

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 18th October 2010

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PORTFOLIO: Education and Children – Councillor Pantelic

PART I **KEY-DECISION**

SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES – UPDATE

1 Purpose of Report

To set out proposals for addressing the Council's statutory responsibilities for ensuring sufficiency of secondary school places, including how capital investment in the secondary school estate over the next 9 years could enable the additional school places required between now and 2019 to be provided.

Following the cessation of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, and in light of the absence of any replacement funding framework to expand and improve schools, the Council may chose to speculatively approach the Department for Education to highlight Slough's future needs with the aim of securing agreement on future funding, and allowing the Council to make plans to satisfy future needs.

2 Recommendation

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- a) That a case be submitted for capital funding to the Department for Education following the demise of Building Schools for the Future, supported by the information about the need for secondary school places and Slough's Secondary School Improvement Strategy.
- b) That a statutory consultation be carried out on the proposed changes to schools (we can start preliminary consultation, but statutory notices cannot be published until funding to implement the capital works is in place).

3 Community Strategy Priorities

- **Celebrating diversity, enabling inclusion**
- **Adding years to life and life to years**
- **Prosperity for all**
- **A cleaner, greener place to live, work and play**

High quality education offers every child an opportunity to succeed and prosper, during their childhood and adult life. Our schools celebrate diversity and enable

children from all backgrounds to learn together, improve relationships between communities, and promote involvement in community activities.

The school curriculum includes an emphasis on children's physical and emotional well-being.

Funding is required for expanding school places to meet the rise in demand projected to start in 2012 and continue until at least 2019/20, and ensure every pupil obtains a school place in a high quality, successful, accessible and low carbon school.

This report supports the development of energy efficient, modernised and enlarged school buildings, co-location of services and a transformation of education contributing to regeneration of wards across Slough.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

In terms of future capital funding for secondary schools, no specific provision to date has been agreed or incorporated within the Council's capital programme. Significant levels of capital funding will soon be required in order to expand secondary school provision (including post-16 and SEN places); this is outlined in detail in section 5. Members will be aware that on 20 October 2010 the government will outline their financial strategy for the coming years via the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Irrespective of any announcements about future school capital funding, the council will need to review how it meets the statutory obligations to provide school places.

As reported to Cabinet on the 8th February 2010 the funding available to fund Slough's preparation for entry to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme was from two sources, namely the schools and the Council. Schools made available £510k from within their devolved funding, of which £260k was a one-off contribution from which all current expenditure to date has been incurred. The balance of £250k, depending on submission requirements post-BSF, will determine if this funding remains in place or is allocated back to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Council had allocated £161k of permanent revenue funding as part of the 2010-11 budget build process, from which no expenditure has been incurred to date. As a consequence of the withdrawal of BSF this budget has been transferred out of the directorate's budget in year.

(b) **Risk Management**

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
From section 2 above	Insufficient secondary school places for resident pupils and insufficient places in neighbouring authorities	Prepare for expansion by starting consultation and applying to DfE for funding
From section 2 and section 5 below	Slough is unable to meet the council's statutory duty to provide school places Education Act 1996 'Local Education Authorities (LEA)	As above

	have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools to provide primary and secondary education for their area ‘	
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(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child’s educational potential. They must ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area and also promote diversity and increase parental choice.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An impact assessment will be required once proposals for school organisation are known.

(e) Workforce

There are no workforce implications.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 As Members will be aware, the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme has now been stopped for most authorities, including those authorities approved for admission in March 2010. Instead the government has commissioned the James Committee to review school capital investment and procurement, and this is expected to report back in two months time. The terms of reference for the committee includes looking at ways of establishing new schools including allowing new providers to enter the state school system.

5.2 Capital investment will necessarily be focussed on providing additional school places where needed; addressing urgent building condition needs; and plans that lead to more efficient and effective use of limited resources. It is likely, therefore, that the size of development and the quality of buildings which were the hallmark of the first waves of BSF schools will be considerably scaled down, and any limited resources available will need to be used to carry out essential renovation, and the provision of additional places will be through building works or modular accommodation which meet the basic standards required.

5.3 While the BSF programme is no longer in place, the information gathered in the course of developing the Slough Readiness to Deliver submission will underpin our future planning for secondary school places in the borough and therefore needs to be included in the overall secondary education and estate strategy for the Council. However, this strategy no longer needs to comply with the BSF guidance laid down by Partnerships for Schools. Therefore it has been possible to take a pragmatic, practical and proactive approach to setting out the Council’s plans, within the Slough context, for addressing the needs of the school estate and improving secondary education and this is outlined in the Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy. This takes into account schools’ priorities and plans, as set out within their individual Strategies for Change (each school has drafted an individual strategy), as the

Council was aware that this core data would be required for BSF or any replacement capital programme that took over from BSF.

5.4 Under the BSF programme, as members will recall from previous reports and briefings, the Council agreed in December 2009 to develop a Readiness to Deliver (RtD) submission for entering the BSF programme. This was submitted to Partnerships for Schools (PfS) at the end of January 2010. The authority was subsequently informed that Slough's submission had been unsuccessful, and this was circulated to members in March 2010. The headline feedback on Slough's submission provided by PfS was extremely positive. However, only six authorities could be entered into the BSF programme at this stage (some 18 had applied), and of these six successful authorities, all had made at least one earlier RtD submission. The few areas where PfS required more information were, for example, a Playing Pitch Strategy, a PE/Sports Strategy, and specific plans for developing extended school activities on each school site. Therefore, in order to ensure Slough had the best opportunity for success at the next application round, whilst keeping expenditure to a minimum, works were commissioned in a considered way:

- Playing Pitch Strategy – this will be completed October 2010. This is an example where the BSF project has funded a strategy which should have already been in place
- PE/sports strategy – this is currently being developed by officers and needs to be in place for the Secondary School Improvement Strategy
- Co-location proposals are continuing to be explored by officers in order to consider the most effective use of resources.

Implications for Slough's Mainstream Secondary Provision

5.5 Since 2007 the capacity of secondary schools has been increased by 15%. Work has been carried out on 5 schools in the borough in the last two years to improve their facilities and increase pupil numbers, there are:

- Slough and Eton CE School - £10m has been invested via a combination of Council Capital, Targeted Capital Fund (TCF) grant and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) grant. This has increased the school admission number from 135 to 165 adding 150 secondary places plus 150 post 16 places. 10 SEN places have also been created.
- Wexham School - £10m has been invested via a combination of Council Capital, Targeted Capital Fund (TCF) grant and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) grant. This has increased the admission number from 150 to 165 adding 75 secondary places plus 50 post 16 places.
- Baylis Court (Girls) School - £4.5m funded by a combination of council capital and diploma funding. This has increased the admission number from 135 to 155 adding 100 secondary places.
- Westgate School – we are half way through a £6m project funded by council capital, section 106 income and TCF 14-19 Diploma funding. This has increased the admission number from 150 to 180 adding 150 secondary places.
- St Joseph's Catholic High School - £0.4m of TCF 14-19 Diploma and LCVAP school funding is creating a new sixth form with 120 new post 16 places

5.5 Slough needs around an additional 20FE (forms of entry) mainstream secondary places, that is 600 more year 7 places or 3000 more places for 11-16 year olds, within the next ten years (a growth of 36% on the current provision of 55FE). The projected pupil numbers are based on the increased birth rate, as evidenced by the

increased numbers coming into and through primary schools (Members will be aware of the large increase in primary places the Council has had to make, supported by funding through the government's Primary Capital Programme). These larger numbers of primary children will start to come through to secondary schools in 2012, and the authority therefore needs to plan proactively to have additional places / schools in place and in time if it is to meet its statutory duties to:

- ensure that there are sufficient schools of appropriate quality in its area to provide a free place to anyone who wants it in connection with their parental duty to educate their children between the ages of 5 and 16
- use all its educational functions to promote high standards of education
- secure high standards to embrace the well-being of the whole child
- promote the fulfilment of every child's 'educational potential' and 'ensure fair access to educational opportunity'
- exercise its functions with a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools, and increasing opportunities for parental choice.

5.6 In developing proposals for providing these additional places, account has been taken of:

- where the growth in the school age population is located within slough
- the need to expand existing schools where possible, given the lack of alternative sites being available for new schools
- the need to phase the expansion of places over time and in line with projected growth – these projections will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain true, and if any changes become apparent to the anticipated growth, there is time to make adjustments to the later phases of proposed expansion
- existing capacity over the border in neighbouring local authority schools.

5.7 The following table therefore sets out when additional places will be needed and the proposals for providing these, allowing for a very small number of surplus places.

Year	Additional FE needed	Proposals for providing additional places
2012	2FE	i) Slough and Eton CE – add 45 (1.5FE) places per year group ii) Baylis Court – add 55 (1.8FE) places per year group
2013	2FE	Wexham - add 45 (1.5 FE) places per year group
2014	2.5FE	Open a new school with PAN of 165 (5.5FE)
2015	1FE	-
2016	2FE	-
2017	2FE	Number of new places required are the equivalent of opening a new school with a PAN of 300 (10FE)
2018	6FE	-
2019	3FE	-
TOTAL	20.5 FE	20.3 FE

5.8 These proposals would meet key criteria for capital investment, as they would:

- address the shortfall in places
- increase diversity of provision through the creation of two new schools in the borough - this could lead to promoters/ providers coming forward to run free schools

5.9 Given the timescales within which Slough needs these additional places/schools to be provided, it would be necessary to obtain capital funding so that procurement, design and construction can take place as set out in the following table:

Priority Groupings	School	Procurement, Design and Construction
Group 1	i) Slough and Eton CE – add 45 (1.5FE) places per year group) ii) Baylis Court – add 55 (1.8FE) places per year group)	January 2011 to July 2012 January 2011 to July 2012
Group 2	Wexham - add 45 (1.5 FE) places per year group)	January 2012 to July 2013
Group 3	Open new school with PAN of 165 (5.5FE)	January 2012 to July 2014
Group 4	Open new school with a PAN of 300 (10FE)	January 2015 to July 2017

5.10 Given the above timescales, the Council would need to make the case to DfE this autumn term in order to seek funding for carrying out the capital works identified in group 1 above. It is not yet clear how the government will allocate capital funding for new schools – it could be allocated to the authority to manage the procurement and construction of the new school, or it could be allocated to the new provider/promoter of the school to manage the process. If a new school were to be a free school, then the funding would be allocated to the new provider of this school.

5.11 It is recognised that schools could, in the meantime, make application to become academies (although the current level of interest is limited). If this were to happen, and their applications were successful, yet they were schools identified for expansion, the authority would need to seek agreement to their proposed expansion – it is assumed that the government’s capital funding for their expansion would then be provided direct to these academies, rather than to the authority.

5.12 It is of course also possible for schools to be expanded, and then to become academies – however it is not possible to anticipate what may happen in the future, and in the meantime the authority still has to develop strategic plans for fulfilling its statutory responsibility for ensuring sufficiency of appropriate school places.

5.13 In addition, where the proposals involve schools expanding their building capacity by at least 30 places and the lesser of 25% or 200 places, or require school closure/amalgamation or opening of new schools:

- it will be necessary to carry out statutory consultation on these proposed changes
- confirmation of the necessary capital funding to make these changes is required before statutory notices can be published.

Implications for Slough’s Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision

5.14 Alongside providing additional mainstream places for the increasing secondary population, it is also necessary to provide more local educational provision for children with special educational needs. As part of this, and in order to make more efficient use of resources, specially resourced provision needs to be added to secondary schools. This will enable more children with special educational needs to attend a local school, and not have long travelling distances to schools outside the authority (sometimes involving being residential because of the long travelling times). These placements and transport arrangements are costly, and given the reductions in Council budgets, this would seem a sensible way forward. Indeed, the authority has already begun consultation on such ideas.

5.15 The solutions being put forward are set out in the table below. Such developments would require additional capital funding, and it would make sense for the necessary construction work to be carried out on the mainstream school sites at the same time as the extensions to create more 11-16 places (see timescales above). However, given the poor condition of the Haybrook College buildings, it is recommended that capital funding is sought this autumn term so that necessary plans are made as soon as possible for pupils who currently attend Haybrook

Special School/ specially resourced provision	Special School/ SEN Unit	Age Range	Type of SEN	Current NOR	Proposed No.
Arbour Vale	Special School	3-19	CN, PMLD, SLD, ASD	226	230
Haybrook College	Special School	11-16/18*	BESD	42	65
Haybrook College	PRU	11-16/18*	N/A	70FTE	110FTE
Westgate	Specially resourced provision	11-18	PD	11	15
Wexham	Specially resourced provision	11-18	ASD	15	20
Langley Academy	Specially resourced provision	11-18	HI	5	10
Slough & Eton	Specially resourced provision	11-18	SLCN	3	20
Baylis Court	Specially resourced provision	11-18	CN	n/a	15
St Joseph's	Specially resourced provision	11-18	CN	n/a	15

*includes post 16 places to enable post 16 provision

Implications for Slough's post 16 provision

5.16 The larger secondary cohorts are working their way up through the system, creating additional need for post 16 places. Slough will also need more post 16 places to support the raising of the participation age to 17 and eventually 18, should this policy remain unchanged. The following table sets out proposals for how this demand for more places could be met.

5.17 It would seem sensible to plan the expansion to post 16 places at the same time as other construction work on these sites, and to seek government funding to enable this. In addition, to enable 16 year olds to stay on at The Westgate School, it would be necessary to seek government funding to provide an additional 150 post 16 places by September 2013 (that is, construction would need to take place during the 2012/13 academic year).

School	Existing places (capacity) for Y12 and Y13	Proposed places for Y12 and Y13
Baylis Court	100	300
Beechwood	159	159
Herschel Grammar	250	250
Langley Grammar	300	300
Langley Academy	250	250
Slough and Eton CE	166	300
Slough Grammar	450	450
St Bernard's Catholic Grammar	250	250
St Joseph's Catholic	120	160
New school (site to be determined)	-	230
The Westgate	100	250
Wexham	200	300
New school (site to be determined)	-	420
Total	2345	3619

Capital investment plans

- 5.18 Prior to submitting plans to the DfE for capital funding, it will be necessary to assess each school site and their buildings to ensure the proposed expansions are achievable. The current asset management information held by the authority on each school building and site will help in this. It will then be necessary to ensure the building work can be delivered within the funding available prior to undertaking consultation on the proposed changes. This also needs to be linked with the Council's capital and assets review currently under way.
- 5.19 The building work on each school site will need to provide the additional places and facilities required for expansion, as well as ensure that outstanding large maintenance items are addressed and that the whole school building/site will be able to function effectively as an integrated whole, so ensuring continued school improvement. To help in this, each school's SfC has identified the improvements necessary to their building/site to enable their evolving school improvement plans to continue to be implemented. Members will already be aware of the significant improvements made possible to standards, behaviour, attendance and community use by the capital investment it has already made in its schools – Beechwood being the latest and prime example of this.
- 5.20 Officers will therefore look to develop capital investment plans that will lead to the required improvements of both the school estate and standards of education, ensuring any investment can be clearly shown to lead to improved pupils' examination results, behaviour and attendance, as well as increased use of schools for providing community education and services to the community.

Next steps

- 5.21 The authority has positioned itself well for submitting new requests to government for capital funding. Slough is able to provide evidence of well thought-out plans and education strategies to support both school improvement and more efficient use of resources. The pupil place planning and school asset management data is robust, and the proposed school organisation plans, as set out in this report, would address the future demand for school places.
- 5.22 The draft Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy for the local authority, supported by more detailed strategies for particular policy areas (eg Playing Fields), provides a sound basis for ensuring any capital investment leads to improved educational provision and achievement. Likewise the individual school SfCs provide the education framework for their school designs, so ensuring that capital investment can support their plans for improvement.
- 5.23 The next steps would therefore be to:
- Submit a case for capital funding to the DfE, supported by the information and strategies referenced and attached to this report
 - Start the consultation process on the changes required for school organisation, including seeking applications from promoters/ providers for each of the two proposed new schools at the appropriate time
 - Review the Council's current and future school capital requirements in readiness for the outcome of the next round of national capital bidding process, so that the Council can ensure it will be able to meet its statutory obligation of providing sufficient and appropriate school places.

6 **Conclusion**

The Cabinet is requested to:

- approve a submission being submitted to the Department for Education for capital funding to expand school places in response to growth in the secondary population, address the poor state of school buildings, and enable more colocated services for the community on school sites
- start the first stage of the consultation process required for the proposals.

7 **Appendices Attached**

None

8 **Background Papers**

'1' Cabinet agenda and minutes of meeting held on 8 February 2010