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| 25 March 2010 | | ITEM 6 |
| Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| Building Schools for the Future Update | | |
| Portfolio Holder: Cllr MacPherson, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services | | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: No | |
| Accountable Head of Service: Colin Stewart, Head of Business (Policy, Performance and Resources) | | |
| Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, Director, Children Education and Families | | |
| This report is Public | | |
| Purpose of Report: To update the Committee on the development and progress of the Building Schools for the Future Programme in Thurrock. | | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the current position of Thurrock's Building Schools for the Future programme, and highlights some of the key activities the Council is undertaking as part of its preparation for entry into the programme.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 Overview and Scrutiny to note progress made to date.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 The Thurrock Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Expression of Interest (EoI) was submitted to Partnerships for Schools (PfS) at the end of November 2008; this submission and the approach to BSF was agreed by Cabinet 14 January 2009, the process having been noted by Cabinet 12 November 2008.

2.2 We submitted our initial Readiness to Deliver document on 08 May 2009 (one of twenty three authorities). We were then invited to an assessment panel in

July 2009, at which PfS asked us to provide additional detail and strengthen some key areas of our Readiness to Deliver submission. We resubmitted our Readiness to Deliver document on 17th September 2009 and attended a feedback meeting with Partnerships for Schools in early December. At this meeting we received very positive feedback, but were asked again to resubmit in January 2010, providing further detail in some areas. We attended a feedback session in mid-February, which will form part of PfS's evaluation process, and are now waiting for their decision. We understand that 6 of the 19 authorities who submitted will be invited to join the programme in this phase.

2.3 The key areas highlighted were:

Pupil Place Projections - We are committed to ensuring that as we develop our school estate, we are building sufficient capacity into our schools to accommodate the expected growth in pupil numbers from new housing development in the Borough. Our analysis of the base data and identified areas for housing growth have produce projected pupil numbers which would indicate the need for expansion in some schools. However, we will need to have further discussions locally and with PfS to agree these capacities.

ICT- this is a core element of the BSF investment, and PfS were keen to see that we were developing genuinely transformational proposals for the integration of ICT into learning and teaching through the BSF programme.

Leadership & Change Management - PfS requested further information on how we intend to ensure strong, strategic leadership for the programme, and how we will engage all stakeholders in the process.

2.4 We are now awaiting feedback from PfS as to whether we will be entered into the BSF programme. Once we receive a positive response, a PfS Education Director and ICT specialist will then work with local authorities, through what is known as Pre-Engagement, to ensure we are effectively prepared prior to the Remit Meeting that marks the formal entry in to the BSF programme.

2.5 We are continuing to participate in a pilot pre-engagement preparation programme run by PfS and the Innovation Unit. Of the four Modules, Modules 1 and 2 have been completed. Module 3 (a one-day workshop for senior management) is scheduled for March 19th 2010, and Module 4 for March 29th. This is an opportunity for Thurrock to influence the development of the PfS training programme, and engage council staff from across the authority, building understanding of and involvement in the BSF programme.

2.6 In addition, we have invested in the National College for School Leadership's (NCSL) BSF Leadership Programme. This Programme is aimed at supporting school leaders in understanding and engaging in the BSF programme, and consists of 3 events, scheduled for January, March and June 2010. Phase 1 was completed in January, and was a very successful event, with almost all schools represented and generating some very positive outcomes and discussion. Head teachers, Deputy Heads and Governors were all involved. As a result of this event, we have arranged further similar events, one specifically for Heads and one for a wider audience, so that school staff, local

authority staff and all Governors have an opportunity to benefit from the training ahead of Phase 2.

2.7 In addition, we are working to ensure that as soon as we are invited to enter the BSF programme, we are genuinely ready to deliver. Work towards this has included:

- Further development of SEN and Inclusion strategies in the context of school capital development
- Establishment of a Sports Strategy sub group, involving the School Sports Partnership, County Sports Partnership, local partners and council officers to ensure a strategic approach to sports development across the Borough, and to maximise the impact BSF investment can have on sport and leisure provision not just for schools but for the wider community.
- Working closely with the development of the 14-19 Diploma and vocational provision agenda to ensure integration and consistency between this and the development of the BSF and Academies programmes
- Working to build understanding and engagement with the BSF programme across Council departments, with all schools and with external stakeholders, so that we are incorporating the full range of views, utilising all available experience and expertise, and bringing related activities together into a coherent long-term project.

2.8 Thurrock's Children, Education and Families budget has allocated £500,000 in 2009-10 to support the further preparation required for entry into BSF, and a further £500,000 in 2010-11 to continue this work.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

3.1 *Statutory Consultation*

Because growth in pupil numbers is projected for most schools, an extensive programme of statutory consultation will be planned and carried out. This will be done when the phasing of our BSF programme is confirmed.

3.2 *ICT Managed Service*

The vision is to unite schools and the Council in maximizing the benefits from the operation and usage of ICT for teaching and learning, administration and communication, which is available anytime anywhere for life-long learning and to engage parents and support integrated working to safeguard children. To achieve this substantive capital funding is provided through BSF on condition that it is delivered through a 5 year managed service contract across all BSF schools. Further funding, a revenue contribution from schools, will be required. We will prepare detailed briefing for schools and members about the benefits and implications of this approach.

3.3 *Environmental Sustainability*

The national BSF programme intends to achieve 60% reduction in carbon across school estates by both design and operational means. The Council is

committed to energy saving by lowering consumption and by using low embedded-energy sustainable materials wherever reasonably possible.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 4.1 There has been ongoing consultation with secondary and special school head teachers during the development of the readiness to deliver submission. In addition, presentations have been given to Governors' Briefing meetings and to meetings of local partnerships such as the 14 -19 Strategic Partnership Board and the Thurrock Learning Partnership. Elected members from all parties have been updated with progress.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 5.1 The BSF Programme offers the opportunity to transform the delivery of education across the Borough, improving attainment, increasing aspiration, and expanding choice for all learners. The redevelopment/remodelling of school buildings offers the chance to develop wider community use of facilities and accommodation, and impact on the delivery of corporate priorities such as sustainability targets. The programme will also have a positive impact on the delivery of integrated services, providing on-site accommodation for multi-agency teams, and support services for children and families.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Yannick Stupples-Whyley**
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Within the Children, Education & Families Directorate's budget for 2010/11 there is £500,000 to support the further preparation required for entry into BSF. In addition if Thurrock is invited to join the next phase of BSF, the Budget Report to Council on 24th February 2010 recommends that the Director of Children, Education & Families through the Children's Trust put forward proposals for a £250,000 contribution to the Local Strategic Partnership from the Performance Reward Grant.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Howard N Russell**
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BSF is now a well established process with techniques, documentation and procedures available to manage risk as the project moves forward.

6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
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There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report as the Building Schools for the Future Update is for information purposes only.

6.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 At present we are awaiting the decision from Partnerships for School on whether Thurrock has been successful in its bid to enter the BSF Programme. In the meantime, we are working with colleagues across the Council and with external stakeholders to build capacity to deliver the Programme, increase awareness and engagement with the strategic development of the Programme, and to establish key working groups to take the work forward.

Inevitably the pace of this development will depend on any decisions made by DCSF and PfS on our Readiness to Deliver submission. When we are clear about the timing for the next stage of the process – the Remit Meeting – then we will revise our project plans and adjust our development of capacity accordingly.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

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