

Smart Schools Initiative: Proposals for Further Investment in the School Estate

Meeting of the Council

21 December 2006

Purpose of report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the intention to submit, in early 2007, a bid to the Scottish Executive for additional capital funding for further investment in the school estate to progress projects including Portobello High School, St John's Primary School, Boroughmuir High School, James Gillespie's High School and St Crispin's Special School.

Main report

- 2 The Council has made significant commitments towards improving the school estate over recent years, under its Smart Schools Initiative. It is anticipated that 28% of the school estate will be renewed and upgraded by 2010. There remains, however, a continued need to address the outstanding condition, suitability and demand requirements of the remaining Children and Families Estate, as set out in the Department's Asset Management Plan.
- 3 The Outline Business Case for the second schools PPP project, submitted in 2002 originally included work at 18 schools. The level of award from the Scottish Executive required the prioritisation the project scope and a number of schools were deselected from the project, including Portobello, Boroughmuir, and James Gillespie's High Schools.
- 4 A major consultation exercise has been undertaken this year to consider possible sites for the rebuilding of Portobello High School and, consequently, St John's Primary School. A separate report elsewhere on this agenda presents the outcomes of this consultation exercise and outlines possible costs and timescales associated with a number of options. It is suggested that the cost of the preferred options could amount to £33m for the rebuilding of Portobello High School and £8.5m for St John's Primary School (current prices).
- 5 Boroughmuir High School operates on a very restricted site at Viewforth, and the building itself is significantly constrained by undersized teaching areas. A feasibility study undertaken in 2002 demonstrated that while it was technically possible to refurbish the existing building to provide appropriately sized teaching areas, this would result in a reduction in capacity to 900 pupils and would

require a complete off-site decant for two years. Accordingly, work since then has focussed on identifying an alternative site for a new school. The cost for the new school is likely to be around £30 million (current prices) excluding acquisition costs for the site.

- 6 James Gillespie's High School also requires significant redevelopment but a feasibility study undertaken in 2002 demonstrated that the existing buildings are more suitable for re-use than at Boroughmuir, and the site offers greater flexibility for a re-development project that would involve a combination of new-build and refurbishment. While work to establish the outline costs of proposals has not yet been undertaken, it is possible that a budget of around £10 million may be necessary (current prices).
- 7 Significant work has also been undertaken over the last 5 years to rationalise and upgrade the special education estate in Edinburgh. St Crispin's Special School, however, is still in need of significant redevelopment. A feasibility study to identify the project scope (which will include the consideration of possible sites) will be undertaken shortly. At this stage it is anticipated that the cost of a new-build solution is likely to be about £8 million (current prices).
- 8 Consideration will also be given to other projects that may be suitable to incorporate within the bid, including the primary school estate.

Financial Implications

- 9 This report outlines projects that have a combined worth of around £90 million at current prices. An ambitious project such as this would require funding to be released from the Scottish Executive. It is accordingly proposed that a bid be made, early in 2007, to the Scottish Executive in anticipation of a further round of funding being made available for major school estate investment projects.
- 10 Should funding be forthcoming from the Scottish Executive, it is likely that the Council will require to commit a contribution to the total cost of the project. At this early stage, it would not be possible to speculate on what level of resources would require to be committed by the Council. The preparation of the Capital Investment Programme for 2007 to 2010 does not currently make provision for additional investment to support these projects.

Risks

- 11 Costs included in this report are current year indicative prices and will require to be updated for cost estimates at actual time of project construction.
- 12 The Council is seeking to mitigate the risk of future building repair liabilities by taking forward these capital projects.

Recommendations

- 13 Delegate authority to the Directors of Children and Families and Finance to
 - develop a funding strategy for the delivery of these schools
 - submit an initial case to the Scottish Executive in January 2007 in advance of submission of a full business case
 - and explore, with the Scottish Executive, possible delivery mechanisms for the schools rebuild programmes



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Appendices

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Wards affected All

**Background
Papers**