

Meeting:	Member Panel
Date:	27 November 2006
Subject:	Building Schools for the Future One-School Pathfinder
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove Director of Strategic Services People First
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Janet Mote People First

## **SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report sets out the background to the Building Schools for the Future One-School Pathfinder, and presents the officer evaluation of the applications received from the high schools.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Members' Panel is requested to recommend to Councillor Janet Mote, Portfolio Holder for People First Children's Services, which school should be selected.

The outcome of the officer evaluation is a recommendation that Whitmore High School be selected for the One-School Pathfinder project.

### **REASON:**

The application from Whitmore High School is considered to exceed the criteria for this project.

## **SECTION 2 - REPORT**

### **2.1 Background about Building Schools for the Future**

- 2.1.2 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a Government capital spend programme with the aim to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England over a 10-15 year period. There is a phased approach to the allocation of BSF funding to local authorities. Harrow is in Tranche E (waves 13-15), which means that the substantial capital allocation to modernise the secondary schools is not expected to be available before 2011-2013. The original Harrow submission for BSF funding was to change the age of transfer to 11+ and provide post 16 on all High School sites.
- 2.1.2 As part of its capital announcement in November 2004, the Government set out its ambition that all local authorities should have capital funding allocated to rebuild at least one secondary school by 2011. This could be achieved through the BSF programme, the academies programme, or the BSF One-School Pathfinder (OSP) scheme. This means that local authorities such as Harrow, who will be joining BSF in wave 10 or later, and who are not being targeted for an academy, will receive funding to rebuild one school as a 'down payment' on BSF via the OSP scheme.
- 2.1.3 Harrow is one of 25 authorities that have been invited to participate in the second phase of the OSP scheme. A letter signed by both the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council was sent to DfES on 14 July confirming that the Council wishes to take up this funding.

### **2.2 Aims of the One-School Pathfinder scheme**

- 2.2.1 The aim of the OSP scheme is for local authorities to achieve BSF outcomes in one school, in order to help develop good practice for when they join the main BSF programme.
- 2.2.2 The Building Schools for the Future programme gives local authorities, in close collaboration with all other stakeholders, the opportunity to consider from first principles the secondary school buildings that are needed, where they should be, and what facilities they should have.
- 2.2.3 It is for the local authority to select the school to receive the investment. The school selected for investment should be such that the project will be able to deliver transformational change within the allocated resources. The project must be consistent with the authority's long term existing secondary strategy and Children and Young Peoples' Plan. The school can be community or voluntary aided, secondary or a special school for secondary students.
- 2.2.4 The project should be consistent with the terms on which BSF schools are funded. The funding may be joined up with other capital resources. The school selected for BSF Pathfinder funding will, in effect, have received its capital BSF investment, and will not be re-visited as part of the main BSF programme.

## **2.3 Harrow Building Schools for the Future Pathfinder**

- 2.3.1 In July, letters were sent to all Harrow's high schools outlining the Government's invitation and the actions we would be taking. The majority of the high schools expressed initial interest in being selected for the project.
- 2.3.2 At the end of August, in accordance with DfES timescales, an Initial Proposal for a Harrow Building School for the Future Pathfinder was submitted to the DfES. A copy is attached. This Initial Proposal was very general and outlined Harrow's long term strategic vision for its schools, which is to change the age of transfer to 11+ and provide post 16 choice and opportunities. This brief summary of initial thinking was requested by the DfES from participating authorities to assist with planning for the BSF Design Event, planned originally for early September but delayed until 12-13 October. Officers attended this DfES launch event.
- 2.3.3 Following the DfES event, a letter, dated 19 October, was sent to all Harrow's high schools inviting them to apply to be selected for this project. Criteria, with specific issues for assessment relevant to Harrow's long term strategic vision for its schools, were enclosed to enable the schools to decide whether to apply, and to assist them focus their applications.
- 2.3.4 At a meeting on 1 November the high school headteachers stated that they wanted the local authority to take a leadership role in the selection of the school to be involved in this project. They asked that the local authority identify the 2-3 schools it thought best met the criteria that was sent to them on 19 October. Those schools identified would then consider whether to apply.
- 2.3.5 Officers undertook an exercise considering all the high schools using a selection of the criteria which have little or no flexibility. On 9 November a letter was sent to all high schools about the outcome of this exercise. The schools that met the selected criteria most closely were Canons, Hatch End and Whitmore. These three schools were invited to apply to be selected for the Pathfinder project.
- 2.3.6 The three schools were invited to submit applications by 5.00 pm on Monday, 20 November on up to 6 sides of A4. The Canons High School Headteacher emailed Geoff Wingrove on 20 November informing him the School had decided not to apply on this occasion.
- 2.3.7 On 8 November the Headteacher of Salvatorian College delivered an application to Harrow Civic Centre. Strong representations have been made to officers and to the Leader of the Council to request that this application be considered for the Pathfinder project. The Salvatorian College application has not been considered because the officer exercise identified that it is not one of the schools that meets most closely the criteria.

## **2.4 The applications**

2.4.1 High quality applications have been received from Hatch End and Whitmore High Schools. Both applications were submitted on time and in the agreed format. The applications were sent to the Members of the Selection Panel on 21 November, together with the guidance notes on the specific issues for assessment. The applications needed to address specific DfES and Harrow criteria.

## **2.5 Evaluation**

2.5.1 Nine officers from the Place Planning and Admissions to Schools Strategy Group have evaluated the two applications. The officers on this group represent sections from within People First Children's Services and Strategic Services Departments, including Achievement and Inclusion, Commissioning and Strategic Planning, Project Management and Policy, Capital Development, Finance, Admissions.

2.5.2 The outcome of the officer evaluation is a recommendation to the Member Panel that Whitmore High School be selected for the One-School Pathfinder project.

## **SECTION 3 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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### **Background Papers:**

Application from Hatch End High School  
Application from Whitmore High School  
Guidance notes on the specific issues for assessment