

Committee:	Date:	Item no.
Education Board	4 December 2014	
Subject: Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School Expansion	Public	
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report is to inform Members of the progress that has been made on the proposal to expand Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School to a Two Form Entry (2FE) school.</p> <p>The City as a Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for its residents. By 2016, the shortage of primary school places in London is set to reach 118,000. The projected potential demand for primary school places for City children over the coming years shows a demand of 73 primary school places for City residents by 2016. Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School has over the last four years had an increasing number of applications for the 30 Reception school places, rising year on year from 76 in 2010/11 to 116 for 2014/15.</p> <p>The Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School Governing Body has been considering the expansion of the school to a 2FE since March 2013, and at their full Governing Body meeting on 24 September 2014 passed a resolution committing them to becoming a 2FE school from September 2016. At the same meeting, the Governing Body also decided to consult on a change to the school's Admissions Policy to add an Admission Priority Area criterion, which will enable more City families to secure a place at this outstanding school (Appendix 1). This consultation began on 3 November 2014, for an eight-week period, supported by the Department.</p> <p>Moving Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School to a 2FE school will not be possible without a capital programme for the existing building, and the Governing Body has also decided on a proposed design for the capital programme. This proposed design went to the Sir John Cass Foundation Board towards the end of October, as the Foundation, being owners of the site, will need to approve the design and grant a licence. The school governors and the City are awaiting written confirmation of the decision but the indications are positive.</p> <p>In terms of funding, the estimated cost of the proposed development to the school is approximately £5m – £5.2m. It has been reported to Members previously that the City has received £2.6m Basic Needs funding from the Education Funding Agency to meet the projected demand for school places from City residents. Since that time a further £1.7m of funding has been secured, with an additional £200k Growth Fund for resourcing the school during completion.</p> <p>Once written approval has been received from the Sir John Cass Foundation, the proposed development will continue through the City Gateway process.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Members note the progress made in Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School becoming a Two Form Entry school. 		

Main Report

Background

1. The City as a Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for its residents. By 2016, the shortage of primary school places in London is set to reach 118,000.
2. Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School has, over the last four years, had an increasing number of applications for the 30 Reception school places, rising year on year from 76 in 2010/11 to 116 for 2014/15.
3. The projected potential demand for primary school places for City children over the coming years shows a demand of 73 primary school places for City residents by 2016, using 2011 census and Department for Education projections.
4. The Governing Body of Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School has been considering expanding the school from a One Form Entry school (30 children in each year) to a Two Form Entry (60 children in each year) since March 2013 by exploring options to extend the existing building, as well as a change to the Admissions Policy criteria, which will ensure City families have an opportunity to secure a place at the school.
5. In December 2013 the City secured £2.6m Basic Needs funding to meet the demand for school places for City residents, and NBP Partnerships were commissioned to develop a capital build design for the school to become a 2FE. This design was progressed to stage 2 of the City's Gateway process earlier in the year.

Current Position

6. At the meeting of the Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School Governing Body held on 24 September, the Governing Body passed a resolution committing them to becoming a 2FE school by September 2016. They also agreed to consult on a change to the Admissions Policy to add an Admission Priority Area criterion, covering the whole of the City, to ensure City families have an opportunity to secure a place at this 'Outstanding' school. The proposed Admissions Priority Area is attached as Appendix 1.
7. In order for a revised Admissions Policy to be in place for children starting Reception in September 2016, an eight-week consultation on the policy must take place between 1 November 2014 and 1 March 2015. The Governing Body as the Admission Authority is required to carry out the consultation exercise, which the Department will support administering on behalf of the school governors. The consultation started on 3 November 2014.
8. With regards to the capital build, the initial design was produced by NBP Partnerships in consultation with all partners and had been progressed to Gateway 2 of the City's Gateway process, but the school governors subsequently considered that it had a number of drawbacks and commissioned a feasibility study on an alternative design. Although initial feedback from planners had raised some concerns, this design was approved at the full Governing Body meeting on 24 September 2014 and went to the Sir John Cass's Foundation Board in October, as the Foundation, being owners of the site, will need to approve the design and grant a licence. The school governors and the City are awaiting written confirmation of the decision but the indications are positive.

9. In terms of funding to expand the school, the Department has been successful in securing approximately £4.55m to date, which is made up of the following:
 - a. £2.6m Basic Needs funding
 - b. £0.5m Section 106 monies
 - c. £0.25m departmental capital funds
 - d. £0.5m 10% statutory contribution from Governing Body/Foundation
 - e. £0.5m of Direct Schools Grant monies converted to capital
 - f. £0.2m Growth Fund from Direct Schools Grant
10. Securing the remaining funds required for the capital build will need to be progressed as the project proceeds through the City's Gateway process.

Implications

11. There is a statutory duty for local authorities to secure sufficient school places for their residents. The work the City is undertaking with the Governing Body and the Sir John Cass's Foundation will ensure that the City meets this duty to provide high-quality primary education for local families.
12. A Governing Body of a voluntary-aided maintained school, such as Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School, may propose an expansion of the school, including an enlargement of the premises, without the need for statutory consultation. However, the Governing Body is still required to engage with relevant stakeholders in making any changes. The Governing Body of the school is also its own Admission Authority, and in this case is not required to consult solely when increasing pupil admission numbers. However, it must consult where it is proposed that the Admissions Policy should be revised.
13. There are a significant number of developments taking place close to Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School site, some of which contain housing. This is highly likely to further increase the number of applications the school receives for places over the coming years.

Conclusion

14. There is a projected increasing demand for primary school places for City children over the coming years, so the City is taking steps in order to ensure that families can secure the places they need, as well as 'taking into account' the demand from neighbouring Tower Hamlets. Proposed developments to the Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School site, as well as changes to the Admissions Policy, will provide City families with access to high-quality education opportunities close to where they live.

Background Papers

Reports to the Community and Children's Services Committee:

Education of primary-aged children, 11 October 2013

Provision of affordable homes and additional nursery and primary school places,
13 December 2013

Demand for primary school places, 14 March 2014

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School Admissions Policy proposed priority admissions catchment area

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