

Planning and Delivering Educational Provision in Response to Planned Housing Development – Progress Report

To: Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee

Date: Wednesday, 9 April 2008

From: Head of Infrastructure, Children and Young People's Services

Purpose:

- i) Advise JSGIC of the legislative and policy frameworks which are informing decision-making processes in respect of the planning and delivery of educational provision in Cambridgeshire;
- ii) Update JSGIC on progress to date with the planning and delivery of education provision to serve new and expanding communities; and
- iii) Advise JSGIC of the key issues and challenges which the Local Authority faces in securing the effective timely delivery of new educational facilities.

Recommendation:

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 In July 2007, JSGIC was advised that on 22 May 2007, the County Council's Cabinet had endorsed a series of recommendations following conclusion of the Authority's city-wide review of secondary educational provision:
- i) New secondary schools should be provided in the North West Fringe and the Southern Fringe development areas;
 - ii) Further work should be undertaken to determine the exact specification of secondary provision to serve Cambridge East;
 - iii) Officers should conclude negotiations with developers and City and South Cambridgeshire planners to secure sites in the North West Fringe, Southern Fringe and Cambridge East at the earliest possible opportunity for the required secondary schools; and
 - iv) Plans to increase the size of Manor Community College to 1200 places (8 forms of entry) should be progressed.
- 1.2 JSGIC noted the progress achieved in the relatively short time which had elapsed between the Cabinet and the July JSGIC meetings.

2.0 Legislative and Policy Frameworks

- 2.1 The Education Act 2005 placed a requirement on local authorities to invite other potential promoters to enter into a competition to provide any new secondary schools they planned to establish, or where they planned to provide replacements for existing secondary schools.
- 2.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 extends the competition requirement to primary and special schools. This requirement also applies to new primary schools to be established as a result of reorganisations such as infant and junior school amalgamations.
- 2.3 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 is very significant new legislation with a clear focus on the promotion of choice and diversity. It has major implications for the Authority's role. The Authority will become a commissioner of high quality educational provision in addition to being a provider.
- 2.4 The requirements of the Act are particularly pertinent to Cambridgeshire given the scale of planned growth in the county, the associated need to open a large number of new schools, and the need to maintain a rolling programme of educational reviews in order to avoid over-provision of school places in some areas.
- 2.5 On 11 September 2007, Cabinet was advised of the steps involved in the competition process, including the requirement to publish a competition specification in line with government guidance and legislation.
- 2.6 At that same meeting, Cabinet considered and approved a series of policy statements in line with the competition specification requirements, and approved a series of recommendations in respect of the decision-making

process for new school competitions. Further details are contained in **Appendix 1**.

2.7 On 13 March 2008, a report was presented to the Service Infrastructure Policy Development Group (PDG) seeking members' views on the characteristics of a sustainable school and how the Local Authority should be setting sustainability standards for its school buildings both now and in the future. A further report is to be presented to the next meeting of the PDG on 19 May 2008.

3.0 Cambridge Southern Fringe

3.1 The identified educational requirements to serve the Cambridge Southern Fringe are:

- Expansion of Fawcett Primary School to serve 420 pupils aged 4-11 and the establishment of a children's centre serving up to 800 children aged 0-5 and their families.
- Establishment of a secondary school to serve up to 900 young people aged 11-16 on a site in the Clay Farm/Showground development south of Long Road and north of Fawcett Primary School.
- Establishment of a new primary school to serve Trumpington Meadows.
- Establishment of a new primary school in the Clay Farm/Showground development on a site south of Fawcett Primary School.
- Queen Edith Primary School and Netherhall Secondary School to be the designated catchment schools for the Bell School development.

3.2 A feasibility study has been undertaken to inform the design and costing of extending Fawcett Primary School and the establishment of a children's centre. This work has been undertaken in consultation with the school, and has been made available to the developers as part of the S106 negotiations. A **key issue** requiring urgent resolution is the access arrangement for the construction of the additional accommodation required to provide for 420 children, and the new children's centre.

3.3 In February 2008 consultation was undertaken on the competition specifications for the Trumpington Meadows Primary School and the Southern Fringe secondary school. The competitions for these new schools will be launched on 10 and 17 April respectively. A meeting for potential promoters will be held within three weeks of the launch of the competition for the secondary school.

3.4 Until very recently, information on the Bell School development was that it would largely comprise 1 and 2 bedroom flats. The expectation was, therefore, that there would be few children of statutory school age living in the development. Information now available is that the development mix could comprise a majority of family homes. The Council's Research Group has produced new pupil forecasts, which indicate that such a change could lead to around 90 children of primary school age living in the development. A **key issue** and challenge now facing the Local Authority is to assess the knock-on

impact of accommodating additional pupils in Queen Edith Primary School, Netherhall School, and neighbouring schools.

- 3.5 As part of the S106 negotiations funding has been sought for contributions towards capital investment in post-16 provision in recognition of the fact that existing providers are expected to serve the planned developments.

4.0 North West Fringe

- 4.1 The identified educational requirements to serve the Cambridge North West Fringe are:

- Establishment of a new primary school to serve the NIAB development.
- Establishment of a new primary school to serve the University development.
- Establishment of a new secondary school to initially serve 600 young people aged 11-16, but on a site providing capacity for expansion to provide 900 places should demand require this in future.

- 4.2 In October 2007, Cabinet approved the outline competition specification for the NIAB primary school. A timetable for consultation on the specification and for the competition process is being developed.

- 4.3 A **key issue** is that the specification for the secondary school cannot be finalised until the outcome of the developers' planning application and the examination into the Site Specific Policies DPD for South Cambridgeshire are known.

5.0 Northern Fringe East

- 5.1 The identified educational requirements to serve Cambridge Northern Fringe East are:

- Establishment of a new primary school
- Expansion of Manor Community College to provide for up to 1200 young people aged 11-16

- 5.2 No action has been taken to progress the planning and delivery of the identified educational infrastructure requirements as a result of continued uncertainty over this development.

6.0 Cambridge East

- 6.1 The identified educational requirements to serve Cambridge East are:

- Establishment of a new primary school to serve North of Newmarket Road
- Establishment of a new primary school to serve North of Cherry Hinton
- Establishment of 4-5 new primary schools on the main Airport site
- Up to 2100 school places for young people aged 11-16, including the Abbey Ward

- Additional post-16 facilities

6.2 An Education and Life-long Learning Topic Group has been established. Its membership includes City and South Cambridgeshire planning and community development officers, County Council education officers and community development officers and representatives from Marshall.

6.3 An external consultant funded through the Growth Area Fund (GAF) has produced a timetable for the planning and delivery of primary and secondary school provision based on available information on the number of dwellings planned for each of the three development areas and available housing trajectories.

6.4 The need to consider and assess options for the provision of two secondary schools to serve Cambridge East and the Abbey Ward has been the focus of initial discussions with the headteacher of Abbey Meadows Primary School and the developers. Marshall have accepted the need to consider the establishment of two secondary schools. A further meeting with the headteacher of Abbey Meadows Primary School will take place on 19 April 2008 to seek his views on options for the future pattern of secondary school provision in this area of the City.

7.0 Northstowe

7.1 The identified educational requirements to serve Northstowe are:

- Establishment of six primary schools
- Establishment of a secondary school to provide for up to 1650 young people aged 11-16.
- Establishment of a 600-place post-16 facility to be located adjacent to the secondary school

7.2 In October 2007, the Council's Cabinet approved the competition specifications for the first primary school and the secondary school. In November 2007 consultation was undertaken on these competition specifications. The competitions for the two new schools were subsequently launched on 21 February 2008. A meeting for potential promoters was held on 18 March 2008 and was well attended. The deadline for submission of bids is 23 June 2008.

7.3 The proposal is to open the primary school on 1 January 2010 and the secondary school on 1 September 2013. The implementation dates are subject to approval of the developers' planning application, commencement of building work and release of houses for occupation.

8.0 Cambourne

8.1 In early September, the Authority was informed that the Secretary of State had turned down Cambridgeshire's application for exemption from competition for the third primary school to serve Cambourne. The public notice launching the

competition was published on 25 September. It invited bids to establish the school at the start of September 2008, initially in temporary accommodation on a site adjacent to Jeavons Wood, but also utilising part of the Jeavons Wood site for provision of outdoor play. Two bids were received by the deadline: one from Comberton Village College, the other from an organisation called Big Wide Talk. A meeting involving Members will be held on 31 March 2008 to consider the bids. Cabinet will be asked to determine the outcome of the competition on 15 April 2008.

- 8.2 The developers subsequently submitted a planning application for an additional 950 houses, which, if granted, will take Cambourne's housing total to 4250 homes, equivalent in size to the planned Southern Fringe developments.
- 8.3 A planning application for the temporary accommodation necessary to establish the school has been submitted on a site adjoining Jeavons Wood, which is also in the developers' ownership. Experience shows that it will be around three months before the outcome of this planning application is known.
- 8.4 The developers' agent has now indicated that access to the Jeavons Wood site and the site of the temporary school will not be granted until the outcome of the planning application for the additional 950 houses is known.
- 8.5 Information from South Cambridgeshire District Council is that July 2008 is the earliest date by which a decision on the 950 homes application will be taken, but September is considered more realistic.
- 8.6 The decision will come too late for the Authority to be able to get onto the site in time to set up and open the school in temporary accommodation as planned for a September 2008 opening. The temporary school will be further delayed if the developers continue to maintain their current stance about access to the site.
- 8.7 The available options are, therefore, to defer the opening of the school until January 2009 or until September 2009 and to provide places for children at other schools. Hardwick Primary School has agreed to take up to 60 children into Reception in September 2008. In addition, discussions are on-going with The Vine over provision of additional places at this school.

9.0 Post-16 Planning

- 9.1 The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners makes clear the Government's commitment that every young person should be well equipped for adulthood, skilled work and further learning. Every young person, whichever post-16 route they choose, must be given the skills and experience that they and their employers require. Its target is for 90% of all young people to be participating in learning age 17 by 2013 and at age 18 by 2015. It has announced its intention to legislate to raise the participation age.
- 9.2 As part of its strategy, the Government has introduced a measure to create

more high quality 16-18 places in schools. High performing 11-16 specialist schools, those who apply for, and are granted a second specialism, are now automatically offered the opportunity to develop proposals to extend their age ranges and open sixth forms. This is known as a sixth form presumption as the Government's clear expectation is that any resulting proposals will be approved, unless there are compelling reasons against. There is also a parallel further education (FE) presumption, which allows high performing colleges, those judged outstanding by OfSTED since September 2005, to expand to deliver diplomas.

- 9.3 The pattern of provision in the City and South Cambridgeshire area is set to change with the granting of sixth form presumptions to three schools as a result of their designation as high-performing specialist schools:

Comberton Village College
Cottenham Village College
Parkside Community College, Cambridge

In addition, Hills Road Sixth Form College in Cambridge holds an FE presumption for 500 additional places.

- 9.4 A **key issue** is that fewer post-16 places may be required at Northstowe and in Cambridge East as a result of sixth form and further education presumptions. Officers will continue to monitor and review provision planned for these new developments in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). A decision on the size of the post-16 facility planned for Northstowe will need to be made before the end of the summer term 2008.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 JSGIC is asked to:

- i) Note the legislative and policy frameworks which are informing decision-making processes in respect of the planning and delivery of educational provision in Cambridgeshire;
- ii) Note and comment on the progress to date with the planning and delivery of education provision to serve new and expanding communities; and
- iii) Note and comment on the key issues and challenges identified in the report.

New Schools Competition Process

1. Awareness-raising of the need to establish a new school.
2. Development and publication of a specification for the new school. This forms the invitation to enter the competition (Stage 1 publication). The specification must include details of the proposed site, the area or particular community the school is expected to serve, transport details (where applicable), the number of pupils for whom education is to be provided, an indication of the preferred specialism of the school, any extended services required, and the estimated capital costs.

It should be emphasised that the information required for a specification for a new school is limited. The requirement on potential providers to produce information relating to their bid for a school is far more extensive and includes matters such as the ethos of the planned school, previous experience, proposed staffing arrangements and plans for delivery against the five Every Child Matters outcome areas.

3. Anyone who wishes to establish the new school has 4 months from the publication of the invitation to enter the competition to submit their proposals to the local authority.
4. The authority publishes details of the bids received within 3 weeks of the end of the 4 month invitation to competition period. (Stage 2 publication.) Anyone who wishes to do so has then 6 weeks to comment upon or object to the proposals.

Within 2 weeks of the Stage 2 publication, the authority must hold at least one public meeting to provide information on the proposals received and the arrangements for objections and comments.

5. At the end of the 6 week Stage 2 publication period, the authority must either take a decision on which proposal it will approve for implementation, or refer the matter to a government appointed School Adjudicator for decision. The authority must take the latter course of action if it is proposing to establish the school, even if it is the only promoter.

Developing the Specification for a New School

The specification must include information on the following:

1. The number of places to be provided at the school
2. The age range including any proposed sixth form or early years provision
3. Whether the school will be mixed or single sex
4. The proposed admission number
5. The location including playing field provision and transport links
6. The school opening date
7. The estimated capital costs of the school and funding sources in accordance with DfES guidance on education building projects
8. Any provision that will be reserved for pupils with special educational needs
9. The area and community to be served by the school
10. Any preferred specialism the school should have
11. The extended services or community use the Authority would like to see provided
12. Proposed arrangements for transport to the new school, sustainable transport alternatives and how the Authority will discourage car use

In October 2007, Cabinet approved policy statements for each of the specification criteria and also approved the responses detailed below to determine when the Local Authority will enter its own proposals for a new school.

Under what circumstances would the Authority consider entering its own proposals?

There may be a variety of reasons which would lead the Authority to decide to put forward proposals to establish a new school. The most likely one being on the grounds of ensuring diversity of provision, if for example, there were no other local Authority maintained schools in the local area.

Another key consideration is the potential for other promoters to respond to the invitation to competition. Interest from other promoters can be assessed during the pre-competition consultation, and at a number of stages during the competition process. If, after a certain period of time, no bids have been submitted, the Authority would expect to enter a proposal.

The Authority will not, therefore, as a matter of course, put forward its own proposals to establish new schools.

Under what circumstances would the Authority apply to the Secretary of State for dispensation to publish proposals without having to invite other promoters to enter a competition?

This should be limited to:

1. New schools being established following a decision to amalgamate existing infant and junior schools.
2. Cases where there is an educational imperative resulting from either the need to address issues over the quality of education being provided in a local area or the urgent need to address pressure of pupil numbers.

What should be the status of new schools proposed by the local Authority?

The default option for new schools proposed by the local Authority should be Foundation status. This is in line with national policy and recognises the additional steps required to seek approval for Community status schools. The establishment of Foundation schools with a Trust will be an option depending upon local circumstances.

Under what circumstances would the Authority apply to the Secretary of State for permission to publish a proposal for a new community school?

This should be limited to new schools being established following a decision to amalgamate existing infant and junior schools where one or both schools are Community schools and consultation indicates a clear desire to maintain community status.