

Division(s):

CABINET – 15 JULY 2014

Didcot, New Primary School – Progress and Authorisation for Delegated Governance Approval

Report by Director for Environment and Economy

Introduction

1. Under the terms of the section 106 agreement for the 3,300 unit housing development at Great Western Park (GWP), Didcot, the County Council has secured land and funding to support delivery of 2 Primary schools and 1 Secondary School within the development.
2. The first of these schools, a 2FE Primary school is required by September 2015 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 Atkins Global as Lead Consultant/Design for the scheme.
4. The school will be run as an Academy and GEMS have been confirmed as the Academy Sponsor
5. The Scheme has now been developed sufficiently to pass its first Capital Governance stage (Outline Business Case) to enable the scheme to be submitted for full planning permission.
6. The scheme is currently being developed further to enable detailed design to be completed in order to enable construction to start in October 2014, with completion in time to enable the school to be ready for use in September 2015.
7. The cost of the scheme is to be met by s106 contributions from the Great Western Park Development; further work during the next stage of design development will include investigations exploring ways of reducing the total scheme cost.

Pupil Pressures

8. It is anticipated that this Primary school will meet the need for additional primary age pupil places within the Great Western Park Area of Didcot from September 2015, as a result of the population growth generated by the Housing Development.
9. This project therefore supports the Council's statutory responsibility to ensure sufficiency of pupil places.

Options for Delivery

10. The Project Team have a procurement strategy which has 3 no. procurement routes which they recommend for this project:
 - Single stage Traditional route
 - Single stage Design & Build route
 - Procure through the County Council Partnership Framework
11. The final recommendation will be made during Stage 2 following consultation with contractors and OCC Partnership.

Communications Strategy

12. The Project Manager has been coordinating the design of the school and site with Atkins (OCC Design consultants) and the main Developer (Taylor Wimpey) on the Great Western Park site. Now that the school has an academy sponsor consultation with them has commenced and they will be able to influence the detailed design of the school, however the main building parameters are now set to allow for planning. The new school plans will be subject to public consultation as part of the planning process.

Exempt Information

13. The financial assessment provides information which, due to the imminent tendering of the project, could compromise best value to the authority and as a consequence is considered to be confidential in nature. The public should therefore be excluded during consideration of Annex 1 because its 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 of open competition 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.

Financial Assessment

14. See Annexed stage 1 report.

Programme

15. In order for the Academy to be ready to admit pupils in September 2015, detailed design and production of the Full Business Case will be required by August 2014, this will allow for Full Business Case Approval, Contract Let and Mobilisation to happen during September with construction starting in October 2014.
16. Any delay in planning, completion of the Full Business Case or its approval will potential put at risk the ability to deliver the school for September 2015 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.
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**
 - (b) **Delegate to the Chief Finance Officer and Director for Environment & Economy in consultation with the Leader the authority to approve the Stage 2 Full Business Case and the award of the construction contract**

SUE SCANE

Director for Environment & Economy

Background papers:

Great Western Park, Didcot Primary School – Stage 1 Outline Business Case

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July 2014