

Delegated Decisions report



29 November 2022

DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION PLACES AT ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Zoe Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families)
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	5.6 To increase the number of high-quality local placements for children and young people
Wards affected	Woughton & Fishermead / All Wards

Executive Summary

St Paul's Catholic School is a secondary school with resourced provision for children aged 11 to 18 with communication and interaction needs. Currently there are 28 commissioned places, but with 34 pupils currently accessing the provision. The proposal is to increase the number of places available in the resourced provision by 24 places in years 7 to 11. These additional places will be phased in from September 2023, with all the places expected to be required by September 2025. This increase will be possible through a dedicated three classroom block to enable the growth in the resourced provision at St Paul's Catholic School. As well as increasing the overall places of communication and interaction resourced provision, this will address a current gap in provision for young people who are able to access a mainstream curriculum but require a smaller environment with greater levels of support.

A formal consultation on this proposal was carried out between 11 February to 8 April, a period of eight weeks. Notification of the consultation was sent to a range of stakeholders associated with the school, local authority and parent and carer groups and the consultation was also available online to give stakeholders the opportunity to submit views and discuss the proposed expansion plans in principle. Of the 199 responses to the consultation, 97% agreed with the proposals on communication and interaction resources provision in Milton Keynes, which included an additional 24 places and a unit provision at St Paul’s Catholic School. The statutory consultation took place between 7 October 2022 and 7 November 2022 confirmed support for the proposal.

1. Decisions to be Made

1.1 That the expansion of the Communication and Interaction Resourced Provision at St Paul’s Catholic School, creating an additional 24 places and the development of a dedicated three classroom block, be approved.

2. Why are the Decisions Needed?

2.1 The purpose of these proposals is to ensure sufficiency of places for children and young people with Special Educational Needs who have an Education, Health and Care Plan, and in relation to this proposal ensure sufficiency of places for children and young people with communication and interaction needs which is the area of need where the data analysis shows us is the area of most demand.

2.2 To provide more choice for children who can access a mainstream curriculum but require higher levels of additional support to be successful and to enable children in Milton Keynes with Education Health and Care Plans to be able to attend a local school and be part of their communities, continuing their sense of community belonging and ensure a greater consistency of education for the children of Milton Keynes.

2.3 There is a growing demand across specialist provision in Milton Keynes and alongside this we have seen a change in the needs of children entering the social communication departments in Milton Keynes. We have a growing number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (1641 in 2015/16 which has risen to 2571 in 2021/22) and 1.7% of children and young people are educated within specialist provision, meaning approximately 17 children and young people to every 1,000 will require specialist provision and solely from growth in Milton Keynes we need to develop a minimum of 40 places per year.

3. Implications of the Decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	N	Procurement	N
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

(a) Financial Implications

The revenue implications will be to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and will be built into the future years budgets as places are opened incrementally to mitigate potential pressures.

The Special Provision capital funding from the Department for Education (DfE) is to create specialist places at good or outstanding provision and/or improves facilities or develops new facilities. Local authorities are also permitted to combine the Special Provision funding with other capital funding.

(b) Legal Implications

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in Milton Keynes. Projects with the objective of enabling the Council to meet this duty would require funding via the Department for Education (DfE) Special Provision Capital Fund.

Local authorities are permitted to use the Special Provision funding for capital transactions which create new additional places at a good or outstanding provision and/or improves facilities or develops new facilities. Local authorities are also permitted to combine the Special Provision funding with other capital funding.

In contrast, local authorities are not permitted to use the Special Provision funding:

- to expand provision to create additional places for pupils who do not have education, health and care plans;
- to make reasonable adjustments that schools are required to fund as part of accessibility requirements (e.g. ramps or widening doorways);
- for revenue expenditure such as training or staff costs; and / or
- for maintenance work.

The DfE Special Provision Capital Fund guidance also stipulates local authorities are required to plan how they invest their allocation of Special Provision funding which includes consulting with parents and carers, schools, FE colleges and other institutions which offer special educational provision.

Any contracts for completion of the capital works shall need to be procured in compliance with procurement rules and legislation.

4. Alternatives

4.1 Do Nothing

There will not be sufficient special school places available to meet the increasing need for specialist school provision in Milton Keynes and there is a risk of increased reliance on higher cost independent provision.

If we are unable to provide appropriate places to meet children and young people's special educational need, at the right time, then we would not be able to deliver our statutory responsibilities.

5. Timetable for Implementation

Timetable:
4 November 2022 - statutory consultation concludes.
29 November 2022 - Delegated Decision.
January 2023 - implementation commences with recruitment and building works underway.
September 2023 - St Paul's Communication and Interaction Resourced Provision expands and dedicated three classroom block opens.

List of Annexes

Annex A Summary of Statutory Consultation Responses

Annex B Full Analysis of Informal Consultation

List of Background Papers

Full details on the consultation can be found here:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultations/development-communication-and-interaction-resourced-provision-st-pauls-catholic>