

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO

PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE 1st JULY 2009

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

**Building schools for the future (BSF): new school: planning brief phase 1 (sample schools)
Bishopsgarth and Ian Ramsey Church of England secondary school**

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to approve a non-statutory planning brief for the sample schools in the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) scheme. Partnerships for Schools (PfS), which is the public body overseeing the BSF programme nationally, require the appropriate committee of the local authority to approve a planning brief for each sample school in the BSF scheme prior to the submission of the outline business case (OBC).

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

- i. Approve the non-statutory planning brief attached as Appendices 1 and 2 Bishopsgarth and Ian Ramsey school sites.

BACKGROUND

1. The decisions are required to enable the Council to meet the BSF programme to deliver new schools for the borough. The programme was outlined in the report to Cabinet on 16 September 2008, and part of this requires the Council to provide the PfS with the comfort that a school can be delivered on the existing sites.

- Bishopsgarth School.
- Ian Ramsey School.

2. Officers, in conjunction with external consultants, have assessed the feasibility of the above sites for a new school. These discussions are in line with the approval gained from Cabinet on 5th February 2009. The level of comfort acceptable to PfS would be an approved planning brief. This planning brief will enable the commercial bidders for the LEP (Local Education Partnership) to have the confidence that if they comply with the requirements outlined in the planning briefs and outline proposals the principle of development should be acceptable subject to the future submission of detail proposals at a later date.

3. The current proposals that the authority would like to implement are briefly described as follows:

- Bishopsgarth School: form a new block to the rear of the site which will develop around a courtyard at the heart of the school while retaining the existing PH unit, sports hall and east facing block. On completion of the new works the north wing will be demolished. There will be little change to the access arrangements.

- Ian Ramsey School: a new development on two floors to the rear of the retained and remodelled north block will enable a new school around a courtyard and atrium in the new building. The existing swimming pool/sport building is to be retained and extended with a new sports hall. The south block with the exception of the hall and recent music block, which will be retained for community use by the Diocese, will be demolished. A new dropping off area/improved access will be provided off Fairfield Avenue with additional parking and potential new site access points identified.

4. The authority is currently progressing the Outline Business Case (OBC) for completion in July for submission.

5. Once the OBC has been approved a competitive dialogue will take place to establish a commercial partner to form the Local Education Partnership (LEP) company who will deliver (design and build) the new schools.

6. As part of the design process full planning permission will be required but this will not be anticipated to be submitted until early 2011.

Planning Policy

7. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12 advises that Councils should not prepare planning guidance other than a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) where guidance is to be used in decision-making or the co-ordination of development. (In respect of this, a SPD should by definition be related to a development plan policy.) This advice is to ensure that consultation and sustainability appraisals are carried out, as with other documents in the LDF process. Officers considered preparation of a statutory brief in the form of a SPD, but conclude that the existing Local Plan policies are not sufficiently relevant and that the LDF process is not sufficiently far advanced to act as a new context. However, PPS 12 does allow for provision of assistance to applicants on how to make planning applications.

8. The BSF requirements for the Outline Business Case (OBC) can be met through one of the following ways: a formally adopted LDF Strategy and sites Document; a Committee approved brief; or a pre-application letter from the Planning Authority and a letter from Sport England regarding community provision. PFS and Council officers consider that an approved brief is the most robust way forward to give as much certainty as possible.

9. Advice on preparation of planning briefs is contained in the Communities & Local Government Guidance 1998 "Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice". This advice was followed in preparation of the non-statutory planning briefs attached as Appendices 1 and 2.

Draft Planning Briefs

10. The Council and its commissioned consultants, AECOM/Ellis Williams Architect, assessed the feasibility sites schools, using the BSF requirements for schools. The feasibility studies took account of the characteristics, components and settings of the potential sites, and considered the site area, economic viability, existing uses, planning policy, transport and access, urban design and timeframe for delivery.

11. The Draft Planning Briefs prepared by the Council are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. The preparation of the Brief follows the BSF Supplementary Guidance where briefs are to be site specific and indicate the constraints and opportunities presented by the site. In addition, preparation is in accordance with the Communities & Local Government Guidance 1998 "Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice".

12. It should be noted that the function of planning briefs in this respect are illustrative, to guide potential development on the sites and any planning applications would be the subject of detailed consideration and consultation.

CONSULTATION

13. Key stakeholders participated in extensive consultation. School head teachers, members of the senior management team and governors were involved in a series of meetings. Teachers, school staff, ward councillors, parents, pupils and residents living adjacent to the school buildings also attended drop-in sessions in June 2009.

14. Most comments received during the drop-in sessions were favourable with the majority of concerns relating to the disruption pupils may be subjected to during the construction period and the organisation of internal spaces.

15. It was suggested that home-school routes were carefully considered on both sites.

16. Ian Ramsey residents raised concern regarding parking and drop-off arrangements at the remodelled North site.

17. All points raised have already been taken account of within the briefing document.

18. Notes of the meetings were taken together with the numbers of public participating and these are attached as appendices 3 and 4.

CONCLUSION

19. The agreement of the recommendations in this report will enable the BSF programme to proceed as quickly as possible.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer Mr Gregory Archer / Mr Gordon Mallory Telephone No 01642 526052
Email address development.control@stockton.gov.uk

Financial Implications – There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The feasibility work for this brief has been undertaken by officers from within the existing Development Services Budget, and commissioning of external consultants is within the BSF budget. There will clearly be cost implications associated with the development of the proposed school. The cost of the BSF programme has been the subject of a number of reports to Cabinet and there will clearly be a need for further reports to Cabinet on this matter.

Environmental Implications – As report

Community Safety Implications – As report

Background Papers – Cabinet Report February 5th 2009, CLG 1998 “Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice”, BSF Supplementary Guidance, PPS 12 and companion guide CLG2008.

Human Rights Implications - The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Wards - Hartburn, Fairfield and Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree

Ward Councillors - K Lupton, T Laing, M Perry, W Woodhead, S Fletcher and J Cherrett