

Meeting of the Cabinet – 9th December 2009

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

**Dudley MBC – Vision 2025 – Including Building Schools for the Future
Submission of Readiness to Deliver Statement.**

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Cabinet about the progress being made in preparing the Building Schools for the Future submission.
2. To ask for delegated authority to be given to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and the Opposition Spokesperson for Children’s Services to sign off of the Readiness to Deliver submission in December.

Background

3. The Local Authority is actively working on the Building Schools for the Future submission documentation in order to be ready to meet the standard and enter in to the programme fully prepared. As agreed in our 2008 submission Dudley’s documentation will be ready in December 2009.
4. Township planning is at an advanced stage with Headteachers and will deliver learning pathways which will meet the needs of all pupils ensuring appropriate commissioning for all vulnerable groups. We have updated the evidence provided in November 2008 with regard to issues such as pupil place planning and school organisation in order to start to translate Vision 2025 into a realistic robust plan for the future . The Readiness to Deliver documentation submission will be one key strand of Vision 2025.
5. The final Readiness to Deliver documentation builds substantially on the 9 September Cabinet report which outlined Vision 2025 and the 28 October Cabinet report Readiness to Deliver supporting statement, which have already been submitted for discussion and approval.
6. The Local Authority met with local partnerships (formerly 4Ps) at the end of September in order to undertake a skills audit of staff to ensure an appropriate team to manage the Building Schools for the Future programme could be drawn up. It was agreed to commission support where skills gaps have been identified.

7. The above programme of meetings and consultation has resulted in the preparation of a draft document which will be shared with Headteachers on the 4 December; their comments will be incorporated into a final draft by the 18 December 2009.
8. Due to this Cabinet meeting being on 9 December the Director of Children's Services is asking for the authority for the final document to be approved for submission by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Opposition Spokesperson for Children's Services.
9. This request is also due to the fact that the Department for Children, Schools and Families has not yet issued a submission date. We continue on a weekly basis to try to establish when our documentation can be formally submitted. As we may receive this information at very short notice we may need to have formal 'sign off' of our submission before the next Cabinet meeting in February 2010.
10. The Director of Children's Service will ensure that further consultation with Cabinet takes place before the next stage of the Department for Children, Schools and Families process which will be the Remit Meeting.
11. The Department for Children, Schools and Families intervention review in December of the authority's plans for the Central Dudley Township will also be critical to the final information included in the Readiness to Deliver Statement. Currently we have not been advised when this will take place.

Finance

12. The initial development of the vision will be delivered within existing Directorate resources. The technical element of our BSF submission will be supported by consultancy and the costs will be funded from the income generated from the disposal of surplus school buildings.
13. The actions outlined in this paper will support the development of a radical learning plan which will be funded via current budget, grant support where available and Building Schools for the Future funding.

Law

14. The provision of learning by the Council for children, adults and families falls within a range of Council functions including the Education and Children Acts and Local Government Acts.

Equality Impact

15. The report takes into account the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet members note progress made to date on developing our Building Schools for the Future Readiness to Deliver submission.
2. Cabinet members endorse the work that has taken place so far and support the submission.
3. Cabinet grant permission for the Leader of the Council the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Opposition Spokesperson to sign the final Readiness to Deliver documentation on the Councils behalf.



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List of Background Papers

Cabinet Paper – 9 September 2009 – 'Vision 2025' – A strategic plan for learning
Cabinet Paper – 28 October 2009 – Building Schools for the Future – Readiness to Deliver supporting statement.