

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

21 JULY 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION

Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor A Cunningham

A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE FOR BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF)

1. Summary

On 11 February Cabinet authorised officers to prepare a draft Strategy for Change Part 1 (SfC1) for discussion with government agencies. Those discussions led to a Remit Meeting on 5th June. This meeting marked the formal entry of Stockton-on-Tees into the national BSF programme. A final version of SfC1 must be submitted to government within eight weeks of the Remit Meeting (i.e. by 31st July).

The first draft SfC1 included preferred options for school organisation following consultation in autumn 2007. The latest draft SfC1 (attached as **Appendix 1**) reflects the outcome of discussions with government agencies over many weeks. Proposed changes from the options agreed by Cabinet in February are:

- an increase in the capacity of All Saints School to 900 places rather than to 750
- a reduction in the capacity of Conyers School to 900 places rather than to 1050
- the Stockton Academy to have 1050 places rather than 900
- a 900-place Academy to replace Thornaby Community School
- a possible federation on three sites to retain distinctive Catholic education in Billingham, Stockton and Thornaby
- a possible federation of Northfield and Campus schools rather than an Academy in Billingham.

A leaflet summarising these proposals was widely distributed through schools and nurseries and placed on the Council website. The draft SfC1 was also published on the website and made available at six drop-in sessions held at public venues around the borough. A total of 24 people attended those sessions. 22 of these were parents or school governors with specific questions about the impact of BSF on their children or schools. One other was a Ward Councillor and the other represented a company with a potential interest in contracting work.

Members are reminded that the proposals in the Strategy for Change do not have the status of formal school organisation proposals. Any change such as establishing a new school or closing an existing school must follow a statutory process of consultation and decision-making laid down in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A decision by Cabinet to authorise the submission of SfC1 does not commit the Authority to any of the changes described in that document.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to agree that the draft Strategy for Change Part 1 be submitted to government for formal assessment.

Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The BSF Remit Meeting on 5th June marked the formal entry of Stockton-on-Tees into the national BSF programme. The timetable laid down by Partnerships for Schools requires a final Strategy for Change Part 1 to be submitted for assessment within eight weeks of Remit.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

AGENDA ITEM

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MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION

PROPOSALS FOR BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF)

SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to agree that the draft Strategy for Change Part 1 be submitted to government for formal assessment.

DETAIL

1. Partnerships for Schools (PfS – the national BSF delivery agency) has published guidance on SfC1. The guidance is highly prescriptive as to the length and content of the document. The draft attached to this report (**Appendix 1**) conforms to that guidance. It describes in broad terms the challenges facing secondary schools in this borough, and the Authority's strategy to address these through BSF.
2. The principal challenges are raising standards further and closing attainment gaps; personalising learning; reorganising schools to meet changing needs within the geography of the borough; and improving choice and diversity. Our strategy to meet these challenges is based on effective collaboration, more effective engagement of young people, and a relevant curriculum. Educational transformation will be supported by a committed and highly professional workforce and by technology that helps to remove obstacles to learning. BSF investment will enable us to provide safe, welcoming and sustainable learning environments with the flexibility for diverse learning experiences. The BSF programme will be set within the Council's strategies for integrated services and community regeneration.
3. The draft SfC1 is in three sections. The first is a chart setting out detailed information about our secondary schools as they are now and as we expect them to be after the BSF programme is completed. The second section is the main body of the strategy in ten pages of text. The third section is a map showing the location of the schools and summarising the changes proposed under BSF.
4. The outcome of consultation last autumn based on the Future Learning booklet was reported to Cabinet in detail on 11th February. The main preferences arising from consultation were for:
 - (a) retaining three schools in Billingham;
 - (b) two schools in North Stockton, one in the east of the town and one in the west;
 - (c) support for a three-school campus in Central Stockton, but some desire to retain Ian Ramsey School on its present site;
 - (d) retaining Catholic education in Billingham, Stockton and Thornaby;
 - (e) more secondary places in Ingleby Barwick;
 - (f) keeping all students at Egglecliffe School (11-16 and sixth form) on one site.
5. These preferences were discussed with the three government agencies involved in BSF: the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and Partnerships for Schools (PfS). Other issues discussed with these agencies included:
 - (a) proposals to raise standards at the three schools where fewer than 30 % of students have achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C including maths and English;
 - (b) support for the school placed in special measures by an Ofsted inspection;
 - (c) close scrutiny of our pupil number projections (and particularly of the likely impact of changes under wave 6 on schools in the later wave).
6. The proposals included in the latest draft SfC1 have been approved in principle by all three government agencies. The following paragraphs outline the latest proposals for each area of the borough.

North Stockton (wave 6)

7. The size of the proposed Academy to be located in the Norton area has been increased from 900 to 1,050 places. Together with a remodelled 750-place Bishopsgarth (plus its special unit) this will offer 1,800 places for students in the north of the town.

Central Stockton (wave 6)

8. Following receipt of a Transport Impact Assessment and further discussions with the governing body and foundation of Ian Ramsey School, it is proposed that the school should be remodelled for 1,050 students on its present site.
9. It is proposed that Grangefield School (1,050 students) and Our Lady & St Bede's School (750) should both be remodelled on their shared site in order to create a campus with Stockton Sixth Form College.

Thornaby Academy (wave 6)

10. The OSC wishes to see an Academy established in place of Thornaby Community School in the first wave of the local BSF programme. The idea of community and Catholic facilities being co-located in a single building is no longer being pursued. PfS is satisfied that 900 places will be sufficient for the Academy. The building needs of St Patrick's School will be met in wave 10 of the programme (see paragraph 15 below).

Special schools (wave 6)

11. Government agencies have accepted our request for the special schools and pupil referral unit to be included in wave 6. It is proposed that Westlands School should be replaced by a new building on its present site as the single specialist centre in the borough for students with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD). This would include a new residential unit. Abbey Hill School and the Bishopton Centre PRU will be refurbished.

Billingham (wave 10)

12. It is proposed that St Michael's School should be replaced with a new building adjacent to Campus School and Bede College. Reflecting the general demographic decline in the area, capacity would be reduced from 875 to 750 (see paragraph 15 below). The OSC will not now require an Academy to replace Billingham Campus School if the school can be supported through a federation with Northfield. Officers have asked the two governing bodies to consider forming a federation to provide a total of 1,500 places across the two sites. Both schools would be remodelled.

South of the Borough (wave 10)

13. By creative use of the existing school site and an area of adjacent land, it is possible to enlarge All Saints School to 900 places. This option is supported by the Diocese of York. It would be necessary to negotiate a variation to the existing PFI contract.
14. Enlargement of All Saints would reduce by 300 the number of students living in Ingleby Barwick attending Conyers and Egglecliffe schools. The OSC has agreed that in these circumstances both schools may be reduced in size. It is suggested that Egglecliffe School should reduce from 1,175 to 1,050 places. This would allow all students to be accommodated in a new building at the Allens West site. Conyers School would reduce from 1,120 to 900 places. The Conyers buildings would be remodelled.

Catholic schools (waves 6 and 10)

15. The three Catholic secondary schools currently include around 30% non-Catholic students. In the interests of diversity and supporting parental choice, it is proposed that a similar proportion should be retained under BSF. This indicates a need for around 2,000 places across the three schools. It is doubtful whether three entirely separate schools could remain viable at this size (750, 750 and 500, for example). The two dioceses have agreed to pursue the idea of a three-school federation across diocesan boundaries. This

innovative suggestion has been welcomed by PfS and OSC and is being explored by the governing bodies. It could retain Catholic education on all three sites with the combined resources of three schools under a single governing body and executive headteacher. Our Lady & St Bede's would be remodelled in wave 6, St Patrick's remodelled in wave 10, and St Michael's rebuilt in wave 10.

Extent of building work on each site

16. At this stage completely new buildings are planned for five schools: the Stockton Academy, the Thornaby Academy and Westlands School in wave 6, and Egglecliffe School and St Michael's School in Wave 10. It is not possible at this stage to indicate precisely the degree of work likely at other schools. Most sites need some degree of remodelling (i.e. significant change involving some new building and major internal alterations to change the shape and size of areas). Many sites have some recent buildings that need only minor refurbishment. Professional surveys and option appraisals are being carried out to determine what is necessary and feasible on each site. In some cases a full rebuild may represent better value for money than radical remodelling. Decisions will be made later in the year in consultation with headteachers and governing bodies when all the relevant information is available.

Next steps

17. Following approval by Cabinet, the final Strategy for Change Part 1 will be submitted to government for formal assessment. Officers will then begin to prepare Strategy for Change Part 2 for submission in December. SfC2 is a longer and more detailed document in preparation for the Outline Business Case (OBC). The OBC, expected in May 2009, will be fully explicit about the degree of work to be undertaken on each site, phasing of work, and arrangements to accommodate students while work is in progress. The OBC, after assessment by government, will form the basis of the Council's procurement process.

18. Members are reminded that the consultation that took place in October and November 2007 did not constitute statutory consultation as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006. No changes can be made to any schools without two stages of statutory consultation. The proposals for change in wave 6 include the establishment of two Academies. Statutory consultation on those proposals will begin when the timeline for Academy developments has been confirmed by DCSF.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19. No implications at this stage.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. No implications at this stage.

RISK ASSESSMENT

21. A risk assessment has been carried out for this stage of the BSF project. The SfC1 submission is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Regeneration and Transport

22. No implications at this stage.

Safer Communities

23. No implications at this stage.

Children and Young People

24. No implications at this stage.

Healthier Communities and Adults

25. No implications at this stage.

Liveability

26. No implications at this stage.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

27. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. The impact of BSF should be positive overall, and no adverse impact on any group has been identified.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

28. The preferred options outlined in this report have emerged following widespread consultation and further discussions with the secondary headteachers, college principals, and the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council. The Education Directors of the Anglican Dioceses of Durham and York, and the Catholic Dioceses of Middlesbrough and Hexham & Newcastle have also been consulted. All Ward Councillors have been briefed on the outcome of consultation. Six public drop-in sessions were held in early July at public libraries in Stockton town centre, Roseworth, Billingham, Thornaby, Yarm and Ingleby Barwick.

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Background Papers

Cabinet report 11 February 2008.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not ward-specific.

Property

The investment of £150 million through the BSF programme will have a significant impact on the secondary school estate at a later stage.