

DETAILED PROJECT APPRAISAL

APPRAISAL NO. ED 715

NAME OF SCHEME: Fitzwaryn School, Wantage – Phase 2 Modernisation and Provision of Post 16 Accommodation

COMMITTEE(S): Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement

START YEAR: 2009/2010

BASIS OF ESTIMATE: Atkins estimate based on agreed sketch scheme.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fitzwaryn School is an outstanding special school as identified by Ofsted in their reports in 2005 and 2008 and provides for pupils with special education needs (SEN). The special needs of the pupils range from complex moderate learning difficulties to those with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties with an increasing number of pupils having autistic spectrum conditions. The school was awarded specialist status in 2007 for its work in Cognition and Learning.

The existing accommodation has suitability, condition and accessibility issues and in April 2008, the Cabinet approved Phase 1 of the modernisation programme to replace the temporary classrooms and provide internal accessibility through the school together with a sensory theatre provided as part of the schools designation as a SEN Cognition & Learning College under the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Specialist Schools Programme. This work is currently under construction and is due to be completed in January 2010.

The second phase of work, which is the subject of this Detailed Project Appraisal, will complete the modernisation of the school to improve suitability and accessibility together with the provision of a permanent post-16 unit as a response to the County Council's Cabinet decision in January 2008 to extend the age range at most special schools and make provision for 16 – 19 year olds. Provision for post-16 pupils has been provided since September 2008 in temporary accommodation on the school site and this will be removed on completion of the permanent building

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The proposed project works comprise three areas of new provision and upgrading of existing provision as follows:

- A. Modernisation of existing accommodation is provided by a new extension and by internal alteration to provide 1 Foundation Stage classroom with integral toilet, hygiene, withdrawal and storage

facilities, 4 Keystage classrooms with integral withdrawal and storage facilities, group room, medical room, sensory room, pupil changing and shower facilities, pupil and staff toilets and 2 hygiene rooms incorporating level or ramped access between areas. The alterations will provide full accessibility avoiding the need to use the hall as an access route.

- B. Modernisation of the existing Art, Design and Technology and Food Technology areas by refurbishment and minor internal alteration incorporating new fittings, benching and equipment to give dedicated Food Technology, Science and Technology facilities.
- C. Provision of a new Post-16 Unit. The accommodation will be provided as a purpose built unit separate from the main school incorporating a large entrance area, common room for social and life skills work, 2 tutor bases, small group room, storage for equipment and resources, pupil toilets and hygiene facilities, staff workbase and toilet facilities. Externally, the access road will be extended to provide taxi drop-off area and paved entrance, external secure outdoor play areas to tutor bases and re-provision of double minibus garage. The temporary post-16 classroom will be removed and the external areas reinstated.

The scheme has been designed to DCSF guidelines set out in the recent Building Bulletin No.102 for special school design. The scheme meets the objectives of the County Council's Corporate Plan by improving the opportunity to enjoy effective teaching and learning.

The scheme has the full support of staff and the school's governing body.

3. JUSTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF NEED

This phase of proposed work will complete the modernisation of the school that has been started by the first phase of work to replace the temporary classrooms and provide some internal accessibility improvements.

Fitzwaryn School was designed and built to meet a different range of pupil needs to those currently being given places at the school and this raises significant suitability issues with accommodation. Classrooms are undersize and restrict pupil movement, there is a lack of toilet, hygiene, changing and shower facilities for pupils and there is a lack of suitable pupil behaviour control facilities. The main school buildings are set at different levels that follow the general slope of the ground and the steps between levels present significant difficulties for pupils with mobility problems and for staff attending pupils in wheel chairs.

The number of children with moderate learning difficulties has decreased because of their inclusion on mainstream school sites and, consequently, there has been an increase in children with severe and complex learning difficulties especially the various forms of autism. The suitability of teaching spaces needs to be improved to meet the changing needs of pupils by

increasing the area of general classrooms and by modernising the toilet, hygiene and specialist facilities in order to meet the needs of a higher ratio of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

The County's Asset Management Plan priority is to replace temporary buildings and to remove significant suitability issues together with addressing accessibility issues that exist with the current accommodation. The proposed scheme meets these objectives and is in agreement with the County Council's Corporate Plan priorities to provide sufficient accommodation to enable delivery of the National Curriculum and the County Council's Children's and Young Peoples Plan which outlines five key outcomes for children and young people:

- Enjoying and Achieving
- Staying Safe
- Economic Wellbeing
- Being Healthy
- Making a Positive Contribution

4. OTHER OPTIONS

Other options need to be considered with the additional factor that approximately £2m of capital investment related to the Phase 1 works has already been made on the current site. The other options are:

1. to replace the school with a new building on the existing school site – this would provide accommodation fit for purpose and would cost approximately £7m. The cost of this option is in excess of available funding
2. to replace the school with a new building co-located with the new secondary school planned in Grove - this would provide accommodation fit for purpose and would cost approximately £7m assuming site acquisition costs are equivalent to the sale of the existing site. The timescale of this option has not been established and the additional land would need to be the subject of negotiation with the developers
3. to replace the secondary element of the school with a new building co-located with the new secondary school planned in Grove - the cost of this option would need to include the costs of land acquisition and the cost of modernising the remaining primary element on the current site – total cost £6m - £7m

All these options are dependent upon funding and/or site availability and consequently the current need to provide fit for purpose accommodation can not be achieved in the short-term which would leave Fitzwaryn School with unsuitable accommodation for an undefined number of years. None of these options take into account the firm resolution and wish of the Governors and staff to stay on the current site and not to have the school co-located in whole or in part.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

(i) Capital

The estimated cost of the project inclusive of fees is £3,200,000.

These costs will be met from developer contributions secured under S106 agreements and identified for this school or countywide SEN provision (£90,000), school contribution from their Devolved Formula Capital grant and other school funding (£100,000), special needs adaptations provision (£200,000), Targeted Capital Grant for SEN Modernisation (£1,000,000) and the balance of (£1,810,000) from government loan sanction provided as part of Oxfordshire's Supported Capital Expenditure allocation.

The scheme is identified in the Capital Programme Forward Plan.

(ii) Revenue

The school will meet day-to-day repair and maintenance costs and structural repairs and staffing costs as part of the Council's Fair Funding arrangements.

The net floor area of the school will increase by 760 m² as a result of these works and this will be reflected in an adjustment in the school's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding formula under the current basis of the formula (as 6th form and under-16 year space is not separately identified in the formula build as currently agreed with schools). This is merely a methodology for allocation funding and is not a formula to recompense for specific costs. Schools have delegated powers over their budgets and therefore are free to determine priorities and appropriate expenditure accordingly but are required to manage within their resources. 6th form funding is from a different source to DSG. It should be noted that this floor area allocation may change for 2011-12 onwards with a new 3 year funding cycle subject to consultation with schools.

The school has a substantive current balance on revenue budget plan and in conjunction with devolved capital balances available should be able to contribute the required funds as set out in the plan without adversely affecting ongoing operational requirements.

(iii) Risk

Regular risk assessments have been carried out and a Risk Register is maintained to manage, reduce or remove identified risks.

(iv) **Whole Life Appraisal**

Whole life appraisal techniques have been integrated within the design development of this project to reduce running costs to the end user.

6. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The building work will be carried out in accordance with the planning permission issued by the County Council. The design, materials and landscaping will be as specified in the planning consent.

The design provides for natural ventilation and solar shading without depriving the internal areas of natural lighting, as per "Guidelines for Environmental Design in Schools - Building Bulletin 87".

The post -16 new building is expected to receive a "Very Good" rating and the extensions to the existing building is expected to receive a "Good" rating in the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Pre-Assessment estimation, which allows a quick evaluation of the likely environmental rating a building would achieve under a formal BREEAM Schools assessment.

The post-16 new building will be designed with an aspiration to achieve a CO2 reduction of 60% compared to the 2002 Building Regulations. This will be achieved in part by the incorporation of a ground source heating system.

The sustainability principles applied to the design incorporate the values of comfort, good internal environment (heating, lighting, ventilation) and adequacy to the teaching areas. The existing quality of the site and landscape will be enhanced by re-provision of the same number of trees that will be lost. The scheme takes into account the current services and building features and in so doing will make efficient use of the available resources.

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