Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Thurrock Council’s school capital programmes, highlighting the considerable and continued progress that has been achieved since the last report to Cabinet in December 2013.

A school capital programme is developed following extensive pupil place planning to assess likely demand, with this report making reference to:

- the most recently completed programme, which delivered sufficient pupil places for the 2012 and 2013 academic years and;
- the current programme, which aims to deliver sufficient pupil places for the 2014 and 2015 academic years

This report is also to provide information on the proposed new school which will form part of the re-development of Purfleet.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Cabinet notes the progress and current position with each of the schemes in the 2012/13 and 2014/15 school capital programmes, (Appendix 1, 2 and 3).

1.2 Cabinet notes the temporary accommodation works that have now been fully completed.
1.3 Cabinet notes the revisions made to schemes within the school capital programme (2014/15) to ensure demand for additional pupil places is met.

1.4 Cabinet notes the updates in relation to the New School Grays West and Purfleet schemes.

1.5 Cabinet notes an update on the tender process for the new school capital programme and main contractor contract awards.

1.6 Cabinet notes progress with the works required following the proposed amalgamation of Arthur Bugler Infants and Junior schools.

1.7 Cabinet notes current position of plans for a new primary school in Purfleet

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that suitable and sufficient places are available in Thurrock for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one.

2.2 The 2012/13 school capital programme consisted of nine projects in Thurrock primary schools, one project in a Thurrock special school, and five projects in Thurrock secondary schools. This extensive programme is now reaching its conclusion, with only works at Manor Primary in progress at the time of this report.

2.3 The 2014/15 school capital programme is progressing well and has taken the opportunity to consider innovative partnership working to deliver the identified additional pupil places required.

Update on School Capital Programme Schemes

2.4 An update on schemes from the 2012/13 and 2014/15 school capital programmes is detailed in Appendix 1, 2 and 3.

2.5 The 2012/13 school capital programme has generated positive feedback from schools, particularly in relation to the anticipated impact on learning through improvements to the built environment.

2.6 The local authority is satisfied with progress made to date with provision for future accommodation within the 2014/15 school capital programme.

Temporary Accommodation Works

2.7 Further to demountables placed at the following locations to ensure sufficient pupil places for the start of the September 2013 academic year, additional
places were also provided at Bonnygate Primary by remodelling existing accommodation:

- Quarry Hill Primary
- West Thurrock Primary
- Stifford Clays Primary

**Update on Revisions to Schemes in the 2014/15 School Capital Programme**

**New School Grays West**

2.8 As previously reported in June and December 2013, a new 3 form of entry (FE) primary school was required in Grays West area, with the capacity to be extended to a 4FE at a later date. However, the site originally identified has since been judged as not feasible and an alternative has been sought to encompass an adjacent planning area, thus increasing the potential FE capacity.

2.9 Accordingly, in order to deliver the required pupil places, a partnership with an existing Academy Trust has been explored in conjunction with the DfE and Education Funding Agency (EFA), to develop a new 5FE school to serve the Grays West and adjacent planning area.

2.10 The proposal has now received full ministerial sign off. A formal funding agreement is being developed between the EFA and the Thurrock legal team. Contracts have been exchanged on the new site and the design has been developed to feasibility stage in conjunction with the principle contractor, Farrens, who were appointed by the EFA using its free schools’ procurement framework.

2.11 Planning is expected to be submitted in June 2014 with a start on site in December 2014 and completion of phase 1 accommodation in September 2015, with phase 2 completing in December 2015.

2.12 In the meantime the new school will open in September 2014 as a 3FE school on the site of the current Harris Primary Academy.

2.13 This scheme will require a £4.9m (plus £250k for nursery places) financial contribution from the local authority within the approved financial envelope.

**Purfleet Scheme**

2.14 Following extensive pupil place planning work, Purfleet Primary Academy has been highlighted as a school to be expanded from a 2FE to a 3FE, allowing for 630 pupils and staff.
2.15 At their request it has been agreed that REAch2 Academy Trust will project manage the expansion project in conjunction with the local authority.

2.16 The REAch2 Trust has reviewed its class organisation for September 2014, when an additional reception class will be required and decided not to purchase any further temporary accommodation. They will instead reorganise classes and manage the additional pupils within the existing accommodation, preferring to use the available funding for permanent new accommodation.

2.17 The scheme has now been developed to feasibility stage, within the revised budget of £3.5m and will proceed towards planning in June 2014, with a predicted start on site in November 2014.

2.18 An adjacent parcel of housing land is being appropriated by education to enlarge the school site and provide more informal play space for pupils. There is no purchase cost associated with this transfer, as the land is owned by the local authority.

**Update on Tender Process for the 2014/15 School Capital Programme**

2.19 The main contractors for the Quarry Hill Primary, Little Thurrock Primary, Graham James Primary and Bonnygate Primary schemes were procured following an EU compliant tendering process, alongside the Council's constitutional and best value duties to ensure value for money.

2.20 Tenders were received via the SmarteEast Framework Tier 2 & Tier 3 using a Mini Competition, as per the framework agreement.

2.21 Contracts were awarded in January 2014 as follows:

- Bonnygate Primary and Quarry Hill Primary schemes – Main contractor: Ashe Construction
- Graham James and Little Thurrock Primary schemes - Main contractor: Lakehouse Construction

**Arthur Bugler Infant and Junior Schools Amalgamation Works**

2.22 Cabinet approved an estimated £500k budget for capital works arising from the amalgamation of Arthur Bugler Infant and Junior Schools on 13 November 2013.

2.23 Designs are currently being developed by the local authority and the school. Cabinet will be kept informed on the amalgamation process separately following the required consultation process; however progress with the planned building works will be encompassed within school capital programme report updates.
2.24 The Council’s efforts to secure the wholesale redevelopment of the centre of Purfleet will generate the need for a new primary school. Located at the heart of the new town centre, the new primary school will form part of the first phase of the Purfleet Centre development alongside more than 500 new homes and local facilities including a supermarket, GP surgery, community space and shops/restaurants. It is anticipated that work will commence on site in 2015 with the development ultimately delivering more than 2,500 new homes built around a state-of-the-art, 600,000 sq ft film, television and media complex which builds on the existing success of High House Production Park.

3. **Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 If the local authority does not undertake the school expansions and builds, the local authority will not be able to fulfil its statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient places available in Thurrock for every child of school age.

4. **Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 To ensure the local authority discharges its statutory duty, under the Education Act 2006, to ensure that suitable and sufficient places are available in Thurrock for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one.

4.2 To ensure that the agreed schemes within the 2014/15 school capital programme are delivered for the start of the 2014 academic year and/or phased completions as outlined in this report.

5. **Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 The new school capital programme and other identified works have been subject to extensive consultation with key stakeholders. The principle has been agreed with schools and the detailed build content is being agreed with the relevant schools. Consultation will continue with each school and key stakeholders, as each scheme and works develop within the programme.

6. **Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The improvement in the educational facilities in Thurrock schools is part of the council’s delivery of its Education Capital Strategy and supports the council’s prioritisation of educational standards and pupil progress by helping to create great places for learning in the borough.

7. **Implications**

7.1 **Financial**
Implications verified by: Kay Goodacre  
Interim Finance Manager

The financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: Courage Emovon  
Contracts Lawyer

The proposals contained in this report complies with the Council’s statutory obligations under the Education Act 2006 and 2011. The Council has an obligation to ensure that sufficient and suitable places are available in Thurrock for every child of school age attending school or due to start school and to provide additional places to meet any shortfall due to any increase.

Apart from ensuring that any processes comply with the Council’s procurement process and any applicable EU procurement rules and legislation especially to planned building works, there should be no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: Teresa Evans  
Equalities and Cohesion Officer

The Thurrock Schools’ Capital Programme will continue to commit to improving learning environments for young people, supporting improvements in standards and raising aspirations to give all children the best possible life chances.

7.4 Other implications

All schemes include an assumption of 10% of total cost for provision of ICT.

All schemes to date have been procured within the funding envelope agreed by Cabinet.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council’s website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Various Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet reports, relevant document held on file, feasibility studies and summary papers, all referenced within this document
- Cabinet Report 5 June 2013 – School Capital Programme Update
- Cabinet Report 11 December 2013 – School Capital Programme Update
- Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Report 5 November 2013
- Cabinet Report 12 February 2014

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Phase 2 School Capital Schemes (2012/13 School Capital Programme)
- Appendix 2 – 14 to 19 Partnership Grant & Other Capital Projects (2012/13 & 2014/15 School Capital Programme schemes)
- Appendix 3 – Schemes within the 2014/15 School Capital Programme

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