

CAPITAL WORK GROUP REPORT FOR FORUM MEMBERS – 23 MAY 2022 MEETING



Date of Work Group meeting: Tuesday 25 January 2022

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

School Place Planning/Commissioning Strategy Update (Ann Pearson) – AP raised the following key points:

Mainstream Provision

- The primary bulge has been managed and planning is in place to manage the secondary bulge.
- There have been some changes over the last 12-18 months around demography. A complete review of demography will be carried out this term and a more detailed report will be in the School Organisation Plan in September.
- Schools have experienced a drop in intake to Reception this year, the first time for a number of years. There has been no change in the birth rate so there had been no indication that this was coming. Early indications are that there has been a significant drop in migration for the Reception intake. There is normally 8-10% growth but there has been 0% growth this year which is significant.
- Migration numbers for in-year admissions are unprecedented. Solihull has received the highest number of applications in the West Midlands for migrants from Hong Kong, with a greater than 200% swing to a positive migration situation. On the whole they have been able to accommodate children but this is becoming more challenging. Year One is a particular pressure and early indications are that years 5 and 6 will be the next pressure points. This comes with no financial support (revenue or capital) but they are campaigning through the government, as is the Economy and Infrastructure Director.

SEND/Alternative Provision

- The latest commissioning strategy was now being implemented. Phase one and two will have added in 362 additional places and they are now working on phase 3: Early Years, Post 16 and SEMH.
- Solihull Academy has now expanded to offer KS3 pupils and provide 6th day provision for secondary age pupils out of school.
- There will be a new Early Years Sufficiency Strategy in September, which will include the outcome of a Parent/Carer survey being undertaken this term.

Capital Programme Update (Peter Carroll)

- It has not proved practical to develop part of the grounds of Valley Primary School and they are exploring other potential uses.
- There were an extraordinary number of objections to the expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School. They have been working through the objections and now have permission to proceed to the Planning Committee in March. The pandemic and Brexit have created supply chains difficulties and contractors are passing on the financial risk so that tenders are coming in much higher than budget. As a result, Cheswick Green and Alderbrook have been pulled back from design and build and they are now proceeding with Alderbrook on a traditional approach where the council takes the risk. Tenders are due to be submitted at the end of February.
- As part of the academisation of Summerfield the building structure needs attention as it is unsound. Rather than trying to repair it they are looking to move the provision to the site of Daylesford infant School.
- Due to increased costs, they cannot afford to do carbon neutral buildings and are only able to meet the sustainability criteria required by building regulations.

Andrew Wilkins
Capital Work Group
25 January 2022