

**Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council**

**The Cabinet - 14 June 2006**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Investing for the Future - Transforming Secondary Provision**

**Purpose**

1. This report introduces a consultation on a framework of principles intended to secure a wide consensus across Dudley secondary schools, key stakeholders and partners. The consultation is the next step in securing substantial capital investment from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

**Background**

2. In 2002, Dudley, along with most other local authorities (LAs), submitted an expression of interest in the national Building Schools for the Future programme. BSF is a national initiative intended to transform secondary education through a major capital investment programme over the next 10-15 years. The DfES have structured the BSF programme in fifteen groups, referred to as waves, with about 10 LAs in each wave.
3. The DfES issued indicative Forward Planning Information in February 2005 suggesting that Dudley would be included in waves 7-9, consistent with a ranking between 70 and 90 within 150 LAs. Wave 7 LAs would be expected to receive BSF funding in 2010/11, Wave 8 in 2011/12 and Wave 9 in 2012/13. The ranking was based on deprivation indices and school achievement indicators.
4. In February 2005 the DfES gave support to Dudley's proposals for developing 'Learning for the Future' as a way of bringing together the wide range of initiatives such as Children's Centres, Extended Provision, Primary Schools Review, SEN strategy, Secondary Schools Review and the developing 14-19 strategy into an ambitious, coherent, and manageable transformation programme. In addition the DfES is

expecting that future proposals will show congruence with FE college planning carried out through the Learning and Skills Council. The long-term linkage of this programme with the regeneration of Dudley developing from the Black Country Study and the emergent regional Spatial Strategy is a major strength. The programme will involve every part of the Council.

5. The Cabinet approved the governance proposals for 'Learning for the Future' in June 2005. The establishment of the Directorate of Children's Services and the need to include additional provision such as children's homes require a broader focus and the programme is now referred to as 'Investing for the Future'.
6. Some West Midlands authorities including Solihull (Wave 1), Birmingham and Sandwell (both Wave 3) are already included in the national programme. This presents a credible risk to Dudley by weakening the potential for staff recruitment and retention in all areas relating to children's services. There is also a risk to pupil numbers in some parts of the Borough particularly where new schools or academies are established close to Dudley boundaries.
7. The DfES is now actively considering local authorities that can demonstrate a clear strategy for their whole area and the capacity to enter the national programme at an earlier stage than originally announced. Dudley therefore needs to position itself with the DfES for the earliest possible inclusion in the programme. This means aiming for Wave 7 (2010/11) or earlier.
8. The DfES will expect to see substantial evidence that Dudley has a clear vision and effective strategy for realisation. The evidence will need to demonstrate how the vision and strategy for implementation will address the key national policy areas. The consultation document 'Investing for the Future – Transforming Secondary Provision' is structured to achieve three main objectives:
  - a. to promote debate amongst secondary schools, key stakeholders and partners;
  - b. to develop a broad consensus about the vision for secondary school transformation in Dudley for the next 20-30 years; and

- c. to demonstrate to the DfES that all key policy areas have been addressed and that Dudley is effectively placed to move forward with its partners.

### Finance

9. The initial costs of the process can be met from within existing 2005/06 budgets. Further financial modelling required to assess revenue and capital requirements will be addressed in future reports.
10. The BSF programme for replacing the Dudley schools with the highest priority in terms of condition and fitness for purpose, and refurbishing the others, is likely to cost in the region of £200 million. Dudley will need to consider with the DfES effective ways of delivering this high volume of work successfully. This BSF work will be in addition to the current portfolio which includes 21 Children's Centres, the Primary Capital Programme and many other schemes.

### Law

11. These developments are covered by the provisions of the Education Acts. There are no specific legal implications in this report. As the project develops there will be significant implications arising from legislation and guidance covering a wide range of relevant areas.

### Equality Impact

12. 'Investing for the Future' is intended to secure for all children and young people the best provision for teaching, learning and social care within the resources available.

### Children and Young People

13. Children and young people will be consulted specifically both during this consultation period and during the working-up of detailed proposals. The views of children and young people will be reported at the conclusions of the consultation period.

## Consultation

14. **The consultation is about the principles of secondary transformation and does not refer to individual schools.**  
Discussions about the consultation document and the process began with secondary schools in February 2005 and have also involved senior officers from across the Council. Informal consultation about the issues with partners have been on-going for at least 18 months.
15. The consultation document will be circulated to all schools and to all those individuals and organisations on the standard list. Secondary headteachers will manage consultation within their own schools. Children and young people will be consulted by schools and colleges, and also directly the Directorate of Children's Services.
16. Following the consultation period, a statement describing the Dudley vision for secondary provision will be published. This will be used as the basis for further discussions with the DfES regarding early inclusion in the BSF programme.
17. A copy of the draft consultation document has been placed in the Members' Room and copies are available to Councillors on request.
18. The formal consultation will begin on Monday 19 June and end on Friday 6 October. Copies of the consultation document will be available in the Members' Room or on request, on the Dudley website, and in public libraries.

## Proposal

19. The Cabinet is requested to endorse the consultation as the next step in 'Investing for the Future' as a major plank in securing major capital funding to transform secondary provision across the Borough.



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