

**Select Committee on Children's Services – 15 November 2007**

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

**Building Schools for the Future – Transforming Secondary Education**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The Committee received a report on Transforming Secondary Education (TSE) on 17 September 2007. The purpose of this report is to set out progress in Dudley's preparations for inclusion in Wave 7 of the national Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

**Background**

2. In 2003 the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) announced Building Schools for the Future, the largest ever capital investment programme intended to transform the outcomes of secondary education for children and young people through the creation of "world-class" schools, fit for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. Local authorities were invited to submit expressions of interest in taking part in this 15 year national programme.
3. Dudley's Expression of Interest in joining the first waves of the programme was not successful, largely because we did not score highly on either 'underachievement' or 'deprivation'. In February 2005 Dudley received indicative information from the DfES that inclusion was likely to be in Wave 7 (2010/11), Wave 8 (2011/12) or Wave 9 (2012/13). Inclusion in the programme would be dependent on Dudley being able to demonstrate a clear and effective strategy for transforming education across the Borough and the capacity to deliver.
4. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has recognised that local authorities may wish to revise their strategies from those set out in the 2003 expressions of interest and recently announced a review of the programme so far. Dudley continues to work with the DCSF to secure inclusion in the BSF programme at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that the DCSF will announce the list of Wave 7 authorities in autumn 2008.
5. The release of BSF funding by the DCSF is subject to a series of rigorous assessments and approvals by Partnership for Schools, DCSF and HM Treasury. The first stage of this process is the development of Dudley's Strategy for Change Part One. This is a high level strategic document setting out:

- An analysis of the key issues in the local authority including demography and standards
  - How the strategy for change will meet the national and local policy objectives
  - What the intentions are for individual schools in the programme
6. The Strategy for Change Part One will not be required formally by the DCSF until after Dudley is included in Wave 7. The submission of an early draft will provide a valuable opportunity to strengthen Dudley's case for inclusion in Wave 7. It is anticipated that formal submission would be early in 2009. Further details would then be required in Strategy for Change Part Two, Outline Business Case and a wide range of other planning and procurement documentation. The preparation of this documentation to the standards required and within the necessary timescales will be demanding and the establishment of a dedicated team will be essential.
7. A key element for Dudley is the ability to demonstrate readiness to deliver. Dudley has consulted widely with schools since early 2005 on the principles to be addressed in the education vision. Since June 2007 consultation on these principles has accelerated with schools, colleges, health professionals, Area Committees, Select Committee, senior officers across the Council and with neighbouring local authorities. The methods used have involved
- Formal launch event at Himley Hall in June with relevant background information and key questions to consider
  - Secondary Headteacher meetings
  - Township meetings with secondary headteachers and college principals
  - Township meetings with primary, special, secondary headteachers, health professionals and officers
  - Meetings with health professionals
  - Meetings with West Midlands Fire Service
  - West Midlands BSF Group
  - Black Country BSF Group
8. Proposals to change the pattern of school organisation such as changing admission numbers or the status of schools are subject to legislation and guidance. Detailed public consultation will be carried out following Dudley's inclusion in the national programme. The arrangements for consultation will meet the requirements of legislation and guidance and the recommendations of Select Committee. It is anticipated that the next phase of consultation will commence in autumn 2008 (subject to DCSF announcement).
9. The approach to consultation has generated a wide range of discussion at a strategic level for Dudley and in how transformation might be achieved operationally. The discussions have challenged schools and providers to actively participate in the generation of Borough wide and local approaches to improving

the outcomes for every child and young person as well as their families and local communities. One particular strength of the consultation is the opportunity to build on existing collaborative arrangements and ensure that all schools and providers contribute to shaping the transformation programme. It also provides a strong platform for ensuring the programme is delivered, maintained and developed in a collaborative way.

10. A concept of learning together as a community is emerging. At the Borough level all schools and providers are part of a family which could be referred to as a learning community. Learning communities can also operate at more local levels such as across a township or as schools working together on a single campus model. For example, the primary, special and secondary schools working with colleges and other providers within a township could provide a powerful learning community, particularly if reinforced by local provision of integrated services and access to specialist support.
11. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet in December. The report will seek approval to submit a draft Strategy for Change for discussion with the DCSF. The purpose of more detailed dialogue is to secure Dudley in Wave 7 of the national BSF programme and to ensure that Dudley's preparations fully meet requirements.

## **Finance**

12. On the basis of condition, sufficiency and suitability surveys and other knowledge about Dudley schools it is estimated that more than £200 million will be required to achieve the aspirations set out in this report. The capital will be provided by the DCSF subject to meeting a series of rigorous tests and approvals by Partnership for Schools, the DCSF and H M Treasury.
13. The costs of building the capacity required to ensure that the strategy is implemented with robust project management arrangements will be substantial. Work is in progress to determine these costs more accurately using the experience of local authorities already in the national BSF programme. Further information will be reported to Cabinet in December with proposals to begin building the essential capacity from April 2008.
14. The costs of the current work are met from existing budgets.

## **Law**

15. There are no specific legal implications in this report. As the project develops there will be significant implications covering school organisation, land, employment and finance. The Council's statutory powers relating to the building of schools and the provision of education are contained in the relevant Education Acts and Guidance.

## **Equality Impact**

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

## **Recommendation**

17. It is recommended that:

1. The Select Committee note the report
2. Advise the Cabinet Member on any issues that should be considered when developing the TSE Strategy for submission to the DCSF.



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John Freeman  
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Ray Watson  
Telephone: 01384 814395  
Email: [Raymond.watson@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Raymond.watson@dudley.gov.uk)

## **List of Background Papers**

15 June 2005  
Cabinet Report      Learning for the Future – Proposals for Governance Arrangements

13 December 2006  
Cabinet Report      Investing in the Future – Transforming Secondary Education

13 June 2007  
Cabinet Report      Investing in the Future - Transforming Secondary Education

17 Sep 2007  
Select Committee    Transforming Secondary Education

