

Heltwate Special School Expansion
Cllr Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills, and University
July 2021
Deadline date: <i>13 August 2021</i>

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Cllr Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills & University Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director: People & Communities Jonathan Lewis, Service Director: Education
Is this a Key Decision?	YES Forward Plan Reference Number: KEY/21JUN21/02
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

Approve the expansion of Heltwate Special school to 206 places in permanent accommodation having regard to the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) ‘Maintained Schools Prescribed Alterations Guidance’ (October 2018) and taking into consideration the views/comments submitted during the statutory four-week representation period which concluded on 14 June 2021, including support for, objections to, and comments on the proposal.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and University to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.3 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (g).

2. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

3.1 Heltwate is a community special school providing 206 places for children and young people aged between 4 and 19 years, all of whom have Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

and Moderate to Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). In addition, it also offers Autism specific education. The Council recently completed a review of its SEND provision. A fundamental part of this review was to change the nature of the provision made in its special schools. Pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) that once made up a substantial part of the Heltwate School, have increasingly been included within mainstream schools. Heltwate, and other SEND schools within Peterborough, now cater for children with increasingly complex needs (SLD and Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)). In addition to being the correct educational approach, it was also adopted to allow the Council to reduce its reliance on expensive specialist provision outside the Council's administrative boundary. Heltwate was judged Good by Ofsted when inspected in January 2019.

It was proposed in 2017 to relocate Heltwate Special School to a new site in Newark Road, however this project had to be cancelled at design stage in February 2018 due to the financial collapse of Carillion (the development partner).

Following this decision, the Council invested in the re-development of a vacant building known as the St George's Centre on Lawn Avenue. The building, which had previously been a special needs school, was converted into a new campus for Heltwate, known as St George's to enable it to accommodate older students mostly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form (age 14+). The Council also undertook a site capacity study on the main school site in 2018 which concluded that there was insufficient area to accommodate sufficient new specialist teaching spaces in the main campus for the needs of children with SLD.

It was therefore proposed that a new purpose-built Early Years building should be constructed on a site as close as possible to the school on the site of the former Silver Jubilee public house. The proposed scheme obtained planning permission in January 2021.

The new site will provide for Early Years (Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1). The Heltwate main site in Bretton will provide for Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils. The St George's campus in Lawn Avenue is where Key Stage 4 and post 16 students will be based.

The school previously provided 140 places on their Bretton site and the number of places was increased to 206 by the addition of the St George's campus and by utilising temporary accommodation.

It is now proposed to formalise this increase in available capacity by replacing the temporary accommodation on the main site with permanent build on the Jubilee campus.

Forecast demand

The SEND census data (see table 1) shows that the number of children with an EHC Plan in Peterborough has risen steadily in line with the increase in the total school population. A high number of these children will be able to successfully access education provision in mainstream schools; however, those with more severe needs will require a special school place.

Table 1: Number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC) (formerly statements) in Peterborough

School Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No of Children	1391	1586	1707	1901	1930	2124

Source: DfE SEN2 Return

Other considerations

It is important to note that the admissions policy for the school will not change. The new build is expected to be completed in March 2023.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Officers consulted with the Governing Body, Peterborough's SEND service and local SEND school head teachers whilst drafting the proposal. The formal consultation was launched on 17 May 2021 on the Council's website. The webpage included the proposal, a statement and details of a public on-line consultation event. Please see Appendix 1 for these.

On-line consultation events have become a well-established but necessary approach in the past 15 months due to Covid-19 restrictions. It was not feasible to hold face-to-face drop-in sessions or public meetings because of the restriction in place at the time.

The proposal, statement and details of the consultation event were also sent to Heltwate's Governing Body, the parents of every registered pupil of Heltwate School and Cambridgeshire SEND services, Ward Councillors and trade unions.

A notice of the consultation was published in the Peterborough Telegraph with a link to the full webpage.

The on-line consultation event was held on 24 May 2021 at 7pm. Three members of the public attended.

The consultation closed on 14 June 2021.

4.2 At the closure of the consultation period, three written responses had been received:

- One response was in support;
- One response was in support, but hoped that the Council had a long-term plan to provide additional places and
- One response was concerned about the length of the consultation process and that local residents, who could not access the Internet would not be able to participate in the consultation.

A summary of the consultation responses is attached as Appendix 2.

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

5.1 The anticipated outcome of this report and attached appendices is that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills & University will have a clear understanding of:

(1) what she must take into account as decision-maker; and
(2) will be able to take the final decision to approve the permanent expansion of Heltwate Special School.

6. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The rationale for this proposed change is as follows:

- Mobile classroom accommodation should only be provided as a temporary measure to increase available school places for a limited time.
- The number of school places currently available (206) will remain the same irrespective of the change from temporary to permanent accommodation.
- Planning permission for the permanent accommodation has already been granted.
- The permanent building will improve the current facilities available and the new site area will increase outdoor space for learners.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The complete rebuilding of the school on a new site in Newark Road was considered but was not possible because of financial constraints.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 8.1 The capital scheme is estimated at £6.8 million. The Capital Board approved the scheme at its meeting on 26 June 2020. The original budget of the scheme was £4 million. This was made up of Borrowing (£1.75M) and Basic Need Grant (£2.25M). An additional £2.8M was approved by the Board. The Board agreed to allocate £1M already identified in the capital programme for additional secondary school places in 2020/21 to the Heltwate project, plus £800,000 of unallocated section 106 funding and additional Basic Need funding of £1M. £1M has been spent in previous financial years including the purchase of the land; the remaining budget for Heltwate in 2021/11 is £5.8m.

Legal Implications

- 8.2 It is not anticipated there will be any legal implications related to this proposed change.

Equalities Implications

- 8.3 Local Authorities have a number of statutory duties including securing diversity in the provision of schools, increasing opportunities for parental choice and ensuring fair access to educational opportunity.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 8.5 The project is not likely to have an impact on the amount of carbon the school produces.

9. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

- 9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools guidance (DfE October 2018)
[Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742222/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools-guidance-2018.pdf)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Consultation proposal, statement and details of public meeting
Appendix 2: Consultation responses