
**BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE:
DRAW DOWN OF FUNDING**

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Cyndi Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the draw-down of funds to engage on the first stage of project management for capital works and ICT improvements to the Council's secondary school estate.

Summary

2. The Council's readiness to deliver statement with regard to BSF was presented to Partnerships for Schools in autumn 2009. The Authority, which had expected to be included in wave 12, was informed that it would be admitted to wave 7 of the national BSF programme, much earlier than anticipated. The opportunity allows capital improvements to be made to the three secondary schools in Darlington which have not benefited from major capital investment over the last ten years.
3. The BSF programme also covers the upgrading and management of ICT services for secondary schools. Through the BSF Programme it will be possible to provide an ICT refresh for all six maintained secondary schools in the Borough. Separate arrangements are in place for Academies.
4. Given the size of the programme in Darlington, it is likely that Partnerships for Schools will ask the authority to use the National Contractors' Framework, drawn up by national Government. Members will recall that St. Aidan's CE Academy was delivered successfully through this Framework. Use of the National Contractors' Framework speeds the process of the programme as partners registered on the framework have already been subjected to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) process. It is still necessary for each Authority to have high quality client side advice for specialist technical, design, ICT and legal matters in order to minimise risk to the Council and to ensure best value for spend.
5. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) contains provision for £1.8m over three years to meet the management requirements of the programme. This report seeks approval to draw down as required in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Lead Member for Resources.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members:-
 - (a) Note that the National Contractors' Framework, managed by Partnerships for Schools will be the preferred procurement route.
 - (b) Agree to the draw down of £1.2m from the provision made in the Council's MTFP.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
 - (a) National Contractors' Framework is the preferred procurement method for authorities whose schemes sum to less than £150m.
 - (b) To cover some areas of expertise and capacity not available within the Council it will be necessary to commission work from external advisers.

Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

DBC Readiness to Deliver Statement – September 2009

Project Planning Guidance issued by Partnerships for Schools – October 2007

George McQueen : Extension 2847

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Section 17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues arising directly from this report.
Health and Well Being	New buildings will take account of up to date technologies and the designs will include work on ventilation, lighting and colour schemes conducive to a healthy working environment for pupils and staff.
Sustainability	New or refurbished buildings will make use of sustainable technologies and their impact for the carbon footprint generated by the Council will be taken into account.
Diversity	The opportunity to develop Branksome, Hurworth and Longfield schools means that all of the Authority's seven secondary schools will have had significant capital investment within the last five years and each can become a school of choice for all sections of the community in Darlington.
Wards Affected	The capital investment will have an impact on all wards in the Borough, but principally to those wards in which Branksome, Hurworth and Longfield Secondary Schools are located.
Groups Affected	Pupils in the 11-16 age range.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not propose changes to the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The updating or replacement of secondary school buildings is consistent with the Prosperous Darlington theme: Attracting high quality, well-paid jobs to the Borough, and the Aspiring Darlington theme: Providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Efficiency	The BSF programme gives impetus to pupil place planning to ensure a sufficiency rather than an oversupply of school places in the secondary sector. The programme will necessitate a review of support service delivery for facilities management. The programme also supports a re-examination of the use of buildings and land for community use. Finally, the programme provides the opportunity to use building techniques that support the 'green' agenda.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Darlington was due to join the national Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme in 2013. Through liaison and discussion with officers from the DCSF and Partnerships for Schools, and with cross party support from politicians, the Council received agreement to submitting a Readiness to Deliver Statement, seeking early admission to the programme in 2010.
9. The reason for seeking early inclusion in the BSF programme was so that students attending Branksome, Hurworth and Longfield schools could enjoy the benefits of capital investment in the way that four other Darlington secondary schools have done. Improved and re-designed buildings will help the schools develop the personalised learning activities and operate the teaching styles demanded by the curriculum in the 21st Century. The BSF programme requires authorities to create a Managed Service for ICT for the BSF estate. This service will provide curriculum support as well as technical support to schools and will assist in the regular upgrading and refreshment of equipment. Finally, the BSF programme will allow the Authority to improve facilities for children registered at 'The Bridge' pupil referral unit.
10. The Council received confirmation on 30 November 2009 that Darlington had been judged ready to deliver. The Council has therefore been included in Wave 7 of the National BSF programme.
11. Darlington's submission requested resources to allow the following:
 - (a) Replacement or refurbishment of Branksome School (with possible co-location of PRU facilities on site)
 - (b) Replacement or Refurbishment of Hurworth School (with possible co-location of a special unit to meet the needs of pupils on the Autistic Spectrum on site)
 - (c) Replacement or refurbishment of Longfield School
 - (d) ICT facilities, through the creation of a Managed Service, for all maintained secondary schools in Darlington.

Technical and Specialist Advice

12. Due to the size of the programme, the complexity and the time constraints it will be necessary to call on expertise from external organisations to fill skills or capacity gaps within the Council. Specialist Advisers will need to be drawn in to work up an ICT specification in line with British Educational communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) recommendations. The Borough Solicitor will require specialist legal advice and the Director of Community Services will need to seek appropriate Technical and Design support to convert the education vision described in the Strategy for Change into the remodelled or redesigned buildings. It may also be necessary to consult specialist advisers

as the Council moves towards financial close.

13. Partnerships for Schools maintains a list of approved organisations who have been subject to robust scrutiny and assessment to ensure that they provide suitably qualified personnel to carry out work in the Public Sector. The Council would be expected to use these frameworks and carry out mini-competitions in line with its current practice to select advisers. These contracts were designated as non-strategic at the Cabinet meeting on 5th January and therefore these appointments will be made by the Director of Children's Services.
14. The use of advisers in building schools for the future work will need to be "front loaded", as the advisers will help shape Technical, ICT and Design matters. Legal and financial advisers will be required as the project approaches approval for the outline business case and financial close. Actual costs cannot be quoted as advisers will be appointed following a tendering process. It is anticipated that no more than £1.2m will be required for the appointment of advisers in the first instance. A further report will be brought to Cabinet to request draw down of additional funds as necessary.
15. The MTFP contains provision for £1.8m over three years to meet the management requirements of the Programme.

Risks

16. A comprehensive risk register will be maintained by the BSF Director throughout the lifetime of the project. Risks will be linked to Workstreams for Education Transformation, Extended Services, Technical and Design matters, Procurement, Legal and Financial matters, Communications and ICT. Risks above the appetite identified in the Council's Risk Management programme will be reported to members. The Head of Capital Projects will arrange a full day Risk Workshop for stakeholders to identify key risks and raise awareness with partners of the responsibility levels for managing each risk.

Outcome of Consultation

17. Not applicable.