

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 22nd September 2009

CONTACT OFFICER: Clair Pyper, Strategic Director Education and Children's Services / Tony Madden, Capital Support Manager
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875704 / 875739

WARD(S): Central; All

PORTFOLIO: Education And Children – Councillor Pantelic

PART I **KEY DECISION**

BUDGET ISSUES FOR THE NEW SCHOOL ON THE FORMER LEA SITE

1 **Purpose of Report**

To update the Cabinet as requested of the budget issues for the refurbishment of the former Lea Junior School building.

2 **Recommendation**

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the reduced refurbishment scheme be approved and that the scheme be expanded if new funding becomes available.

3 **Community Strategy Priorities**

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling Inclusion**
- **Adding Years to Life and Life to Years**
- **Prosperity for All**

This project will provide 60/90 additional primary places for reception age pupils from September 2010 to help meet the projected increased in demand due to rising birth rates. New school places on the former Lea Schools site will provide a non-faith primary school option to parents living along the Wexham Road, an option not currently available as all the schools are voluntary aided faith schools.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

A budget of £3m was allocated towards the refurbishment project in 2008 based on a provisional feasibility study. A more detailed study which included surveys of the infrastructure of the school and a brief to achieve a Very Good BREEAM rating put the cost of the project at £4.5m. A recent exercise has been carried out to bring this scheme down to the minimum standard that would still provide a good quality facility for teaching and learning and achieve planning approval. Two alternative projects have been costed one including only essential works and one including all necessary works. Project costs are:

- i) Essential works only - £2.96m
- ii) Essential plus necessary works - £3.575m

If the project is delayed and classes will not be ready for September 2010 then modular classes would be required at 2 (or 3) alternative school sites to create 2 (or 3) 'bulge' classes per year, the estimated cost of this would be £260K (or £390K) per year. It is undecided at this point how many reception age pupils might be admitted for September 2010, it may be 60 or 90.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
Refurbishment project proceeds irrespective of final status of the new school	Status of new school is still undecided. It may be a community or foundation school or a competition may be required, alternatively it may form part of an existing school. If this must be decided before proceeding with project then places will not be ready by September 2010	Refurbishment project proceeds in parallel with the school organisation process for creating new school places
Further non-essential items are removed from the project to keep within budget unless new funding becomes available	£3m budget may not be sufficient to meet project objectives	Project tailored to budget Capital bid has been submitted through PPRG process Basic Need funding bid submitted to DCSF

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

None

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An impact assessment will be drafted to include the full range of expansion projects being undertaken in Slough once they are confirmed.

(e) Workforce

None

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 As part of the council's 2008 capital bidding process, £3m was approved to refurbish the former Lea Junior School building to create a new 2-form entry primary school.
- 5.2 This budget estimate was based on an initial feasibility study. Since then a more detailed study of the building together with a developed brief by the council has put the full project cost at £4.5m.
- 5.3 Education together with the recently appointed project managers, have been working with the architects to remove non-essential items from the scheme to arrive at a project that is within the budget envelope available. A scheme has emerged for £2.96m and a summary of excluded items and cost summary is attached as Appendix A.

- 5.4 A second project that would also include necessary items is estimated at £3.575m and would include the following items omitted from the 'essential items' scheme. The cost report is included as Appendix B.
1. New light fittings - replacing damaged and defective fittings.
 2. Ventilation to three number IT suites.
 3. Two number smart boards.
 4. Renew solar reflective paint to roof coverings.
 5. Retained carpets to be cleaned.
 6. Redecorate all corridors and classrooms (walls/ceilings).
 7. Refurbish toilets near year 1 classroom (finishes & fittings).
 8. Fence off uneven playground area around tree.
 9. Install handrail protection to opening doors and windows.
 10. External redecoration (allowance only).
 11. Support for future ventilation plant to kitchen.
 12. Entrance canopy to main entrance and reception entrance.
 13. Provision of new grass football pitch.
 14. Make good tarmac to playground area.
- 5.5 The £1.5m funding gap for the full scheme means that a number of significant items have been removed from the schemes altogether or reduced in scale. However, the 'essential items' project will still deliver a school with a nursery, some refurbished classes, safety of electrics upgraded, new school hall added, many windows replaced and boilers upgraded. However, all elements of the project have been scaled back to some degree as the original plan was to address 100% of condition needs and achieve a Very Good BREEAM rating (a nationally recognised high energy efficiency target).
- 5.6 The separate modular dining hall, formerly used by Lea Infant and Junior Schools, will remain unchanged as the school dining facility in both the 'essential items' and 'necessary items' schemes. It will be some distance from the main school on the other side of the Iqra Slough Islamic Primary School entrance road on the playing fields for the new school. The proposed new school hall is being designed such that it can be adapted at a future date to also be used as a dining area with internal kitchen, should future funding become available.
- 5.7 At this stage in the project it is still possible to expand the scope of the works should new funding become available to either address the necessary items (£575K), £1.1m to achieve a Very Good BREEAM rating or undertake the full scheme (£1.5m). Slough has recently submitted a Basic Need Safety Valve (BNSV) funding application to the DCSF, should this be approved then one of the candidates for investment of this funding would be to increase the budget for this scheme. As this is only an application at this stage and the level of funding available for Slough won't be known for some weeks, the project will need to proceed within the current £3m envelope.
- 5.8 A planning application for the scheme was submitted in August to avoid any delays with delivery of the scheme. This has been possible because the difference in outward appearance between the different possible schemes only relates to the canteen and school entrance.
- 5.9 While the building works proceed there is a parallel process running to determine the status of the new school. New maintained schools must be established in accordance with the procedures defined by The Education and Inspections Act 2006. The Act requires that if a local authority wishes to see a new school established they must either: invite proposals for the school through (what is generally known as) a "competition" or apply to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new school, without running a competition. An application for exemption from this

process is currently being explored. This was discussed at Cabinet on 16th June 2009.

- 5.10 Current advice from government is that a request for a new community school is likely to be rejected but a request to open a new Foundation or Trust school would have a good chance of gaining approval. A requirement of Foundation and Trust schools is that they must own their land and buildings.
- 5.11 Given the issues with land ownership and time delays associated with the proposals discussed above an alternative model is also being explored. This model would see the refurbished building forming part of an existing school, leading to a school based on two sites. Discussions are ongoing to understand the full implications for the statutory consultation process and management structure for a split site school.
- 5.12 As this is a developing situation, a further paper will be brought back to cabinet to decide the preferred route for creating the new school places.
- 5.13 This creates uncertainty regarding the final status and opening dates of a new school on this site. In order that the new school places are available for September 2010, irrespective of the future status, the procurement of the building works needs to proceed without delay.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7 **Conclusion**

The Cabinet is requested to agree that the reduced £2.96m refurbishment scheme should proceed and the scheme will expand if new funding becomes available.

8 **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Indicative Cost Estimate - Refurbishment of existing primary school - Essential Works Option

'B' - Indicative Cost Estimate - Refurbishment of existing primary school - Necessary Works Option

9 **Background Papers**

'1'- Cabinet agenda and minutes of meeting held on 16th June 2009