
Meeting: Executive
Date: 8th December 2009
Subject: Bedfordshire East Schools Trust Co- Location Project
Report of: Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis , Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Summary: The report outlines the Bedfordshire East Schools Trust Co-Location Project which has been subject of a successful bid for Government funding. Members are asked to approve the project, which provides physical facilities for local services in a single location, for inclusion in the Council's capital programme.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning
Contact Officer: Roy Waterfield, AD Leisure & Culture
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Shefford
Function of: Executive
Key Decision Yes

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This co-location project supports the Council's Strategic Plan 2009-11 particularly in educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people. This co-location project can be seen as the first of many strategically placed community hubs for the delivery of a wide range of education, health, police, training and advice services for children, young people and communities. Co-location is a key element for the delivery of Every Child Matters and the project also contributes towards managing growth effectively.

Financial:

The project comprises capital investment from a number of sources as follows: DCSF Co-location Fund £1,973,125, Sure Start / Early Years £225,000, School Centred Initial Teacher Training £100,000, Samuel Whitbread Community College £100,000.

Revenue funding will be provided by stakeholders in the form of service and maintenance charge. Samuel Whitbread Community College Nursery is self sustaining.

This bid was submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families by the School's Trust. At the final stages when the money was allocated, the endorsement of the Council was requested. This was agreed and the relevant Portfolio Holder notified.

Central Bedfordshire is not contributing capital to this project. Other than in officer time as representatives on the project board and the involvement of other officers across the Council with regard to any resultant planning applications, there is no revenue implication to the authority.

Legal:

Central Bedfordshire's legal team will be required to oversee the establishment of lease arrangements for the early years element of this project. Any changes to the PFI in terms of land transfer will be overseen by Bedfordshire Education Partnership (BEP) and dealt with in terms of a change request to the original PFI contract at the cost to Samuel Whitbread Community College.

Risk Management:

The key risks for the Council result from the obligations outlined in the Grant Funding Agreement that any cost overrun must be met by the LA and its partners and that project completion beyond a deadline of 31st August 2011 would require repayment of funds. These and other key project risks have been identified as part of the Trust's original funding application to DCSF and will be reviewed regularly by the Project's Board which includes Central Bedfordshire's staff.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None

Equalities/Human Rights:

The addition of the facilities outlined in this proposal, to the school and wider Trust reflects enhanced provision in terms of the extended school offer it will be able to make to the existing and developing community, also helping to promote equality for all sections of the local community.

It is intended that the premises are fully accessible and that qualified expert advice is being obtained to ensure disabled access to the new facilities.

Community Safety:

Whilst this is a development on an existing Upper School site, the scheme will adhere to the principle of designing-out crime and creating space both within and outside the building that is safe for young people, helping reduce the potential for anti social behaviour. This proposal will provide a permanent office base at the school for Bedfordshire Police's community support team.

Sustainability:

This Project will provide security for the continued provision of a nursery unit at Samuel Whitbread Community College. The Project is supported by LowC Construction Ltd who have been contracted to design and construct a low or zero carbon solution, complying with new regulations and responding to market demands for improved environmental performance.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

This report has not been subject to consideration by Overview and Scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Bedfordshire East Schools Trust co-location project, outlined in the project initiation document which forms Appendix A to this report, be approved to commence.

Reason for Recommendation(s): So that the scheme can be formally commenced and implemented within the budget allocated by Partnerships for Schools and contributions by the project's partners.

Background

1. The Co-location Fund is a cross-Government fund to support capital projects that enable the co-location of local services. The Fund helps local agencies work together by providing funding for projects which locate services together in significant or innovative ways, responding to local needs. The fund aims to enable better service delivery while improved access, facilitated by co-location, leads to improved outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.
2. In the current spending review period Bedfordshire East Schools Trust submitted a successful application endorsed, at the later stages by Central Bedfordshire. The Director of Children Families & Learning was asked to agree this in principle after the success of the bid was known and informed the relevant Portfolio Holders.
3. The application was also endorsed by the existing Nursery at Samuel Whitbread Community College, Bedfordshire Police, NHS Bedfordshire and School based Initial Teacher Training,
4. Based at Samuel Whitbread Community College in Shefford the proposal will create accommodation/facilities for the following local partners:
 - Bedfordshire East Schools Trust (BEST)
 - School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)
 - Bedfordshire NHS
 - Central Bedfordshire Extended Schools
 - Bedfordshire Police
 - Central Bedfordshire (Nursery)
5. The Project Initiation Document, drafted by the Bedfordshire East Schools Trust and signed off by Partnerships for Schools as a condition of funding, provides further detail on the facilities included within the scope of the project. The project initiation document is attached to this report as Appendix A.
6. Key benefits of the project were summarised in the bid as:
 - Raised profile, access and visibility for children, young people, the community and new and marginal audiences

- New and improved services and innovation
- Knowledge, information sharing and cross-organisational learning
- More efficient use of resources
- Competitive advance when tendering for service delivery
- Better co-ordination of activities
- Shared activities
- Stability and risk mitigation
- A collaborative model which can be replicated on strategic locations across the community and elsewhere

Project management, governance and funding

7. The project will be managed by Bedfordshire East Schools Trust's Chief Executive Officer. To ensure benefits realisation and the efficient delivery of the project, the Trust and ultimately the Council is accountable to Partnerships for Schools, the non departmental public body set up by the Government to manage and deliver the government's capital investment programmes into schools.
8. Central Bedfordshire's staff will be members of the project board and will oversee progress against the project's plan, the management of risk and of the project's budget, ensuring that the risks to the authority are managed and mitigated appropriately with stage payments to the project made at the achievement of key phases.
9. The new provision is planned to be constructed on the site of former caretaker accommodation at Samuel Whitbread Community College in Shefford at a total cost of £2.4 million.
10. A variation request has been registered by Bedfordshire East Schools Trust to transfer the land required for this project from the Private Finance Initiative contract. Samuel Whitbread Community College has committed to fund any legal costs associated with the transfer.
11. The capital budget for this project breaks down to:

• DCSF Co-location Fund	£1,973,125
• Sure Start / Early Years Grant	£225,000
• SCITT	£100,000
• SWCC	£100,000
12. Project costs broadly comprise:
 - Build element £1,775,000
 - Fixtures & fittings including ICT £150,000
 - Professional fees £481,250
13. The project's plan is attached to this report at Appendix B.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Bedfordshire East Schools Trust Project Initiation Document

Appendix B – Project Plan

Background Papers:

None