

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

11 JUNE 2009

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Children & Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Alex Cunningham

CAPACITY TO DELIVER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT / ACADEMY CO-SPONSORSHIP

1. Summary (expanded report summary)

To inform Members of significant new workstreams rising from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme and Thornaby Community School (TCS), which are combining to place considerable additional pressure on the School Improvement Team.

To ask Members to note the use of CESC managed surplus to create additional one off funding for the overall School Effectiveness/Advisory Service budget to allow for an increase in capacity to cover this additional workload for the next two financial years (2009/10 and 2010/11).

2. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the allocation of an additional £100,000 from CESC managed surplus to be made to the School Effectiveness/Advisory Service budget for 2009/10, and 2010/11.
2. That additional capacity be recruited to the Advisory Team to address the new workstreams.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The additional work represented by the need to put significant time into TCS, to deliver the co-sponsorship role of the LA in the Academies, and to oversee the smooth transition from three schools to two academies, the closure of Billingham Campus and the enlargement of Northfield cannot be delivered from within the existing school improvement team. Additional capacity and backfill to enable the additional workload to be managed across the team is needed to cover this two year 'bulge'.

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.

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1. SUMMARY

To inform Members of significant new workstreams rising from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme and Thornaby Community School (TCS), which are combining to place considerable additional pressure on the School Improvement Team.

To ask Members to note the use of CESC managed surplus to create additional one off funding for the overall School Effectiveness/Advisory Service budget to allow for an increase in capacity to cover this additional workload for the next two financial years (2009/10 and 2010/11).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Cabinet note the allocation of an additional £100,000 from CESC managed surplus to be made to the School Effectiveness/Advisory Service budget for 2009/10, and 2010/11.
2. That additional capacity be recruited to the Advisory Team to address the new workstreams.

3. DETAIL

School Improvement

- 3.1 Since 2002, careful re-structuring and re-focusing of the Advisory Team has seen a reduction in staffing from 14 general school advisers to 7 highly skilled ex-headteachers, all of whom are Ofsted and SIP accredited. This change in focus and expertise has been matched by significant year on year improvement across phase, with Stockton moving from below average performance to a position where we recorded our best ever performance across all key stages and are now at least in line with, but in most cases above national averages. We were short-listed as a beacon authority for school improvement, and score consistently well in APA and CPA.
- 3.2 Performance in Primary has been better than Secondary overall, although at both phases there are considerable variations between the most and least successful schools. The school improvement team intervene, challenge and support in inverse proportion to success, and allocate large periods of time to support individual schools. 8 primary schools are designated as 'hard to shift', and therefore need more radical solutions to achieve the step change in improvement that is required. A significant majority of Stockton's primary schools overall are designated good or outstanding by Ofsted, reflecting the effectiveness of the teams' intervention and support over time.

- 3.3 7 secondary schools are currently in receipt of additional support from the advisory team. This includes two schools with unsatisfactory Ofsted designations, a special school currently without a headteacher and 3 national challenge schools. One of the schools is in special measures with an Interim Executive Board (IEB) application in place, the other is going through closure and re-organisation as part of BSF. This has put significant additional strain on an already small team
- 3.4 We are working with external specialists to provide an intensive 18 month intervention programme to bring TCS out of special measures and prepare its transition into an Academy. This input has been funded from existing budget and efficiencies across the School Effectiveness group of services. The advisory team will monitor and evaluate the work on an ongoing basis, and two members of the team will also be members of the IEB, itself a significant additional time commitment.

BSF

- 3.5 As part of its model for Academy development the local authority proposes to act as co-sponsor to both academies. This adds a new workstream and responsibility to the other areas of Academy development. The delivery of the buildings will be done by a dedicated project manager from within the BSF team, funded by top slicing the capital allocation for the Academies. In addition the local authority has a quality assurance role in relation to the development of the academies within the Council's BSF vision, this will be the responsibility of the Head of Service. Co-sponsorship is another workstream entirely, and is focused on the actual development and set up of the school itself, from vision and ethos to curriculum design, policy development, staffing and everything else to do with establishing a school from scratch. Added to this will be the statutory consultation, political and local consultation, TUPE transfer, communications and on-going dialogue with government agencies and partners to ensure the smooth transition from maintained schools to Academies.

Recommendations

- 3.6 The additional work represented by the need to put significant time into TCS, to deliver the co-sponsorship role of the LA in the Academies, to oversee the smooth transition from three schools to two Academies and the closure of Billingham Campus and enlargement of Northfield cannot be delivered from within the existing team, nor can the range of work be covered by a single dedicated post. The work would most effectively be distributed across the existing school improvement team, however they are already over stretched. The recommendation is to appoint 1.5 additional general advisers and some additional clerical time to create capacity and backfill to enable the additional workload to be managed across the team. The age profile of the team is such that in two years' time retirements will enable us to delete posts from the structure again, as the peak of the work currently facing us diminishes. Therefore we seek an additional £100K one off in each of the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 to provide capacity to backfill during this 'bulge'.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The £100,000 in each of the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 would be non reoccurring additional payments to the existing School Improvement Service budget. The funding would come through deployment of CESC managed surplus.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The relevant legislation in relation to employment law would apply to any new posts.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk associated with not creating additional capacity within the team to cover the additional workstreams relating to school improvement and Academy development are categorised as medium. The existing team is small and already overstretched, spreading them even more thinly would impact negatively on their capacity to continue early intervention and support work which in turn would raise the risk of more schools moving into Ofsted categories. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

7. COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Regeneration and Transport: High performing schools and successful Academies will contribute to the regeneration agenda.

Safer Communities: No implications

Children and Young People: Will support the Standards Agenda.

Healthier Communities and Adults: No implications.

Liveability: No implications.

8. CORPORATE PARENTING

This decision will support school improvement and as such will support the educational achievement of looked after children.

9. CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

The decision is not subject to consultation, it is a request for additional one-off funding to support a two year increase in capacity for a team to manage additional workstream brought about by a combination of factors as detailed in the report.

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Background Papers SfC1, SfC2

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not applicable

Property: No implications