



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**17 MAY 2005**

Report of the Director of Education

## **Targeted Capital Funding Bid 2006-08**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 To approve the submission of a Targeted Capital Funding bid to the DfES for a replacement building on a new site for Ivy House Special School and a new primary school to replace Normanton Village Infant School, Sunnyhill Infant School and Normanton Junior School.
- 1.2 To approve the submission of a Voluntary Aided Targeted Capital Funding bid for a new Science and Arts block at St Benedict Catholic and Performing Arts College.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 There are major condition and suitability issues with the current accommodation at Ivy House School. The building is in urgent need of replacement to ensure that the school can provide adequately for the complex needs of special needs pupils. The site is not suitable for the purpose, and a move was proposed in principle within the Council's expression of interest for the Building Schools for the Future programme.
- 2.2 Normanton Village Infant, Sunnyhill Infant and Normanton Junior Schools all have serious condition and suitability problems, particularly the junior school. A new replacement primary school in the Austin / Sunnyhill area would have exciting potential as a new learning environment for the pupils in that area. It would be able to deliver higher standards and continuity for pupils. The current junior school takes pupils from 2 separate infant schools, and, although standards in the core subjects have improved over the last two years, the Key Stage 1 to 2 transition process is a factor affecting pupil progress. Accelerated progress after transfer would bring better value added through Key Stage 2. Local secondary schools demonstrate improving value added scores, and so the overall impact on key Stage 4 attainment would be significant.
- 2.3 There are excellent opportunities to use Normanton Village Infant School building to support the community education agenda in this area, and it is envisaged that the new school would become part of a coherent and integrated network of children's services and adult learning.
- 2.4 The bid for a new Science and Arts Block at St Benedict Catholic School is an exciting project to improve the learning environment and address longstanding suitability problems. This is also an opportunity to re-organise existing classrooms.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council has received details on the next round of Targeted Capital Funding (TCF) from the DfES. Local Authorities have previously been able to submit bids for school capital projects each autumn for the following financial year. The deadline for submission of bids in the current round is 27 May 2005. There will not be another opportunity to bid for a further two years.
- 3.2 TCF provides funding for projects that are not covered by other funding streams. The DfES will assess bids on the basis of how well they support the Government's current priorities. In this round of TCF funding, the DfES guidance outlines the following key assessment criteria:
- Standards and Curriculum improvements
  - Standards-focused re-organisations
  - Improved provision for children with Special Educational Needs
  - Extended schools / community use
- 3.3 The advice to Councils is that it is not necessary to target all of the above priorities in each bid.
- 3.4 It is proposed to make two community school bids which match the DfES criteria, and would make a significant difference to the pressing and long-standing needs in Derby. The outcome is likely to be known in September 2005. It is inevitable that the bids submitted to the DfES nationally will far exceed the funding provision available, and it is far from certain that both of Derby's bids will be successful.
- 3.5 The highest priority bid is to build new premises on a new site for Ivy House Special School. This school, which provides 75 places for pupils aged from 2 to 19 with a wide range of profound multiple learning difficulties, is housed in a building which is in very poor condition. There are significant condition issues with its timber construction building, together with problems with the roof, failing heating system and asbestos. The school was recently re-wired to address urgent health and safety issues. A capital project had to be prioritised recently to replace the failing heating pipework this summer to avoid school closure.
- 3.6 The Ivy House building is no longer suitable for the range of complex needs of its special needs pupils. The accommodation does not provide a healthy school environment for pupils with medical needs due to limited facilities. Mobility and access are major issues for pupils who use motorised wheelchairs. Existing spaces no longer comply with DfES space requirements. The new school would be designed in accordance with latest DfES guidance for special schools.
- 3.7 There are further detailed problems with the Ivy House accommodation. In particular, the storage of large items of equipment for individual pupils such as wheelchairs, specialist work chairs, standing frames and hoists causes daily health and safety concerns as the already narrow corridor space is compromised by large equipment. Access to many areas of the school is becoming difficult. The introduction of specialist programmes is extremely limited due to building constraints.

- 3.8 The proposal is to bid for funding to construct new premises for Ivy House, potentially on the site of one of the city's secondary schools. The detailed design does not have to be finalised at this stage. The feasibility work currently underway will ensure the new school is flexible in responding to the complex needs of special needs pupils, including specialist facilities such as a hydrotherapy pool and accommodation for sensory work and paramedical support. The entire building will be accessible, including automatic door mechanisms. It is envisaged that such facilities together with flat access on site would radically improve physical independence for many young people for whom this is currently wholly or partially denied.
- 3.9 As part of the Council's expression of interest for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) scheme, it was proposed in principle that Derby's existing special schools should be "relocated to share sites with mainstream schools to enhance provision for every student with special needs and maximise the scope for full inclusion". The timing of Derby's participation in the BSF programme is uncertain, although it is hoped that construction will commence between 2008 and 2010. Unfortunately, the building at Ivy House cannot wait that long without substantial expenditure. Spending considerable sums on keeping such an unsuitable building open and safe would provide poor value, and it would be much better to invest in a new building that would help move towards the BSF vision. This investment cannot be funded from the formula allocation of capital to the Council.
- 3.10 No site has yet been identified for Ivy House, as this will require careful consideration of physical features, as well as extensive discussion with possible partner schools. The new building will need to be designed to link with a secondary school, as the intention is to include some shared accommodation and facilities. This would be particularly important to provide a secure and supportive setting for Ivy House pupils, while allowing them to have contact with mainstream pupils. This could, for example, involve communal dining facilities and shared use of outdoor and indoor PE space. The potential for linkage with a nearby accessible primary school would also be desirable.
- 3.11 This project would establish a leading example of inclusive specialist provision for pupils with profound learning difficulties. It would also provide facilities which could be used to offer leisure and education opportunities to adults with high levels of disability and special needs. It is hoped that the DfES would recognise the worth of funding an example of excellent innovative practice that could provide a model for developments elsewhere.
- 3.12 The second proposed bid is to provide a modern learning environment in a new primary school in the Austin / Sunnyhill area. This would replace Normanton Village Infant, Sunnyhill Infant, and Normanton Junior schools. This will address issues of viability, educational standards and building condition. It will also enable further coordinated development with the children's centre and Sure Start work in the area. No other primary school project of an appropriate size would match the DfES assessment criteria as well.
- 3.13 Normanton Village Infant School has places for 90 pupils. A majority of pupils currently come from outside the normal area for the school. The school is in a small building resulting in a number of suitability issues with limited space. Circulation is an issue, with an inappropriate layout resulting in disruption to curriculum activities and access to classrooms. The life expired nursery building was demolished last year and re-located into the main building. Following this capital investment, the building would still

provide excellent potential for any future use for community based activities and adult learning programmes.

- 3.14 Sunnyhill Infant School has places for 180 pupils. Again, there is significant pupil movement in the area. The existing building has medium term problems with the roof, together with a range of suitability issues due to the open plan layout and very limited internal circulation space and disabled access.
- 3.15 Normanton Junior School has places for 360 pupils. The school building is in extremely poor condition with a wide range of significant condition issues relating to corroding concrete cladding, roofing and rewiring. There are major accessibility issues with a sloping site and buildings situated on different levels. The school is in need of major capital investment.
- 3.16 Regarding the proposed size of the new school, the analysis of pupil data shows significant movement across all three local schools and other nearby schools. The trend indicates pupils from the Peartree schools attending the Normanton schools, together with movement in the opposite direction. There is also a significant proportion of pupils from the Normanton schools area attending Littleover schools.
- 3.17 The preferred size of any new school is related to full forms of entry. The Education Commission in their topic review on School Place Planning also outlined this. On this basis, the size of the proposed new Normanton Primary should be either 420 or 630. There are, however, 502 pupils on roll across the three schools. Following discussions with the headteachers, they strongly support the view that a new school should have capacity for 525 pupils with two and a half forms of entry, and mixed age classes can be managed. In view of the limited time to submit this bid, the proposal is to bid on the basis of a 525 capacity school. This is subject to further analysis of pupil number trends / movement across the local schools, which may result in a of review current normal areas.
- 3.18 A site for a new school has not been determined, and does not need to be specified in the bid. It would be possible to construct a new school on the site occupied by Sunnyhill Infant and Normanton Junior schools. It would also be sensible to consider location on the site of the former Village School, as this would provide excellent links to the new Health Centre and to the Early Years and Adult Learning facilities which are based there, or planned in the near future. It is suggested that there should be thorough consultation with the residents and parents in the area before any decision is taken on a proposed site.
- 3.19 This proposed bid also relates to a number of other recommendations made in the Education Commission's Topic Review, ie that:
- sustainability should be key to every decision taken
  - a strategy for school place planning needs to be inseparable from strategies to improve schools in Derby
  - all through primary schools would be the ideal model for schools in Derby ... amalgamation should only proceed where it is considered that standards of education would be enhanced, and where local conditions including school buildings are suitable, and

- nursery units in primary sector schools would be the ideal model for Derby.

3.20 There is a proposal to submit a voluntary aided TCF bid for a new science and arts block at St Benedict Catholic and Performing Arts College to target suitability issues. This project will include the re-organisation of six existing classrooms. This bid will be submitted specifically as an aided scheme from the separate Voluntary Aided TCF funding. The school is currently completing the necessary feasibility work.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Targeted Capital Funding is the only opportunity to secure major capital funding for projects on this scale. It is essential to seek to maximise the funding available to improve school buildings in Derby.
- 4.2 Other schemes were considered, but the two proposed community school bids are currently the most urgent within the funding range and bid criteria. Major secondary school projects must await the government decision on the timing of Derby's involvement in the Building Schools for the Future programme. Other special schools are in better condition and have more suitable premises than Ivy House.
- 4.3 A range of other primary school projects were considered in line with Asset Management priorities. These projects are judged to provide the best balance of development focused on the government's requirements for improvements in standards and curriculum, standards focused reorganisation and linkage with the extended schools and community use agenda. If the bid is successful, other primary school projects could be prioritised for funding from formula capital and possible capital receipts.
- 4.4 The Catholic and Church of England Diocese have considered TCF guidance for a voluntary aided project. A TCF bid is proposed for St Benedict Catholic and Performing Arts College

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**Background papers:** None  
**List of appendices:** Appendix 1 - Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1.1 Each LEA bid must have a net level of funding requirement of between £500,000 and £6 million. This figure is exclusive of the matched funding that has to be made available if the project is successful. The total project costs can therefore be up to £7.5 million per bid.
- 1.2 Following detailed feasibility work, the estimated total cost of the Ivy House project is £7.4 million, and the Austin/Sunnyhill project is estimated at £7m.
- 1.3 The TCF will provide up to 80% of the total cost of any project. The remaining 20% or more of the funding can come from any source. The matched Council funding for the projects is likely to come from the NDS Condition and Modernisation Capital Programme, phased over three years, or from capital receipts. Schools devolved capital funding will also be considered as a funding source. A decision on this would have to be made by Council Cabinet once it is known whether the bids have been successful.
- 1.4 The estimated cost of the St Benedict voluntary aided project is £4.5 million. Aided schools projects need to fund 20% of costs, including the 10% statutory contribution by the school's governing body. The remaining 10% can be met from Voluntary Aided capital funding, or other funding sources. This is subject to further discussions with the Catholic Diocese and St Benedict School. The bid can only be submitted if this matched funding is available.

**Legal**

2. There would be legal processes to follow for a re-organisation of Sunnyhill Infant, Normanton Village Infant and Normanton Junior schools to form one primary school. This would involve a detailed consultation with parents, neighbouring schools and the wider community leading to the publication of statutory notices for the closures of three schools and opening of a new one. If necessary, there would also be a decision by the School Organisation Committee.

**Personnel**

3. There would be implications for staff arising from the proposed re-organisation of Sunnyhill Infant, Normanton Village Infant and Normanton Junior schools to form one primary school. These will be carefully considered and consulted upon should this bid be successful.

**Equalities**

4. The replacement of Ivy House Special School with purpose built premises co-located with a secondary school would enable its pupils to have access to modern facilities designed and constructed to meet their special educational needs, and support the development of inclusive experiences for pupils of both schools. It is also envisaged that the new Ivy House School would be able to greatly extend the current range of educational and leisure opportunities in the city for adults with a range of high level

special needs. A new primary school in Austin / Sunnyhill would offer full accessibility and modern facilities capable of meeting a wide range of educational and physical needs.

### **Corporate Objectives and priorities for change**

5. Capital investment in schools is recognised to improve both staff and pupil morale, and provide a stimulating and high quality learning environment.