

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY
CABINET
COUNCIL

12th MAY 2005
16th MAY 2005
26th MAY 2005

NEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR BRAUNSTONE

Report of the Service Director, Education Policy & Resources

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Cabinet at its meeting on 17th May 2004 approved the amalgamations of Queensmead Infant and Junior Schools, and Bendbow Rise Infant and Crescent Junior Schools. In deciding this, it agreed to secure Targeted Capital Funding (TCF) that had been approved by the DfES to enable the Authority to provide purpose built all through primary schools as part of the strategy to raise standards in West Leicester.
- 1.2 Following detailed consultation, and as the proposals have been developed, a number of issues have emerged relating to design standards, additional facilities and temporary accommodation, which has led to an additional funding requirement.
- 1.3 This report asks Cabinet to consider:
 - (a) The revised proposals for the new Primary Schools project, in particular the revised accommodation requirements and the revised costs; and
 - (b) The proposal to change one school location from the original site at Bendbow Rise Infant school site to the Crescent Junior School site.

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 The New Primary Schools project in Braunstone is an exciting prospect for the City Council as it is the first opportunity to build new primary schools since becoming responsible for education following Unitary Status in 1997.
- 2.2 Braunstone is the most disadvantaged ward in the East Midlands. The LEA, together with Learning and Skills Council, has developed a school improvement strategy for West Leicester in response to the Area Wide

Inspection (AWI). Closing the attainment gap for children in West Leicester is recognised by the DfES as a priority and the two new schools address a key part of the primary element of the strategy.

- 2.3 The bid for funding for the new Primary Schools brought together external partners and funding to provide innovative and creative facilities for the children, their parents/carers and the community in general.
- 2.4 The schools have been designed using DfES guidance and Schools for the Future Exemplar Designs, thereby allowing the schools to provide a curriculum which meets statutory requirements, but which also addresses them in creative and innovative ways incorporating the principles of Primary Enrichment.
- 2.5 An educational philosophy has been written, which has informed the designs, allowing them to be flexible in their use and to reflect: -
 - The community needs for personal, social and lifelong learning.
 - Wrap around childcare.
 - Nurturing approaches to provision.
 - The role of arts and ICT in providing approaches to learning.
 - The potential for learning with and through the local environment.
- 2.6 The desire to provide facilities that support active and creative learning underpins the design, hence the provision of facilities for: music, drama, art, design and ICT.
- 2.7 The external environment has been designed to make a link between the classrooms and outdoor learning and to provide a safe, diverse and stimulating resource for children in this deprived area.
- 2.8 The strong structure of planting creates and encloses a hierarchy of external areas which can be used as external learning spaces. These include an ecology garden and a sensory garden. These spaces are to be designed with the teachers paying close attention to the requirements of the national curriculum.
- 2.9 Allowing for separate spaces within the overall structure also allows for dedicated spaces for different age groups and this has been shown to decrease problems such as bullying and conflict in play between different need groups.
- 2.10 The Education Select Committee report into education outside the classroom states that the DfES should ensure that its capital projects “devote as much attention to the “outdoor classroom” as to the innovative design of buildings and indoor space”.
- 2.11 Significant changes to the proposals are required following consultation and detailed design of the schools and a decision from Cabinet is required before any commitment is given to proceed to construction stage.

2.12 To fund the revised proposals requires an increase in the funds from the DfES' funded schools capital programme. The original provisional agreement was for contributory funding of £500,000 from this programme. This has now risen to £1,774,000 plus devolved school funds of £234,000.

2.13 It would be possible to reduce these costs although this would severely compromise the project and these are not recommended. Potential savings can be summarised as:

(a) Opting to build on the Bendbow site rather than Crescent could reduce costs by around £500,000. The most recent consultation shows that local people have a preference for the Crescent site. In particular, the following factors apply:

- The Crescent site would allow the school to make ready use of the excellent facilities at the nearby leisure centre.
- The report recommends building a school for a potential 2 form entry intake given population projections. Also, it is better practice to have a 2 FE school. The Bendbow site does not have sufficient area to meet the playing field requirements for a 2 form entry school. Therefore, there would be no potential for future expansion of a school on this site.
- The Crescent site has much better access than the Bendbow site in terms of the highway access, on-site parking, safe walking routes to school, etc.
- Development on the Crescent site would allow the existing infant and junior schools to remain open during the construction works, thus minimising disruption to the continuity of education.

The Bendbow site would be better from the point of view of:

- The potential to reverse migration to county schools being possibly slightly higher
- There are very few other community facilities at this end of the estate.

However, on balance and after careful consideration, the Crescent site is judged to be a better option, even taking into account the increased capital costs.

(b) Reducing environmental standards so that the buildings are less sustainable could save around £200,000. However, this would not be consistent with the Council's Environmental Strategy.

(c) Omitting non-core educational accommodation (e.g., nurture rooms, etc.) could save around a further £1,200,000. However, this would seriously impact on the ability of the schools to address the particular

problems faced by this community. Furthermore, there would no longer be any prospect of partnership funding as this is the aspect of the project that the Braunstone Community Association (BCA) judges to be particularly important.

- (d) Reducing the quality of external landscaping could save around £230,000. However, the concept of the outdoor classroom is a very important feature of the school design philosophy and there would be a significant loss of an enrichment opportunity. Losing this element of the contract would leave the external areas looking dull and uninspired with large areas of basic tarmac and grassed areas.

2.14 If any of these savings are made it would mean that the funding could be released for other priorities in the City-wide programme.

2.15 Also, it should be noted that £3,950,000 of the proposed funding is not secure because it relies on gaining DfES consent to sell playing fields (£3,450,000) and third party funding from the BCA that has not yet been agreed (£500,000). These sums would need to be underwritten from future years' schools capital allocations. If the consents were not obtained it would mean a two-year deferral of the mobile classroom replacements planned for other schools. However, initial discussions with DfES officers have indicated that there is a reasonable prospect of securing these consents.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report and Supporting Information and make any observations it sees fit to Cabinet.

3.2 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) Consider whether it wishes to proceed with the amalgamation at the revised cost discussed above, and if so:-
- (b) Note the recommendations contained in a separate report on the agenda regarding the funding of the school.
- (c) Authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Bendbow Rise Infant and Crescent Junior Schools at the end of the summer term 2007, and for a new primary school to be established on the Crescent Junior School site at the commencement of the autumn term 2007.
- (d) Authorise the disposal of part of the Bendbow Rise Infant site for sale on the open market for redevelopment (subject to obtaining statutory approval for the disposal of school playing fields).
- (e) Authorise supplementary planning guidance for the disposal of the site prior to its marketing.
- (f) Authorise the Town Clerk and Corporate Director for Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Link for Resources, Access and Diversity, to select the preferred purchaser and subsequently agree the detailed terms for disposal.
- (g) Authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into the formal documentation necessary to complete the disposal.
- (h) Authorise the Town Clerk to procure the works in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules

4. **Headline Financial and Legal Implications**

4.1 Financial Implications

- The increased costs will reduce the amount available to the Education capital programme. The implications of this are included in that report.
- The capital receipt valuations are based on information from RAD Property Services and refer to existing values. Values may be subject to change due to fluctuations in the property market up to the time of sale.

4.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report (Guy Goodman, Assistant Head of Legal Services – ext 7054).

5. **Report Author/Officer to contact:**

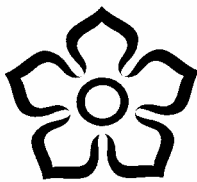
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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living Or working in an area comprising one or more ward
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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NEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR BRAUNSTONE

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

- 1.1 This section sets out detailed considerations to enable Members to consider whether they wish to support the revised proposals for the two new schools with the attendant financial requirements.
- 1.2 For ease of reference it is proposed to break down the project into the two schemes and show the proposals firstly as they were when the submission of the bids was made - then showing the revised proposals and current estimated costs, and finally the options available to reduce the costs.
- 1.3 A number of issues have arisen that need to be highlighted first. An overview is set out below, while more detailed information and impacts are shown in the assessment of the individual schemes.
- 1.4 The original Targeted Capital bids were based on DfES official guidance including Building Bulletins and Area Guidelines. This was a competitive bidding process for a limited national fund. One of the criteria upon which the projects were scored was a value for money judgement based on how closely the floor area met the guidelines.
- 1.5 Since the bids were made, the Area Guidelines have been revised. The impact of the revised guidelines is that primary schools were allocated additional floor space and that all new schools are now required to conform to the new minimum requirements. However, the funding allocations were made using the old guidelines and have not been similarly revised. This means that to provide the schools as per the revised guidelines requires a significant increase in floor space and a commensurate increase in the cost of the projects.

- 1.6 As part of the continued and ongoing consultation for the new schools it has become very apparent that the original bids that were made would not be appropriate to meet the needs for schools in a disadvantaged area like Braunstone.
- 1.7 The facilities referred to in the educational philosophy would be available for pupils and the community, enabling the schools to extend opportunities for children and their parents/carers to learn beyond the school day. Parent and community participation are seen as crucial elements in the strategy to raise standards further.
- 1.8 Following consultation, a number of additional facilities are proposed. These are above the DfES minimum requirement and were not included in the original bids. These are - Nurture Rooms, Parents/Community Room and Store, Changing Rooms and a Music Room. These facilities would enable the schools to address the extended schools agenda.
- 1.9 The sustainability or 'Green' agenda is also an issue that cannot be fully addressed within the DfES area guidelines. The DfES guidelines are based on a cost per metre for capital construction. However, it is now common practice to look at the whole life costings or total costs of a project that also takes account of the revenue or running costs.
- 1.10 The City Council is committed to utilising sustainable materials and systems wherever possible, but there is a higher initial capital investment required to facilitate this type of building and to comply with the Council's environmental policy. The following ways of using sustainable materials in the new schools, all of which have a higher cost implication, are being proposed by the design team:
- Insulation levels in excess of Building Regulations
 - Ventilation - where technically feasible natural ventilation rather than mechanical
 - Rainwater recycling – rainwater collected and stored in an underground tank, to be recycled and used within the buildings. Any overflow from them would be diverted to the habitat area to form a wetland area. Excess water from the wetland would overflow into a sustainable urban drainage system
 - Air tightness – the building would be constructed to limit heat loss and to minimise input heating requirements
 - Heating – the use of a low temperature hot water under floor heating system with high efficiency boilers that would give maximum savings from low return water temperature, as well as having low Carbon and Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) emissions.
 - Windows would be double-glazed with 'k' glass which minimises radiant heat loss and optimises passive gains
 - Demolition of the building is being looked at closely. The debris from the demolition could be recycled on the site or sent to the Construction and Demolition Waste Recycling facilities at Enderby, which is due to open in August. There will be an attempt to incorporate the recycled materials into the new construction wherever possible.

New Queensmead Primary School (Queensmead Infant and Junior schools)

1.11 The original bid proposals for Queensmead Primary School were for:

- Construction of a new 2 form entry (420 place plus 30 FTE nursery place) primary school on land adjacent to the existing infant school
- An integrated training and development centre to be funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), incorporating a Children's Centre to be funded by Children's Centre Funds
- Demolition of both existing infant and junior schools

1.12 The total capital cost was originally estimated to be £5,460,781 and was to be funded as follows

	£m
DfES Targeted Capital Fund bid	2.99
LEA Schools Capital Programme	0.25
Estimated Capital receipt from sale of Queensmead Junior School site	1.20
Contribution from Braunstone Community Association (BCA)	0.25
Children's Centres Funding	<u>0.08</u>
	Sub-total 4.77
Contribution from the LSC (Training Centre)	<u>0.69</u>
	TOTAL 5.46

1.13 The revised proposals for Queensmead Primary School require the following significant changes:

- As part of the original bid to the DfES, initial feasibilities had indicated that a new school could be situated adjacent to the existing infant school without causing any disruption to the infant school. However, as the design progressed and was informed by the educational philosophy and also the DfES Exemplar Designs, it became apparent that, to obtain the optimum school layout, it would be necessary to utilise the land currently occupied by the infant school building. This then necessitates the need for temporary accommodation.
- The Training and Development Centre was omitted from the design brief as part of the new school as, despite many attempts by officers to engage with the LSC, there has been no written commitment from the LSC to provide the necessary funding. The decision has therefore been taken to mitigate the risk of abortive design works. The Training and Development Centre could still form part of the scheme as a stand-alone unit on the site.
- Following extensive consultation with the school and the local community there is a requirement for more accommodation to provide for the particular needs of parents and children over and above what the national design standards recommend. The additional accommodation, including nurture rooms and community facilities, will enable the school to provide enrichment opportunities for children, additional support for parents and will make the school a focus for its local community.

1.14 The total capital cost is now estimated to be £5,842,073, excluding the training centre. This is an increase of £1,072,000 from the original estimate.

1.15 Cost increases have, to an extent, been mitigated through design development and value engineering throughout the project. The cost increases outlined below therefore represent more than the total cost increase. The above, plus a series of other cost increases, means that there is now a shortfall on the project. The increases are detailed below:

- Additional accommodation for enrichment / parental support- £587,862
- Additional temporary accommodation - £306,000
- Increase in world steel prices - £126,453
- Increased acoustic requirements (increased national standards)- £138,960
- Changes to national design standards (implemented post bid) - £117,904
- Addressing the sustainability/green agenda - £104,078

1.16 The estimated capital receipts from land sales are now believed to have risen from £1.2m to £1.95m. Therefore, the revised estimate of project funding (excluding the training centre) is as follows:

DfES Targeted Capital Fund bid	2.990
LEA Schools Capital Programme	0.250
Estimated Capital receipt from sale of Queensmead Junior School site	1.950
Contribution from Braunstone Community Association (BCA)	0.250
Children’s Centres Funding	<u>0.080</u>
Sub-total	5.520
Estimated cost	<u>5.842</u>
SHORTFALL	0.322

New Braunstone Primary School (Bendbow Rise Infant and Crescent Junior Schools)

1.17 The original bid proposals for Braunstone Primary School were for:

- Construction of a new 1.5 form entry (315 place plus 23 FTE nursery place) primary school on land adjacent to Bendbow Infant School
- An integrated childrens centre to be funded by Children’s Centre Funds
- Demolition of both existing Infant and Junior Schools.

1.18 The total capital cost was estimated to be £3,967,207 and was to be funded as follows:

	£m
DfES Targeted Capital Bid fund	1.65
LEA Schools Capital Programme	0.25
Estimated Capital receipt from sale of Crescent Junior School site	1.60
Contribution from Braunstone Community Association	<u>0.25</u>
Sub-total	3.75
Children’s Centres Funding.....	<u>0.22</u>
TOTAL	3.97

1.19 The revised proposals for Braunstone Primary School require the following significant changes:

- Following extensive consultation with the school and the local community there is a requirement for more accommodation to provide for the particular needs of parents and children over and above what the national design standards recommend. The additional accommodation including nurture rooms and community facilities will enable the school to provide enrichment opportunities for children, additional support for parents and will make the school a focus for its local community.
- A further assessment of possible future pupil numbers indicates that there may be a need to expand the school in the future. It is proposed to construct a new 1.5 form entry (315 place plus 23 FTE nursery place) primary school, with 2 form entry aspects to cater for possible future expansion: - Hall, Kitchen, Administration areas, Foundation Unit on land adjacent to Crescent Junior School incorporating additional education and community accommodation. The benefits to the authority on taking this decision are the future proofing of the primary school. Should 2 forms of entry be necessary in future, the only additional accommodation required would be the class bases, which would be relatively easy to provide, by an extension to the class base block. It would however be virtually impossible, without major disruption and cost, to extend the areas above to 2 forms of entry.
- Changing the proposed site for the new school from Bendbow Rise to Crescent with attendant reduced land values and additional costs. The reasons for this are outlined below:
 - Following the publication of the statutory notices on the 21 May 2004 concerning the amalgamation, written representations were received about the choice of the Bendbow Rise site upon which to build the new primary school.
 - An architectural feasibility report was also received which indicated that it would be difficult to build a new school adjacent to the existing infant school without causing any disruption to the infant school. Also, similar to the Queensmead Primary School project, to achieve an optimum design which was informed by the proposed educational philosophy, the Crescent site would be more appropriate.
 - It became apparent that more time was needed to give consideration to the issues raised so subsequently, after consultation with the Cabinet Link for Education and Lifelong Learning, the amalgamation proposals were withdrawn.
 - This required new consultations proposing the site of Crescent Junior School for building the new primary school.
 - The majority of respondees supported the new primary school being situated on the Crescent Junior School site; however, there was still a view from some that the Bendbow Rise site should be selected.
 - Arising from the new consultation, it was felt necessary to give more detailed consideration to the two options. A DfES option appraisal system to identify, weight and score the key issues was used.

- A further meeting was held with the Heads and the Chair of Governors of both schools, the Standards Inspector and members of Planning and Property Team to discuss the DfES option appraisal and to score the issue. Arising from this meeting, Crescent Junior School received the highest score.
- It is therefore proposed to publish a new statutory notice for the amalgamation to take place as previously, from Autumn 2007, but which states that the new primary school should be built and located on the Crescent Junior School site.
- As the proposed site for the school is Crescent Junior School, it is now not necessary to proceed with the Children's Centre as part of the school as the Jubilee Children's Centre already exists on Cort Crescent. However, it is recognised that a Children's Centre on the Bendbow Rise Infant School Site would still help support delivery of children's services within that area of the estate. It is therefore proposed that the existing Nursery Unit on the site be retained and considered for use as a Children's Centre. This could be funded by Children's Centre Funding as part of the Wave 2 programme due to be confirmed imminently or from the Extended Schools' Capital Allocation.

1.20 The total capital cost is now estimated to be £5,102,000 (excluding a Childrens' Centre). This is an increase of £1,330,000 from the original estimate.

1.21 Again, cost increases have, to an extent, been mitigated through design development and value engineering throughout the project. The cost increases outlined below therefore represent more than the total cost increase. The above, plus a series of other cost increases, means that there is now a shortfall on the project. The increases are detailed below:

- Additional accommodation for enrichment / community- £613,023
- Increase in world steel prices - £115,742
- Increased acoustic requirements (increased national standards)- £127,190
- Changes to national design standards (implemented post bid) - £83,440
- Addressing the sustainability/green agenda - £102,076

1.22 Although the estimated capital receipts from the sale of land have risen, in this case it makes very little difference as the proposal to change from the Bendbow site to Crescent results in the land for sale being of lesser value because it is proposed to retain the nursery and convert this to a childrens' centre. Therefore, the revised estimate of project funding (excluding the Childrens' Centre) is as follows:

	£m
DfES Targeted Capital Fund Bid	1.650
LEA Schools Capital programme	0.250
Estimated Capital Receipt at Bendbow Infant School Site	1.500
Contribution from Braunstone Community Association	<u>0.250</u>
	Sub-total <u>3.650</u>
Estimated cost	<u>5.102</u>
	Shortfall 1.452

Overall Funding Position

1.23 The total shortfall in funding for the two projects is as follows:

Queensmead	£0.332m
Bendbow / Crescent	<u>1.452</u>
Total	£1.774m

There are a number of options for addressing this shortfall including reduction options or additional funding.

1.24 The shortfall of £1,774,000 will be made up as follows:

Uncommitted funds from the 04-05 Schools Capital Programme	£1,040,000
Additional £500,000 from the 05-06 Schools Capital Programme	£500,000
Schools devolved formula capital funding from the schools due to close	£234,000
TOTAL	£1,774,000

2. Financial Implications

2.1 These are considered throughout the report.

3. Legal Implications

3.1 These are dealt with in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

4. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph within this report	References
Raising Standards	YES	Throughout	
Equal Opportunities	NO		
Policy	NO		
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	1.9 & 1.10	
Crime and Disorder	NO		
Human Rights Act	NO		
Elderly/People on Low Income	NO		

5. Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX			
Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1. Not obtaining s77 Notice approval for sale of playing field land	M	H	Officers have and continue to meet DfES officials to ensure applications are compliant with conditions. Current feedback from DfES is positive. Unsecured funds underwritten by future years schools capital allocations. Failure to gain consent would mean deferral of mobile classroom replacements in other schools by two years.
2. Tender Costs for projects exceed current estimates	L	M	Robust management process of current estimates, including external contractor estimations of draft proposal and ongoing value engineering throughout life of scheme.
3. Delays to project construction programme	L	M	Project management process in place. Current programme allows flexibility should small delays occur.
4. Delays to amalgamation	M	L	High levels of consultation on designs during draft schemes. All partners signed up to revised design proposals.
5. Failure to secure BCA grant	M	M	Ongoing discussion with BCA have been positive. A level of funding can be expected. Remainder (if any) to be funded from future years LEA schools capital programme.

L - Low L – Low
M - Medium M - Medium
H - High H – High

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Cabinet report 17th May 2004 – Targeted Capital Bids

7. Consultation

Bendbow Rise, Crescent, Queensmead Infant and Junior Schools
Officers from Resources, Access and Diversity

8. Report Author/Officer to Contact

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