
CHILDREN'S SERVICES CAPITAL UPDATE

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio

Responsible Director – Margaret Asquith, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Members with a mid year update on the Children's Services capital investment programme. The report highlights the progress made on major capital projects and seeks approval for changes to the previously agreed programme of works approved by Members in June 2006. The report lists potential changes and explains the need and justification for any amendments.

Information and Analysis

2. Annually Children's Services seek approval to all proposed capital works to departmental properties. On 6th June 2006 Cabinet approved a programme of works amounting to some £6.089m.
3. Since June, schemes of work have been further developed and a large amount of work completed during the summer holiday period. The result is that many works are now complete with others progressing against their planned programme.
4. However, as a result of design development, some works have had to be modified resulting in potential changes to timetable and spend profiled.
5. Listed below are details of the main schemes currently being undertaken within the Children's Services Department. In addition, a review of the main capital programme is also detailed.

Hummersknott School & Language College - Targeted Capital Fund Development

6. This project is currently reaching the end of outline design. After a range of stakeholder meetings with staff, pupils and residents, the outline design will be signed off by 16th October 2006. The signoff of the design will coincide with the lodging of a planning application.
7. The design has been developed and costed within the available funding with further cost assessments being undertaken as detailed design and production information provide tighter cost definition.
8. The commencement of work on site will now take place in mid-June 2007. This is four weeks later than originally planned. The change has been necessary to avoid noisy pre-site

work clashing with the exam period. The extra time will also allow greater scrutiny of risk in the pre-tender stage of the project.

9. The new build area will account for phase one of the project and will take twelve months to complete. Phase two will involve refurbish and some demolition. This phase will take nine months. The project will be complete in March 2009.
10. A reduction in anticipated spend in 2006/07 has been identified reducing from the figure of £1 million reported to Members in June to an anticipated £500,000. This change is necessary as the original figure placed pressure on the Project Manager to progress the scheme quickly to meet the spend profile.
11. Now detailed discussions with stakeholders have commenced, and it is essential additional time is given to the feasibility stage of the project to ensure the design solution meets the needs of all end users. This is essential if we are to remove any potential design risk. As feasibility has extended, the anticipated spend profile has reduced. The change in proposed spend reflects this and the funding has been re-profiled to increase spend in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Abbey Infant & Junior Schools – New Hall

12. Very early feasibility work on the project is now under way. The proposed project is jointly funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the schools on an 80%-20% match funding basis. The schools are currently finalising the financial arrangements for their 20% contribution of £120k to the project, upon confirmation of this, approval for release of funding will be sought from Members.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

13. Over the last 6 months the project to reallocate the current and dispersed PRU services has seen extensive design development to ensure that the accommodation will be suitable for children, staff, and the wider community. Detailed site investigations have taken place which have helped to accurately identify the current condition of the building and the extent of additional work that needs undertaking, over and above that originally estimated. In addition, extensive consultation with users and the community has got underway which will help to shape the requirements of the project.
14. As a result of this additional work, the total project costs have risen and alternative funding streams have been identified and this proposal will be the subject of a separate report to Council on 23rd November 2006.

The Coleridge Centre

15. In February 2006 the Authority opened a community development building unlike any other in the country. Located in Skerne Park, the Coleridge Centre is a purpose built, state of the art facility that aims to give youngsters the best possible start in life, and adults the opportunities and choices they need to improve their living standards.

16. Housing four unique services under one roof, the design incorporates dedicated areas for each service but provides many multi-functional rooms that only the economies of scale from a large project can achieve.
17. Due to the unique nature of the design and some early refinements to reduce the scale of the design to fit the cost mode, it became necessary to increase the final cost of the scheme during the development and construction phases.
18. To allow these changes in design to be approved, Children's Services sought and obtained, additional capital funding from a variety of sources. In addition monies were vired from other schemes to ensure that the scheme was completed without a call on corporate capital resources. The table below details the additional funding, which has been vired to the scheme:

Funding	£000's
Targeted Capital Funding	323
Sure Start Capital	163
Condition Funding	197
Total	683

19. The net result is that without affecting any other Children's Services developments, the Authority has been able to create:
 - a) Darlington's first fully extended 315 place primary school with Nursery
 - b) A Neighbourhood Nursery (managed by the local Community Enterprise Association) offering 52 nursery places, providing wrap around child care from 8am to 6pm
 - c) A full range of local Sure Start provision including dedicated working spaces for Health Visitors; and
 - d) A Family and Adult Learning area managed by the Authority's Libraries and Community Learning Team.

Children's Centres Capital

20. The development of the network of Children's Centres continues to progress. The Authority received an allocation of £1,298,953 across two financial years, 2006/07 and 2007/08. The original programme looked to spend £667,488 in 2006/07 and £631,465 in 2007/08. Following national delays in this programme, the DfES have re-profiled the allocations for each of the two years.
21. Agreement was reached that the new profiles would see £428,654 spent in 2006/07 and £870,299. The projects in the 2006/07 remain on programme and it is anticipated spend will be in line with the revised allocation.

Capital Programme

22. **Appendix 1** details Children's Services Capital programme including schemes and resources rolled over from previous years and changes since the Cabinet report of 6th June 2006. Essentially most proposed works have been or will, during the remainder of the

financial year, be completed. In addition to the major schemes detailed earlier in the report there are variations on several other projects. The major variances in excess of £0.050m are detailed below:-

Scheme	£m
Allocation of unallocated Schools Access Initiative balance to access works at five primary schools	0.078
Virement from Pupil Places to Remodelling relating to remodelling works at Corporation Road (£0.100m) and other minor variances.(£0.036m)	0.136
Secondary schools contributing additional Devolved Formulae Capital to Heating and Water Systems schemes.	(0.055)
In relation to Pupil Places a virement of £0.100m has been identified relating to Corporation Road as detailed above. Off setting this are additional costs of £0.050m relating to Gurney Pease Nursery Extension.	(0.050)
Additional condition funding related costs relating to the Coleridge Centre as detailed at paragraph 15-19	0.197
Other minor variations	(0.026)
Amount transferred from contingency	(0.280)
Balance	0

23. In total these variances are contained within the approved resources but Cabinet approval is sought to formalise the re-allocation of resources between individual schemes.
24. Re-profiled spend in 2006/07 has been reduced from £6.089m to £5m. The reason for the reduction is due to three factors:
- A reduction in anticipated spend at Hummersknott of £0.5m
 - A reduction in anticipated spend at the PRU of £0.35m; and
 - A reduction in allocation of Children's Centre capital of £0.239m.

Outcome of Consultation

25. The revised programme has been discussed with all stakeholders and agreement reached on any changes made.

Legal Implications

26. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

27. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

28. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

29. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Key Decisions

30. The report represents a key decision as it involves works to Children's Centre buildings across most Council wards.

Recommendations

31. It is recommended that Members:
- a) Approve the revised programme of works; and
 - b) Agree to the revised financing of the Coleridge Centre.

Reasons

32. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- a) The revised programme will allow the investment of capital to be made into Children's Services' premises; and
 - b) The revised programme will ensure effective management of building projects in Children's Services can be undertaken.

**Margaret Asquith,
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

Cabinet Report "Children's Services Capital Programme 2006-07" – 6th June 2006

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