

Cabinet 11 May 2005

**Elm Street Infants School and Albion Road Junior School:
Determination of Statutory Proposals**

Portfolio	Councillor E F Hughes, Children's Services
Service Area	Education Walsall
Wards	Willenhall South
Forward Plan	Yes

Summary of report

This report informs the Cabinet that no objections have been received to the statutory proposals to close Elm Street Infants School and Albion Road Junior School and open a replacement primary school. In view of this, the statutory proposals must now be determined by the Cabinet.

Recommendations

Approve the statutory proposals to:

- (i) Close Elm Street Infants School from 31 August 2005
 - (ii) Close Albion Road Junior School from 31 August 2005
 - (iii) Open a replacement primary school from 1 September 2005.
- (2) Subject to (1) above, add the scheme to provide a replacement primary school on one site to the Capital Programme.

Resource and legal considerations

On 2 March 2005, Cabinet considered the outcome of consultation and approved the publication of statutory proposals for the closure of Elm Street Infants School and Albion Road Junior School from 31 August 2005 and the opening of a replacement primary school from 1 September 2005.

Statutory proposals were published on 18 March 2005. No objections to the proposals were received during the 6-week representation period which followed the publication of the proposals and which ended on 28 April 2005. In these circumstances, the determination of the proposals is by Cabinet and not the School Organisation Committee.

Subject to approval of the statutory proposals by Cabinet, a scheme to provide a primary school building on the Elm Street Infants School site will be developed. In September 2005, the primary school would operate from both sites. Prior to the commencement of construction, infant pupils would be transferred to the junior site on Albion Road and it is anticipated that some alterations will be necessary in order to provide appropriate temporary facilities for infant and nursery pupils.

Financial resources for the replacement school were made available to the Council by the Department for Education and Skills from the Targeted Capital Fund. Although the bid was submitted in October 2003, the allocation was not announced by the DfES until December 2004. The allocation represents the 80% of the October 2003 cost estimate and the remaining 20% will be funded by the Council. The DfES has not made any allowance for inflation in the intervening period during which there have been significant cost increases relating to the volume of construction and the increase in the cost of materials such as steel.

Details of the funding for the scheme are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Funding Arrangements

	2004/05 £	2005/06 £	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	Total £
DfES	63,800	1,337,500	915,547	0	2,316,847
Council		350,325	228,887	0	579,212
Total	63,800	1,687,825	1,144,434	0	2,896,059

DfES funding in 2004/05 and 2005/06 will be provided as Supported Capital Expenditure (Capital) and in 2006/07 as Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue). If the Council is unable to spend the 2004/05 allocation by 31 August 2005, this may be vired to another project and replaced by an equivalent amount to ensure that the project is completed. Some funding will be required in the 2007/08 financial year to cover retention monies.

Cabinet will be requested, at a future meeting, to consider the provision of an appropriate additional sum in order to allow for increased costs since the bid was submitted. Information regarding this sum will be included in a future report which will set out the arrangements for the delivery of the scheme.

Citizen impact

Approval of the statutory proposals will result in the creation of an all-through primary school to serve this part of the Borough. The provision of a new school building will create an improved learning environment for pupils. This will enable pupils to learn in a 'state of the art' school allowing full use of ICT to support their learning.

Community safety

The new school building would provide a secure environment for children and staff

Environmental impact

A scheme to provide a primary school on the Elm Street Infants School site would use sustainable resources wherever possible.

Performance and risk management issues

The provision of an improved learning environment for pupils would contribute to the raising of standards.

Equality implications

The proposal provides an opportunity to create a school with an improved learning environment for the local community.

Consultation

A 6-week representation period followed the publication of the statutory proposals. No objections to the proposals were received during this period. Public consultation on the proposals was undertaken during January / February 2005 and the outcome of this was detailed in the report considered by Cabinet on 2 March 2005.

Vision 2008

The proposed new primary school will contribute to the delivery of Walsall's vision for 2008 - Make Our Schools Great. It will provide an improved learning environment for children from the local community.

Background papers

Cabinet Reports:

2 March 2005	Outcome of Consultation on Proposed Amalgamation of Elm Street Infants School and Albion Road Junior School
19 January 2005	Targeted Capital Allocation

Contact officer

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Date: 3.5.05

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Portfolio Holder: Councillor E.F. Hughes

Date: 3.5.05