

## **Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 December 2021**

### **Proposed Relocation and Expansion of St Leonard's Primary School, Stafford**



**Cllr Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) said,**

"This authority is committed to building new schools, or expanding existing ones where appropriate, to ensure that all Staffordshire's children have access to a good education in first class local facilities.

"This £4 million proposal to repurpose the Kingston Centre meets the anticipated future need in this part of Stafford in a sustainable way, as the site is within walking distance of the housing developments it will serve.

"Having engaged with the school community and residents in the area, the next step is to formally publish the proposal for the relocation and expansion of St Leonard's Primary School."

#### **Report Summary:**

Cabinet agreed on the 19th August 2020 to the retention of the Kingston Centre for potential future use as a primary school which enables the relocation and expansion of St. Leonards Primary School.

The proposed scheme will be undertaken in a two-phased approach:

- a. Phase 1 to be a 1.5 forms of entry (FE) primary school.
- b. Phase 2 extension project to provide an additional 0.5 FE to the first phase 1.5FE primary school to create a 1½ FE – 2 FE (315 - 420 place) primary school.

The Phase 1 relocation and initial remodelling is programmed to be completed by September 2023. The Phase 2 extension project will be undertaken at a later date and will be dependent upon when the new housing comes forward in the local area.

Following Executive Officer Delegated Decision Authority on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021, a 4-week local community & stakeholder consultation was undertaken between the 21st September and the 19<sup>th</sup> October on the

proposed scheme. A local consultation event was held at St Leonard's Primary School on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

No formal responses to the local consultation have been received by the school organisation team or by the school either via email or letter and there were no negative comments raised at the local community event.

In addition, a neighbourhood consultation event was undertaken on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 by Strategic Property and Entrust colleagues at the Kingston Centre.

To progress this scheme further, a statutory proposal/notice is now required to be published, and this report seeks approval to publish the statutory proposal/notice early in 2022.

In addition, this report also seeks agreement that Delegated Decision authority can be used to approve this project to completion if no major objections are raised during the statutory proposal/notice process.

## **Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Approves the publication of a statutory proposal for the proposed relocation and expansion of St. Leonard's Primary School, Stafford.
- b. Subject to no major objection to the proposal, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Families and Communities be authorised to implement the proposal at the end of the representation period.



<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Cabinet – Wednesday 15 December 2021**

### **Proposed Relocation and Expansion of St Leonard’s Primary School, Stafford**

#### **Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Approves the publication of a statutory proposal for the proposed relocation and expansion of St. Leonard’s Primary School, Stafford.
- b. Subject to no major objection to the proposal, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Families and Communities be authorised to implement the proposal at the end of the representation period.

#### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

1. The County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all children and young people resident in Staffordshire who wish to attend a publicly funded school.
2. The County Council’s vision is for a Connected Staffordshire where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. Every child deserves a good education and to be “ready for life”, with the drive to want to attain a good job and the skills to do so.
3. The recommendation in this report will help to ensure children have access to a good education so that they are well prepared for their adult lives. It will promote independence and responsibility for making positive choices affecting children’s health happiness and prospects.
4. The relocation and expansion of St Leonard’s Primary School will meet increased demand for school places as a result of local housing developments of circa 800 dwellings within close proximity to the school, and within walking distance to support sustainable journeys to school.

5. St Leonard's occupies a Grade II listed Victorian building, on a cramped site, without an attached playing field. The school cannot be expanded to provide places for children from the residential developments.
6. The Kingston Centre site is large enough to move St Leonard's into a purpose-built building and enable the expansion by 210 places to create a 2FE, 420-place school.
7. The project is to be partly financed by Section 106 contributions received, sealed or requested from housing developers totalling circa £2.4m and funds from the Basic Need Capital Programme.
8. Cabinet agreed on the 19th August 2020 to the retention of the Kingston Centre for potential future use as a primary school which enables the relocation and expansion of St. Leonards Primary School.
9. The Kingston Centre provides an opportunity after remodelling and building work to accommodate the relocated school. The relocation would enable the school to expand to meet the expected demand for primary school places generated by local housing development. The proposal would enable the school to increase its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 30 to 60, increasing its maximum capacity by 210 places (from 210 places (1FE) to 420 places (2FE)). The project would also provide a modern learning environment and on-site playing field for current and future families
10. An additional report was submitted to pre-cabinet (3rd March 2021) providing an update of detailed plans to relocate and expand the St. Leonard's. The report provided a proposal to deliver the scheme in two phases which was covered with a single planning application and land allocation that facilitates that growth.
  - a. Phase 1 to be a 1.5 forms of entry (FE) primary school.
  - b. Phase 2 to provide an additional 0.5 FE to the first phase to create a 1½ FE – 2 FE (315 - 420 place) primary school.
11. This will enable the school to increase the PAN incrementally initially to 45 (1½FE) then to 60 (2FE) in line with the proposed housing growth.
12. The Phase 1 relocation and initial remodelling is programmed to be completed by September 2023. The Phase 2 extension project will be undertaken at a later date and will be dependent upon when the new housing comes forward in the local area. A scheme plan is contained in Appendix 1.

13. Agreement was given by Executive Officer Delegated Decision on the 18th August 2021 that a statutory public consultation on the proposal could be undertaken. The consultation was held between the 21st September and 19th October 2021. A local consultation event was held at the school on the 28th September 2021.
14. In addition, a neighbourhood consultation event was undertaken by Strategic Property and Entrust colleagues at the Kingston Centre.

### **Local Community Consultation Feedback**

15. No formal responses to the local consultation have been received by the school organisation team or by the school either via email or letter.
16. A positive local community event was held where officers and the school answered practical questions about the proposal to relocate and expand St Leonard's to the Kingston Centre.
17. Positive comments about the school design were received by numerous attendees; an onsite kitchen, the attached playing field and library were all identified as benefits to the school. The school answered questions on how classes would be taught and the school's ethos.
18. There were questions asked about pedestrian access and the traffic impact of the new site but also acknowledgements that the traffic safety issues at the current site would be eradicated.
19. Other questions raised were in relation to the future use of the school, its detached playing field and any land not required for school provision at the Kingston centre. It was explained that nothing had yet been agreed and that the school was a grade II listed building.

### **Statutory Proposal/Notice**

20. The Head Teacher, governors and staff are in full support of the proposed relocation and expansion and welcome the proposed increase in primary school places at St Leonard's.
21. Following the positive response to a local consultation, the Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendation to publish a formal statutory proposal.
22. If approved, there would be a four-week representation period following the publication.
23. If no objections are received during the four-week representation period, the Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendation for the Deputy

Chief Executive and Director of Families and Communities be authorised to implement the proposal.

### **Legal Implications**

24. Local Authorities proposing to make changes and making decisions on changes to all categories of maintained schools must follow the statutory guidance "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools" (DfE, 2018).
25. Consent would be required from the Secretary of State for disposal of the playing field at St Leonard's Primary School, under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

26. A new 2FE primary school would typically cost circa £7 million. The proposed relocation and expansion of St Leonard's to a capacity of 2FE is estimated to cost £4.3 million, providing good value.
27. The first phase as detailed above is estimated to cost £3.3 million as outlined in the pre-cabinet report 3rd March 2021.
28. The project is to be partly financed by Section 106 contributions received, sealed or requested from housing developers totalling circa £2.4m and funds from the Basic Need Capital Programme.
29. As usual, funds would be committed from the Basic Need Capital Programme in lieu of receiving Section 106 receipts secured in legal agreements.
30. It must be noted that Section 106 contributions are not guaranteed. Developers may submit a viability assessment to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for consideration when determining the planning application. All planning obligations necessary to mitigate the impact of the development will be considered. The determination of the planning application may include a reduction or removal of the financial contribution for education infrastructure. If there is a shortfall in funding, funds would be drawn from the Basic Need Capital Programme.

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1– Scheme Plan

Checklist and Executive Summary CIA

## Contact Details

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