



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

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| REPORT TITLE: | KINGSWAY SCHOOL – PFI UPDATE |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an overview of the feasibility study that has taken place in relation to Clare Mount Specialist Sports College relocating to the former Kingsway Academy, Wallasey.

A report was brought to committee in November to explore whether this would be a viable option and if Clare Mount Specialist Sports College would like to explore this option.

The former Kingsway Academy is part of the Wirral Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schools' contract that was signed in 2007. The PFI scheme allowed for the significant refurbishment and new build of nine schools across the local authority. This included eight secondary schools and one primary school.

The former Kingsway Academy school building has remained empty since the closure of the school. The site is being maintained by the current PFI contractor until a use for the building has been formalised.

Options in relation to the school building use had been explored at the end of 2019, of which one of these was the possibility of Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving to the former Kingsway Academy building. Options outlined have not been developed further due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed relocation of Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to the former Kingsway Academy site supports the Brighter Futures theme of the Wirral Plan 2021 - 26 and specifically the delivery of the school asset and sufficiency and SEND strategies.

This matter affects residents across the borough.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is requested to:

1. Agree to commence formal consultation for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to move to the former Kingsway Academy from September 2022.
2. Committee requests the Director of Children, Families and Education explore future options for the remaining part of the building that will be un-occupied.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Children, Young People and Education Committee has a role in making sure that council assets are utilised in the most appropriate way and have a positive impact on the lives of Wirral's young people.
- 1.2 The current cost to the council of the former Kingsway Academy is £867.5k per annum; this cost will continue and increase by indexation (RPI) annually if the site remains within the PFI contract, until July 2031 or until another use of the building is found.
- 1.3 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College have been consulted regarding the relocation to the former Kingsway Academy, they are supportive of the move and see the significant benefits it has to offer.
- 1.4 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College are currently using the CLC on the former Kingsway Academy for their sixth form provision. This proposal would allow the sixth form provision to be within the same building as the school provision.
- 1.5 Through site visits and consultation with the school leadership team, the building adaptations that are required to allow Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to move are realistic in the timescales given.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 In the previous report brought to committee in November 2021 several options were outlined for consideration. The option to move Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to the former Kingsway Academy is seen as the preferred option
- 2.2 We could do nothing and the current liability of the PFI costs associated with the former Kingsway Academy will remain with the local authority for the next 10 years.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The option for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to move into the former Kingsway Academy is seen as the preferable option based on the locality of the two sites and the current condition of the Clare Mount Specialist Sports College building and the facilities available at the former Kingsway Academy that are currently not available at their current location.

- 3.2 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College is a secondary school supporting pupils aged 11 – 19 with Moderate Learning Disabilities (MLD) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). The school is currently rated as outstanding by OFSTED, the inspection took place in autumn 2021. The school has 249 pupils on roll.
- 3.3 The current Clare Mount Specialist Sports College has significant building issues; Flat roofs are prone to leaks and this would be an ongoing issue if the school remained at this site; Windows are not double glazed, and many sections need replacement; The construction has led to poor insulation and flooding has been an issue historically due to the low water table in the area.
- 3.4 Investment has been made with an extension to their sports facilities, but this was over 15 years ago. Major investment is needed to improve the condition of the building if the school is to remain on this site. The level of investment needed would be significantly more than the adaptations required at the former Kingsway Academy
- 3.5 Through site visits with both Clare Mount Specialist Sports College leaders, LA officers, and architects, a collective decision has been developed to decide which part of the school would be required. This would allow all pupils currently on roll to be able to access the curriculum offer that is currently delivered. The site has been deemed as suitable by all involved, in addition extra capacity is available if required.
- 3.6 An advantage of Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving to the former Kingsway Academy is the access to specialist facilities in relation to cookery/technology/science and sports facilities they currently do not have available.
- 3.7 An added benefit of the site coming back into use by a school provision is the facilities can be explored for community use when the school is not open. This would allow additional access to sports facilities that are currently unavailable
- 3.8 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College will not be using all the former Kingsway Academy. A section of the building has been retained to explore other uses by a different provider or other provision. This will be explored further in the future. Clare Mount Specialist Sports College will be consulted on any future proposals.
- 3.9 To support the timeline for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving to the former Kingsway Academy, the PFI provider, Wirral School Services Limited (WSSL) are exploring the use of a Deed of Indemnity (DOI) with Wirral Council. This will allow the Council to carry out the adaptive works to facilitate Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving in a timely manner.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Current financial cost to the local authority is £867.5K per annum, this cost will remain until the end of the PFI scheme in 2032, unless an alternative use of the building can be found.
- 4.2 The feasibility study has been undertaken by LA officers, focusing on building alterations; revenue contributions; capital contributions and mothballing considerations of the current Clare Mount Specialist Sports College.

- 4.2 As part of the feasibility study as to whether Clare Mount Specialist Sports College could move to The Kingsway Academy site, an assessment of the costs associated with Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving to the site will be undertaken. This will cover both capital and revenue costs.
- 4.3 The re-purposing of the former Kingsway Academy will reduce the financial revenue costs currently covered by the council.
- 4.4 Council officers have worked with Clare Mount Specialist Sports College colleagues to ascertain a reasonable figure in relation to revenue budget contribution from the school. A final figure has not been confirmed, but a reduction in the council costs will be achieved through Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving to the former Kingsway Academy.
- 4.5 It is intended that the current Clare Mount Specialist Sports College site will be declared surplus to requirements and will be recommended for disposal. National procedures will be followed which in principle make provision for capital receipts from the sale of surplus school buildings to be re-invested in other school buildings.
- 4.6 In this case it is intended to propose the investment of the capital receipt from the Clare Mount Specialist Sports College site into the current Kingsway Academy building for the required modifications, within the existing building to accommodate the adaptations for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College.
- 4.7 The costs of mothballing the current Clare Mount Specialist College when they exit the site until the sale of site will need to be factored into the capital costs.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If the recommendations are approved by committee, a formal consultation would need to take place in relation to Clare Mount Specialist Sports College moving to a new site. The guidance for this process can be found in the DFE document, *Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools*.
- 5.2 A formal consultation will involve all relevant stakeholder including parents/carers, community members and other local schools.
- 5.3 The DFE will also be notified of the intention to relocate the school during the formal consultation.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 To oversee the transfer of Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to the former Kingsway Academy, a Project board will commence. This will include relevant LA officers and colleagues for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College. The progress board will oversee all relevant areas that cover staffing, ICT, and assets.
- 6.1 During discussions with colleague's from Clare Mount Specialist Sports College, it has been identified which equipment and furniture they would require to be moved from the Clare Mount Specialist Sports College site to the former Kingsway Academy.

Where additional furniture, equipment and ICT will be required, this will be part of the capital monies ringfenced for the project.

6.2 A full review of mechanical, electrical and IT services will need to be conducted. This is to ascertain what capital works in these areas will need to take place to make sure the building is compliant with the relevant Health and Safety regulations.

6.3 A project plan will be developed to ascertain what staffing resources will be required to oversee the transfer to the former Kingsway Academy.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The clear risk is the timeframe to move Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to the former Kingsway Academy for the 1st September 2022. The Clare Mount Specialist Sports College site will be made available for the autumn term 2022 if needed to aid the transition process.

7.2 Capital works maybe delayed during the autumn term in relation modifications that have been requested. The scope of works will be RAG rated in relation to what is essential for the school to open on site in September 2022.

7.3 The sale of the current Clare Mount Specialist Sports College site could be delayed or not realised.

7.3 If no alternative use can be found for the former Kingsway Academy site the annual costs of 867.5K per annum until 2032.

7.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Several meetings have taken place between LA officers and Clare Mount Specialist Sports College staff and the Local Governing Body. This has allowed a clear understanding of what is required to facilitate the move to the former Kingsway Academy.

8.2 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College have communicated with all parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school, to highlight the discussion taking place regarding the school moving to the former Kingsway Academy. Initial feedback has been positive

8.3 A formal consultation with parents/carers and the local community will take place if the proposal is approved by committee.

8.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact

Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

- 9.2 A full EIA will take place as part of the formal consultation for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to relocate.
- 9.3 As part of the asset review of the former Kingsway Academy, consideration will be taken to make sure the building meets any recommendations that follow the completed EIA.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Consideration has been given to the climate emergency in exploration of re-using the former Kingsway Academy. The former Kingsway Academy site is a newer building, with improved energy efficiency in comparison to the existing site being used by Clare Mount Specialist Sports College. In addition, as part of the feasibility study, how the former Kingsway Academy site could maximise the efficient use of technology to reduce carbon.

11.0 Community Wealth

- 11.1 The proposal outlined will bring back into use a council asset that is currently un-occupied, this could lead to future employment within the local area. In addition, the re-utilisation could allow the site to be used outside of school hours for community use. This opportunity could lead to local employment opportunities.

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APPENDICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Children, Young People & Education Committee | 23 rd November 2021 |
| Audit and Risk Management Committee | 10 th March 2020 |