

# OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED SATELLITE OF MEADOW SPECIAL SCHOOL ON THE HAREFIELD ACADEMY SITE AND INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PLACES

<b>Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Councillor Susan O'Brien
<b>Cabinet Portfolio(s)</b>	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
<b>Officer Contact(s)</b>	Nav Minhas – School Place Planning
<b>Papers with report</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> - Public Notice <b>Appendix 2</b> - Full Proposal <b>Appendix 3</b> - FAQ sheet <b>Appendix 4</b> – Full Consultation Responses

## HEADLINES

<b>Summary</b>	Cabinet will consider the outcome of Consultation on the proposed satellite of Meadow Special School on the Harefield Academy Site and increase in number of places.
<b>Putting our Residents First</b>	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People; Our Natural Environment; Our Built Environment; Our Heritage and Civic Pride; Strong financial management.</i>
<b>Financial Cost</b>	Estimates for the expansions of Meadow High and Harefield Academy amount to £16,984k in total to be funded from the Schools SRP/SEND capital programme. The expansions will deliver 180 permanent special needs places, a net increase of 98 from existing provision.
<b>Relevant Select Committee</b>	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
<b>Wards</b>	All, specifically Harefield Village & Colham & Cowley

## RECOMMENDATION

**That Cabinet consider the responses to the statutory consultation as set out in the report and Appendix 4 and approve the proposed satellite of Meadow High School at the Harefield Boarding Block and subsequent increase in number of places.**

## Reasons for recommendation

Meadow High School is the only Council maintained Secondary Special school, as well as the only Secondary Special for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties and Autism (MLD and ASD). It has continuously expanded over the past few years, with the January 2022 census roll being 256 pupils. This is now by far the largest special school, around 30% of all pupils in special schools in the borough. Pupils are taught in 3 separate “Pathways” to meet their individual mix of learning difficulties, physical, social, and other needs.

All the parents and staff have been involved in various meetings and had information on the proposals over the past six months, and issues have been clarified. There were relatively few responses to the formal consultation. There are currently 65 pupils in Pathway 1 who are taught in smaller groups, each by one teacher in one classroom, more similar to a primary model, and they do not use the specialist subject classrooms or teachers.

The school partially relies on four old double modular units which had previously been used on other sites which were intended for temporary use. They are unsuitable for use by pupils with limited mobility and are deteriorating, so need to be replaced one at a time over the next four years, which would reduce the total capacity at the school by 82 by 2026. However, the Local Authority need more places in the school to meet rising demand and reduce the use of independent placements, which are far more expensive per pupil and will increase the deficit on the High Needs Block.

The proposal is to move all Pathway 1 pupils to the new site into purpose built classrooms and other facilities, and grow from 65 to 90. This will change arrangements for some current pupils, some will have to travel further, whilst others will live nearer, since this is the only provision in a large borough. Pupils will have continuity of teachers and therapeutic staff and school. Pupils and parents will be supported by school and local authority staff with the transition to the new site. Furthermore, additional pupils will gain a place on both sites, who are currently turned away, and have to travel far out of the borough or receive only interim tuition. This is the quickest and most cost effective route to meeting the needs of Hillingdon pupils requiring a place at Meadow High School from 2024 and into the future.

The benefits of the satellite provision will ensure the pupils in Pathway One continue to receive access to the full National Curriculum adapted and individualised for their learning needs in a classroom-based approach, beneficial to pupils as it minimises transitions and maintains a safe, consistent approach to learning and support. The facilities being created will provide pupils increased access to specialist rooms, in the form of a dedicated food technology room, sensory and therapy spaces, a bespoke playground designed to meet all pupils' physical and sensory needs and larger and more spacious classrooms. As these facilities will be shared by only 90 pupils, opposed to the 260 on the Royal Lane site, it is anticipated pupils will greatly benefit from increased access, whilst maintaining a smaller, calmer provision for pupils and maximising independence. Where appropriate, accredited courses will be offered at the satellite site or pupils will be supported to access courses alongside their peers on the Royal Lane Site. Pupils will continue to benefit from a strong emphasis on 'real life' learning and our strong community cohesion approach, accessing transport training, community facilities for leisure and learning and work experience opportunities. Alongside opportunities for pupils to access social events alongside those at Royal Lane, it is anticipated that there will be greater opportunities for them to

act as peer role models themselves as they mature, supporting and guiding their younger peers as they prepare for adulthood.

Building a satellite of Meadow High School on the Harefield Academy site would enable the demolition and removal of the four huts in one go without losing pupils and allow building of extra places attached to the main building in 2023/24; which could be at least in part in double storey, with a smaller footprint than the huts. The proposed work at the current Meadow High School site and Harefield Boarding Block will provide 180 permanent special needs places, 90 at each site (82 places re-provided and 98 additional places) with a net gain of 98 places, and sufficient external play space on each site. There is no other educational site of the size available in the borough.

These proposed works have been discussed with DfE in outline and are included as the largest single project in the formal Council Deficit Safety Valve Submission made to DfE in March 2022, setting out how the Deficit can be reduced, mainly by adding more places, and including a bid for capital grant to fund this and other potential projects to create more places, and then the DfE will wipe off the current Deficit.

### **Democratic compliance / previous authority**

Cabinet in March 2022 has previously agreed to progress the expansion of Meadow High School and delegated future decisions in respect of the construction and works required to the Leader of the Council and relevant Cabinet Members. This decision is in respect of formally approving the statutory education school organisation proposals.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Need for places**

Meadow High School is a special school for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Complex needs, such as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) linked to MLD. The school currently has 256 pupils (January 2022 Census) on roll making it the largest Special school in the borough. Meadow High School and Hedgewood School (primary MLD school) are the only maintained schools in the borough with all other SEN schools being Academies.

Approximately 60% of the existing buildings at Meadow High School are currently being rebuilt under a Priority School Building Programme phase 2 (PSBP2) by the DfE to upgrade facilities for pupils to meet the required standards and add a dining hall. No extra places are being provided as part the PSBP2 works.

The school roll has grown rapidly since 2016 and the school has 82 pupils in the 4 temporary double modular classrooms on site that accommodate the extra pupils. As part of the PSBP2 works the DfE did not agree to replace these modular classroom unit as they deem them as temporary provision.

Due to the poor condition of the modular classroom units the school and the Council agreed that one double modular unit would be removed each year from the end of 2022 as they are coming

to the end of their serviceable life. This would lead to around 20 place reduction a year, for four years, seriously reducing or pausing accepting new pupils. However, the demand for the school continues to increase, and alternative places out of the borough are expensive. As part of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Safety Valve plan being negotiated with DfE to increase SEN places within schools in the borough including Meadow High School, as it is essential to reduce the Council reliance on out of borough placements. This supports pupils continuing to access local communities.

The proposed works will provide a net gain of 98 places works across both sites, Harefield Academy (*up to 90 additional places*) and the Meadow High School (*up to 90 minus 82 equalling 8 additional places*). The works at the Harefield Boarding Block will need to progressed first and once completed up to 90 pupils will relocated to this site from Meadow High School. This will free up the places to allow for the modular units to be demolished at Meadow High and the new replacement permanent block to be constructed, with no loss of current places. The overall capacity across both sites will be 354 places (*256 plus 8 at Meadow High and 90 places at Harefield*).

The proposal for the Harefield Boarding Block was originally initiated following discussions to avoid losing 82 places as it was necessary to take the opportunity to look at options to *increase* the number of places. The proposals have been discussed with DfE and Members in outline and discussions have taken place with the Meadow High School and Harefield Academy and DfE.

### **Proposals for Harefield Boarding Block**

An external Architectural Consultancy was appointed to carry out a feasibility assessment and details of the proposed development are outlined below. The proposed development at the Harefield Academy block will provide places for Pathway 1 pupils to increase capacity up to 90.

#### Existing site and building

The Harefield Boarding Block was constructed 10 years ago and was until a couple of years ago used as boarding facility for the academy of Watford Football Club, who joined the school roll. The boarding block is 3 storeys with an open central atrium across all 3 storeys. The bedrooms and kitchens are on the first and second floor around the edge of the building with corridor leading to these bedrooms overlooking the atrium. As the block is made up of a series of small rooms there is a requirement to reconfigure the internal area to provide spaces of suitably large size for use by a school. The block is timber framed structure with a large proportion of the partition walls between the bedrooms and kitchens acting as supporting walls for the building. This adds complexity and additional costs when creating rooms sizes large enough for classrooms and other spaces.

The Council owns the freehold for the Harefield Academy site including the boarding and the Academy has a long-term 150-year lease from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 for the whole site from the Council.

The intention is for The Trust to revert back part of the lease for this building and its immediate surrounding area to the Council as the freeholder for use by Meadow High School. Externally there is a Multi-Use Games Area MUGA and soft landscaped areas adjacent to the boarding block.

The area required for the school has been determined using Building Bulletin 104 (BB104) which is the space standards guidance document developed by the Department of Education for Special Schools. Based on BB104 there is insufficient floor area within the building to provide sufficient accommodation for the school, even when an infill of the atrium areas on the first and second floor is considered. Therefore, an extension to the existing building is required. The building will need to undergo an extensive adaptation and alterations works to make the building suitable for use as a school.

### Proposed works at Harefield Academy

A new two storey extension which will contain six classrooms is being proposed in planning application made 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The existing boarding block will contain 3 classrooms on the first floor with the other required ancillary area (offices, medical room, kitchen, dining/assembly areas) spread across all 3 floors. Overall this option is broadly in line with target area required under BB104.

The main advantage of the proposal is that the area provided closely meets the area requirements under BB104, the areas which will be used most often by pupils with mobility issues are restricted to the ground and first floor. With the inclusion of the Food Technology room within the development there will be no need to use any space within the main Harefield Academy building.

### **Proposals for an increase in pupil numbers at Meadow High School**

#### Existing site and buildings

This site consists of several buildings, with the main school building constructed in the 1960s, an extension to the building constructed in the 1990s which contains the Science and Technology classrooms. A standalone sixth form block was construction 8 years ago. There is also collections of temporary modular classrooms and huts which are beyond economic repair and will not be suitable for use beyond the next 2 to 3 years.

The main school building from the 1960s is currently being rebuilt by DfE funded Priority School Building Programme with improved facilities and a gym hall but will be adding any new places.

The school have indicated that they will stop using the temporary modular classrooms and huts over the next few years which will reduce the capacity of the school by 82 places, therefore the focus of the feasibility exercise on the Meadow High School site will be replace the accommodation that will be lost when the modular classroom units and huts stop being used with a building that can accommodate up to 90 pupils (a net gain of 8 places on this site).

The proposed work at the current Meadow High School site and Harefield Academy will provide 180 permanent special needs places, 90 at each site (82 places re-provided and 98 additional places) with a net gain of 98 places. The overall capacity across both sites will be 354 places (256 *plus 8 at Meadow High and 90 places at Harefield*).

Please note that the actual number of pupils will vary, dependant on their individual needs and the number in each class, classes have ranged between 8-11 pupils.

## Financial Implications

The expansions of Meadow School and Harefield Academy will be funded from the Schools SRP/SEND capital programme. Including prior years and pending Cabinet approval of 2021-22 year end capital budget re-phrasings, this programme amounts to £55,595k up to 2026/27, financed by Special Provision Capital Fund and High Needs Provision Capital grants. Annual previously confirmed grant allocations from 2018-2024 amount to £18,369k. In addition, the Council has recently been successful in securing further funding from the Department for Education, resulting from a bid for capital funding for several proposed schemes, linked to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit recovery safety valve agreement. The proposals within the bid included the expansions of Meadow School and Harefield Academy, with a figure of £16,984k included in the bid for the two expansions, based on latest pre-tender cost estimates.

The permanent provision of special needs places through these two expansion schemes will support delivery of the DSG recovery plan. Each additional place provided in the borough is estimated to achieve an average saving of £24k from reducing use of more expensive independent out of borough placements and £11k reductions in SEN transport costs. In total, 180 permanent new places will be created over both sites, an increase of 98 from existing provision.

## RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

### Consultation

Informal consultations were planned by Meadow High School to engage with stakeholders to answer any queries and take on board any concerns. Please see timeline of information sharing with families at Meadow High School regarding Northwood Road:

Date	Action
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> March 11am, 1pm and 6pm	<i>Information presentation by the Headteacher to all Meadow families</i>
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	<i>Information in the weekly bulletin</i>
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	<i>Letter to all families confirming their child's Pathway and expected site of provision for September 2023</i>
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March	<i>Whole school assembly with Headteacher regarding Northwood Road and Royal Lane developments</i>
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> March 6pm	<i>Information presentation by the Headteacher to all Meadow families</i>
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> March	<i>Pathway 1 assembly with Assistant Headteacher regarding Northwood Road developments</i>
Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March	<i>Information presentation by the Headteacher to Year 6 Pathway 1 transition families</i>
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 10am, 2pm and 6pm	<i>More detailed information session with Pathway 1 families. Q and A at the end.</i>

During the informal consultation with parents/ guardians, presentations were provided by the Headteacher to all Meadow families which are available as background papers on request, a FAQ

sheet **Appendix 3** was developed, and a questionnaire shared with Pathway 1 families. Conversations and meetings were also arranged with individual families.

### **Part 5, Statutory process:**

The prescribed alterations requires a minimum of a 4 week consultation period. The consultation was designed to ensure that the following received notification of the consultation, in line with the guidance “Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools”:

- the GB/LA (as appropriate);
- the parents of every registered pupil at the school - where the school is a special school;
- if it involves or is likely to affect a school which has been designated as having a religious character:
  - the local Church of England diocese;
  - the local Roman Catholic diocese; or
  - the relevant faith group in relation to the school;
- proposals affecting a special school should go to any LA that has commissioned a place at the school (i.e. all relevant authorities who have made an out of county/borough placement there); and
- any other body or person that the proposer thinks is appropriate e.g. any affected educational institutions in the area.

The consultation document was available from Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 on the consultation page of the Hillingdon Council website. This included a brief outline of the proposed change, the full proposal and a questionnaire to obtain feedback in direct response to each proposal.

Information regarding the consultation was publicised to the all the schools within the Borough.

As Hillingdon Council also receives school place applications from residents who live outside of the Borough, the consultation was designed to be inclusive. Therefore, officers contacted the following surrounding Local Authorities:

- London Borough of Ealing
- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Brent
- London Borough of Harrow
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Slough Borough Council

No responses were received.

The details of the proposal were also shared with the following groups: Parent Carer Forum and Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS).

## **Consultation Responses (set out in full in Appendix 4)**

**24** responses were received in total during the consultation period, with 22 of which were submitted via the online questionnaire and 2 were received by email.

### **Online Questionnaire responses are summarised below:**

1. **18** respondents stated that they had children under the age of 18 living in their household. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide information on their interest in the proposals.
  - A pupil - 0
  - A parent/carer/guardian - 11
  - A staff member – 2
  - A local resident - 2
  - Other – 6
  - Prefer not to say - 1
  
2. Respondents were invited to state which school(s) their child(ren) currently attend and the responses were as follows:
  - Charville Academy
  - Bishophalt
  - Coteford Junior School, St Bernard Catholic Grammar School & St Clement Danes
  - Hayes Park Primary School
  - Mainstream School with a SRP
  - Meadow High School x 3
  - Below School Age
  - No Longer at School
  - Pinner Park
  - Swakeleys School for Girls and Meadow High School
  
3. **12** respondents agreed with the proposed satellite site for Meadow High School at the Harefield Boarding Block:
  - Yes - 12
  - No - 10
  - Don't know – 0
  
4. Of the 9 respondents that answered 'No' or 'Don't know', reasons have been provided in Appendix 4.
  
5. **15** respondents agreed with the proposed 98 additional places for pupils on roll at Meadow High School:
  - Yes - 15
  - No- 5



- Don't know - 2
6. Of the 7 respondents that answered 'No' or 'Don't know', reasons have been provided in Appendix 4.
  7. 10 respondents agreed these proposed changes will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
    - Yes - 10
    - No- 12
    - Don't know – 0
  8. Of the 10 respondents that answered 'Yes', reasons have been provided in Appendix 4.
  9. 12 respondents confirmed that they had attended one of the Family Information presentations regarding the Meadow High School development plans:
    - Yes - 12
    - No - 10
  10. Additional comments from the questionnaire have been provided in **Appendix 4**.

#### **Consultation responses received via email:**

In addition to this the Local Authority received a total of 2 near identical email letter responses **Appendix 4** shows these in detail along with the Council and Meadow High School response to each point raised.

1 letter was sent on behalf of 3 sets of parents expressing their concerns and objections over the proposal which re-iterated many of the points already made and set out above. One parent confirmed that they had submitted both a response via the questionnaire and email to [education@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:education@hillington.gov.uk).

The school has liaised directly with the parents of pupils who have raised concerns about the new proposed provision.

#### **Conclusion**

The formal statutory consultation helped to collate views and queries of both parents and staff.

The consultation process outlined some of the concerns raised by a number of parents who have pupils currently attending Meadow School, but overall the school community can see the benefits of the proposal for the satellite site. This provision will also meet the needs of more Hillingdon pupils and parents. The LA and the school will continue to work hard with individual families to ensure a smooth transition and that positive education continues for all pupils. There will be an ongoing dialogue with parents, carers and families to work collaboratively to demonstrate the culture of inclusive practice at the heart of the LA and the school.

If approval is granted by the Council, the Education Service will notify the Department for Education and implement the proposal following the requirements set within the document “Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools” [School organisation: local-authority-maintained schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

### Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting the recommendation to approve the proposed satellite of Meadow High School at the Harefield Site.

The Council has recently secured funding from the Department for Education, resulting from a bid for capital funding for several proposed schemes, linked to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit recovery safety valve agreement. The expansions of Meadow High and Harefield Academy were included in the bid with a pretender amount of £16,984k, to be funded from the Schools SRP/SEND capital programme.

The expansion supports the DSG recovery plan, with each additional place provided in the borough is estimated to achieve an average saving of £24k from reducing use of more expensive independent out of borough placements and £11k reductions in SEN transport costs, resulting in a financial benefit of £6,300k across the Council’s Schools and General Fund Budgets.

### Legal

The proposed changes are prescribed alterations for the purposes of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. The local authority is entitled to propose and decide upon these changes. The local authority must follow the statutory process for consultation in relation to the proposed changes.

### Infrastructure / Asset Management

The entire site is leased to the Harefield Academy Trust under the terms of a 150-year lease from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 and it is proposed that part of the site needed for the proposed new Meadow Special School will be surrendered back to the Council by way of a part surrender agreement. The Council will then have an unencumbered freehold of the new school site.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Presentation – Stakeholder Information  
Presentation for families of Pathway 1 pupils