

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Education held on Thursday, 9 March 2017 at 4.00 pm in Conference Room A, Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Neill Young (in the Chair)
Suzy Horton

11. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alicia Denny.

12. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Capital Programme schemes for School Condition Project 2017-18 and Sufficiency of Secondary School Places

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Caroline Corcoran (Head of Sufficiency, Participation and Resources). She summarised the table in paragraph 4.1 of the report listing the school modernisation urgent projects and explained that £219,000 had been set aside for contingency/emergency works.

Councillor Young said that some of the costs listed in the table for works seemed quite high; he referred in particular to the proposed works at Southsea Infant School Lodge, and asked for some further clarification on how the costs were arrived at. Caroline said that her colleagues present would be able to provide the details and introduced Susan Whitehouse (Design Manager) and Steve Groves (Asset Manager) who had been involved with the projects. Susan explained that the Southsea Infant School Lodge was a former caretaker's house which was now being used as an after school club. When this was inspected, there were no safety measures in place. Officers had been made aware of this project at short notice and the estimate was based on the cost per square metre. If approval was given today officers would prepare a tender for the project using the PCC framework of contractors who will submit prices. The tenders received will be evaluated to ensure the Council is getting value for money. Chris Williams noted that the council's costs for school modernisation projects had compared very favourably against national bench-marking for the last 2 years. Officers confirmed that any underspend would be returned to the overall school condition budget. Steve added that throughout the year his team will identify demand for properties that need works carried out. Condition surveys of the potential projects take place which are costed using cost data from previous tenders. Once the overall budget is approved, his team will meet with

education colleagues to discuss how to prioritise the projects. In response to a further question from Councillor Young, Steve Groves said that PCC include for a 5-10% contingency on individual projects.

In response to a question from Councillor Horton, officers explained that the council is aware of the overall demand of schools for improvement and condition works. Colleagues have been evaluating and prioritising school condition projects since October and are confident that the projects identified are the highest priority that can be undertaken within the overall budget available.

Caroline Corcoran then introduced the school sufficiency section of the report. Councillor Young said that he appreciated there is a real challenge for secondary school places in the city and understood that 2019 will be the 'pinch' year. He invited Chris Williams (Pupil Place Planning & Capital Strategy Officer) to give some further information on the schemes. Chris referred to the table in paragraph 5.4 of the report and said that the four schemes that made up phase 1 and which were already underway were good value projects. Many of the city's secondary schools are on constrained sites and many of the 'quick wins' had already been exhausted.

Mike Stoneman (Deputy Director Children's Services - Education) added that it was proposed that the shortfall of £50,000 for Phase 1 of the secondary sufficiency programme is offset against the Primary School Phase 2 expansion scheme which currently has sufficient allocated funding to meet this. In response to a question from Councillor Young at this point about the birth rate, Chris Williams explained that the last two years the birth rate had reduced slightly but officers were fairly confident that there was sufficient surplus within the primary school phase 2 expansion scheme to do this.

Councillor Young said that he felt it would be useful if there was a mechanism in place to report back on the progress of the sufficiency and school condition projects. Richard Webb advised that the capital monitoring reports regularly come forward to the portfolio; however officers could look providing further information on the performance and delivery of the school sufficiency and school condition capital projects within the approved capital programme in addition to the regular financial monitoring report. He asked that this be included as an additional decision.

In response to a question from Councillor Young regarding why an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) had not been completed for the report, Caroline Corcoran advised she had sought advice from the Council's Equalities Advisor and it was not appropriate to complete an EIA at this stage as there are so many different schemes and there would be no meaningful results. When the individual schemes are worked up an EIA for each would be completed and this would yield more meaningful results. Officers are working with schools to ensure that all their needs are met.

Mike Stoneman added that the expansion of The Portsmouth Academy was subject to discussion with the secondary heads. A conference meeting of the secondary heads will be taking place on Thursday 16th March.

DECISIONS: that

- (1) The School Modernisation "urgent condition" projects as set out in Section 4 of the report be approved and the scheme be amended to reflect the expected school contributions of £215,000;**
- (2) The required redistribution of funding across the short term sufficiency projects shown in the table at paragraph 5.4 be approved, together with a transfer of £50,000 from the Primary School Phase 2 expansion scheme to meet the identified shortfall.**
- (3) The secondary sufficiency scheme at The Portsmouth Academy and the feasibility work for the other secondary school expansion projects, as set out in Section 5 of the report, be approved, subject to discussion with secondary headteachers.**
- (4) Power be delegated to the Deputy Director of Children's Services - Education, to approve the entering into contract for the proposed capital works set out in this report.**
- (5) Quarterly monitoring reports on the performance and delivery of the school sufficiency and school condition capital projects within the approved capital programme be brought to the Education portfolio holder, in addition to the regular financial monitoring reports.**

The meeting concluded at 4.30 pm.

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Chair

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