
**TARGETTED CAPITAL FUND 2005 - SUBMISSION FOR HUMMERSKNOTT
LANGUAGE COLLEGE**

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor McEwan - Children's Services Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) – Margaret Asquith - Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' approval for the submission of a bid under the Department for Education & Skills (DfES) Targeted Capital Fund (TCF) for financial support to remodel and, in some areas replace, the existing Hummersknott Language College.

Information

2. Darlington Council has invested just under £80Million in our schools since 1999, with 22% of schools being in new build facilities by 2007. In the main we have been successful in addressing the condition and suitability needs in the primary sector, but have not been able to make the same level of investment in the secondary.
3. Work began last year with Schools, Governors and Members to identify the long- term strategic plan for secondary education in Darlington. This early consultation exercise began to shape the potential size and locations of schools, with the Borough divided into quadrants with appropriate numbers of schools in each area. The Authority had hoped that this strategic review could continue under the DfES Building Schools For The Future (BSF) programme supported by extensive funding to replace, reconfigure and re-model existing schools. It would also ensure the most severe condition needs of the secondary school estate would be met.
4. On 30th November 2004, DfES announced the next two waves of BSF, and gave Authorities not in these waves an indication of when they may expect to enter the BSF programme. Unfortunately Darlington is in Wave 8 of the programme with an indicative indication of entering the full BSF programme by 2013. The announcement did state that DfES had an aspiration that every Local Authority would receive funding for one new school by 2011. The announcement on these allocations will be made in July 2005 at which time more detailed consultation on future secondary school provision in the Borough can recommence.
5. However, with no certainty of BSF funding the Authority must explore all potential funding opportunities for our schools.
6. The Authority received notification of a potential bidding opportunity for TCF funding on 24th February 2005. The guidance received outlines the potential capital support for priority building projects Local Authorities wish to undertake during the period 2006-07 and 2007-08. This

category of TCF is bid based for priority building projects, which also contribute to achieving educational improvement, but which might not normally be funded from formulaic allocations, perhaps because they are relatively large in relation to formulaic allocations.

7. This is a two year cycle bidding programme and the local Authority will not have another opportunity to access significant capital to undertake large scale building projects until 2009-10
8. Local Authorities may propose up to two projects. The projects may attract funding of £6 million, plus matched funding of an additional 20% (i.e. up to £7.5 million) each. Alternatively, the Authority may propose one project of £12 million plus matched funding (i.e. up to £15 million).
9. All bids will be assessed against a set of criteria developed by DfES. The criteria covers the following areas;
 - a) Standards / curriculum improvement
 - b) Primary enrichment
 - c) Science and design and technology improvements
 - d) The 14 to 19 agenda
 - e) Standards focused re-organisation
 - f) Improved provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
 - g) Extended schools / community use agenda
10. The closing date for the submission of bids is 28th April 2005.

Analysis

11. Like all other Local Authorities, Darlington is looking to provide the best start in life for the children attending Darlington schools. It is clearly acknowledged that providing 21st century state of the art facilities, allied to excellent teaching practices and high quality support services, is key to raising education standards. The Authority places the raising of education standards amongst its highest priorities and is looking closely at all aspects of education delivery to raise attainment in schools.
12. Additionally, the Local Authority wants to see schools develop their position within the local community, no longer opening at 9.00am and closing at 3.30pm, but extending the availability of the buildings and education delivery to pupils and the local community. Through the extended schools programme, this concept is being developed in Darlington with greater community access a key principle of school development.
13. These ambitions are being undermined by the poor quality of our existing school buildings, particularly at secondary school level. **Appendix 1** sets out the immediate condition needs of all Darlington secondary schools (the table excludes Houghton Community School and Beaumont Hill Technology College, both of which are being replaced by the Education Village. The table clearly shows that one school, Hummersknott Language College has significantly higher condition based needs than any other secondary school in Darlington. The table identifies significant investment is required in the mechanical and electrical infrastructure of the building. If a major failure of plant in these areas was to occur, it is likely the school would have to close whilst temporary repairs were undertaken. The Authority has grave concern on the effect any

temporary closure would have on children's education, further frustrating our aim to raise education standards.

14. In addition, a survey undertaken to assess the suitability of Hummersknott Language College to deliver education in the 21st century (**Appendix 2**), highlights a number of areas where the current size, design and layout of the school buildings is inhibiting delivery of the curriculum. These include dispersed faculties with Departments spread across the school buildings. Not having the ability to work in a single department creates in built inefficiencies for the school, leading to duplication and waste. The age and configuration of teaching spaces, many built over 50 years ago creates a poor teaching environment in large areas of the school undermining the schools ability to achieve higher standards of education delivery.
15. Hummersknott Language College is a very popular and successful school. Applications for entry to the school at Year 7 always exceed the available number of places. At 60% A* to C attainment is above the national average although with enhanced premises and more intensive challenge it is expected results will rise to nearer 80%. Hummersknott is also Darlington's largest Secondary school with over 1200 pupils. The sheer size of the school, its popularity with parents and above average performance removes any potential to close the school as part of the strategic review of secondary school provision. As a result, significant capital investment must be found to improve and enhance the accommodation.
16. The Authority has used the formulaic funding received from central government to try to address the most serious building needs within Darlington schools. However given a legacy of under investment over many years this funding is addressing only a small percentage of the building needs in a 'patch and mend' mentality. To achieve a real step change in secondary school accommodation, significant capital investment must be secured to provide building solutions that will allow schools to develop the type of premises needed to deliver education for the next 10 to 15 years. This will see schools moving out of the patch and mend era to a more strategic vision for developing school buildings.
17. For the reasons outlined above, higher levels of attainment, popularity of school, existing condition and suitability needs and extended use, Members are asked to support the proposal to bid for significant capital investment at Hummersknott Language College. To achieve the step change desired, it is recommended that a bid of £15 million be submitted, £12 Million funded by DfES with the Authority providing matched funding of £3 million. This will allow real change to be made in the accommodation with large areas of the school being demolished and replaced and the remainder significantly refurbished. Work on the detail of the final building solutions is still being developed but will be completed ahead of the closing date for bid submissions (28th April 2005).
18. Council funding of £3 million will be required to support the proposed bid. It is anticipated this funding will be realised from the potential sale of surplus school land resulting from the closure / replacement of a number of existing schools in Darlington. This is land that would no longer be required for the delivery of education services, but the Authority is advocating that the proceeds that accrue from these sales should be reinvested into the education system in support of the bid for Hummersknott Language College.

Legal Implications

19. 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

Council Policy Framework

20. The issues contained within this report do not represent significant Council policy or a change in the Authority's framework.

Decision Deadline

21. This report, for the purposes of the Scrutiny Committee 'call in' procedures, does represent an urgent matter due to the submission date of a bid for TCF funding.

Key Decisions

22. This report constitutes a key decision impacting on more than two wards within the area of the local authority.

Recommendations

23. Members are requested to:
- a. Support the proposal to bid for Targeted capital Funding to undertake works at Hummersknott Language College
 - b. Agree in principle that Corporate investment of £3 million matched funding be agreed subject to the approval of Council.

Reason

24. There is a clear need for significant capital investment to be made into Hummersknott Language College which will have a direct effect upon the Authority's drive to raise educational standards in Darlington. At present, a bid for TCF funding is the only available funding stream to provide such support.

Margaret Asquith
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

TCF bidding guidance 2006-07 & 2007-08

Kevin Duffy ext 2818