
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS IN DARLINGTON

SUMMARY REPORT**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Members of the appointment of a building contractor for the replacement North Road School
2. To inform Members of progress to date on the proposals to amalgamate Dodmire Infant & Nursery School with Dodmire Junior School.
3. To inform Members of development of community use at the Phoenix Centre.

Summary

4. North Road School is being rebuilt as a 'pathfinder' scheme and in line with the Council's Primary Capital Strategy. The building must have a low carbon footprint and wherever possible advance the sustainability agenda with regard to energy usage. The building was designed by Atkins. Following the presentation of Tenders, Kier (Northern) have been appointed as building contractors for the project. It is anticipated that work will begin on site in mid-November 2008.
5. Public consultation of the creation of a new primary school to replace Dodmire Infant & Nursery School and Dodmire Junior School closed on 3 October 2008. A Temporary Governing Body has been created for the proposed Primary School. The Schools Adjudicator, who has decision making powers regarding the closing of the existing schools and the opening of a primary school, is scheduled to visit Darlington on 22 October 2008.
6. The Phoenix Centre has now been open to pupils for two terms and the Headteacher is making outreach in to the community. Details of some of the activities, proposed and in operation, are contained in the detail of the report.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that this report be received for information.

**Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

George McQueen : Extension 2847

S17 Crime and Disorder	The Neighbourhood Watch in the North Road area will have access to the Phoenix Centre for meetings.
Health and Well Being	Through the Healthy Schools initiative, the Phoenix Centre will be used for community outreach for young and elderly members of the community.
Sustainability	The successful contractor for the North Road contract is aware of the need to achieve an 'excellent' rating in accordance with the Building Research Establishment Energy Assessment Matrix
Diversity	No issues arise from this report.
Wards Affected	Lascelles; Bank Top; North Road;
Groups Affected	Children aged 4-11 and their families, and members of the North Road community.
Budget and Policy Framework	No issues arise from this report
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report transmits information on improvement to the school building stock consistent with the Aspiring Darlington theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

North Road Primary School

8. A new decision making process with regard to procurement was introduced to the Council on 1 May 2008. Procurement decisions are made by Cabinet.
9. Tenders received were scored against a matrix prepared by the Chief Executive's department. 40% of points awarded were made on the basis of price, 60% on the basis of quality. All companies submitting tenders were asked to comment on the methodology they would employ for the build; the way in which they would respond to the challenge posed by sustainability for the new building and the way in which they would demonstrate value for money. Questions were also asked about their communications strategy and how interested parties would be kept informed of project developments.
10. Scrutiny of the accounts and balance sheets of bidding companies was made. Bankers references were called and telephone references were also sought from local authorities and schools who had experience of working with the companies who submitted the highest scoring tenders.
11. Following a selection process weighted for price and quality, Kier (Northern) was identified as the successful company. Kier (Northern) has an established track-record of building schools and we look forward to a fruitful partnership with them over the development of the construction of the new building.

Dodmire Proposed Amalgamation

12. The public consultation on the closure of the existing Infant & Nursery and Junior schools closed on Friday 3 October 2008.

13. A Temporary Governing Body for the proposed Primary School has been set up and has carried out business associated with the setting up of a new school. A Headteacher (Designate) has been appointed. The Temporary Governing Body decided not to make any further appointments to the Leadership Team, as national advertisement is necessary. Governors thought it would be imprudent to advertise until it was clarified that the new primary school would open as planned. The Temporary Governing Body therefore decided to make an internal advertisement for the post of Acting Deputy Headteacher, for the proposed Primary School, from 1 January 2009.
14. The Temporary Governing Body is due to meet again on Thursday 16 October 2008, where matters for consideration will include: the name for the proposed new school; uniform; communications with parents and the community, and any update on correspondence from the Office of the Schools adjudicator.

The Phoenix Centre

15. As previous reports have indicated, the Phoenix Centre is now open and pupils are benefiting from the updated facilities. The Headteacher is still working closely with Asset Management section to correct some minor problems with building work, relating mainly to the efficient operation of the heating system in all of the rooms and external site fencing.
16. Local residents have noted that The Phoenix Centre can be used as a Poling Station. It will serve the local community for this democratic purpose for the first time since its re-opening on the day of the North Road By-Election.
17. The Headteacher has offered the centre for community use through the auspices of the Healthy Schools initiative and through the Adult Learning function of the Library service. There are plans to use The Phoenix Centre for regular meetings of the Polish community in the area and for a meeting of senior citizens, to pass on their experiences and reminiscences of earlier times. These activities are in preparation and should be available from January 2009. At the time of writing, the Headteacher is also looking into the possibility of letting out the sports hall for organized events out of school hours. Additionally, an agreement has been reached for the Neighbourhood Watch association to use the premises for their meetings.
18. The Headteacher has meetings planned with North Road school, geographically close to the centre, to look for ways in which the two establishments can best meet community needs.

Outcome of Consultation

19. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator has indicated that a meeting will take place with the Headteachers and the Chairs of Governors of the existing Dodmire schools on Wednesday, 22 October 2008.
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