

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 17th December 2018
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Children's Services
Executive Member for Investment, Regeneration and Strategic Planning

Report Title

Proposed use of the former Brentwood School site

Summary

This report requests that the former Brentwood School site be removed from the Strategic Land Review Programme and be retained as an Education site for both Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Centre.

There are benefits for pupils' physical and mental well-being to go to a school with an improved learning experience and environment that can better meet their needs.

The relocation of the Education provision would then release both the Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Centre sites for the Strategic Land Review Programme for Education capital.

Recommendation(s)

The Executive is recommended to approve:

- 1. That the former Brentwood School site be removed from the Strategic Land Review Programme;**
- 2. That Trafford High School and Medical Education Centre be relocated to Brentwood School;**
- 3. That the Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Centre sites be placed on the Strategic Land Review Programme;**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Alison Milne, Head of Service, Access & Inclusion
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Background Papers: None

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	Services focussed on the most vulnerable people Preserving and improving education excellence
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	Not applicable
Financial	Funding would need to be drawn down from the 2019/20 Basic Need allocation to bring the former Brentwood site back in use. Basic Need funding can then be paid back from the land sale of the 2 sites. Savings would be made on future capital maintenance on the 2 sites.
Legal Implications	Disposal of School playing field requires completion of SCH1F for Secretary of State's consent under Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010 and completion of SATPF1 for Secretary of State's consent under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Not applicable
Sustainability Implications	Savings from co-located of Education provision on one site.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Revenue savings from co-located of Education provision on one site.
Risk Management Implications	Completion of Statutory requirements (as detailed under Legal) for the Disposal of School playing fields
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The condition of School buildings affects the Health and Wellbeing of all staff and pupils.
Health and Safety Implications	All building work is subject to appropriate current Health and Safety/CDM regulations. Failure to respond to condition issues, which have health and safety implications, will find the Council in breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

1.0 Background

1.1 The former Brentwood School closed on the Brentwood Avenue site in 2016 after the School relocated to a new purpose built School on Cherry Lane, Sale. Since then the former Brentwood Avenue site has been mothballed and was put on the Strategic Land Review Programme.

1.2 A feasibility study was undertaken to see if Education could utilise this site for another Education purpose as opposed to selling the building and its land.

1.3 The Council owns 2a Houldsworth Ave, Timperley known locally as the Brentwood House. The house was used to provide pupils with opportunities to learn independent living skills as the Brentwood School had limited space. With the re-location of the School the house became surplus to requirements. The Executive agreed the disposal of the house in March 2018.

2.0 Feasibility Study

2.1 A feasibility study has been undertaken to assess whether Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service can relocate to the former Brentwood School in Timperley.

2.2 Trafford High School caters for up to 60 pupils with social, mental and emotional health needs and occupies premises of 1126m² on Lydney Road, Flixton.

2.3 Trafford Medical Education Service caters for up to 30 pupils with medical issues following lengthy periods of non-schooling and currently operates from 465m² facilities on Flixton Road.

2.4 The former Brentwood School occupied 2457m² and catered for 100 11-19 year old pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and severe learning disabilities (SLD).

2.5 Based on the site capacity and the needs of the two services the following was ascertained in the feasibility study

2.6 There is sufficient internal floor area at the former Brentwood School to house each service.

2.7 Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service could easily share the building as they have similar pupil and staff numbers to the original school and the site can be adapted to meet the needs of both schools.

2.8 Initial advice from Trafford's Planning Department suggests that the site will have open D1 consent which allows for non-residential education and training centres so the suggested use is unlikely to require planning permission.

2.9 The Executive Head and School staff from Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service have been instrumental in developing proposals for how the former Brentwood site can be separated and reconfigured to accommodate the different needs of the two groups of students and keep them safe.

3.0 Benefits of Re-location for the Pupils of the Two Schools

3.1 Building Bulletin 77 sets out standards for Pupil referral Units (PRUs) and when compared to this the current accommodation occupied by the two schools is deficient in many areas:

- The Trafford Medication Education Service site was originally a youth club and has had modifications to create teaching spaces. There are only two reasonable classroom spaces and three smaller spaces neither of which can accommodate more than 6 pupils. The space upstairs does not have disabled access and therefore has limited usage. There are no science labs or suitable area for the pupils to eat. The room used for assessments has no window. The outdoor area is unsuitable for PE activities.
- Trafford High School site is a former primary school; the pupils at the School are secondary age pupils, many in Years 10 and 11. The hall space cannot be used properly as a gym and the outside area is in poor condition. The canteen area is too small and cannot accommodate all 32 children; food technology lessons have to take place in the canteen area which is not ideal. There are no science facilities so currently Y11 pupils go off site to Wellacre Academy to carry out experiments.

3.2 The Brentwood site is a purpose built school, albeit for secondary age special needs pupils. The site will provide an improved learning experience and environment. It already has designated ICT, science, art, food technology and design and technology rooms. Pupils will not have to travel offsite to access some of their science lessons. There is a separate gym and dining area with opportunities to develop horticulture activities and a vocational curriculum such as construction and hairdressing.

3.3 The existing blocks lend themselves to two separate entrances for each facility; the sports hall and canteen will be shared between the two Schools. There will be different start and finish times and staggered break and lunch times.

3.4 The 6th form block is ideal for the Trafford Medical Education Service as it has large classrooms, a therapeutic room and a dining area. The classrooms already have dedicated quiet zones making them good spaces for pupils with anxiety and mental ill health. There is an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) block which could accommodate pupils undergoing assessment.

3.5 There is a large sports hall at the Brentwood site, although it does require some refurbishment and a new floor covering to make it suitable for use by this cohort of pupils. Many of the pupils at the former special school were wheelchair users. Currently pupils at the Schools have to go off-site to Flixton, JJB and George H Carnell to use the sports facilities. Spending less time travelling and being able to timetable longer sports activities will benefit pupils' physical and mental well-being.

3.6 The playing areas at the Brentwood site are already separated and doors open out to the play area thus providing space for pupils experiencing bouts of anxiety with the capacity to be supervised without being invasive. There is football and basketball facilities at the park next door which will allow opportunities close by for pupils to experience different sports.

3.7 There will be greater opportunities for pupils and staff to come together when it is beneficial and safe to do so. Transition will be easier for pupils who are better placed in the Trafford Medical Education Service instead of Trafford High School.

3.8 The proposed site is more centrally located within the Borough for pupils making it easier for some pupils to travel to school. Many pupils use public transport; pupils from both the North and South of the Borough have difficult journeys to school. A more accessible school will improve punctuality and attendance.

3.9 At the end of the school day some Trafford High School pupils will be escorted to the Tram stop and others to the appropriate bus stop. It might be that some pupils from both Schools will require transport but more pupils will be able to walk and travel to and from school independently. A full risk assessment will be carried out by the Schools to ensure the safety of pupils as the Brentwood site is close to the Tram and the Bridgewater Canal.

4.0 Additional Benefits of Re-location

4.1 There are other advantages in relocating the two Schools onto the former Brentwood School;

- Teaching and support staff will be better able to plan lessons and activities together and for those staff who work in both Schools there will be no time lost travelling between sites.
- There is the potential to make small revenue savings from efficiencies in the administration and management of the two services if based on the same site.
- The site gives potential to create further places and offer improved provision which in turn could reduce the need for out of borough places.
- There is limited capacity at the Trafford Medical Education Service site for expansion and the Trafford High School site is a former primary school – not an ideal site on which to expand provision for secondary age pupils.;
- There would be minimal adaptations required as the existing teaching and specialist spaces are suitable. Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service are happy to use the existing specialist spaces in situ, however, larger works are required to the building fabric as the building has been vacant and suffered from fire damage during this time and planned maintenance was halted in the years prior to the Special school's relocation.
- Similar pupil and staff numbers to the former Brentwood School would be using the site so impact on residents should be minimal.
- Capital maintenance improvements to the condition of the buildings at both Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service would not be required and this would release funding for further improvements to the Trafford education estate in future years.
- The move is expected to be funded from the disposal of the current Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service sites which will release a larger capital receipt to be re-invested in the Trafford education estate.

5.0 Conclusions of Feasibility Study

5.1 Trafford High School and the Trafford Medical Education Service can be accommodated within the former Brentwood School with no additional accommodation required, however minor internal remodelling will be necessary to accommodate the needs of each service with secure doors and CCTV installation where necessary in addition to the work required to bring the building to a good standard of repair.

6.0 Revenue savings

6.1 There is the potential to make small revenue savings from efficiencies in the administration and management of the two services if based on the same site.

6.2 There is the potential to make small revenue savings from efficiencies in premises and resources of the two services if based on the same site.

7.0 Disposal of School Playing fields

7.1 The former Brentwood School playing field land has not been used since the School relocated to the new site in September 2016. The Brentwood House site has a medium sized garden and was last used by the School in August 2018. The Trafford High School has a large playing field and Trafford Medical Education Service has an outdoor area, both of which are used by the schools but will be surplus to requirements if they are re-located.

7.2 The former Brentwood School, existing Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service sites and the Brentwood House sites all require Secretary of State's consent for disposal. There are two processes to be completed for disposal of school land and playing field land:

1. Completion of SCH1F for Secretary of State's consent under Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010

This is to notify the DfE of surplus school land, the DfE can insist this land is gifted for use by Free Schools, should the pupil number demand support this.

Risk for Trafford High School site: This was the former site of Woodsend Primary School which closed in July 2006 due to falling pupil numbers, the KS3 PRU then relocated here and then expanded to include the KS4 PRU also. Pupil numbers do not support the opening of a further Primary or Secondary School in the area.

2. Completion of SATPF1 for Secretary of State's consent under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to dispose of school playing field land.

This includes a minimum 6 weeks public consultation period (with 4 of those weeks being in term time) and includes explicit consent from primary schools within ½ mile radius and secondary schools within 1 mile radius, excluding Academies, that they do not require the use of this land.

7.3 Within Question 19 of SATPF1 there is a requirement to declare how capital receipts will be allocated to schemes. Stating that "the first priority for investment of proceeds or benefits arising from any disposal should be sports facilities (where these are needed by the school), then specific education capital projects to improve or enhance facilities at this or other schools."

7.4 In line with these criteria it is not considered that there is a need for the proceeds from the sale any playing field land to be invested in sports facilities. It is therefore proposed that the capital receipts from the sales be allocated as follows:

- Reinstatement of former Brentwood site;
- Condition issues at various schools. Possible schemes may include whole block replacement, boiler replacements, re-roofing, re-wiring, window replacement and other health and safety issues as required.

8.0 Other Options

7.1 Do nothing. This option maintains the status quo and delivers the existing provision over the two current sites which is deemed to be poor. The benefits for pupils detailed in section 3.0 plus benefits in section 4.0, including any revenue savings from a co-location, would not be realised. Additional capital receipts or the potential development of Lydney Road and Flixton Road sites would not be realised.

9.0 Consultation

9.1 Planning

Initial advice from Trafford's Planning Department suggests that the site will have open D1 consent which allows for non-residential education and training centres. On that basis

Educational use will not require planning permission to operate from the former Brentwood School site.

9.2 School Governors

The proposed change of site for the provision falls outside the statutory process for consultation. The School Governors are aware of the proposals but further consultation and discussion will take place with them and the Executive Head.

9.3 Parents of current pupils

Parents of current pupils will be consulted about the proposed change in site for the provision.

9.4 Staff and Unions

Staff and Unions will be consulted about the proposed changes to the place of work.

9.5 Residents

If planning permission is not required then a formal consultation does not need to be undertaken. However, a letter to residents will be sent, to inform them of the new use for the building, including start and finish times of the two schools and how pupils will be travelling to and from school. There has been considerable interest in the future of the site from residents.

10.0 Reasons for Recommendation

10.1 The learning environment for all pupils will be improved and enhanced and they will have on-site access to specialist teaching areas, therapeutic, sports and play facilities which will improve their physical and mental well-being. There will be opportunities to expand the curriculum into vocational subjects and offer additional activities and support. Punctuality and attendance should improve as the school is more accessible for pupils from all corners of the Borough.

10.2 The relocation of both Trafford High and Trafford Medical Education Centre into the former Brentwood School site could generate ongoing modest revenue savings for these establishments and release further significant capital funding for investment into the Education portfolio.

10.3.3 This site also provides a future option to increase the number of places in the provision if required and reduce the number of out of borough places funded by the Local Authority.

Key Decision: Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance (type in initials) GB

Legal Officer Clearance (type in initials) JLF

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE (electronic)



[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE *(electronic)* 

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.