

## MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013/2014 REPORT NO. 205

### MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Cabinet – 12 March 2014

### REPORT OF:

Director of Schools and Children's Services

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Agenda – Part: 1

Item: 8

**Subject: Brimsdown Primary School Investment**

**Wards: Enfield Highway  
Key Decision No: 3869**

**Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Ayfer Orhan**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the need to provide Primary pupil places in the North East of the borough as a result of two local academies' proposed increases to their Primary school provision and the subsequent effect on Council proposals for the expansion of Brimsdown Primary School.
- 1.2 As part of the proposed expansion of Brimsdown Primary School the opportunity was going to be taken to investigate the best way to improve the condition of existing buildings with a decision taken on rebuilding or renovating them as part of the required expansion works.
- 1.3 Without the need to expand the school the issue of the condition of the existing school buildings remains, particularly the need to improve the kitchen and dining facilities. As the replacement of the kitchen and dining facilities are required as a matter of urgency it is proposed that they are re-provided in such a way which will allow them to be incorporated into the current school buildings or to form part of the re-provision of a new build. A decision on the investment options will follow a detailed option appraisal to ensure the school's infrastructure can deliver 21st Century education services.
- 1.4 The report asks Cabinet to note the financial implications in terms of the change in requirement to expand the school and seeks approval to proceeding with the technical studies, design and works procurement of works to re-provide the kitchen and dining facilities. In addition to undertake a detailed options appraisal to evaluate the investment need to bring the remaining school building up to an acceptable standard either via investment into the current stock or the reprovision of the school for this activity.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet Members approve:

- 2.1 The updated strategy to provide school places in the North East of the borough and to note that it no longer requires a Council funded school expansion in the short to medium term.
- 2.2 That Brimsdown Primary school's kitchen and dining facilities are re-provided at an estimated cost of up to £3m including contingency, from within the PEP2 project costs already included in the Council's Capital Programme. It is proposed that these facilities are provided in such a way which will facilitate either an improvement of the current building stock or the re-provision of the school on site.
- 2.3 That a detailed options appraisal is undertaken on the site to assess the benefits and costs of either upgrade the current building stock to enable the school to deliver the curriculum into the 21st Century or to re-provide the school within the school site.
- 2.4 Delegated authority to the Director of Schools and Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (via Portfolio Decision) to take decisions on:
  - Entering into contractual arrangements and placing orders for required construction works.
- 2.5 Delegated authority to the Director of Schools and Children's Services on the:
  - Appointment of appropriate technical services such as architects, surveyors and contract managers;
  - Submission of planning applications; and
  - The appropriate procurement routes for individual schemes.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Pupil Places**

3.1.1 In the report (School Expansion Programme Phase 2 2013/14 – 2017/18) submitted to Cabinet on the 19th June 2013 Cabinet agreed:

- The updated strategy to provide the additional school places required between 2013/2014 and 2017/18;
- The establishment of the school expansion programme to run from 2013/14 to 2017/18 including a provisional budget of up to £44.318m to deliver 1,680 extra Council funded Primary school reception places, including the cost of rebuilding and re-configuring existing schools between 2013/14 and 2017/18, subject to availability of funding,

agreement of detailed scheme costs, and clear demonstration of value for money.

- 3.1.2 Given the pressure on places in recent years, an independent review was conducted between March and May 2013 by Openbox Consulting, a company that has supported a number of local authorities with pupil place modelling. Openbox reviewed Council and Government data separately to the annual release of population projections from the Greater London Authority, that is used in pupil place projections, and the planning areas used by the Council. For the North East area of the borough, the review originally identified a need for four additional reception classes by 2014 with a further two classes by 2017.
- 3.1.3 In June 2012 the pupil place projections and knowledge of existing and other planned expansions in the area led to the Council identifying a need to expand one Local Authority maintained primary schools in the North East area. Based on a range of criteria including available space, Brimsdown Primary school was chosen as the most suitable for further detailed work on the potential to expand. An informal approach was made to the head teacher and Governing Body to assess their willingness to agree to a potential expansion of the school. Following agreement of the school, the Council included Brimsdown Primary school within the PEP2 programme.
- 3.1.4 Clearly the need for pupil places and how they are to be delivered is something that is subject to continual change, it is dependent on the decisions of other education organisations in terms of their own expansion proposals. The Council is required to continually review projected demand for places and the provision of places in the borough. Following the decision of two free schools / academies to expand their primary provision, the assessment of need for the North East area has been updated. The result is that the Council does not need to expand a school in the North east area within the next five years.
- 3.1.5 Based on the revised picture of the supply and demand for pupil places in the area, it is recommended that the proposed expansion of Brimsdown primary school does not proceed and that Cabinet notes the effect on the identified future capital budget requirement, re-profiling the current budget to take account of the change to expenditure in the coming years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

## 3.2 **Building Condition**

- 3.2.1 This school is set in a large plot of land and the original construction was in the 1930's, since then the school has seen a number of new additions. As a result of the differing eras of construction the school finds itself under a number of differing construction regulations standards and materials used in the construction of.
- 3.2.2 The original building is solid brick construction under a pitched concrete tile roof. The later additions are cavity brick walls under flat felt roofs. Guttering is

both metal and PVC. RWP's and soil are both metal and PVC. Windows are 'Crittal' in the original, alloy PVC coating and PVC.

- 3.2.3 The school uses three outbuildings, one as a kitchen, dining hall (both built 70 years ago) and the other two as teaching areas. The dining hall was due to be demolished and replaced but as a result of the financial climate, this has been suspended.
- 3.2.4 The existing Dining Halls and Kitchen are housed in HORSAs (Hut Operation for the Raising of the School [leaving] Age) huts, these were cheap prefabricated kit buildings that were part of a national Government initiative. They are reinforced concrete framed and had asbestos cement sheet roofs. These buildings are reaching the end of their serviceable life; the reinforcement is rusting from water penetration and the concrete is spalling, the buildings tend to have no insulation, single glazed windows and as a result are incredibly expensive to heat. The Kitchen and Dining Halls at Brimsdown are in a poor state of repair and essential maintenance work is likely to cost £200,000+, this does not offer good value for money given the poor condition of the building and the form of construction. It should be noted there is one further school (Eldon) which still operates its own school meals service from HORSAs accommodation. However the Brimsdown facility although is in very much worse condition.
- 3.2.5 There have been two reports published by Architectural Services detailing five options that relate to the re-provision of dining & kitchen facilities at the school. The costs range from approximately £1m (re-provision of facilities on existing footprint) to £3m. It should be noted that the re-provision on the current footprint is not recommended for safety reasons as this option would continue to require pupils to cross the internal road on the site. The only option which would deliver the necessary flexibility to enable the new kitchen and dining facility to support either the current building stock or a re-provided school design is the £3m option, see para 3.2.8.
- 3.2.6 The internal decoration of the school is good but as already stated the age difference in the build eras means different standards of finish. A staged redecoration programme should be implemented to fit the budget available on a yearly rota. Although the internal decoration of the school is considered good the ad-hoc expansion of the school has resulted in logistical difficulties in terms of the management of the school for example the current location of the girls and boys toilets in the school means that large numbers of pupils have to traverse across the length of the school to use the toilets. As identified there are still a large number of 'Crittal' windows which are at the end of their useful life and are not energy efficient. In addition the current boiler room is coming to the end of its useful life and is in need of replacement.
- 3.2.7 The grounds, fencing and tarmac car park and pathways are in good order.
- 3.2.8 Based on the current architectural reports on the school buildings, it is recommended that an options appraisal is undertaken on the site to assess the benefits and costs of either upgrading the current building stock to enable

the school to deliver the curriculum into the 21st Century or to re-provide the school within the school site. It is proposed that the options appraisal be completed for a report to be brought back to Cabinet in the autumn. It is also recommended that approval is given to the re-provision of the kitchen and dining facilities on the site. It is proposed that these facilities are provided in such a way which will facilitate either of the two options (improvements to current building stock or the re-provision of the school on site).

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Council has considered re-provision and expansion of the school as part of the PEP2 programme however, due to the provision of additional primary school places via two local academies there is no longer a need. It is not an option to do nothing to the current kitchen and dining facilities the current buildings are no longer fit for purpose and require replacement.

#### **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The school buildings are in need of improvement with the kitchen and dining room block in urgent need of replacement with the potential of imminent failure.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

##### **6.1 Financial Implications**

6.1.1 The approved SCS Capital Programme currently includes a provision of £44.318m for the Primary Expansion Programme – Phase 2. This includes an initial estimate allocation for the provision of places in the NE of the borough of £13m for the rebuild of the Brimsdown Primary school. As this proposal is no longer required an opportunity has arisen to reduce the overall cost of the PEP2 budget by £13m, however as this report indicates there is an urgent need to address the poor condition of the kitchen and dining facilities at a cost of up to £3m. Approval is therefore being sought to allocate up to £3m of the £13m for this proposal. A more detailed report will be submitted in due course once the scope and cost of the proposed works are quantified for delegated approval by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.

6.1.2 It should be noted that the PEP2 budget is currently funded by capital grants of £31.3m and an unsupported borrowing of £13.018m so any reduction could be used to reduce the annual unsupported borrowing revenue cost, which is £80k per £1m. However, as the PEP2 schemes are not yet fully specified or costed a permanent reduction in the budget available is not yet recommended. This will need to be considered when the remaining PEP2 schemes are fully quantified,

and costed with the aim of reducing the unsupported borrowing requirement where possible.

## **6.2 Legal Implications**

- 6.2.1 Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 requires that Enfield ensures that sufficient school places are available within its area for children of compulsory school age. Case law upon this statutory duty confirms that compliance with the duty requires an education authority to actively plan to remedy any shortfall. Under s.1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council is empowered to do anything that an individual generally may do subject to the restrictions contained in s.2 of the Localism Act and other statutory prohibitions. Under s.111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions and under s.120 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to acquire land by agreement for the purposes of improvement or development of their area
- 6.2.2 In addition, regard must be had to the Council's Constitution, in particular Contract Procedure Rules and EU law for the procurement of any goods, works or services relating to the works/services to the schools. Any such procurements will need to have contracts in a form approved by Assistant Director of Legal Services. Any use of EU frameworks will need to be reviewed and agreed by Assistant Director of Legal Services.
- 6.2.3 The Council has committed to reducing its energy consumption via the Carbon Reduction Commitment and investment in its portfolio will assist to meet the Council's obligations. Where planning permission is required for any of the works envisaged, an application should be made and approved with any pre-commencement conditions having first been discharged.

## **6.3 Property Implications**

- 6.3.1 The condition of the internal and external areas of school is as set out within this report.
- 6.3.2 An updated condition report should be commissioned before the options appraisal is started so as to inform the validity of the figures of any report produced.
- 6.3.3 The design and build of the new kitchen and dining facilities should be implemented so that it does not cause a hindrance or redesign to any new or modified school on site in the future. It should link to the new school seamlessly.
- 6.3.4 Future proof systems engineering should be envisaged at this stage to avoid high costs later in the development life cycle. These should

be carried through the options appraisal and be weighted high accordingly to any evaluation criteria.

- 6.3.5 Any future evaluation of the school options should include consultation with all relevant stakeholders and departments.
- 6.3.6 The use of modular construction will assist with speeding up the construction process, but requires significant investment upfront in the design process. Additionally it has the potential to lower costs as compared with the traditional build routes. The modular construction also significantly improves a buildings environmental performance and overall sustainability.
- 6.3.7 To meet statutory requirements it is vital to ensure that the Council's financial accounts do not include buildings (or parts of buildings) that have been demolished. To ensure we have high quality records and meet our statutory obligations Education Asset Managers will complete a demolition notification form and return to Property Services.
- 6.3.8 An inventory list of any material procured and produced will need to be kept. In the event of failure, appropriate arrangements will need to be made for these supplies to be retained and secured for the Council until a decision is made on how best to dispose of them.
- 6.3.9 Property Services will need to be aware and sent the new data being generated for the expansion of these schools. These include floor plans with room data for the purposes of the Asset Management System, Atrium.
- 6.3.10 Once planning permission is gained Building Regulations will need to be adhered to as part of the enabling and construction works.

## **7. KEY RISKS**

Failure to replace the current facilities could lead to the failure of the current building which would mean the school was unable to deliver appropriate school meal services.

## **8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Fairness for All**

This proposal will result in improved facilities at the school allowing pupils the best life opportunity via an improved educational establishment

## **8.2 Growth and Sustainability**

The current facilities are very old and are not energy efficient the new facilities will ensure lower running costs for the school and the reduction in energy usage will mean reduced greenhouse gases.

## **8.3 Strong Communities**

Our schools remain a key hub for local communities any investment in these facilities will aid community engagement and strengthen the local community.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

The provision of the new facilities will ensure equality of provision across the borough in relation to meeting legislative requirements for the provision of free school meals to all infant aged pupils.

## **10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The new facility will allow the school and therefore the Council to meet legislation in relation the provision of free school meals to infant aged pupils.

## **11. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

The re-provision of the kitchen and dining facilities at the school will improve health and safety by illuminating the need for pupils to cross the internal road within the site in addition a new purpose built facility will improve health and safety for staff and pupils in terms of the new building against the current out of date facility.

## **12. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

A new facility will encourage more pupils to use the school meals service promoting a healthier life style.

## **Background Papers**

None