

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 12th March 2012

CONTACT OFFICER: Clair Pyper, Strategic Director Education & Children's Services
John Rice, Interim Assistant Director Environment & Regeneration

(For all enquiries) (01753) 87 5704 / 87 5239

WARD(S): ALL

PORTFOLIO: Education and Children – Cllr Pantelic
Neighbourhoods and Renewal - Cllr Swindlehurst

PART I KEY DECISION

OLD TOWN HALL CONVERSION TO A PRIMARY SCHOOL – PROGRESS REPORT

1 Purpose of Report

To report back to Members on progress with the Town Hall conversion and refurbishment project.

2 Recommendation

2.1 The Cabinet is requested to

- a. Note the progress made with creating a new school from the Old Town Hall,
- b. Agree the funding for the project to be £2.89M.

3 Community Strategy Priorities

- **A Place to Live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

The conversion and refurbishment of the Town Hall will deliver a new school for Chalvey Ward. This project is a key part of Slough's Primary Expansion Programme, a programme to increase rapidly the primary school capacity across the Town to meet rising demand. The Town Hall project will help the Local Authority to ensure that every Slough child entitled to a school place is offered one from September 2012 onwards.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

At the meeting held on 19 September 2011, Cabinet agreed a final contract value with Mansell Construction Services Ltd of up to £2.4m and to delegate the agreement of the Phase II Contract works to the Assistant Director, Environment & Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Education & Children's Services and the Commissioners for Neighbourhoods & Renewal and Education & Children's Services. Surveys were subsequently undertaken, with further investigation and design work it has been possible to keep within the agreed level

of funding for the Contract, but to add the full refurbishment of the second floor of the building to create a further two classrooms and fully bring this part of the building back into full use. However, excluded from and in addition to the construction contract is the cost of furniture, site preparation costs, highway works, kitchen equipment, ICT hardware and management fees. These are estimated to be £490K. Combined with the construction contract the total budget required for the project is £2.89M.

The project is funded from two income streams:

- £1.4m is funding received as part of a Section 106 agreement with developers. This funding is time limited and must be spent on primary school places within 2 miles of the development in Cippenham. The Town Hall project satisfies these criteria.
- £1.490m is capital grant received in 2011-12 as part of Slough's Basic Need Safety Valve funding.

The increase in budget since the original paper acknowledges the longer life span of the building as outlined in section 5.11.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
Creation of a new school from the Old Town Hall.	Risk – Pre-commencement works delay start on site for the construction works	Coordinate works/contractors to minimise delays
Agree the funding for the project to be £2.89M.	Risk – Project does not complete in time to admit children for September 2012	Alternative school classrooms to be identified for the intervening period

(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. This project contributes towards the Council's fulfilment of its statutory duty.

The procurement exercise undertaken meets the requirements of the legislation and the Council's procurement procedures contained in the Constitution.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

One has been prepared – it identifies a positive impact for new arrivals to Slough and residents of Chalvey, the majority of who are from ethnic minority groups. Consideration should also be given to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which places a general duty on public authorities, in exercise of their functions, to have regard to the need to promote equality. This includes the need to eliminate

discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and section 33 of the same Act requires this specifically when land or premises are being disposed of.

(e) Workforce

None – Claycots will need to recruit additional staff for the new school site. The staff would be employed by the Local Authority as Claycots is a Community school.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 In May 2011 Claycots Community School was selected to provide a school annex at the Town Hall opening from September 2012. This is a key expansion project within Slough's Primary Expansion Programme to meet the continuing demand for school places, particularly in the central north-south strip of Slough. This project will initially provide two additional forms of entry at Reception stage, eventually offering fourteen classes by the time the Reception pupils reach the end of their primary education in Year 6.
- 5.2 Claycots has a history as a successful primary school which achieves good outcomes for the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 with results soundly above the floor levels for attainment and progress, particularly in maths. The annex will be an integral part of the main school and the facilities and resources will be used flexibly across the two sites.
- 5.3 The School has viewed this as an exciting and pioneering opportunity and have embraced the project enthusiastically. The School has embarked on this venture as the Headteacher and Governors feel they are ready to share what they have learned with others and to extend the success at Claycots to other needy areas.
- 5.4 The involvement of the Chalvey community is viewed as a natural progression and the Headteacher, Governors and staff are fully committed to making this work. The catchment area and pupil cohort have many similarities with that of the Chalvey area: high free school meals, higher than national figures for English as an Additional Language and an area of deprivation. The School has an experienced leadership team which is familiar with successful implementation of various outreach projects. Alongside this, the School has experience of carrying out a variety of building projects. The current staffing structure has the flexibility to work on more than one site. Additionally, the staff and governors have the dedication and enthusiasm for the challenges and rewards which come from working within this type of catchment area.
- 5.5 Since May 2011, regular planning meetings involving a wide range of officers and school representatives have taken place to address building, financial, legal, human resources, admissions and communication issues associated with this development.
- 5.6 Admissions
The Schools' Adjudicator has recently agreed to the catchment area for the annex and this includes some slight changes to the catchments to the neighbouring schools. The emphasis of the criteria is to facilitate siblings attending the same school if parents express this as a preference. Even though the school was only a proposal at the time the admission's booklet was published, 28 parents have put the 'Claycot's annex' as their first preference.

5.7 Contract Progress

Cabinet on 9th November 2010 agreed to tender the conversion and refurbishment of the 1930's part of the Town Hall to create a new school building ready to be used from September 2012. The tendering process was based upon a two stage design and build approach employing an NEC 3 Engineering and Construction Contract: June 2005, Option C Target Sum Contract. The first stage required Tenderers to submit fixed prices for standard elements including design, preliminaries, subcontract and direct fee percentage together with the outline concept design and building specification.

5.8 At a Cabinet meeting on 19th September 2011 it was agreed to proceed to Stage 2 of the tender process with Mansell Construction Services Limited. The second stage provided the Council with the opportunity to customise the outline designs, quality of design, timescale for the completion of the work, ensure the work commissioned is within the funding envelope, etc and then to include the agreed specification and contract sum in the Contract to award the work. This process required additional design and costing works, conducting surveys and extensive contract negotiations. This work resulted in providing the option to refurbish the second floor and create two further classrooms.

5.9 On 24th January 2012 the contract was awarded to Mansell Construction Services Limited. Pre-construction works have now started on site and construction is due to start March 2012.

5.10 The key milestones have included arrangements for the work to complete during August and for Claycots to move in mid-August with a view to the annex opening on 5th September 2012.

5.11 Lifespan of the new Annex

The original proposal for the Town Hall project was to provide a 7-year life after which time the Town Hall would revert to alternative use. Over the last year the development of the Academies regulations and indications of intent included within a recently concluded government consultation have changed the basis on which that decision was taken. It is now clear that the Secretary of State would need to approve any change of use of the building; this would be unlikely while high demand for school places remains in Slough.

5.12 In recognition of this, the opportunity has been taken to refurbish the building where sensible to give a longer life to the building. For example, to operate as a school it was necessary to provide radiators and pipework suitable for young children. Also the heating boilers for the building unexpectedly failed during the scoping works. Therefore a new boiler is included in the work being undertaken. To provide the school with the full complement of classes needed for a primary school, 2 additional classrooms have been created by converting the second floor, resulting in the whole building now being available for use.

5.13 Furthermore, the Council is considering options with Claycots School for how the newly refurbished facility can be used to provide commercial and civic use once the School has opened.

5.14 Planning

Full planning permission has been obtained. This includes the safe arrangements for dropping off and picking up at the rear of the school.

5.15 Communications

The progress of the Town Hall annex has been communicated at regular intervals to the Lead Commissioner for Children and Young People, head teachers' meetings, Heads' Termly meeting, Slough Schools Education Forum, Schools Organisation Group and the Directorate Consultative Forum. Claycots School will soon embark on a communication programme through the Council's Communication Team to highlight to the community, partners, headteachers and other stakeholders the impending opening of the annex.

6 Comments of Other Committees

None

7 Conclusion

Members are requested to note progress with the project.

8 Appendices Attached

None

9 Background Papers

Cabinet reports:

9th November 2010 Item 4 'Proposal for New School Places in Chalvey'

19th September 2011 Items 7 and 13 'Outcome of Town Hall Tender Process'