	Parents
Date:	Friday 17 November 2017
Time:	10.00pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	Mary Elliot School
Philip Wells, SEND Projects Officer	Adrian Coleman, Headteacher Teresa Tunnell, Chair of Governors
	6 parents, 2 staff members

The proposal is to provide 30 additional places at Mary Elliot School. It has a current capacity of 110 places which will increase to 140 places by September. PW outlined the statement of case and copies of the feasibility study were circulated.

Questions, Comments & Responses:

- The proposed expansion of this school and the other five schools “is very forward thinking”
- “[It].. is in the best interests of the school to go ahead with this”
- Discussion of future numbers (led by the Headteacher) – in two years time, it will rise to 133; currently 5 out of borough. The school could safely admit over its new PAN capacity (as it does now) – we could see numbers of around 150. The numbers coming through mean we need to increase capacity
- The timing (2019) is right for the school
- The additional spaces will increase flexibility and lead to a re-think as to how the school uses its accommodation currently
- Access to the school, parking and the use of the playing field need to be factored in
- Funding – the new places will be funded (place value and top up); special school heads and the LA are looking at new funding arrangements/ a new banding scheme
- All students at Mary Elliot have/will have Education, Health & Care Plans
- Staff numbers have reduced as numbers have dipped, but staff:student ratios are virtually the same; the more students we have, the more favourable the funding. Staff and class sizes will remain roughly the same.
- Discussion of building options: Expansion to the rear of the school is the better solution. It looks good and is less disruptive; Access to the school, parking and the use of the playing field need to be factored in. Another lift will be provided; an opportunity to look at other facilities at the school that could be improved
- Very limited amount of Devolved Formula Capital available from the school
- Issues over access and lack of school safety zone on the main road outside the school.

A drop-in session was held in the staff room over the lunch time break for staff to pick up the consultation paper and look at the plans.

7. Consultation Meeting Notes – FACE Walsall– parent/carer forum

Location:	Arboretum visitor centre
Meeting with:	Walsall FACE
Date:	Tuesday 21 November 2017
Time:	10.30pm

PRESENT:

Walsall Council:	FACE Walsall
Philip Wells, SEND Projects Officer, Jackie Ross, SENDI support, Walsall Council	Jo Yarnold (Chair)
	6 members/associates

The proposal was to expand six of Walsall's special school, four by September 2018 and the remaining two by September 2019. The need to expand was explained by the -growing number of young people in the school system in Walsall. There were 20% more births a year in Walsall than there were 15 years ago. Demographic grounds alone could justify an increase in specialist places, as well as a rise in the number of children/young people with some form of special educational need. Also, compared with our statistical neighbours we have fewer children/young people in special schools. There are 6 special schools in Walsall in the current round of expansions. All are local authority maintained. All are Good or Outstanding in Ofsted's judgement. Feasibility studies were commissioned and the reports are available for the meeting to inspect. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure sufficient places.

Questions, comments and reponses:

1) Will we have enough funding?

Response: Yes – the capital funds (Basic Need) are there for the buildings and there is revenue funding (from the High Needs Block) that will fund the places and top-up. Unlike some other Las, we have some head-room that can be used to fund the additional places. This was a statutory consultation, PW signposted parents to this, and welcomed parent input into this. Consultation ends 30th November, reporting back to Cabinet on 13th December. Consultation posted on the Local Offer website. Proposals and costings are on this site too. Options to email thoughts or post it back.

2) Local Offer:

Some parents were unable to find the link- (Action-to change that asap.)
Feedback: was, however, that parents were pleased there is a commitment to special schools in Walsall and that they welcomed in the increase in the number of places.

3) Inclusion:

Some parents felt that mainstream schools may come to a conclusion too quickly to meet a child's SEND. Response-we are looking at SEND support and are keen to set expectations across the borough. The LA is really keen to set out improving SEN Support. If there are more special school places it is important that mainstream schools do not too quickly say they cannot meet a child's needs.

We are working with schools to establish clear expectations and looking at factors which lead to success for children/young people. What works well in some schools is to be shared across the borough.

4) Post-16 provision

What about post 16 and post 19 provision?

Response: there is a project with WACC and Walsall College, looking in particular at post 19 provision and the scope for expansion.

5) Overall

Feedback from parent: The increase of provision feels positive for the whole borough.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Specialist School Place Planning		
Directorate	Children's Services		
Service	Special Needs		
Responsible Officer	Claire Goss; Lynda Poole		
EqIA Author	Philip Wells		
Proposal planning start	16/9/16	Proposal start date (due or actual)	1/9/17

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy		
	Procedure		
	Internal service		
	External Service		
	Other - give details: To propose an increase in the number of specialist school places in Walsall over the next 5 years from September 2017		
2	What are the intended outcomes, reasons for change? (The business case)		
	<p>The proposal is based on the SENDi (special educational needs and disabilities) strategy for Walsall that indicates the need for an additional number of school places in existing and potential special school in Walsall and in Additional Resource Provisions (ARPs) that are attached to mainstream schools.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to ensure that there are available in its area "sufficient schools in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of an education" (s14, Education Act 1996). There are three aspects:</p> <p>i) There are short term pressures that need to be addressed for September 2017 – the pressure points of places for Key Stage 1 children with more complex needs. It is proposed to achieve this by selective use of adaptations and placing children at other appropriate school sites;</p> <p>ii) An indication of the need for additional 156 places in Walsall special schools (including the September 2017 increase) and for around 30 new places in Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) over the next 5 years, with proposals for a number of schools to be issued for further consultation;</p> <p>iii) Two outline proposals to further increase the number of special school places through the free schools programme. Up to a further 150 places are possible if both proposals</p>		

	are successful.										
3	Who is the proposal potential likely to affect?										
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail								
	All	Yes	Ensuring sufficient school places and opportunities for education contributes to the realisation of the Council's purpose of 'reducing inequalities and maximising potential'								
	Specific group/s	Yes	Pupil with special educational needs and/or disabilities, their parents/carers								
	Council employees	Yes	Potential increase in staff numbers in schools that are maintained by the local authority (as well as in other providers)								
	Other										
4	Evidence, engagement and consultation										
4.1	<p>On 4 February 2015, Cabinet received a report on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Review that sought approval to consult on a number of proposals to expand specialist provision in Walsall. That report was accompanied by an EqlA that described a process of consultation and engagement that had preceded the Cabinet report. This is summarised below.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Type</td> <td>Mixed</td> <td>Date</td> <td>2013-14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audience</td> <td colspan="3"> <p>There were 6 workshops with special headteachers, ARP leaders, representation from workforce development, social and health care professionals.</p> <p>September 2014-November 2014 initial informal consultation to ascertain thoughts, feelings and fears with Special Headteachers; Chair of Governors; parents / carers; pupils and staff of all the 6 special schools, Additional Resource Provision (ARP's) and PRUs within Walsall.</p> <p>There were 163 written responses received. These were broken down into the following areas (SLD/PMLD – 62 responses; MLD – 61 response; SME – 29 response; Communication and Interaction ARP – 6 responses; Specific Learning Difficulties – 5 responses).</p> <p>There were 3 telephone conversations regarding the SEND reform.</p> <p>Presentation at Director Children Services (DCS) November 2014 to highlight the journey regarding SEND reform and the commitment of the Local Authority through the secondment of 2 senior leaders from within the special sector.</p> <p>September 2014 – Attendance at parent forum to “myth bust” regarding the changes a foot within SEND.</p> </td> </tr> </table>			Type	Mixed	Date	2013-14	Audience	<p>There were 6 workshops with special headteachers, ARP leaders, representation from workforce development, social and health care professionals.</p> <p>September 2014-November 2014 initial informal consultation to ascertain thoughts, feelings and fears with Special Headteachers; Chair of Governors; parents / carers; pupils and staff of all the 6 special schools, Additional Resource Provision (ARP's) and PRUs within Walsall.</p> <p>There were 163 written responses received. These were broken down into the following areas (SLD/PMLD – 62 responses; MLD – 61 response; SME – 29 response; Communication and Interaction ARP – 6 responses; Specific Learning Difficulties – 5 responses).</p> <p>There were 3 telephone conversations regarding the SEND reform.</p> <p>Presentation at Director Children Services (DCS) November 2014 to highlight the journey regarding SEND reform and the commitment of the Local Authority through the secondment of 2 senior leaders from within the special sector.</p> <p>September 2014 – Attendance at parent forum to “myth bust” regarding the changes a foot within SEND.</p>		
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	<p>December 2014 – All stakeholders associated with the SEND reform from within the mainstream sector were invited to an initial consultation event across the North, East, South and West of the borough.</p>
<p>Protected characteristics</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Positive Effective identification of need for all pupils and matching that to appropriate provision will enable greater opportunities for learners to reach their full potential</p> <p>Negative The requirement to change schools for existing pupils (though this did not materialise) - travel arrangements and facilities at schools was identified as a risk that may adversely impact pupils</p>
<p>Feedback</p>	
<p>There were 163 written responses received. These were broken down into the following areas (SLD/PMLD – 62 responses; MLD – 61 response; SME – 29 response; Communication and Interaction ARP – 6 responses; Specific Learning Difficulties – 5 responses).</p> <p>There have been 3 telephone conversations regarding the SEND reform December 2014 – Primary, Nursery and Special Headteachers group and Walsall Secondary Headteacher group the options were presented and initial thoughts, feelings and fears recorded and challenged.</p>	
<p>Implementation of the proposals in the February 2015 was only partially achieved. The present report builds on the 2015 exercise. From the autumn term 2016, a number of events and meetings took place as summarised below that helped in the development of the proposals</p>	
<p>Type</p>	<p>Mixed</p>
<p>Audience</p>	<p>The proposals derive from :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A SENDi Strategy for Walsall that has been signed off by the of the SENDi Challenge Board and in which the need for specialist places forms part; • A report on the numbers and types of specialist places that Walsall commissions both within Walsall and in other authorities' areas and the scope for reducing out of borough placements; • Data analysis of the number of pupils on roll with 'SEN', projections of local and national demographic change and the changing demand for SEN provision by type of need; • An analysis of achievement and attainment of children with special needs in Walsall; • A multi disciplinary seminar on commissioning specialist

	<p>school provision held in the autumn term;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to every special school in Walsall and meetings with headteachers and some governors; • Visits to Additional Resourced Provisions in Walsall; • Presentations to and consultation meetings with special schools headteachers (1 December, 18 January, 16 March); primary headteachers (PNS 24 November and, again, on 26 January); secondary headteachers (WASH 14 November). 	
<p>Protected characteristics</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Positive Effective identification of need for all pupils and matching that to appropriate provision will enable greater opportunities for learners to reach their full potential</p> <p>Negative None identified</p>	
<p>Feedback</p>		
<p>There was support from those represented at the various fora for the proposals contained in the report, as there had been for the original set of proposals in 2015. Once the 5 year strategy is agreed, proposals will come forward to make changes at individual schools.</p> <p>Proposals to make significant changes at individual schools are subject to a statutory process of public consultation in which proposals are published and responses invited for a period of 4 weeks following the publication of a notice. In the case of local authority maintained schools, the local authority itself is able to ‘determine’ (agree or otherwise) the proposal in the light of feedback from consultation.</p>		
<p>Type</p>	<p>Mixed</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>November 2017</p>
<p>Audience</p>	<p>The proposals derive from a Cabinet decision to consult on a proposal is to increase the number of places at Jane Lane School, Castle Business and Enterprise College, Shepwell Short Stay School, Old Hall School (all from September 2018); and at Oakwood School and Mary Elliot School (both from September 2019). Additionally, Castle Business and Enterprise College are proposing to alter the school’s designation to better reflect the type of special educational needs provision they make.</p> <p>At their meeting on 25 October 2017, Cabinet approved proposals to provide additional special school places at the schools named above. They also approved a process of statutory consultation on each of the proposals, under school organisation regulations. This consultation started on Thursday 2 November 2017 and closed on Thursday 30 November 2017 Cabinet decision to significantly enlarge six of Walsall’s special school from September 2018 :</p> <p>The statutory notice and the composite consultation document</p>	

together with a bespoke proposal for each of the six special schools were posted on line in the Admissions and School Organisation section of the Council’s website and on the Local Offer. The notice was published in a local newspaper and was displayed in the reception areas of each of the schools.

The notice and the consultation document were sent to ‘statutory consultees’:

- All schools in Walsall
- The colleges
- The dioceses
- Other local authorities in the area
- The Regional Schools Commissioner; and also to
- Parents groups

Meetings were held at each of the special schools. In most cases, there was a separate meeting for parents, staff, governors and the school council. In some, there was a single meeting for all interested parties.

Meetings for parents:

Old Hall school	Wednesday 15 November 16.30 pm
Shepwell school	Tuesday 21 November 16.30 pm
Mary Elliot school	Friday 17 November 10.00 am
Castle school	Thursday 23 November 14.30 pm
Oakwood school	Tuesday 28 November 14.30 pm
Jane Lane school	Tuesday 21 November 16.00 pm

A meeting was also held with parents’ groups (led by Walsall FACE) on Tuesday 21 November 2017 from 10.30 in the visitor centre of the Arboretum.

Responses were recorded by:

- Simple questionnaire – in favour of the proposal; not in favour of the proposal; undecided, with scope for written response/ comments.
- Minutes taken at each of the meetings.
- Written/email responses.

Effort taken to engage with parents – including a meeting organised by parents themselves at time of day to suit parents/carers of children with SEND,

Protected characteristics

Disability

Positive Effective identification of need for all pupils and matching that to appropriate provision will enable greater opportunities for learners to reach their full potential

Negative None identified

Feedback

There were no objections from any of the 'statutory' consultees to the proposals to significantly enlarge Old Hall school, Shepwell Short Stay School, The Jane Lane school (from 1 September 2018); Oakwood school and Mary Elliot school (from 1 September 2019); and the proposal to significantly enlarge and alter the designation of Castle College of Business and Enterprise to that of 'Communication, Cognition and Learning' (from 1 September 2018).

Of the written responses (the questionnaires) 83% supported the proposal; 14% were 'unsure' while 2% were against the proposal.

Proposals to make significant changes at individual schools are subject to a statutory process of public consultation in which proposals are published and responses invited for a period of 4 weeks following the publication of a notice. In the case of local authority maintained schools, the local authority itself is able to 'determine' (agree or otherwise) the proposal in the light of feedback from consultation.

4.2 Concise summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

- The total school age population of Walsall will continue to increase over the next 10 years – it is increasing by just under 1% a year, adding around 400 young people a year to the school age population;
- There is a *pro rata* increase in the number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Around 15% of children have some form of special educational need. In Walsall, 3.5% have significant special educational needs and have either a statement or an Education Health and Care plan. Whilst the vast majority of children with SEN are in mainstream schools, the general increase in the school age population alone is enough to justify over 100 additional specialist places;
- There has been an increase in the numbers of young people identified as having some form of SEND and the marked growth in particular types of SEND, such as ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder)- an increase of 15% over a 5 year period- and other more complex special needs;
- No local authority is or ever will be self sufficient in its SEN provision. However, typically, there are over 200 children and young people a year going out of borough to school placements in other authority areas. Many are the nearest appropriate placement in neighbouring areas; others are in regionally based specialist provision, while 70 or more a year are in independent specialist provision. Placement costs are typically higher than those in-borough, even more so when transport costs are added.
- There is a decline nationally in the proportion of pupils with a statement or Education Health and Care plan who are in mainstream school settings;
- Also nationally, the Department for Education, forecast a significant (30%+) increase in the number of special school places that will be required in England up to 2024;
- There is local information about the numbers of very young children being identified as having some form of special educational need or disability. In the autumn term, just under 50 children were identified as possibly requiring a Key Stage 1 special school place in Walsall in 2017-2018,
- There are therefore short term pressures that need to be addressed for September 2017 –a demand for places for Key Stage 1 children with more

complex special educational needs. It is proposed to achieve this by selective use of adaptations and/or placing at other appropriate school sites.

The proposals contained in this report have been developed in close consultation with schools and other stakeholders in Walsall. That occurred in a first phase of the process leading up to the report in 2015 and then, as part of the SENDi strategy work, in the autumn of 2016. The proposals are at a strategic level, indicating the need for additional specialist school places in Walsall over the next 5 years. School specific proposals will follow.

The proposals will create additional quality places to meet changing needs that parents and young people will find attractive and which will create conditions that will help to improve the educational outcomes for those young people.

**5 How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group?
The affect may be positive, negative or neutral.**

Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Y or N
Age	Neutral	No foreseen impact	N
Disability	Positive	Effective identification of need for all pupils and matching that to appropriate and expanding provision will enable greater opportunities for learners to reach their full potential. See below on types of need/disability	N
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Proposal does not change, remove or reduce	N
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Proposal does not change, remove or reduce	N
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Proposal does not change, remove or reduce	N
Race	Positive	The identified prevalence of SEN associated with learning disabilities differs considerably between ethnic groups. The proposal expands opportunities See below.	N
Religion or belief	Neutral	Proposal does not change, remove or reduce	N
Sex	Neutral	Proposal does not change, remove or reduce	N
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Proposal does not change, remove or reduce	N
Other (give detail)			
Further information			

6	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details below.		Yes
	SENDi strategy (Strategy Board 4 April 2017). Cabinet 8 February 2017, Agenda Item 16: Proposed Implementation of the Five-Year Sufficiency Strategy plan.		
7	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation suggest you take? (Bold which one applies)		
	A	No major change required	
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality	
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact	
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal	

SEN and Disability by Ethnicity

The following present information on the ethnic composition of children with primary SEN (School Action Plus or with statements) associated with learning disabilities for all minority ethnic groups in 2013.

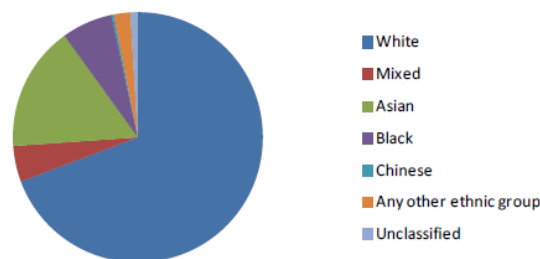
In 2013, 74% of children with a primary SEN of MLD were recorded as 'white British' compared with 71% of children with a primary SEN of SLD and 64% of children with a primary SEN of PMLD. These differences primarily reflect the higher rates of severe and profound multiple learning difficulties among 'Pakistani' and 'Bangladeshi' children.

Source: People with Learning Disabilities in England 2013 (PHE)

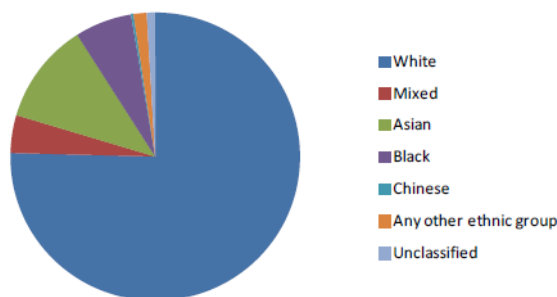
Extract of presentation to SENDi Challenge Board February 2017 by Dr Uma Viswanathan

The identified prevalence of SEN associated with learning disabilities differs considerably between ethnic groups.

Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty

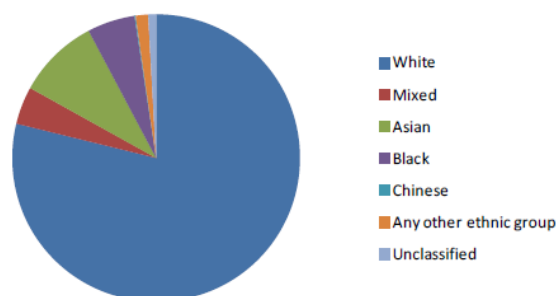


Severe Learning Difficulty



Ethnic Composition of children with primary SEN (School Action Plus or with statements) of SLD, 2013

Moderate Learning Difficulty



Percentage of Pupils by Ethnic Origin

State funded schools in England, 2016

Source: School Census

White non-British pupils now make up 7.1% of the population in primary schools. This is the third year that this ethnic group is the second largest ethnic minority, after pupils from Asian origins, who continue to be the largest minority. Pupils from Asian and Black origins are the two largest minorities in secondary schools. In pupil referral units (PRUs), there are a greater proportion of black pupils and pupils from mixed ethnic origins than in mainstream schools, and a smaller proportion of Asian pupils.

	Special Schools	Primary	Secondary	PRU
White British	71.6	67.9	70.9	70.9
White Non British	4.0	7.1	5.4	6.3
Asian	9.5	10.6	10.3	4.2
Black	6.7	5.7	5.5	7.1
Mixed	5.2	5.7	5.5	7.1
Chinese	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.1
Any Other	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.5
Unclassified	1.3	0.7	1.2	2.1

Walsall residents

School pupils with SEN and/or a Disability number	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Increase	%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	259	304	336	407	420	284	358	99	38.22
Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)	473	474	500	546	529	415	512	39	8.25
Hearing Impairment (HI)	70	66	68	65	78	64	57	-13	-18.57
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	1115	1093	1156	1242	1230	1013	1764	649	58.21
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)	6	16	13	15	18	8	11	5	83.33
Other	81	70	71	102	112	59	96	15	18.52
Physical Disability (PD)	125	117	118	141	141	84	97	-28	-22.40
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)	83	82	75	74	64	84	65	-18	-21.69
Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)	396	401	415	444	478	369	615	219	55.30
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	233	225	192	196	213	197	201	-32	-13.73
Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	212	193	193	221	236	210	332	120	56.60
Visual Impairment (VI)	93	106	116	120	121	75	82	-11	-11.83
SEN No specialist assessment of need (NSA)	0						167	167	
Totals	3146	3147	3253	3573	3640	2862	4357	494	15.70

Source: National Statistics on special educational needs 2015. Walsall return