

**Wards Affected:**

All Wards

**ITEM 3****DELEGATED DECISION****14 MARCH 2017****A PROPOSAL TO EXPAND SLATED ROW SPECIAL SCHOOL TO INCLUDE A NEW SITE AT KENTS HILL PARK**

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Nolan (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

Report Sponsor: Caroline Marriott (Head of Delivery, Special Educational Needs and Disability)

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**Executive Summary:**

In making this proposal we are required to follow the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance related to (1) "expansion of an existing maintained school onto a new school site", and (2) guidance for decision makers on "making changes to a special educational need provision". (See background documents)

We are at stage five of the DfE process for "making prescribed alterations to maintained schools":

- 1) Informal consultation to gather views
- 2) Decision to proceed with statutory consultation
- 3) Publish a statutory notice (January 2017)
- 4) Formal consultation on a published proposal (January 2017)
- 5) Decision to proceed with the proposed alteration (March 2017)
- 6) Implementation, if agreed (January 2018)

This paper reports the results of the four week formal consultation and recommends that the council proceeds with the proposal to expand Slated Row School to include a new site at Kents Hill Park.

**1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 The proposal to expand Slated Row Special School to include a new site at Kents Hill Park without modification be approved.

**2. Issues**

- 2.1 Slated Row School is a community school in Wolverton which is judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. As our largest special school, it caters for pupils aged 4 to 19 with a range of complex needs in addition to their Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD). The school does not have the space to expand on its current site but there are an increasing number of children and young people across Milton Keynes with SEN. The school already had a vision to expand its services so it was proposed to expand onto a satellite site.

- 2.2 The new housing development at Kents Hill Park provided the opportunity for three education sites for our growing population - a primary, a secondary and a special school, all of which are in the process of being built. This is a cost effective way to commission a special school since pupils will be drawn from all over the borough and one building project for all three schools can save time and resources.
- 2.3 An informal consultation on the proposal to expand the provision at Slated Row School to include a new site at Kents Hill Park was carried out between 19 September 2016 and 4 November 2016. Notification of the consultation was sent to a range of stakeholders and the consultation was available online with an electronic response form in order to give stakeholders the opportunity to submit views. Of the 71 respondents to the consultation, 92% were in favour of the expansion. Following this consultation a delegated decision was made on 13 December 2016 to proceed to a formal consultation.
- 2.4 A statutory consultation took place between 12 January 2017 and 10 February 2017. As prescribed in the DfE's Statutory Guidance, a notice was published in the press and displayed at the entrances to Slated Row School. The consultation, including a detailed proposal document, was published on the council website and was emailed to stakeholders. Details of the consultation are included in **Annex C**.
- 2.5 There were 82 responses to the statutory consultation, 96% were in favour of the proposal; 3% disagreed with the proposal and 1% did not state their view (see **Annex C**). Themes of agreement were:
- (a) A bespoke secondary provision for pupils with MLD and additional complex needs will benefit the wider community with links with the mainstream school and Slated Row. The ability to share resources and expertise on both sites through the expansion of Slated Row is both necessary and positive.
  - (b) The growth in population means that there is increased demand for special school provision.
  - (c) The expansion will enable students to further develop their health and fitness through physical exercise and sports. Shared sports facilities and supervised integration with mainstream children will benefit pupils.
  - (d) Slated Row School will be able to expand its ethos and expertise onto a further site.
  - (e) Slated Row School is currently judged by Ofsted to be an outstanding school and has the expertise which it would readily be able to transfer to a new site.
  - (f) Staff are highly trained and have the expertise to develop a further site. They are particularly skilled in the use of therapeutic teaching approaches which are relevant to specific SEND so that the provision is broad and balanced.
  - (g) The school works well with Denbigh Teaching School, the LA and other special schools. It works particularly well with White Spire School,

which shares some of the same specific needs in their pupil populations.

2.6 Themes of concern together with officer responses are set out below:

- (a) One respondent felt that there was sufficient provision in Milton Keynes for children with MLD and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and that more provision is needed for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH).

*This proposal specifically focuses on our shortage of places for secondary school age pupils with complex needs.*

- (b) Secondary age children provide positive role models for the younger children and this could be lost if they are moved to the new site.

*The governing body and leadership team would agree the best arrangements to meet the needs of all their pupils. The school has also discussed this concern with parents/carers and activities are already identified for this to happen regularly.*

- (c) Concern that transport for pupils is maintained if they are moved to the new site.

*Slated Row School's catchment areas cover the whole borough since pupils are placed according to their need rather than geographically. The Home to School Transport policy applies to all families equally. Due to better public transport accessibility of Kents Hill Park compared to Wolverton, more students should be able to independently travel to school, developing their skills and making a step into life beyond Slated Row.*

- (d) In order to ease the transition for the children a high percentage of existing staff would need to transfer with the children to the new site. If the children are to transfer mid-way through the academic year their classes need to have a teacher and teaching assistants in place from the start of that academic year who will see them through the transition and transfer with them to the new site.

*Staff will be part of one structure with one leadership team and one governing body. The governing body would agree a structure to best meet operational and curriculum needs across both sites. The school states that an initial staff survey shows that a high number of staff would be happy to work on either site, supporting the use of high skilled staff and the keeping of the ethos.*

- (e) Concerns regarding security of the new site and in particular, security between other schools in the development.

*The school will have its own distinct access and physical boundaries. It will have its own distinct playing areas and will benefit from sharing some of the sports facilities at the secondary school.*

### 3. Options

#### (a) Option 1- Do nothing

Our high needs place planning identified a deficit of 241 places by 2020. This takes account of higher demand from population growth and the increasing complexity of needs in children and young people with SEN and/or disability. Data demonstrates a need for 40 additional places each year. The council will not be able to meet its statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places if we do nothing.

#### (b) Option 2 - Approve the proposal with modifications

Responses to the formal consultation do not suggest a modification.

#### (c) Option 3 - The council proceeds with the proposal to expand Slated Row School to include a new site at Kents Hill Park

**This is the recommended option.** Our policy 'A good local school for every child, Sept 2015' states "*We are proud of our successful maintained schools. Where there is a strong maintained school with the desire to expand that meets the qualification criteria for expansion, the council will consult on expanding the school.*" We have a preferred option to consider expansion of Slated Row School because it is 'Outstanding'. The school already had a vision to develop its provision so it was proposed to expand onto a satellite site. The opportunity was created at Kents Hill Park. The new special school is commissioned by the council specifically to meet our shortage of places for pupils of secondary school age with complex needs.

### 4. Implications

#### 4.1 Policy

Improving educational outcomes, and enabling everyone to achieve their full potential and experience choice and control are corporate priorities. Ensuring sufficient school places is a statutory duty.

#### 4.2 Resources and Risk

##### (a) Capital - Not relevant to this proposal

Revenue - Schools funding is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) so this proposal does not directly impact the General Fund. However there are significant pressures on the high needs block of the DSG and the changes to government policy regarding the national funding formula means it is unlikely that the LA will receive extra funding to support the cost of additional places. Funding additional places at a local special school will be more cost effective than placing children out of area so this proposal ensures appropriate prioritising of high needs places.

##### (b) Staff - Staff for the new site would be recruited as part of the existing Slated Row School staff structure. There will be one leadership team

and one governing body. Staff and trade unions are included in the stakeholder engagement.

- (c) Accommodation / Asset Management - The special school at Kents Hill Park will become a maintained school under the governance of Slated Row School. The site is owned by Milton Keynes Development Partnership and is on a 125 year lease to the council as a designated education site.

N	Capital	Y	Revenue	Y	Accommodation
Y	IT	N	MediumTerm Plan	Y	Asset Management

#### 4.3 Carbon and Energy Management

Travel will be reduced if we provide sufficient local places rather than transporting some children to out of area special schools. The building of the new special school at Kents Hill Park is resource-effective due to being built at the same time using the same contractors and materials as the new secondary school.

#### 4.4 Legal

- (a) This paper is written in accordance with new guidance from the *DfE "Guidance for decision makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals - April 2016"*
- (b) The Council has two months from 10 February 2017 (the closing date of the statutory consultation) to determine whether the change should proceed.

#### 4.5 Other Implications

Y	Equalities/Diversity	N	Sustainability	N	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

#### Background Papers:

DfE "*Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals*", April 2016.

[DfE Guidance for decision makers](#)

[Delegated decision report 1](#) November 2016: Proposal to expand Slated Row Special School to include a new site at Kents Hill Park

Annex A	Statutory Notice
Annex B	Complete Statutory Proposal
Annex C	Summary of responses to the statutory consultation
Annex D	Consideration of DfE guidance