

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION - Councillor Fiona Baker

Report Title	Proposal for Hunsbury Park SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) unit to operate in part from Chiltern Primary from October 2023
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List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Other Director	Ben Pearson Stuart Lackenby	07/09/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Craig Forsyth	23/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Statutory Notice 22 June 2023

Proposal to expand and operate the Hunsbury Park SEND unit from an annex site at Chiltern Primary School.

Related links:

12 July Cabinet report to establish 50-place SEND unit

[Decision - Proposal to establish a 50 place Special Educational Needs & Disability \(SEND\) unit for pupils with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Condition \(ASC\) at Hunsbury Park Primary School, Northampton - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report seeks approval from Cabinet Members to:

Proceed with the creation of 55 additional places for primary aged children with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), by expanding and operating the Hunsbury Park Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) unit from an annex site at Chiltern primary school as detailed in this report.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 A statutory consultation took place between 22 June 2023 and 19 July 2023, for part of the Hunsbury SEND unit to operate from Chiltern Primary school instead of the original plans for the entire unit to operate on the Hunsbury Park site from September 2023. The provision caters for primary age pupils who are in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) with a primary need of ASC.

2.2 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) originally established plans for a Hunsbury Park 50-place SEND Unit to be created in two phases. Phase 1 saw 20 places being delivered at Hunsbury Park Primary, for new pupils attending from September 2022 in years reception, 1 and 2 (KS1). However, due to construction constraints and a delayed delivery date, the remaining provision, which was planned as part of phase two for 30 places in years 3-6 (KS2), cannot be accommodated on the same site.

2.3 As a result, WNC has explored alternative options with sufficient spare accommodation having been identified at Chiltern Primary School, Northampton. This will enable the Hunsbury Park SEND unit to operate as an annex site at Chiltern and the increased space will allow for 45 new SEND places to be created. 30 KS2 places will be available for new children to start from Monday 2 October 2023 and a further 15 KS2 places will be created in time for new children to start from September 2024.

Operating part of the Hunsbury Park SEND unit at Chiltern primary will also enable a further 10 places to be created on the Hunsbury site as part of construction work due to be completed in January 2024. Overall, this will result in a total of 75 much needed new places being created during both phases – 25 above the original plans.

Table 1 - summary of changes to Hunsbury Park unit delivery

Original proposal	New proposal
50-place SEND unit at Hunsbury Park Primary to be delivered in two phases. First 20 places to be delivered from September 2022.	Hunsbury Park Primary site – key stage 1 places: Total places already delivered: 20 Total number of new places to be delivered by Jan 24 (subject to project delivery times) – 10 Total places: 30

Further 30 places to be delivered from September 2023.	Chiltern Primary site – key stage 2 places: Total new places being delivered by 2 Oct 2023 – 30 Total new places being delivered by Sept 2024 – 15 Total places: 45 Total planned new places: 75
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This report will provide a summary of all responses received during the period of consultation for the outlined proposal, following the publication of the following statutory notice - *Proposal to expand and operate the Hunsbury Park Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) unit from an annex site at Chiltern primary school. Please refer to appendix A.*

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Approve the creation of 55 new Hunsbury Park SEND places, for children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) of which 45 places will operate from an annex site at Chiltern primary school, Northampton and a further 10 will be created on the Hunsbury Park site.
- b) Notes the responses received during the 4-week consultation period on the proposal

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is **mandatory and must be completed**)

4.1 The objective of this proposal is to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its statutory obligation of providing a sufficiency of SEND places in West Northamptonshire.

4.2 The proposal will provide an increased number of SEND places and will help ensure that children with ASC are able to access education in a provision that is best placed to meet their individual needs.

4.3 The proposal can be considered to benefit all West Northamptonshire primary schools as it will reduce the need for mainstream school settings to provide places to children with additional needs, where that provision is not best placed to meet a child’s additional needs.

4.4 The recommended course of action will reduce pressure on the High Needs Block (HNB) element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) via a reduction in the number of children being required to be placed in more expensive out of county and independent provisions to meet their individual needs.

5. Report Background

5.1 The earlier Cabinet reports of 3 May and 12 July (shown as appendices 2&3) set out the following:

- Current demand for specialist places within West Northamptonshire
- Future demand for specialist places in west Northampton shire
- Future projects to provide additional SEND places

- 5.2 All current specialist setting within the maintained school and academy sector that are in West Northamptonshire have reached or exceeded their capacity. As a result of this WNC has had to utilise independent and out of county specialist provision to ensure students in receipt of an Education Health Care (EHC) plan can access education and learning opportunities. Providing places in this way is more expensive and less cost effective than creating provision in local schools and academies.
- 5.3 This alternative option to create part of the Hunsbury Park unit on the Chiltern Primary school site will alleviate some of the forecasted and imminent pressure on SEND places.
- 5.4 A statutory consultation was undertaken on part of the Hunsbury SEND provision, operating from Chiltern Primary school instead of the original plans for the entire unit to operate solely on the Hunsbury Park site from September 2023. The provision caters for primary age pupils who are in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) with ASC.
- 5.5 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) originally established plans for a 50 place SEND Unit to be created at Hunsbury Park Primary School in two phases. Phase 1 caters for children in Key Stage 1 classes – Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Phase 2 will cater for children in Key Stage 2 classes – Years 3 to 6.
- 5.6 In November last year, under Phase 1 of the project, a specialist unit creating 20 new places for key stage 1 children with ASD and Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) was opened at Hunsbury Park Primary School. However, due to construction constraints and a delayed delivery date, the remaining provision of 30 places for Phase 2 cannot be accommodated on the same site.
- 5.7 As a result, WNC has explored alternative options with sufficient spare accommodation having been identified at Chiltern Primary School, Northampton. The unit at Chiltern Primary, which will cater for children in Key Stage 2, Years 3 to 6, will continue to be operated by Hunsbury Park Primary School and their specialist SEND staff, with plans to open fully from Monday 2 October 2023.
- 5.8 The additional 30 places will be achieved via the refurbishment of existing classrooms to provide a modern and fit for purpose teaching environment for new pupils. The scheme will also provide further bespoke outdoor learning facilities and dedicated specialist areas such as new hygiene rooms. The accommodation at Chiltern will also allow for an additional 15 places to be created from September 2024, taking the total number of places delivered under Phase 2 to 45.
- 5.9 Relocating Phase 2 to Chiltern primary will also enable a further 10 places to be created on the Hunsbury site as part of the first phase of work due to be completed in January 2024. Overall, this will result in a total of 75 much needed new places being created during both phases – 25 above the original plans.
- 5.10 The Council and Hunsbury Park Primary have been liaising closely with the schools and affected families who have been made aware of the proposals.

- 5.11 This proposal forms part of wider plans for Hunsbury Park Primary and Chiltern Primary to work more closely together in order to improve outcomes overall. Known as a ‘soft federation’ the arrangements will allow both schools to carry out some functions jointly, such as through joint committees and joint board meetings, with a focus on effective collaboration improving key strategic areas. The local authority is supportive of this measure to protect and strengthen LA (Local Authority) maintained schools.
- 5.12 Under this proposal, an executive leadership model has now been implemented with the current headteacher at Hunsbury Park Primary, acting as the new Executive Headteacher at Chiltern Primary. The Executive Headteacher will take a strategic role in both schools with an overarching statutory responsibility of leading the school’s day to day activities in each school and overseeing the SEND provision on both sites.
- 5.13 The proposal to move phase two of the Hunsbury Park Primary SEND provision, to the Chiltern Primary School site helps to address the need for good provision, providing additional places in a faster timeframe whilst under the same leadership, ensuring quality of education and learning is maintained.
- 5.14 This proposal forms part of a wider programme of works that aims to deliver up to 600 new SEND places across West Northants by September 2025.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 As set out in the earlier report of 3 May and 12 July 22 (links to reports shown at the start of report), if this proposal is not approved, this will result in WNC failing to fulfil its statutory obligation of providing sufficiency of SEND places in West Northamptonshire. The Council would need to work fast to secure places in the independent sector for children that required places. This would be difficult to achieve and be more expensive and further strain the High Needs Budget (HNB) and Delegated School Grant (DSG).
- 6.2 The additional 30 places initially, and increasing to 45 places in subsequent years, will be achieved via the refurbishment of existing classrooms to provide a modern and fit for purpose teaching and learning environment for pupil with primarily ASC. The scheme will also provide further bespoke outdoor learning facilities and dedicated specialist areas such as new hygiene rooms.
- 6.3 A summary of the responses received during the consultation on this proposal can be found in section 7 of this report. The majority of the consultation responses received were in support of this proposal.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The capital cost of both renovating the accommodation at Chiltern Primary to create a bespoke unit, along with expanding the existing unit at Hunsbury, in order to create a total of 55 new places, is expected to cost £1.8m.

7.1.2 The cost of the project will be funded through a mixture of the SEND capital grant and council borrowing.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 LA must follow the statutory guidance to establish a new SEND unit at a maintained school, this is defined in the DfE (Department for Education) guidance booklet, 'Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools' and prescribed in the 'The School Organisation (prescribed alterations to maintained schools) Regulations 2013'. The statutory which encompasses the consultation process is provided in section 7.4 of this report. WNC will fully comply with the required statutory process.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are significant risks attached to a decision not to proceed with this proposal at the current time, these risks would relate to WNC's ongoing ability to fulfil its statutory obligations of providing a sufficiency of SEND places and compromise its ability to allocate specialist school places to pupils in receipt of an EHC plan in a timely manner.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 The statutory process that governs school organisational changes of this nature is prescribed in the 'The School Organisation (prescribed alteration to maintained schools) Regulations 2014'. The consultation was carried out in line with DfE guidance.

Stage	Description	When/ How?
1	Publication of statutory notice	Through local newspapers, notifications to families through schools, and by displaying statutory notices outside both schools
2	Representation (formal consultation)	Statutory period of 4 weeks : 22 June – 19 July 2023
3	Decision	To be made at WNC cabinet meeting scheduled 19 September 2023
4	Implementation	New SEND unit (partially) opens from Monday 2 October 2023 (if approved).

7.4.2 Details of the consultation and an opportunity to respond were sent to:

- The Governing Body at Hunsbury Park Primary School and Chiltern Primary School
- Staff at Hunsbury Park Primary and Chiltern Primary School
- Parents of Hunsbury Park Primary School and Chiltern Primary School
- Other nearby schools;
- Local Academy Trusts;
- Local Councillors;
- The local MP;

- Local Diocesan Authorities;
- Other appropriate stakeholder i.e., SEN community and voluntary organisation

7.4.3 There were in total 42 completed responses in total with the majority – 31 consultees (74%), responding in agreement to the proposal. These respondents were from a varied and representative audience which included staff, parent/guardians, SEN professionals and residents. Only 8 disagreed (19%) with the proposal and 3 consultees did not respond ‘not answered’.

Question 1 - Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for additional SEND provision in Northampton to serve children and young people with autistic spectrum disabilities (ASD)? - Need agree/disagree

Response Question 1

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Total respondents
39	2	1	42

Question 2 - Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to establish a new initial 30 place, with a future potential of up to 45 place SEND unit catering to pupils with a primary need of autistic spectrum disabilities (ASD) that will be run by Hunsbury Park Primary school but on the site of Chiltern Primary School? - New school agree/disagree

Response Question 2

Agree	Disagree	Not answered	Total respondents
31	8	3	42

7.4.4 The full set of consultation responses will be sent to all cabinet members prior to the Cabinet meeting 19 September, in order that all opinions expressed by stakeholders were given full consideration prior to any decision being made on this proposal.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 Not applicable

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The decision to issue a public notice of WNC’s intent to establish a new SEND unit at Chiltern Primary school and launch a 4-week consultation on the proposal has no related climate impact should the proposal be given approval to progress.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The proposal to establish a SEND unit at the school will have significant positive impact on the community, by providing specialist provision in a local area which will support families and children with SEN needs.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Please refer to the links at the start of this report for the previous cabinet report of the 3 May and 12 July which provide more details on the original Hunsbury Park SEND unit plans.