

Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: 16th October 2018

Title of report: Learning and Early Support Capital Plan: Proposals to allocate funding for New Pupil Places at Birkby Junior School.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes - this will result in significant capital expenditure in excess of £250K.
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan?	Yes – 14/09/18
Is it eligible for “call in” by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by Strategic Director & name	Karl Battersby - Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure - 08 / 10 / 2018
Is it signed off by the Service Director - Finance, IT and Transactional Services	Eamonn Croston 04 / 10 / 2018
Is it signed off by the Service Director - Legal, Governance and Commissioning	Julie Muscroft 05 / 10 / 2018
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Graham Turner – Corporate Cllr Masood Ahmed – Learning and Aspiration

Electoral [wards](#) affected: Greenhead

Ward councillors consulted: Yes

Public or private: Public report with a private appendix

1. Summary

- 1.1 Members will be requested to approve capital investment of £1.852m to permanently expand the existing Birkby Junior School from 480 places (4 Form of Entry – 4FE) to 600 places (5FE) in order to meet a Basic Need for additional new junior school places in the Birkby area.
- 1.2 This will be achieved through the remodelling and refurbishment of the existing Birkby Fartown Community Centre building on Wasp Nest Road, Huddersfield to provide modern educational facilities to meet the needs of the expanded Birkby Junior School.
- 1.3 This proposal will have implications for the existing Birkby Library, which will no longer be able to operate from this building. Alternative arrangements are detailed in this report.

2. Information required to take a decision

The need for additional school places

- 2.1 Kirklees Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient high quality school places to meet the needs of Kirklees families and communities. This is described as “basic need”.
- 2.2 Birkby Junior School is situated in the Huddersfield North Planning area, which has seen a period of significant population growth in recent years and a large gap between the basic need demand for primary places and their availability in local schools. There has been, and continues to be, significant basic need demand over and above current provision.
- 2.3 In September 2012 the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Birkby Infant and Nursery School was increased from 120 (4FE) to 150 (5FE) to reflect the rising need for additional school places to serve the Birkby area of Huddersfield. This created a disparity with the then PAN of 90 (3FE) at Birkby Junior School, which led to Cabinet approving in October 2013 a new four classroom extension at the Junior School to increase its PAN to 120 (4FE), which was completed in March 2015.
- 2.4 It was noted at the time that not all pupils from the Infant School transferred to the Junior School, hence the continuing disparity in PANs, however it was acknowledged that this would need to be kept under review. The Council’s School Organisation and Planning Service has continued to monitor the situation and has concluded that there is a need to inject a further 120 junior school places, thereby expanding Birkby Juniors from 480 places (4FE) to 600 places (5FE), as outward migration at primary level is not expected to continue in forthcoming years due to increased demand in other planning areas and Calderdale and a likely increased demand from potential housing developments in the Planning area.
- 2.5 These places are additional to the new 420 place (2FE) primary school at Clare Hill playing fields to serve North Huddersfield, which was

approved by Members in October 2016 and which opened in temporary accommodation in September 2018, pending the provision of a new build school building in 2019.

Site constraints and requirements

- 2.6 Birkby Junior School operates on a confined Victorian site on Wasp Nest Road, Huddersfield with no opportunity for expansion beyond its existing site boundaries. The four classroom extension in 2015 on the existing playground means that any further new build is not feasible as the school grounds are constrained with no playing field provision and increasing pressure on available space from a rising intake.
- 2.7 Providing an additional 120 places will require a minimum of four additional classrooms plus supporting teaching and non-teaching spaces such as small group rooms, offices, toilets and storage. In addition, the school's existing infrastructure will need expanding and improving. A small hall will need to be provided for PE / Assembly / Music purposes and the existing dining hall, which is already too small for existing numbers, will need to be expanded through the conversion of an adjacent classroom to dining purposes, which in turn will require a fifth replacement classroom to be provided.
- 2.8 Due to pressure on numbers, the school has been admitting over its PAN of 120 since September 2015 by utilising all available space within its buildings and through the provision of temporary accommodation. There are currently three modular classrooms on site, which are restricting the availability of soft play and habitat spaces and a fourth modular classroom will be required in September 2019 unless a permanent solution to the school's chronic lack of space is provided.

(c) Birkby Fartown Community Centre Building

- 2.9 Adjacent to Birkby Junior School and sharing the same site is the existing Grade II Listed Victorian Birkby Fartown Community Centre building, which was part of the original school but for many years has been part of the Council's portfolio of community buildings.
- 2.10 In recent years this building has been occupied by the police service, a Children's Centre, the Young People's Service, Birkby Fartown Community Centre and Birkby Library. However, since 2016 usage of the building has declined significantly and as of September 2018 the only remaining usage of the building was the Library Service operating on limited opening hours.
- 2.11 The building has a very significant backlog of condition works exceeding £1m and including the need for a complete replacement of the roof and the windows on all elevations. An internal ceiling collapse in 2016 led to the partial closure of the building and without significant capital investment it is inevitable that this building will close completely at a future point. However, as a community venue that does not cover its

operating costs this is not a priority for investment from the Corporate Landlord capital plan.

(d) proposed conversion of the building

2.12 It is proposed that all of the existing Birkby Fartown Community Centre building is fully refurbished and extensively remodelled to create modern, fit for purpose educational facilities. This would include a full replacement of the roof, windows on all elevations, the heating and electrical systems plus extensive works to remove existing structural walls, repair fallen and damaged plaster and return the building to a state that will extend its life for another 50 years.

2.13 The extensive remodelling will provide the following accommodation for the school:

- Five classrooms to enable the whole of Year 6 to be taught together as one Year Group in a separate and independent unit that will provide an ideal environment for SAT test preparation and high school life;
- Two “Breakout” spaces for 1:1 teaching, small groups, working with pupils with special educational needs (SEN) etc.;
- A multi-purpose small hall with a kitchenette and storage for PE / Assembly / Music. The scheme has been designed to ensure that the small hall can be locked down and made available for hire by the community via the school on evenings, weekends and during holidays;
- Sufficient toilets to comply with the School Premises Regulations including appropriate DDA provision;
- Ancillary support spaces such as offices, storage and resource areas.

In addition, the existing internal link between the former Community Centre building and Birkby Junior School that has been closed and blocked for many years will be reinstated with appropriate DDA access to enable the free movement of pupils and staff between the different part of the enlarged school.

2.14 Other works will include the remodelling of a classroom adjacent to the existing dining hall to create an enlarged space for lunchtimes as the existing dining hall is already under severe pressure from current numbers at the school. Following completion of the project, the existing temporary accommodation will be removed from site and the ground beneath restored to soft play and habitat areas.

(e) Implications for the existing Birkby Library

- 2.15 The existing library occupies one of the large spaces within the building, which has been earmarked for conversion to school accommodation. As a consequence an operational decision has been taken to stop running the library from its existing location on Wasp Nest Road from 2nd November 2018. This will enable building works to start on site later that month, which is essential in order to ensure that the new school accommodation is ready for the 2019/20 academic year.
- 2.16 It is acknowledged that library services are important to local people, hence work is ongoing to look for a permanent solution for the housing of the library. Suitable community space for a library is extremely limited in this area. While it is entirely appropriate to prioritise the education of local children, the council is committed to providing the best library service that it can, both during the alterations and going forward in the future.
- 2.17 Library services are not just those delivered in library buildings and Kirklees Library Service already has a comprehensive range of outreach library services available in this area. Every opportunity will be taken to enhance these.
- 2.18 The Library Service will ensure that people can continue to borrow books by setting up a book drop service. A book drop is a collection of books left in places that are easy for people to access. All that is required is a shelf where people can pick up books from and return them when they have finished with them. Books will be replaced and replenished on a regular basis.
- 2.19 The Library Service is working with local Ward Members to identify suitable locations for the book drop facilities and further details will be published in due course. In the meantime, users are being signposted to existing facilities at Huddersfield Central Library and the Chestnut Centre in Deighton. The Library service is also working on a way to offer access to computers in the local area.
- 2.20 Cabinet considered a report on Libraries in August this year which reported back on the recent consultation about library provision. Regard will be had to this and the agreed recommendations in it when providing library services in the area.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 *Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)*

The newly expanded Birkby Junior School will provide 120 additional high quality junior school places (through an increase in the PAN from 120 to 150) to help address the significant shortfall of places for primary aged children in the Birkby area.

3.2 *Economic Resilience*

The recommended contractor as detailed in the private appendix is a local contractor based in West Yorkshire. The extensive refurbishment and remodelling of a listed building will generate employment and supplies opportunities for local labour and businesses. The expanded school will provide a range of new teaching and non-teaching jobs, both full time and part time, that will benefit the local economy.

3.3 *Improving Outcomes for Children*

The remodelled and refurbished building will be used as the permanent base for the school's Year 6 pupils. Its five classrooms and supporting teaching and non-teaching facilities will provide a modern, light, airy and spacious environment set within the context of a lovely Listed Victorian building, which will encourage and inspire children to learn and develop in their final, important SATs year before they make the journey to High School.

3.4 *Reducing the Demand for Services*

Not applicable

3.5 *Equalities Impact Assessment*

The Equality Act 2010 places the Council under a duty - the Public Sector Equality Duty - to have due regard to the need to achieve equality objectives when carrying out its functions. Members are reminded that before making any decisions that they have a legal duty to consider the **Equality Act 2010 - Section 149**, which introduced a public sector equality duty that the Council must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

A Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been produced by the Library Service which indicates a negative impact on residents resulting from the library no longer being located in the Birkby Fartown Community Centre. This can be located at: [http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/deliveringServices/impactAssessments/impactAssessmentEvaluations/02\)%20Adults%20&%20Health/Libraries/Birkby%20Fartown%20stage%201%20EIA%20SEPT18.xlsm](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/deliveringServices/impactAssessments/impactAssessmentEvaluations/02)%20Adults%20&%20Health/Libraries/Birkby%20Fartown%20stage%201%20EIA%20SEPT18.xlsm)

A Stage 2 EIA is therefore required which indicates the measures that will be taken to mitigate this impact. This can be located at:

[http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/deliveringServices/impactAssessments/impactAssessmentEvaluations/02\)%20Adults%20&%20Health/Libraries/Birkby%20Fartown%20stage%20%20EIA%20SEPT18.docx](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/deliveringServices/impactAssessments/impactAssessmentEvaluations/02)%20Adults%20&%20Health/Libraries/Birkby%20Fartown%20stage%20%20EIA%20SEPT18.docx)

These should be borne in mind by Members in coming to a decision on this matter.

3.6 *Financial Implications*

The details of the tender process undertaken are contained within the private appendix to be considered later in the Cabinet meeting on 16th October 2018. The proposed contractor is identified and will be subsequently confirmed subject to final tender queries being resolved.

Based on this, it is expected that this project will be delivered within a financial envelope of £1.852m. This includes the cost of the construction project, all professional fees (internal and external to the Council) and relevant contingency sums.

This will be funded from a combination of capital grant provided by the Department for Education for the provision of additional school places (£1.6m) and for urgent condition works in school buildings (£252K). These funds are identified in the Learning and Early Support baseline section of the Council's Five Year Capital Plan approved in February 2018 and updated for rollover in July 2018. There are no revenue borrowing implications relating to this project.

Recurrent revenue funding in respect of the expanding number of pupils and the associated premises costs will be provided to the School via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block funding formula at no additional cost to the Council. Using the growth funding element within the DSG Schools Block allocation, provision for each year's anticipated growth in pupil numbers will be built into each financial year's Budget Share allocation to Birkby Junior School. There will be a need to support some additional set-up costs for each new class created. This cost will be met from either the School Reorganisation provision within the DSG Central School Services Block or from growth provision within the DSG Schools Block.

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

Ward Members for Greenhead have been consulted during the course of the development of the project to convert the existing Birkby Fartown Community Centre building to school accommodation. Members have been supportive of the conversion as it is recognised that its existing poor condition could eventually close this important local building. This project will secure the building's future for another generation whilst providing much needed school places for local children in their local junior school.

Members have also welcomed the provision of a small hall (83m²) within the building, which will have a sprung floor, a kitchenette and access to storage and toilets. This facility is capable of being locked off from the rest of the school and can be hired by the local community on evenings, weekends and holidays via the school, who will manage the booking in accordance with the Council's guidelines.

Ward Members' concerns relate to the continuance of a library service in the area and they are actively engaged in discussions with the Library Service regarding the short, medium and long term solutions in relation to future library provision.

5. Next steps

Subject to approval of the recommendations in this report and the private appendix, officers from the Council's Capital Delivery team will let a contract for the remodelling and refurbishment works and will manage the project to ensure that it completes on time, within budget and to the required quality standards.

The Library Service will continue to work with Local Ward Members and residents to implement an interim solution following the closure of the provision in its current location and to develop a longer term proposal for library services in this area.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Based on the content of this report, Officers make the following recommendations to Cabinet. Members are asked:

- to approve a capital allocation of £1.852m to enable the conversion of Birkby Fartown Community Centre building to school accommodation in order to provide 120 additional school places at Birkby Junior School;
- endorse the interim arrangements being put in place in relation to Birkby Library, which will no longer operate from its existing site on Wasp Nest Road, Huddersfield from 2nd November 2018.

Officers make these recommendations as they enable the Council to meet its statutory duty to provide high quality school places in areas where there is a Basic Need for additional provision. The proposal will also secure the long term future of an important local listed building whilst putting in place arrangements for future access to community and library facilities.

7. Portfolio Holders Recommendations

The Portfolio Holders for Corporate and Learning and Aspiration endorse the Officers' recommendations as they provide a pragmatic and cost effective solution to the need for additional school places to serve the Birkby area.

It is acknowledged that this will impact on the provision of the library service in this area but Officers and Members are working together to ensure that disruption is minimised and an acceptable solution for the longer term is identified and implemented.

8. Contact officers

David Martin – Head of Capital Delivery and Facilities Management
Tel: 01484 221000 Email: david.martin@kirklees.gov.uk

Carol Stump – Chief Librarian - Email: carol.stump@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background papers and history of decisions

There have been a number of relevant previous Cabinet decisions in relation to this proposal as follows:

- October 2013 Cabinet – decision taken to increase the size of Birkby Junior School from 360 places to 480 places in order to provide additional school places;
- October 2016 Cabinet - decision to provide a new 420 place (2FE) primary school at Clare Hill playing fields, Edgerton, to serve North Huddersfield;
- August 2018 Cabinet – Kirklees Libraries Service Redesign proposals.

10. Service Director(s) responsible

Joanne Bartholomew - Service Director - Commercial, Regulatory and Operational Services - joanne.bartholomew@kirklees.gov.uk

Sue Richards – Service Director – Community Plus and Integration - Sue.Richards@kirklees.gov.uk

11. List of Appendices

There is one private appendix to this report containing commercial information relating to the tender process outcome for the construction contract arising from this report.