

The Cabinet – 13 December 2006

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Investing in the Future - Transforming Secondary Education

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the progress made so far in preparation for inclusion in the national Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and the next stage.

Background

2. BSF is a national initiative intended to transform secondary education through a major capital investment programme. The programme brings together significant investment aimed at renewal or replacement of every secondary school in England, ICT (information and communications technology) to support the government's educational reform agenda.
3. The DfES have structured the BSF programme over 15 years with around 10 local authorities commencing in each year. These groups are referred to as 'waves'. In February 2005 indicative forward planning information was issued by the DfES suggesting Dudley would be included in waves 7-9. This is consistent with Dudley's ranking against deprivation and attainment of between 70 and 90 out of 150 authorities. In this scenario Dudley could expect to receive BSF funding in 2010/11 (Wave 7), 2011/12 (Wave 8) or 2012/13 (Wave 9).
4. Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell, Solihull and Wolverhampton were included in Waves 1-3 or 4-6. Walsall has received substantial capital investment through other programmes and is scheduled for Waves 7-9. This presents a significant challenge for Dudley with regard to recruitment of staff as many of these authorities will be able to offer modern fit for purpose accommodation. There is also a risk to pupil numbers in some parts of Dudley particularly where new schools or academies are established close to the Borough boundaries.

5. Preparations have continued in a range of areas. These are set out below.
6. The BSF programme incorporates several approval stages. The first stage includes strategic vision that includes all of the major government policy areas such as personalised learning, specialist schools and diversity. The first step in developing such a vision for Dudley was taken through the consultation on Investing in the Future – Transforming Secondary Education (TSE). The consultation document included all of the relevant policy areas and the responses will be shaped into a clear vision statement or prospectus. This statement will set out the broad strategic direction for transforming secondary education in Dudley. The statement is in preparation within Children's Services and will be circulated for further comment as soon as possible.
7. The government's education reforms are central to the national regeneration agenda. In the same way, the TSE strategy should make a major contribution to the Black Country Study. The four headline objectives for the Black Country Study are to:
 - a. reverse net out-migration and grow population to 1.2 million;
 - b. raise income levels to 90% of the UK average (from 81% today);
 - c. accommodate a more balanced population achieving parity with the national social grade profile; and
 - d. create high quality sustainable environments.
8. The objectives set out in paragraph 6 will be driven by the Black Country Education and Skills Strategy for all phases of learning. The first 10 years of the strategy will challenge learning providers, educators, students, local communities, employers and government to work together in new ways to raise attainment and aspirations across the Black Country. The strategy aims to secure significant additional investment at national and regional level. This investment will be additional to the BSF and Primary Capital Programme funding. The draft guiding principles are:
 - e. Vision Led. Education and skills are acknowledged as a fundamental driver leading to achievement of future growth and competitiveness
 - f. Shared Commitment. Working together with key partners and sponsors will provide a stronger vehicle and enhanced leverage to build confident, aspiring and proficient communities

- g. Transformational. The challenge campaign will provide real options for transforming learning opportunities from early years to adulthood. For example, a dynamic curriculum will build a strong and diverse future workforce through a range of teaching and learning styles which exploit new technology.
 - h. Inclusive. Transformation of our local neighbourhoods will ensure that the most vulnerable at all stages of learning are included and that differential rates of educational achievement across communities are tackled effectively.
- 9. In June 2005 The Cabinet approved the corporate governance arrangements for Learning for the Future proposed by the then Director of Education and Lifelong Learning. The title of this strategic planning framework was amended to Investing in the Future to reflect the broader role of Children's Services within and beyond the Council. The TSE Strategy is a major part of this planning framework and the next steps in development are:
 - a. complete the prospectus and circulate for further discussion with stakeholders;
 - b. build professional and political consensus in support of the vision;
 - c. secure the necessary funding to implement the strategy.

Finance

- 10. The initial costs of this work have been met from existing budgets. Inclusion in the BSF programme will attract government capital funding in excess of £200 million. Inclusion in the Primary Capital Programme is expected to attract in excess of £45 million. The Black Country Education and Skills Strategy is seeking to attract further substantial investment.
- 11. There will be implementation costs which will be addressed in a further report at the appropriate stage.

Law

- 12. The Council's statutory powers relating to the building of schools and the provision of education are mainly contained in the Education acts and subordinate legislation.

Equality Impact

13. Investing for the Future – Transforming Secondary Education is intended to transform the range of learning opportunities from early years to adulthood. It will improve the outcomes set out in Every Child Matters for all children and young people. Children and Young people will be asked to comment on the prospectus at the next stage.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that:
- The contents of this report are endorsed;
 - The Director of Children's Services is authorised to further develop the Transforming Secondary Education Strategy.



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List of Background Papers

