

# **Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday, 19 March 2018**

## **Additional Information**

### **5. Consideration of Cabinet and Cabinet Panel on School Organisation Decisions**

Appendix 2 – Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Panel on School Organisation held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 (Pages 5 - 8)

This page is intentionally left blank

## NOTICE OF DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION HELD ON THURSDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018

### 10. **Proposal to Increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) at Brimble Hill Primary Special School from 77 to 85 from September 2018**

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School attainment, and the Head of Education, submitted a joint report seeking the Panel's agreement to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) that is recognised by the Local Authority as reserved for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at Brimble Hill School, Swindon from 77 to 85 Pupils from 1st September 2018.

The report set out the results of the consultation process held in late 2017 and early 2018 on the proposal to increase PAN and summarised the responses received by the local community.

In reaching its decision, the Cabinet Panel confirmed that it

- had carefully considered the joint report and the representations made at the meeting by Council Officers **along with the representations made at public question time.**
- was satisfied that
  - o it had the necessary information in order to make the decision referred to above,
  - o the Statutory Notice complied with the statutory requirements,
  - o the statutory consultation was carried out properly prior to the publication of the Notice, and
  - o the Notice did not relate to any other published proposal.
- had carefully considered the factors to be considered by the decision makers, as set out in the statutory guidance from the Department for Education in April 2016, *Guidance for decision-makers: Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals.*

The Cabinet Panel's decision was to approve the proposals as set out in the statutory notice to:

1. Increase the PAN that is recognised by the Local Authority as reserved for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at Brimble Hill School, Swindon from 77 to 85 Pupils from 1st September 2018.

The reasons for the decision were as follows:

#### Education standards and diversity of provision

The Cabinet Panel believed that the Local Authority was responding to the Government's wish to see a dynamic system in which the best schools are able to expand and spread their ethos and success. In February 2018, OFSTED reported

that Brimble Hill Primary Special School continued to be rated as good.

The proposal to increase the PAN at Brimble Hill Primary Special School had been developed to respond to the service commissioners identifying a requirement for places for at least eight additional pupils.

#### A school-led system with every school an academy

The Cabinet Panel noted that Brimble Hill Primary Special School was a Local Authority maintained school. Therefore, the proposal was not consistent with the Government's policy - a school-led system with every school an academy. However, the proposal would increase the school-led provision in Swindon by increasing the number of places Brimble Hill Primary Special School could offer.

#### Demand

Cabinet Panel noted that Brimble Hill Primary Special School was very popular with parents. It was operating not only at full capacity but also with a waiting list. Brimble Hill Primary Special School recognised the important role that parents play in the life of the school, and their preference for their children to attend this school.

The Panel noted that in common with many Local Authorities, Swindon had seen a large increase in the number of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN). These children could struggle with attending a mainstream primary school.

The Panel noted that the Local Authority was under a specific duty to respond to representations from parents about the provision of new schools, including requests to establish new schools or make changes to existing schools.

#### School size

Brimble Hill Primary Special School had 77 pupils on roll and the ability to take flex the intake to accommodate 85 as the relevant regulations allowed an increase above the PAN within a limit of 10%. The Panel noted that the increasing the PAN to 85 would allow the school to accept up to 93 pupils.

#### Proposed admission arrangements (including primary provision)

The Cabinet Panel noted that the proposed increase in PAN would be incorporated into the space already allocated at the school for 5 – 11 years olds.

In addition, the Panel noted that all pupils would be required to have Statements of Special Educational Need or an Education Health and Care Plan, which would be commissioned by the local authority.

#### National Curriculum

The Cabinet Panel believed that the proposed changes to the PAN at Brimble Hill Primary Special School would offer the high quality education currently provided to students to more pupils in the area. The School had an excellent record of

delivering a broad range of subjects and the students made outstanding progress during their time at the school. By increasing the admission number, the school would seek to extend this opportunity to make progress to the additional pupils.

The Panel also had confidence in the capacity of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body to continue to deliver a high standard of education to the pupils and parents it serves.

#### Equal opportunity issues

The Cabinet Panel believed that there would not be any adverse sex, race, or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed. A diversity impact assessment had been carried out which had not identified any issues.

#### Community cohesion

The Cabinet Panel believed that Swindon Community Cohesion was borne out of all stakeholders working together to facilitate high aspiration, create equity in terms of life opportunities and achievements, increase awareness/appreciation of difference and diversity, challenge discrimination, develop resilience to manage change, promote connections between different communities and encourage positive citizenship. All schools were called to meet this aspiration.

The Panel noted that the proposal aimed to create a range of provision and support that could respond to the needs of pupils and parents' preferences.

The Panel noted further that Brimble Hill Primary Special School had an excellent reputation for providing high quality education and care for its pupils. Increasing the PAN would continue to provide a supportive environment for more children to ensure they continue to develop the skills and knowledge required to move successfully into secondary school education.

#### Travel and accessibility

The Cabinet Panel noted that the proposals would not unreasonably extending journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from sustainable travel due to unsuitable routes e.g. for walking, cycling etc. Panel Members were made aware that there was surplus capacity on existing school transport, if required.

#### Funding

The Cabinet Panel noted that if approved there would be no capital funding required for the proposal to increase the PAN at Brimble Hill Primary Special School.

#### School premises and playing fields

The Cabinet Panel noted that the proposal to increase the PAN would not include any conversion of existing accommodation. It would not reduce the space available on the site for outdoor pitches and games courts. The proposal would enable the

school to continue to provide suitable outdoor space for physical education in accordance with the school curriculum.

Views of Interested Parties

The Panel noted that the consultation process had been followed and that of the 44 respondents, all were in favour of the proposal.

In analysing the comments, the Panel noted that respondents cited the quality of the school, the rising demand for places, and the specialist education provided as reasons to support the proposed increase in the PAN.

*Date of Publication of Draft Decisions: 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018*

*Issued to Members of the Scrutiny Committee: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018*