

Russell School and Strathmore School development

School Place Planning Strategy

- The School Place Planning Strategy is developed using local current and forecast statistics, birth rates and trend data.
- It was agreed by Cabinet on 18 July 2013, in its role as local decision maker, to approve the statutory proposals for the Strathmore School expansion. This included the identification of the Russell School site for expansion to provide growth in primary special education needs (SEN) school numbers.
- The Russell School project includes for an additional 4 classes as a shared form of entry. This equals an increase from 247 to 330 pupils (1FE = 210 pupils, plus 4 classes = further 120 pupils).
- The Russell School nursery is to **remain** at 26 full time equivalents.
- The integrated portion of the Strathmore School is for up to 24 pupils.
- Updated School Place Planning Strategy considered by Cabinet on 14 January 2015, anticipates a further 2 forms of entry will be required in the Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside area by 2017-2018. It also now recommends that the Russell School be expanded to 2FE from September 2017. (The proposed additional 2 forms of entry would be by further expanding the Russell School by 90 pupils, from 330 to 420 pupils - a full additional form of entry; and potentially expanding Meadlands Primary School by 210 pupils to accommodate the second form of entry. Both would require feasibility studies and approval.)
- The Russell School Governing Body has agreed to expand to 2FE. However, the statutory proposals process will need to be followed to include publication with a consultation period, followed by pre-planning consultation prior to the submission of a planning application followed by its statutory planning consultation.
- Cabinet agreed on 12 February 2015, as part of the Capital Programme 2014/15 - 2019/20 to **retain the whole of the Russell School site** as part of its schools strategy.
- The proposal consolidates the 5 current dislocated buildings into one building. The gross internal area of the new building is 18% greater than the existing 5 buildings, and meets with current area guidance for schools. A key site constraint is both the Russell and Strathmore Schools need to remain operational throughout the development.

Consultation – there are a number of separate consultation processes

- **Statutory Proposal consultation** about the expansion of Strathmore Special School took place during 2013. Whilst this consultation is not linked to the current planning submission, when the Council plans to make a significant change to the organisation of a school, a statutory notice must be published to enable members of the public to object to or make comments on the proposed change.
- **'Informal' consultation** through meetings and communications with all groups (local residents, school staff, school governors, parents/carers, pupils, users and planning officers) is non statutory, and whilst there is no requirement to do this extensive consultation has been undertaken.
 - Informal events were organised between July and September 2014, which gave parents/carers, residents and the wider community opportunities to comment and give feedback on the proposals before the planning application was submitted.

- **Pre-planning (submission) consultation** advice was sought from planning officers (including urban design, ecology, traffic and transport and tree officers). The response included advice about evidence and reports required, considered the impact of the proposed development and resulted in physical changes to the design proposals. Some of these were:
 - lowering the building's height;
 - visually breaking up the north and south roof elevations (previously suggested to appear continuous in bulk);
 - change to a different material and colour for the roof tiles (to contrast the façade brickwork); and
 - reduction in external hard surfacing, rearranging the proposed car parking and generally preserving more open space.
- **'Formal' planning consultation**, following validation is an independent and statutory process managed by the Planning Department. Local residents are notified by letter and by public adverts/notices placed.
- **Website/email/newsletters** – proposal information was published on the Council's website, newsletters were issued and email feedback welcomed through a dedicated development email address.

Strathmore School site development

- Strathmore School site is not fit for purpose and is considered for disposal as part of the Council's Sale and Reinvestment Programme (approved by Cabinet).
- The expansion of Strathmore School onto three new sites was agreed by Cabinet on 18 July 2013 following Statutory Consultation approval.
- Strathmore School will remain operational on site until at least 2018, when its third and last relocation project completes (target August 2018).
- The future use of the Strathmore School site is not confirmed and is an entirely separate process.
- In due course a separate process will begin to determine the future of this site and will be subject to land use, consultation and planning consent among other considerations.
- The residential scheme proposals mentioned as part of the 'statutory' or 'informal' consultation events in 2013 and the summer 2014, were a possible example of what could happen on this site. (This is impacted by the non sale of Russell School land.)

Planning consideration process

Although considered at pre-planning stage, the following topics are being consulted upon and evaluated by the planning department and their statutory consultees as part of the planning process. They include, but are not limited to:

- Architecture and building mass are in keeping with its surroundings;
- Development within Metropolitan Open Land;
- Development within a conservation area, with relation to protected views and other site characteristics;
- Nature conservation and ecological impact:
 - Measures will be implemented to mitigate the ecological impact;

- Additional measures to offset/enhance the ecology environment;
- Trees - arboricultural impact of development:
 - Measures will be implemented to mitigate the impact of any tree loss;
 - Additional planting of native species proposed to offset any tree loss;
- Landscaping scheme relevant to the points above;
- Traffic generation and potential impact of development:
 - **Existing** Russell School vehicle entrance, off Petersham Road, will be retained and will continue to function as a main entrance for staff, refuse, coach, minibus, and service vehicle access. The proposed arrangement removes Strathmore School traffic from Meadlands Drive altogether;
 - **Existing** pedestrian entrance off Petersham Road will be retained;
 - A single, widened, pedestrian entrance is to be retained on Meadlands drive (with a larger area for parents to gather/access the site);
 - Parking provision (on site) is for **staff only** and is calculated in accordance with planning policy;
 - Traffic and parking capacity survey was carried out early in July 2014, in accordance with Traffic and Transport guidance and methodology; and
 - A further traffic and parking capacity survey was carried out as requested by local Councillors, at the start of the spring term 2015.