

Report to Cabinet

13 September 2023

Subject:	Schools Capital Programme; Shenstone Lodge School, The Brades Lodge, City Road, Tividale, Oldbury – Proposed Expansion
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Member Cllr Hackett
Director:	Director – Children and Education Michael Jarrett
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Martyn Roberts School Place Planning and Capital Manager School Organisation Paul Smith, Interim Assistant Director Inclusive Learning Services

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to the allocation of £1,264,000 from the Department of Education’s (DfE) High Needs Provision Capital Allocation to extension works to The Brades Lodge, Shenstone Lodge School, Lower City Road, Tividale, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2HA as part of the Schools Capital Programme 2023-26.
- 1.2 That subject to 1.1, in accordance with the council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules – July 2022, the Director - Children and Education be authorised to award a contract to Seddon Construction Limited to deliver the construction works, following a compliant procurement exercise, in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education.



- 1.3 That subject to 1.1 and 1.2, the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into any legal agreements on terms agreed by the Director – Children and Education as required, to complete the extension works at the school.
- 1.4 that in connection with 1.1 and 1.2 the following actions identified within the appraisal report be implemented to avoid exposure to significant risks in achieving objectives:-
- That cost estimates are reviewed for reasonableness and to ensure that additional costs could be managed within the allocated funding.
 - That the project plan is reviewed to ensure that delivery can be achieved within agreed timescales and will not result in additional costs in providing alternative school accommodation.
 - That the corporate risk register is reviewed to ensure that all risks are appropriately identified and assessed, with adequate mitigation.
 - Ensure post project evaluation includes specific outcomes, along with benchmarking of final costs to assess value for money.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 There is a need to provide additional school places for children / young people with SEND. The Brades Lodge has been identified as a school where additional capacity for SEMH or ASD places can be provided.
- 2.2 On 5 May 2023 the Director – Children and Education approved that the current design work for The Brades Lodge could proceed to RIBA Stage 3 for the design of a new teaching block at the school.
- 2.3 RIBA Stage 3 has now been completed and initial designs have been checked with building control, planning and technical services.
- 2.4 Authority is now required to proceed to RIBA 4 through to RIBA 7 to appoint a contractor to complete the build of the new teaching block.
- 2.5 A financial appraisal has been undertaken by Strategic Finance which recorded a score of 67% with recommended actions to mitigate potential risks to the Council. The appraisal report is attached Appendix A.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People</p> <p>The recommendations in this report support:</p> <p>Ready for school</p> <p>B9 We will provide enough good school places that offer families choice and confidence that their children can experience high quality education and achieve good outcomes.</p> <p>B10 We will work with schools and other learning providers to improve educational outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Children and young people that need more support</p> <p>B16 We will ensure that children and young people with SEND can access high quality local services when they need them, by working with partners to ensure there is a comprehensive local offer available to children and families.”</p>
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4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Local Authorities must ensure there are sufficient school places for all pupils including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. There has been a significant rise in demand for specialist places in the Borough. The population of children and young people (C/YP) with SEND requiring additional support through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has risen to above 3,000 plans. If current growth in population continues it is predicted that there could be an estimated 3,500 C/YP with an EHCP by 2025. The most significant rise has been over the last 2 years, with an additional 500 C/YP requiring a plan.
- 4.2 The local authority has identified several strategies to support C/YP with an EHCP who require specialist placements. One of these is to expand specialist provision for C/YP with social, emotional and mental health needs in both Primary and Secondary age ranges through either expansion of current Special School provision or creating additional resource bases across both ages phases.



- 4.3 In January 2022, Sandwell had 319 C/YP with an EHCP whose primary area of need was Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties. This is 15.2% of all C/YP with EHCPs. Not all of these pupils require a Specialist placement. Currently the Authority commissions 95 places at Shenstone Lodge School which has 2 sites; 57 on the Primary site at Shenstone Lodge, Birmingham Road, Shenstone, and 38 at the Secondary site, Brades Lodge, City Road, Tividale. The Primary site has some Year 7 pupils due to lack of capacity at the Secondary site. The remainder of secondary aged pupils requiring specialist SEMH are currently attending independent schools both in and outside of the borough.
- 4.4 Shenstone Lodge School provides places for children with SEMH difficulties. For Key Stage 1, 2 places are provided at Shenstone Lodge School, and for Key Stage 3, 4 places are provided at The Brades Lodge. Shenstone Lodge School provides 95 places for children. 38 of those places are for Key Stage 3 – 4 at The Brades Lodge School.
- 4.5 A feasibility study and outline design have been produced and identified that the Brades Lodge site can support an increase in capacity. The new accommodation will enable the school to provide between 60 -70 total pupil places dependent of the needs of the children from September 2024.
- 4.6 The expansion will provide the following accommodation;
- Science Lab with Prep room
 - Art Room
 - Food Technology Room with prep room
 - Workshop with prep room
 - 2 General Classrooms
 - 2 Recovery rooms
 - Office
 - Unisex toilets
 - Accessible / staff toilet
- 4.7 The estimated cost of the project is £2.514million. The school's academy trust, Manor Hall Academy Trust, has agreed to contribute £1.25million towards the cost of the build. Chief Officer delegated approval was granted by the Director – Children and Education in



November 2022 to fund initial feasibility at a cost of £80,000, and further authority was obtained in May 2023 for £135,300 to fund detailed design.

- 4.8 The proposed works are scheduled for completion by August 2024 to ensure a sufficient supply of pupil places are provided at the school to support the council's drive to expand provision within the Borough.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Places at The Brades Lodge are not increased: Sandwell pupils continue to attend schools outside of the Borough at an increased cost to the council.
- 5.2 Adaptation of the existing school: the original building was constructed as a community centre with a small multi-classroom extension provided when the school took occupation of the site. Given the specific design for a community centre with an inner quad, recent consideration has been given to re-model and extend the existing buildings but this proved cost prohibitive due to the extent of demolition and reformation that would be required to provide a conducive teaching environment.
- 5.3 Relocation of the school: Shenstone Lodge School is now an Academy, with the existing site held by the Manor Hall Academy Trust holding a long leasehold in the land. The council does not have either an alternative site or the capital funding to provide a replacement school. An expansion of the existing school is better value for money.

6 Implications

Resources:	A balance of £5,503,757 High Needs Provision Capital Allocation grant funding is held by the Authority to fund the provision of new special school places. It is proposed to allocate a further £1,264,000 to complete the build at The Brades Lodge.
Legal and Governance:	In accordance with the Education Act 1996 the council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient schools available for the children of Sandwell.



	<p>The council shall ensure that any procurement of contracts necessary for this proposal are undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules.</p>
<p>Risk:</p>	<p>The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been complied with – to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation, financial, environmental and reputation risks.</p> <p>Based on the information provided, it is the officers’ opinion that for the significant risks that have been identified, arrangements are in place to manage and mitigate these effectively.</p> <p>If this report is not agreed, then the council will risk having an insufficient level of SEND school places which is contrary to the council’s statutory responsibility. If there is an insufficiency of SEND school places this will have a detrimental impact on children's future access to school places within Sandwell and the council’s reputation will be detrimentally affected.</p> <p>Early risk analysis identified that approval of the report could introduce an amber risk to the project due to volatility of rising prices within the construction industry over the past 24 months. Sufficient mitigation measures are being managed to finalise the scope of works: detailed early stage with the contractor to provide estimated project costs at each stage: and allowance for a project contingency.</p> <p>The council’s directorate risk register currently includes an amber risk in respect of school place planning. The recommendations above if approved, will assist in the continued mitigation of this risk.</p>



	<p>In addition, improvements to the condition of school buildings may assist in mitigating some of the risks arising from insured perils (such as storms, floods, fire etc) and therefore mitigate the financial costs associated with such events.</p> <p>A Project Risk Register will continue to be managed during the lifetime of the project to ensure that time, cost and quality are continually monitored to mitigate any risk to the council once the project is finalised. There are currently no significant risks identified.</p>
Equality:	<p>The proposed feasibility and design for a new build scheme at Brades Lodge will not present a negative impact, or disadvantage any end user from an equality perspective.</p> <p>A design for an outline scheme informed by the feasibility study will ensure that the final solution will be age appropriate and provide accessibility, both for physical and curriculum delivery needs.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>These project proposals will build upon established SEND provision.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact for children and young people because the project will provide SEND school places at an outstanding school.</p>
Social Value:	<p>In supporting the provision of sufficient SEND school places for children and young people, the new facilities at Shenstone Lodge School will enhance and improve the teaching environments for all.</p>
Climate Change:	<p>The specification for the outline design will look to build upon, and use exemplar sustainable school designs built through the council's School's Capital Programme.</p> <p>The council has numerous examples of innovative school buildings where the construction and</p>



	<p>infrastructure have been built with the impact of climate change in mind.</p> <p>Equally the final design solution for Brades Lodge will have to meet prevailing Building Regulations and targets set out in the Black Country Plan.</p> <p>The construction fabric of the Block will need to provide for it to be demountable and materials that can be re-used at end of life of the building.</p>
<p>Corporate Parenting:</p>	<p>The report recommendations will provide additional SEND places in the borough. Those places will be available to all children including those in Sandwell's care, enabling / supporting them to reach their potential.</p>

7. Appendices

Appraisal report

8. Background Papers

None

