

Appendix B

The Bishop's Stortford High School – Relocation and Expansion.

Background

1. Following consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 July 2016 of the report entitled:

“PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF LANDS TO ENABLE THE EXPANSION OF HERTS AND ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL AND SCIENCE COLLEGE, THE RELOCATION AND EXPANSION OF THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL AND THE GRANT OF AN OPTION OVER PART OF THE SITE OF THORLEY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, BISHOPS STORTFORD

See agenda item 14 at:

<https://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/346/Committee/8/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Cabinet authorised:

- “(i) acquisition of land south of Beldams Lane, Bishop's Stortford and a Funding Agreement with The Hertfordshire & Essex High School and Science College, on terms to be authorised by the Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources & Performance and Enterprise, Education & Skills;
- “(ii) acquisition of land at Whittington Way/Obrey Way/St James Way, Bishop's Stortford, and an Option Agreement in respect of part of the site of Thorley Hill Primary School, Bishop's Stortford and an agreement with The Bishop's Stortford High School regarding its possible relocation, on terms to be authorised by the Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources & Performance and Enterprise, Education & Skills; and
- “(iii) an agreement with the Governing Body of Thorley Hill Primary School on the arrangements that would be included for reorganisation of the school site and additional classroom if The Bishop's Stortford High School relocates from its existing site, on terms to be authorised by the Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources & Performance and Enterprise, Education & Skills.”

Progress

2. Substantial progress has been made and can be summarised as follows, referring to those decisions:
 - (i) An option to purchase additional land has been completed and a town planning strategy is in preparation by the School that will underpin their expansion scheme and the additional land acquisition;
 - (ii) Terms have been agreed for a conditional contract for purchase of an alternative site within the Bishop's Stortford South development area that has been proposed for release from the green belt by East Hertfordshire District Council; the conditions being that outline planning permission is granted for the development of that whole area (to include the secondary school) and a funding agreement is made by the School that enables its relocation; and
 - (iii) Terms have been discussed (and agreed [by the date the report is published]) for the provision of an additional classroom for Thorley Hill Primary School, subject to the above funding agreement having been concluded.
3. Once the conditional contract at item (ii) has been exchanged, it will be necessary to secure four key planning permissions that will underpin the funding agreement definition, pricing and security. They are detailed planning permission for the new school premises, outline housing planning permission for the existing secondary school site, detailed planning permission for replacement accommodation for The Blues Pre-School, which currently occupies part of the existing secondary school site, on a site at Cox's Gardens, Bishop's Stortford that is owned by the County Council, and detailed planning permission for the additional classroom for Thorley Hill Primary School. The estimated cost of the actions needed to secure these permissions is £500,000 and additional budget provision is required to support this work. None of that cost would be incurred unless and until the conditional land contract for the new school site has been exchanged.
4. There is expected to be a positive business case for a funding agreement to be made once all five planning permissions have been secured. The variable and approximate costs and funding sources are set out in the following table.
5. Recent discussions with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) representative in respect of the School's agreed in principle PSBP2 award indicate that a full re-building of the school premises on its existing site would be expected by the EFA. That would have a very high cost and be expected to at least cover the indicated gap in local funding sources. Potentially the EFA would wish to be responsible for the new premises procurement, and if so the School funding agreement will be tri-partite, to include the EFA in addition to the School and the County Council.