

Division(s):

## **CABINET – 17 MARCH 2015**

### **NW Bicester Primary School – Progress and Authorisation for Delegated Governance Approval**

#### **Report by Director for Environment and Economy**

#### **Introduction**

1. Cherwell District Council is developing a new local plan to guide the development of the district up to 2031 and significant housing growth is planned for Bicester. This plan includes proposals for North West Bicester (Eco Town) for at least 5000 homes in total (1793 of these by 2031) along with new primary schools and a secondary school.
2. The first of these schools, a 1FE Primary school is required by September 2016 in order to meet pupil pressures arising from the development.
3. Funding is captured within the Council's Capital Programme and design development work has been managed by Carillion in association with White Design as Lead Consultant/Designer for the scheme.
4. The school will be run as an Academy and White Horse Federation have been confirmed as the Academy Sponsor
5. The Scheme has been submitted for detailed planning consent in November 2014 following approval of the Outline Business Case that was granted in October 2014. The scheme is currently being developed to detailed design in order to enable construction to start in June 2015, with completion in time to enable pupils to begin school in September 2016.
6. This report is being submitted for consideration now by the Cabinet in anticipation of an expeditious Final Business Case review and subsequent governance approvals in the first financial quarter 2015. This will facilitate mobilisation phases on receipt of the Land transfer agreement expected in May 2015.
7. Funding to construct the primary school for this exemplar phase has been obtained from a combination of this S106 developer contributions and funding from Cherwell District Council in the form of a government Eco-grant. Design work for this new school project commenced December 2013.

## **Exempt Information**

8. Annex 2 contains commercially sensitive information. The public should therefore be excluded during consideration of the Annex as discussion in public would be likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information in the following category prescribed by Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended):

*Category 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in that where a tender or bidding process is in progress disclosure would distort the proper process and would prejudice the position of the authority in the process of the transaction and the Council's standing generally in relation to such transactions in future, to the detriment of the Council's ability properly to discharge its fiduciary and other duties as a public authority.

## **Pupil Pressures**

9. It is anticipated that this Primary school will meet the need for additional primary age pupil places within the North West Bicester area from September 2016 required to accommodate the population growth generated by the Housing Development.
10. This project directly provides for the Council's statutory responsibility to ensure sufficiency of pupil places.

## **Options for Delivery**

11. The Project Team have a procurement strategy which has 3 no. alternative procurement routes which they recommend for this project:
- Single stage traditional tender
  - Single stage Design & Build
  - Procure through the County Council Partnership Framework (Carillion Capita)
12. The final recommendation on which procurement strategy to follow will be made during Stage 2 following consultation with contractors and OCC Partnership.

## **Communications Strategy**

13. The Carillion Project Manager has been coordinating the design of the school and site with White Design (OCC Design consultants) and the main Developer (A2 Dominion), OCC Corporate Landlord, School organisation & planning

(CEF) & Cherwell District council on the NW Bicester Eco-town site. Consultation with the confirmed academy sponsor has commenced to provide input to the detailed design of the school. The main building parameters are not subject to further sponsor consultation and planning consent is being sought on this basis. The new school plans will be subject to public consultation as part of the usual planning process.

## **Financial Assessment**

14. See Annex 1

## **Programme**

15. In order for the Academy to be ready to admit pupils in September 2016, the detailed design and Full Business Case will be required by May 2015. This will allow for full business case approval, contract let and the mobilisation to happen during June 2015 with construction starting on completion of land transfer.
16. Any delay in obtaining planning consent, land transfer or approval of the full business case or its approval will potential put at risk the ability to deliver the school for September 2016 and may result in further funding pressures on OCC to provide temporary teaching space for the Academy.

## **Outline Revenue Costs/Benefits & Value for Money Analysis**

17. The new Academy will be responsible for all running costs which will be funded from their delegated budget. Resources for Academy budgets are provided by government and will increase in line with pupil numbers as the Academy grows over time. However there will be revenue required to support the school in the early years of operation as staff and running costs will be proportionally greater while the school population grows. These costs are to be met by the council. Revenue funds are available from a growth portfolio fund and a formula for consistent and fair application of funds to new academies is in place.
18. Financial information relating to Value for Money can be found in the Annex Stage 1 Report

## **RECOMMENDATION**

19. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - (a) **endorse the progress to date; and**
  - (b) **delegate to the Chief Finance Officer and Director for Environment & Economy in consultation with the Leader the authority to**

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**approve the Stage 2 Full Business Case and the award of the construction contract**

SUE SCANE  
Director for Environment & Economy

Background papers:  
NW Bicester Primary School – Stage 1 Outline Business Case

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