

STATUTORY PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT BASE AND AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION AT RUISLIP GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Officer Contact(s)	Babatunde Balogun – School Place Planning
Papers with report	Appendix 1 - Public Notice Appendix 2 - Full Proposal Appendix 3 – Full Consultation Responses

HEADLINES

Summary	Cabinet will be asked to consider the outcome of Consultation on the proposal to establish a Specialist Assessment Base and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary School.
Putting our Residents First	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>
Financial Cost	The adaptation capital work at Ruislip Garden Primary school will be funded from the grant funded Schools SRP/SEND capital programme linked to the DSG safety valve agreement. The pre-tender estimate is £1,270k. The adaptation works will deliver a Specialist Assessment Base for 16 children and an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for 12 children.
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Wards	All, especially South Ruislip

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet consider the responses to the statutory consultation as set out in the report and Appendix 3 and approve the proposal to establish a specialist assessment base and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary School.

Reasons for recommendation

Due to the rising demand for special education needs in the Borough, a programme of capital works to create and expand new special schools and units has been initiated and linked to the DSG safety valve recovery programme which was approved by the DFE in June 2022. One of the purposes of the recovery programme is to put mainstream inclusion and high quality SEND services at the heart of education in the Borough and the proposal to establish an assessment base and SRP at Ruislip Gardens Primary school fulfils this purpose.

Ruislip Gardens Primary School is a Council-maintained school. It was built as a 3 Form of Entry (FE) but was reduced to 2FE due to declining roll. The reduction in the Published Admissions Number (PAN) has freed up 6 rooms in the school which can be used to accommodate the assessment base and SRP unit from September 2022. The school's governing body has agreed to the proposal and further discussions are underway to develop the design of areas of the building to be adapted. The Council is also progressing discussions on financial viability, staffing model and service specification for both provisions.

The benefit of establishing a locally based assessment base and SRP in a school setting is that it will improve mainstream inclusion, reduce total cost of out of Borough placement and add more specialist places within the Borough.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Cabinet in April 2022 has previously agreed to progress the expansion of Ruislip Garden Primary School. Decisions in respect of statutory proposals relating to school organisation, where representations have been received, are considered by the full Cabinet.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Need for places

There is a growing demand for special school places for pupils with Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP) in the Borough and a need to minimise reliance on costly independent provision and long travel for residents. Several mainstream and academy primary schools in the Borough have surplus places due to declining roll. The Council has initiated a programme of capital works to create new special education units using these surplus places. The programme is linked to the DSG safety value recovery programme which the DFE has approved.

Ruislip Garden Primary school is a maintained primary school which has been rated 'Good' by Ofsted since 2019. It was built as a 3FE school but was recently reduced to 2FE, the reduction in PAN has freed up 6 classrooms which the Council proposes to use as special education learning spaces.

The proposed work will create dedicated spaces for an assessment base and a specialist resource provision. The adaptation work is planned to be completed and handed over to the school in July 2023 in preparation for September 2023 intake. The proposal has been discussed in detail with the school and agreed with governors.

Proposal for the Specialist Assessment Base and Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Provision

The assessment base will be the first of its kind in the Borough, so the school will be developing the provision alongside the SEND team in the Council but also draw on various models from other local authorities. The Assessment Base will meet the demand for specialist teaching and further diagnosis of young children aged 3 – 5 who clearly have additional needs but may not have one obvious need. The pupils will be assessed to plan the best future education provision to meet their needs. The assessment base will be created to accommodate 16 full time places, It will be located on the ground floor of the main building and will include 2 classrooms, soft room, 2 group rooms, therapy room, toilets, washing facilities, staff office and toilets. The assessment base will have a head of unit who will be supported by the SEND team in the Council.

The Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) will enable some of the pupils from the Assessment Base to continue in the mainstream school from the age of 5. The students within the provision will predominantly access teaching sessions in the resource base with some supported mainstream class provision following individualised programme to meet their needs outlined in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Each session within the SRP will be taught by a Specialist Teacher or a Trained Learning Support Assistant. These groups will have a high level of staff to pupil ratio. Some pupils may spend more time in the SRP than others and it would be the responsibility of the school to manage the specialist offer and inclusion levels in partnership with the parents and in line with the outcomes outlined in their EHCPs. All pupils placed within the SRP by Hillingdon Council will have an EHCP specifying the school's SRP as the appropriate provision to meet their individual needs. Placements will be made by Hillingdon Council following consideration at the SEND panel, a multi-disciplinary panel consisting of education, health and social care professionals, ensuring that the SRP will meet appropriate needs.

The SPR will be created to accommodate 12 full time places for pupils, It will be located on the first floor of the main building and will include 2 classrooms, sensory room, 2 group rooms, therapy room, pupil toilets, staff office and toilets. All areas of the school will be fully accessible to SEN pupils.

The school is fully engaged in the design process with Hillingdon Council to ensure that the provisions is fit for purpose. The adaptation work is being designed to meet DFE area guidelines for SEND and alternative provision, BB104. The Council will meet the capital costs associated with building and site adaptations, ICT, furniture and equipment fit out to ensure suitability of the areas being adapted. It will also provide revenue funding to Ruislip Gardens Primary School for each year based on the number and needs of pupils accessing the provision. In the years of growth, the local authority will provide reasonable diseconomies funding based on budgets provided by the school to recognise any shortfall between funding and costs of operating the new provision whilst numbers are below capacity.

In consultation with the school, the Council will develop service level agreement setting out how the provision will be operated, funded, assessment processes, staff training and structure.

Financial Implications

The adaptation works at Ruislip Gardens Primary school to increase SEND places will be funded from the Schools SRP/SEND capital grant linked to the DSG Safety valve programme. In June 2022, the DFE approved the Council's capital bid totalling £6,962k to expand SEND provision in the Borough. The expansion of Ruislip Gardens primary school was included in the bid at a value of £1,270k. In June 2022 Cabinet Members approved a contract award, and associated capital release of £289k, for multi-disciplinary consultancy services to commence the project.

The adaption works to increase SEND provision supports the DSG recovery plan, with each additional place provided in the Borough 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.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

Consultation

Formal consultation on the proposal to establish an assessment base and an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary school started on the 15th of June and ended on the 15th of July 2022. Information about the consultation was shared to parents and staff by the school on 10th June 2022.

Public Notice of the proposals is set out in Appendix 1 and the full proposal consulted on in Appendix 2.

Part 5, Statutory process:

The prescribed alterations require a minimum of a 4-week consultation period. The formal 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 Governing Body/Local Authority (as appropriate);
- the parents of every registered pupil at the 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 15th June 2022 to Friday 15th July 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). No responses were received.

Consultation Responses (set out in full in Appendix 3)

21 responses were received in total during the consultation period and submitted via the online questionnaire and none were received by email. The responses are summarised below and in full in Appendix 3.

Online Questionnaire responses are summarised below:

1. **19** agreed with the proposed Specialist Assessment Base for pupils aged 3 - 5 years at Ruislip Gardens Primary School
 - Yes - 19
 - No - 2
 - Don't know – 0
2. Of the **2** respondents that answered 'No' or 'Don't know', reasons have been provided in Appendix 3.
3. **21** agreed with the proposed Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary School.
 - Yes - 21
 - No - 0
 - Don't know – 0

4. **None** of the respondents answered 'No' or 'Don't know'.
5. **20** disagreed that the proposed changes will disadvantage any Hillingdon residents.
 - Yes - 1
 - No - 20
 - Don't know – 0
6. **1** respondent agreed that the changes will disadvantage Hillingdon residents' reasons have been provided in Appendix 3.
7. **21** respondents are confirmed their interest in the proposal as:
 - A pupil – 0
 - A parent/ Carer/guardian – 10
 - A staff member – 4
 - A local resident – 3
 - Other – 3
 - Prefer not to say – 1
8. **14** respondents stated that they have children under the age of 18 living in their household.
 - A pupil – 0
 - A parent/ Carer/guardian – 9
 - A staff member – 1
 - A local resident – 2
 - Other – 2
 - Prefer not to say – 0
9. Respondents were invited to state which school(s) their child(ren) currently attend, and the responses were as follows:
 - Ruislip Gardens Primary School
 - Whiteheath
 - Ruislip High School
 - Meadow high
 - Hillside Junior School
 - Hayes park school
 - Bishopshalt
 - Northwood
 - Douay Martyrs Catholic Secondary school
 - Cherry Lane Primary school.
10. Additional comments from the questionnaire have been provided in **Appendix 3**.

Conclusion

The formal statutory consultation helped to collate views and queries from parents/Carers, residents and staff.

The consultation process outlined some of the concerns raised by 2 respondents (1 of whom is a local resident). However, 90% of respondents who are parents, staff and local residents were supportive of the proposal. All parents who have children currently attending the school see the benefits of having both provisions on the school site. The only concern raised by one of the parents was the need for a drop off/pick area for high need pupils and the need to ensure that the provisions are adequately staffed at all times and not taking staff away from the mainstream classrooms.

The proposal is intended to increase the number of special education places in the Borough and help meet the needs of more Hillingdon pupils and parents. To ensure that a positive education experience continues for all pupils, the LA and the school will continue to work with residence to place pupils in most appropriate provisions to meet their individual needs. There will be an ongoing dialogue with parents, carers and families to work collaboratively to demonstrate the culture of inclusive practice is at the heart of the LA and the school.

If approval is granted by the Cabinet, 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103442/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools.pdf)

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that the recommendation to establish a specialist assessment base and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary School.

The Council secured funding in June 2022 from the Department for Education resulting from a bid for capital funding linked to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit recovery safety valve agreement. The funding totalling £6,962k to expand SEND provision in the Borough included expansion of Ruislip Gardens primary school in the bid at a value of £1,270k.

The adaptation 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. The provision of 16 ASD place and 12 SRP places result in a financial benefit of £980k across the Council's Schools and General Fund Budgets.

Legal

The recommendation to establish a specialist assessment base and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary School is a prescribed alteration. It is confirmed within the body of the report that the required statutory process has been followed. There are no further legal implications arising from the proposed recommendation.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

The recommendation to establish a specialist assessment base and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Ruislip Gardens Primary School. The Council owns the freehold interest and there are no specific property issues with this proposal.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cabinet decision – 21 April 2022](#)