

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
**Cllr Pauline Church**

**SERVICE AREA**                      **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**OFFICER CONTACT**                **Clara Davies, Head of School Place Commissioning**  
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**REFERENCE:**                        CS-03-20

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**Statutory Notice to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School,  
Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT.**

**1.     Purpose of Report**

To ask the Cabinet Member to approve the statutory proposal published by Wiltshire Council on 23 April 2020. The notice proposed to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School to provide pre-school provision from 1 January 2021. The school will then admit children from the age of 3 years. Pupils will be accommodated in existing buildings on the site which are being converted into pre-school accommodation.

**2.     Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure effective school organisation and sufficient school places are provided across the Council area.

**3.     Main Considerations for the Council**

The local population is increasing and the Local Authority has identified a need for additional pre-school places in the area.

Wiltshire Council in partnership with Princecroft Primary School applied for School Nurseries Capital Funding (SNCF) in October 2018 to the DfE to address a predicted shortfall of nursery places in the school's catchment area. The outcome of the SNCF application was announced in January 2020 with the bid of £470,000 successfully awarded.

This funding is to be used to renovate the on-site former Children's Centre to create a 30 place nursery for 3-4 year olds. The Council does have the option to do nothing but that would not create the places needed and the funding would need to be returned to the DfE.

**4.     Background**

Princecroft Primary School is currently a primary school for children aged 4-11 years. The capacity of the school for statutory school age pupils is 210 and the current

admission number (PAN) for the school is 30. The new nursery will offer an additional 30 places for children below statutory school age. The nursery will not affect either the Net Capacity or PAN of the school for statutory school age children.

In creating these new pre-school places, there will be no changes to the school's Admission Policy as attendance at the nursery will not offer any additional guarantees of a school place at Princecroft at statutory school age. Places will continue to be allocated on the existing over subscription criteria so equality of opportunity for all will not be compromised.

Princecroft Primary School was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in March 2018. However, OFSTED noted that many of the children on roll have low starting points especially in terms of language, literacy and communication and the school is keen to address this to ensure children's academic outcomes are improved.

The local population is increasing, and the Local Authority has identified a need for additional pre-school and school places in the area. The school has already undergone a recent expansion of its facilities and has increased its Published Admission Number (PAN) to 30 to accommodate an increased number of pupils due to housing development in the catchment area.

Numbers on roll have increased by 7% since September 2017, and by September 2020 this will increase to 15%.

In order to create the pre-school places needed, the age range of the school needs to be lowered from 4 to 11 years currently, to 3 to 11 years from January 2021. The current and proposed places available are shown below.

CURRENT OFFER		PROPOSED OFFER	
	Places		Places
Age 3-4 (Nursery)	0	Age 3-4 (Nursery)	30
Age 4-5 (Reception)	30	Age 4-5 (Reception)	30
Age 5-6 (Year 1)	30	Age 5-6 (Year 1)	30
Age 6-7 (Year 2)	30	Age 6-7 (Year 2)	30
Age 7-8 (Year 3)	30	Age 7-8 (Year 3)	30
Age 8-9 (Year 4)	30	Age 8-9 (Year 4)	30
Age 9-10 (Year 5)	30	Age 9-10 (Year 5)	30
Age 10-11 (Year 6)	30	Age 10-11 (Year 6)	30

As can be seen in the table above, existing places for 4 to 11 year olds will not change as a result of this proposal to lower the age range.

There would be no displaced pupils as all pupils at the school will continue to be educated at Princecroft Primary School from January 2021.

Creating a nursery at Princecroft School will provide an additional 30 places all year round for 3 - 4 year olds in the local area. It will also offer parents and carers a wider choice of settings and support the government's strategy to increase take up of 30 hours per week of funded nursery provision.

In turn this will enable parents and carers to more easily return to work and allow the school to improve the outcomes for the children in the school community by ensuring they are school ready when they start in Reception.

There will be facilities for children to enjoy messy play, crafts, cookery, and outside activities, as well as quiet space for naps, and a meeting room to facilitate early interventions with other agencies where required, as well as opportunities to provide parental support and secure parental engagement early on in children's educational journeys.

Once the nursery is established the school anticipates only a positive impact, for parents having access to high quality, wrap-around care; for young children experiencing a nurturing and stimulating environment, and for the school in being able to impact on the school-readiness of these children.

The new nursery will not impact detrimentally on existing school accommodation because it will be fully contained in the detached former Children's Centre on the school site. In addition, the funding secured will fully cover the proposed renovation costs, and grants will be sought should there be a shortfall on revenue costs.

Noah's Ark Pre-School also sits within the school site and offers places for 2 – 4 year olds term time only. The proposed pre-school places at Princecroft will offer places for 3-4 year olds all year round. Forecasts predict sufficient numbers for both settings (as well as others in the area). One of the conditions of the School Nurseries Capital Funding was that the project must not be at the detriment of existing good quality early years provision. Princecroft Primary School aims to have a positive impact on existing neighbouring nursery provision in the future as they hope their nursery will be able to collaborate with other local providers to ensure continuity for children on transition to school, consistency of provision and quality assurance.

It is envisaged that there will be minimal disruption to the school during the renovation works as the building is detached from the main school building and much of the works will be indoors. Outside works can be timed during school holiday periods where required. Moreover, the school recently underwent major building works to expand the number of classrooms and managed the impact of this on the rest of the school very successfully, so is experienced in managing similar situations.

### Consultation

Wiltshire Council and Princecroft Primary School have widely consulted on the proposal to expand the age range Princecroft Primary School to provide nursery provision. The consultation took place between 1 March and 27 March with the following interested parties:

- Parents and carers of children at the school
- Teachers and support staff at the school
- Governors at the school
- Local Councillor Pip Ridout
- Warminster Town Council
- Other schools and pre-schools in Warminster
- Wiltshire Council’s Lead Member for Children’s Services
- Neighbours adjacent to the school site

A public meeting was also held on 12 March 2020. A summary of the consultation responses are shown below.

Stakeholder	Number of responses	Agree with the proposal	Disagree with the proposal	Percentage in agreement
Parent/Carer	36	35	1	97%
Member of staff	13	13	0	100%
Governor at the school	5	3	0	100%
Local resident	4	4	0	100%
Prospective Parent	1	1	0	100%
Other	1 (Councillor)	1	0	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98%</b>

The one parent/carers who said they disagreed with the proposal did not complete the comments section of the feedback form so their reasons for objecting are unknown.

Following this round of consultation, the Council published the statutory proposal on the 23 April 2020. The statutory proposal period ended on 23 May 2020 and there were no objections or comments received.

## **5. Overview & Scrutiny Engagement**

Not applicable

## **6. Safeguarding Implications**

All schools are designed to ensure that schools provide safe and secure places for children and young people in the local community. If a decision was taken not to provide places locally to meet demand in a local area then there is a risk that young children would need to be transported to settings further away leaving them more vulnerable due to the distance they are from home.

## **7. Public Health Implications**

Providing early years places in the community will enable local families to walk to school rather than travelling to settings further away.

## **8. Procurement Implications**

The school decided to manage the works themselves and have already secured planning permission, obtained tenders and will be able to appoint a contractor once a formal decision on reducing the age range of the school has been made.

## **9. Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

The Local Authority has a duty and responsibility to provide sufficient places to meet demand arising from all areas of the community.

Through detailed planning and effective design, officers continue to ensure that all accommodation improvements promote and deliver equality of opportunity and access to facilities.

The Equalities Act 2010 states that reasonable adjustments must be taken into consideration in design. By adopting compliant design principles, and ensuring all schemes meet Building Regulations it should be possible to eradicate disability access difficulties and discrimination in the new nursery accommodation.

## **10. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

Having early years places available at the school should result in reduced vehicle journeys to settings further away.

## **11. Risk Assessment**

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is not taken**

The Council does have the option to do nothing but that would not create the additional pre-school places required in this community. The SNCF grant would also need to be returned to the DFE.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

There is a risk that the capital works required could be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances and Covid-19. However, the school have already identified that an alternative room could be used for the nursery temporarily if necessary.

## **12. Financial Implications**

This project will be fully funded by the SNCF awarded by the DfE to address a predicted shortfall of nursery places in the school's catchment area. Tenders have

been sought and with some minor value engineering the school's ambitions for the nursery accommodation can be met within the scope of the funding.

### **13. Legal Implications**

There is a prescribed process that must be followed where it is proposed to change the age range or increase the number of pupils. These proposals fall within those requirements and the relevant public notice has been given. The Council has a duty to consider any representations received as a result of that notice, before making a determination to approve or reject the proposal. Any approval may be made conditional on the grant of planning permission or other prescribed matters.

Alterations to Maintained schools, such as Princecroft Primary are governed by The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 ("Prescribed Alterations Regulations"). When exercising functions under these regulations regard must be had to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), "Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools", which sets out the procedure to be followed. The process as set out in the report follows that of the guidance.

The Cabinet member, as decision maker must have regard to a list of factors included in further statutory guidance, namely "Guidance for decision-makers", particularly Section 2 and 3.

### **14. Options Considered**

The Council does have the option to do nothing but that would not create the places required to meet demand in this area and SNCF funding would need to be returned to the DfE. The Council has no other funding it could use to create these additional places elsewhere.

### **15. Reason for Proposal**

The LA has a statutory duty to provide sufficient places across Wiltshire and projections indicate a need for additional pre-school places in this area. Lowering the age range of Princecroft Primary School to create the places needed is the most appropriate solution to providing the required places in a timely and efficient way.

### **16. Proposal**

To approve the statutory proposal published by Wiltshire Council on 23 April 2020. The notice proposed to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School to provide pre-school provision from 1 January 2021. The school will then admit children from the age of 3 years. Pupils will be accommodated in existing buildings on the site.

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**STATUTORY NOTICE**

**Wiltshire Council Statutory Notice of a proposed Change of Age Range at the Princecroft Primary School, Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT.**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended by the Education Act 2011) and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 that Wiltshire Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Princecroft Primary School, Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT.

Wiltshire Council proposes to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School to provide pre-school provision from 1 January 2021. The school will then admit children from the age of 3 years. Pupils will be accommodated in existing buildings on the site which are being converted into pre-school accommodation.

The statutory representation period will begin on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 and will continue until 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020.

**Access to copies of the full proposals**

This Notice is a brief extract of the full related proposals, which are available to view on the Princecroft Primary School website at [www.princecroft.wilts.sch.uk](http://www.princecroft.wilts.sch.uk) and on the Wiltshire Council Consultation portal <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-consultations>. Paper copies of the full proposals can also be obtained upon request from School Buildings and Places Team (ref: Princecroft Primary School), Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN.

**Comments on, or objections to, the proposals**

Any person or organisation may object to, or comment on, the above related proposals by sending them to School Buildings and Places Team, Wiltshire Council (ref: Princecroft Primary School), County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN **within 4 weeks** of the date of publication of this Notice, namely **by 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020**.

All statutory consultation requirements relating to these proposals have been complied with.

**Signed:**

**Mr Ian R Gibbons  
Solicitor to the Council**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**