



Transforming Learning in Walsall

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: October 2009

Subject: Transforming Learning in Walsall – Financial Update

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Purpose of the report: This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the progress of the programme and related budget activity which is currently ongoing and planned. This report has been prepared at the requested of the Schools Forum.

Recommendations: Schools Forum notes the progress that Primary Capital Programme and Building Schools for the Future are making.

1. General Information

1.1

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a long-term programme of investment and change in England that will help transform education for secondary age students by providing 21st century learning environments that engage and inspire young people, their teachers and the wider community. In line with “Every Child Matters” agenda every BSF school will be an extended school offering additional or dual use facilities such as sports halls, libraries nurseries, and ICT resources. BSF offers a great opportunity to integrate schools into wider regeneration projects, repositioning our schools at the heart of the community

1.2

Walsall joins the programme in Wave 6a, following a successful bid by Walsall Children’s Services in summer 2008. The council now has to comply with an extremely complex and rigorous approvals process in order to secure the initial investment of around £100 million investment in Walsall secondary schools. A ‘Strategy for Change Part 1 document is currently being finalised which will set out what we hope to achieve through our BSF programme.

1.3

The SfC Part 1 will be followed by a Strategy for Change Part 2 (SfC2) that will set out how we are going to achieve the changes we want in Walsall. Walsall is currently in the pre-engagement stage of the BSF programme where the Council has to demonstrate that it is ready to move forward with this major programme. The Council will formally commence the programme in November 2009 with a Remit Meeting.

1.4

The programme is initially focused on secondary provision, although it is envisaged that the LEP’s remit will also deliver future schools projects (including secondary and primary) and other service delivery assets. In Walsall the programme will cover an initial six secondary schools:

- Alumwell Business & Enterprise College
- Frank F Harrison Engineering College
- Joseph Leckie Community Technology College
- Pool Hayes Arts and Community
- Shire Oaks - A Science College
- The Streetly School – A Specialist Sports College

Commitment around transforming learning through the delivery of the LEP will benefit all schools in Walsall.

1.5

The Primary Capital Programme (PCP) has already benefited the following schools:

- Croft Primary
- Christ Church CE JMI
- Birchills Primary
- Chuckery Primary
- Leighswood Primary
- The Radleys Primary
- Woodlands Primary

There is further £1.2m of PCP for which proposals are currently being considered.

2. Financial Update

2.1

During the 2009-12 budget setting process that took place in autumn 2008, the Council made plans to finance work on BSF to establish a LEP. This information was based on the best estimates at that time.

2.2

Walsall Council will be able to deliver a LEP for £6.2m any significant changes to the programme may require re-evaluation of the budget e.g. slippage of the project end dates. Ensuring regular reporting and accountability has ensured that the expenditure on this significant funding stream will be under appropriate level of review and control.

2.3

The BSF programme currently is working within the following primary work-stream areas:

- Education Capital
- Education
- Regeneration/Property
- Commercial
- ICT

Table 1: 2008/09 and 2009/10 Budget and expenditure to September 2009

Actual Spend September 2009 (£)		
	Capital (£)	Revenue (£)
2008/09 Expenditure	106,139	357,000
Programme Management		190,000
Education work-stream		70,000
Regeneration work-stream		25,000
Property work-stream	1,000	
Total	107,139	642,000

2.4

There is considerable amount of work current being carried out on regeneration and property work streams activities. As invoices are normally paid retrospective of the work being completed satisfactorily, this spend will be incurred in November and December.

2.5

The forecasts for the Transforming Learning programme term covering three financial years is currently in progress and more indicative figures will be available as the Remit Date approaches. Current estimates are in line with requirements identified. The estimated spend for 2009/10 is £2,550,000, for 2010/11 £2,500,000 and for 2011/12 is £700,000 this estimate is currently being recalculated on the basis of project slippage. As with any project the slippage in activity will result in the budget being carried forward into the following year.

2.6

In accordance with the Council's financial procedures, the accountability memorandum has been signed by the BSF Project Director in line with Walsall Council Medium term Financial Strategy.

3 Funding Update

3.1

Previously Schools Forum have requested that their contribution wherever possible be capital instead of revenue. Despite further work with Grant Thornton the Council's auditors it is not possible to reduce the revenue impact at this time. Further will work go on and if this becomes possible then this will be communicated to Forum.

SCHOOLS FORUM – OCTOBER 2009

PROGRAMME UPDATE NOTES

Remit Planning:

- Remit Letter response plan has been drafted to maintain team members' focus in preparing for the Remit Meeting on 17th November.
- Meetings with PfS have been planned ahead of Remit to help with Remit Planning on key themes.

SfC2 Progress:

- Work continues on the SfC2 document with regular writers co-ordination meetings taking place. Whilst core attendance at these meetings has been sketchy throughout the holiday season, work continues in earnest around responding to the Educational Challenges section of SfC2.
- Work to the Estates Strategy section of the SfC2 has commenced with work in earnest planned for the Technical Advisers to assist the Council in completing this section.
- Further work is in train to ensure that teaching and learning colleagues are involved in the production of the SfC2. This includes seeking agreement around a Wave 6a Headteachers forum.

Consultant Appointments:

- Technical Advisers:
 - Following evaluation, two firms were interviewed on 18th August.
 - Mace Group (with Associated Architects) has been appointed as our Technical Advisers
 - A briefing meeting with Mace will take place on 10th September after which a programme of engagement between the Technical Advisers and other team members will take place to progress aspects of the SfC2 and plan ahead for OBC and beyond.
 - Mace has visited all the Wave 6a sites to feed into a validation of build work types.
- Client Design Adviser:
 - The Client Design Adviser will be interviewed from the SCAPE framework at the end of October with an appointment to follow very shortly afterwards.

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PROGRAMME UPDATE NOTES

Learning Pilots:

- Pilot learning schemes are being developed further in earnest.
- A number of exciting aspects to teaching and learning will be explored. A summary of the schools and schemes are as follows:
 - Pool Hayes – handheld technology and outdoor spaces;
 - Streetly – Flexible use of outdoor spaces; and
 - Alumwell – Opening minds (competence based learning, independent learning, flexible use of space).

Regeneration, Co-locations and Partnerships Working:

- A workshop took place on 12th October to brief the Technical Advisers.

Funding Allocation Model (FAM) and Local Education Partnership (LEP)

- A presentation took place at CMT on 8th October to raise awareness of the function of the Funding Allocation Model and the Local Education Partnership and the corporate level.
- It is expected that this presentation, with the help of advisers, will help kick-start discussion and decision making for scoping the LEP activity.
- Further briefings will be rolled out to Scrutiny Panel Members to keep them informed and involve them in scoping the LEP and addressing affordability issues along the way.