

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

The Cabinet – 15 June 2005

Report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

'Learning for the Future' – Proposals for Governance Arrangements

Purpose

1. This report sets out arrangements for the governance 'Learning for the Future', the overarching development programme for all aspects of the Dudley education service.

Background

2. 'Learning for the Future' (LFF) is an over-arching framework designed to join a series of wide-ranging initiatives into a coherent and manageable development programme. The initiatives include:
 - the development of pre-school settings;
 - the development of Children's Centres;
 - the Primary Schools Review;
 - the Secondary Schools Review (including 14 – 19 strategy);
 - 'Building Schools for the Future';
 - the implementation of the SEN Strategy;
 - the implementation of Full Service Extended Schools;
 - the development of integrated children's services;
 - the development of community use including leisure, libraries and lifelong learning.
3. Each of the initiatives in paragraph 2 will require significant capital investment with the largest element required for transforming secondary education. 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) is a DfES programme to provide very significant capital investment for transforming whole geographical areas such as Dudley. Using national comparators we might expect to receive upwards of £100 million. Access to this scale of funding will be dependent on meeting a series of approvals against strict DfES and Treasury criteria. This report sets out the general governance arrangements for LFF set in the specific

context of needing to demonstrate to the DfES and Treasury our arrangements for BSF.

4. 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’, of about 10 local authorities.
5. Dudley, along with almost all local authorities, submitted an Expression of Interest to the DfES in October 2002 for inclusion in the first wave.
6. DfES criteria for inclusion in the first three waves prioritised local authorities with low attainment at GCSE and high levels of deprivation. The DfES have ranked all local authorities using pupil attainment and deprivation as key indicators. DfES issued indicative Forward Planning Information in February 2005 suggesting Dudley would be included in waves 7 – 9, consistent with a ranking between 70 and 90 of around 150 local authorities. Wave 7 local authorities would be expected to receive BSF funding in 2010/11, Wave 8 in 2011/12 and Wave 9 2012/13.
7. The DfES stressed the indicative nature of the Forward Planning Information

“It is important to stress that this information is for planning purposes only, and does not constitute a formal decision. It could not, for example, be used by a school organisation committee as evidence of funding for a reorganisation, and authorities will need to be careful in managing school’s expectations. The actual programme will, of course, only emerge over the coming years, and will be subject to:

- *Future public spending decisions*
- *Refinements in BSF policy aims*
- *Updating and supplementing the data used for prioritising areas (i.e. GCSE and free school meals), which increasingly will be insufficient to discriminate between similar geographical areas*
- *Adjustments to the programme arising from lessons learnt from waves 1 to 3 (e.g. the optimal size of projects, their phasing, regional and national market capacities etc) and*
- *Changes in the plans, priorities and local circumstances of local authorities”*

(Prioritisation and Forward Planning Information, DfES, Nov 2004)

8. Dudley has developed strong ambitions for continuous improvement in the education service. However, significant capital developments taking place in neighbouring local authorities including Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull and Walsall threaten these ambitions by weakening Dudley's potential for staff recruitment and retention. There is also a risk to pupil numbers in some parts of the Borough particularly where new primary schools or academies are established close to Dudley boundaries. Dudley therefore needs to position itself with the DfES for the earliest possible inclusion in the programme. This means aiming for Wave 7 or earlier, should that be possible.
9. BSF is very much more than a major building project. It is focussed on transforming secondary schools, raising standards, and economic and social regeneration. It is, however, focussed on the secondary age range and learning within school settings. Within Dudley, preparations for BSF are set in the broader context of LFF which covers the complete age range 0 – 19+ and brings together learning in school and other settings.
10. On 24 February the Corporate Board considered a first report which set out the background, general approach and initial scope for the BSF project. On 3 May the Corporate Board considered a further report on proposals for governance and project management. The arrangements in this report to the Cabinet reflect discussions at the Corporate Board, DfES and Treasury criteria, and approval processes followed by BSF wave 1 and 2 local authorities.

Finance

11. The initial costs can be met from within existing 2005/6 budgets. Further financial modelling required to assess revenue and capital requirements will be addressed in future reports.

Law

12. There are no specific legal implications in this report. As the project develops there will be however significant implications including school organisation statutory processes, land ownership and planning control and it is important that this is taken into account in the governance arrangements.

Equal Opportunities Policy

13. 'Learning for the Future' is intended to provide the best teaching and learning opportunities for all within the resources available.

Proposal

14. The proposals for governance and management of the project are:

Authority

- The Cabinet will hold authority for decision making including the endorsement of the Vision and Business Case before submission to the DfES.
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong learning will hold authority for decisions in accordance with the constitution.

Challenge

- The Select Committee for Education and Lifelong Learning will provide challenge and scrutiny of the Vision and Business case and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.
- Further challenge will be provided by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.
- External challenge, review and approval will be provided by the DfES through a quango set up for this purpose, 'Partnership for Schools'.

Reporting Arrangements

- The Corporate Board will receive regular progress reports and make recommendations as appropriate. Identified officers will report to specific groups as appropriate.
- Area Committees will receive progress reports relevant to each area and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member or Cabinet as appropriate

Project Director

- Learning for the Future, particularly the BSF element, will require a full-time Project Director through and beyond the development and procurement phases. The timetable for such an appointment will be subject to the DfES inclusion of Dudley within the overall programme and may not be required for two or three years.

Project Sponsor

- Dudley MBC and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning will be the Project Sponsor. The Project Sponsor will be the senior officer who will generally support the Project Director, be involved in key negotiation meetings, and be responsible for promoting the project with members, stakeholders and other external bodies.

Project Board

- The Project Board will be responsible to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning for the development and procurement of Learning for the Future. The Project Board will set the objectives of the project consistent with Council policy and carry out the following functions:
 - approve the Strategic and Outline Business Cases for Cabinet ratification;
 - select the procurement short list;
 - approve the Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) including all contractual negotiation;
 - select the Preferred Bidder;
 - Approve the Final Business Case subject to Cabinet ratification.
- The Project Board will also be responsible for risk management and managing the political dimensions of the project. Membership of the Project Board is likely to include Chief Executive, senior officers with responsibility for Finance, Procurement, Education, Children's Services, Law, Property as well as the Cabinet Member, school representation and possibly

Partnership for Schools (PfS). Terms of reference and meeting cycles will be addressed in later reports.

Project Team

- The Project Team will include senior colleagues from education, children's services, technical support, legal, procurement and financial expertise. External support will be required to complement the skills and capacity of in-house staff.
- The Project Team will support the Project Director in the delivery of the business cases, procurement and implementation stages.
- Each member of the Project Team will be responsible for a major area of work within robust project structures and systems that will deliver the defined objectives
- Terms of reference and work streams will be addressed in later reports.

Stakeholder and Service User Groups

- These groups will include
 - The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP);
 - the Schools Forum;
 - governors (through the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies);
 - young people (through the Youth Parliament and otherwise);
 - staff (through unions and associations and otherwise).

Stakeholder and user groups will provide additional expertise and guidance on specific matters. Reporting arrangements will follow existing procedures where appropriate or will be developed to meet respective needs. It is likely that Project Board agendas will include reports from these groups as appropriate.

Communications Strategy

The Project Board will approve a communications strategy and plan for the project. The plan will include methods for communicating with all of

the potential stakeholders in the 'Learning for the Future' project including children and young people.

Recommendations

11. The Cabinet is requested to:
 - a. endorse the arrangements for governance of 'Learning for the Future';
 - b. support effective engagement of the Council and external partners including health, police, fire and transport authorities and the voluntary sector.



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