

## **Report to Andrew Edwards, Director of Property and Assets**

**November 2021**

### **Award of Contract for the Woodlands Meed College New Build Project**

**Report by Philippa Hind, Head of Development**

**Electoral divisions: Burgess Hill East**

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#### **Summary**

The decision to rebuild Woodlands Meed College on its current site and with its existing capacity of 100 pupils, with a total budget of £20m was approved by Cabinet in May 2020 ([Decision CAB03\(20/21\)](#) refers). This approval acknowledged that there is a current under provision of area at the College (based on the Department for Education's Building Bulletin 104) of circa 1,259 sqm. The site fails to provide the necessary levels of inclusion. As part of this decision the Cabinet also approved the delegation of authority to the Director of Property and Assets to award the contract for the works.

ISG Construction Ltd were procured under the Southern Construction Framework (SCF) on a two-stage design and build route for the new build project. Following the end of RIBA stage 4 design and the contractor's financial offer, the total project cost has increased to £21.66m and is approximately £1.66m above the originally approved budget of £20m. In October 2021 the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills approved the allocation of the necessary additional funding to enable the project to rebuild Woodlands Meed College to proceed ([Decision LS06\(20/21\)](#) refers). The intention is to proceed with awarding the contract for carrying out the rebuilding project to ISG Construction Ltd.

This proposed decision was published in the [Forward Plan](#) on 21 April 2021 therefore the required 28 days' notice has been given. However, this decision is now urgent as it is necessary to confirm award of the contract to enable the project to commence without additional delay or further cost increase. Due to the need for this decision to be determined as soon as possible, in accordance with Standing Order 3.45, the Director of Property and Assets has consulted with the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee regarding this urgent decision being taken and coming into effect immediately.

#### **Recommendation**

That the Director of Property and Assets, in consultation with the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee, approves the award of the construction contract to rebuild Woodlands Meed College to ISG Construction Ltd for the sum of £17,787,522.46 which is affordable within the overall budget of £21.66m for this project.

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## Proposal

### 1 Background and context

- 1.1 The County Council's [West Sussex Plan](#) sets out the corporate priorities and a commitment to give children the best start in life; this includes ensuring that young people are ready for school and ready for work.
- 1.2 The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2024 which, along with the accompanying implementation plan, sets out how the County Council will support the inclusion of all children and young people, with a particular focus on those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 1.3 The vision is that all children and young people in West Sussex will, irrespective of their learning needs or abilities, gain the skills and confidence to live well in their community. They will be supported and nurtured through an educational system that responds to their circumstances and prepares them for adulthood.
- 1.4 The Planning School Places [2021](#) document sets out how the County Council are planning sufficient school places across the county. There is only one Special School serving the Mid Sussex District. This school is Woodlands Meed which caters for 259 planned places for pupils across the 2-19 age range, across two sites. The two sites are Woodlands Meed School (located in Chanctonbury Road) for 2 to 14 year olds and Woodlands Meed College (located in Birchwood Grove Road) for 15 to 19 year olds. Woodlands Meed is a generic Special School meeting the needs of a vast range of SEND.
- 1.5 A viability study was undertaken in 2018 and an options appraisal undertaken in 2019 to assess potential options for replacing the Woodlands Meed College buildings due to suitability concerns. It was a requirement that the new College building design for these potential options would be based on the Department for Education (DfE) Base Line Designs and in accordance with Guidance in Building Bulletin 104 'Area Guidelines for SEND and Alternative Provision'.
- 1.6 The decision to rebuild Woodlands Meed College on its current site and with its existing capacity of 100 pupils, with a total budget of £20m was approved by Cabinet in November 2021 ([Decision CAB03\(20/21\) refers](#)). As part of the decision the Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Property and Assets to award the building contract to carry out the necessary works.
- 1.7 The project to rebuild Woodlands Meed College on its current site and with its existing capacity of 100 places was procured under the Southern Construction Framework (SCF) on a two-stage design and build route and ISG Construction Ltd were appointed under a Pre-Construction Services to undertake and complete RIBA Stage 4 of the design.
- 1.8 Following the end of RIBA stage 4 design and the contractor's financial offer, the total project cost has increased to £21.66m and is approximately £1.66m above the originally approved budget of £20m. In October 2021 the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills approved the allocation of the necessary additional funding to enable the project to rebuild Woodlands Meed College to proceed ([Decision LS06\(20/21\) refers](#))
- 1.9 The need for additional funds of £1.66m has been driven by a number of factors but the principal reason is delay. Inflation is significant in the construction

industry at present and with regard to this project is running at approximately £141k per month. In addition the project was scheduled to start in the summer. The delay until December brings into account other factors such as working in close proximity to operating schools and colleges, potential conflict between the operations of the contractor and pupils, parents and staff and construction works taking place during the Winter. All of these factors contribute to the overall increase in project costs.

## 2 Proposal details

- 2.1 Approval to award the building contract to undertake the second stage of the works to construct the new Woodlands Meed College on its current site to ISG Construction Ltd for the sum of £17,787,522.46 is sought from the Director of Property and Assets. The contract will commence in December 2021 and the work is due to be completed during November 2023.

## 3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 Alternative options are as set out in the Cabinet Decision Report [CAB03\(20/21\)](#).

## 4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The project has been designed and agreed in full consultation with Woodlands Meed College.
- 4.2 The project has received planning permission.
- 4.3 The details of the proposal have been shared with the local Member representing Burgess Hill East.
- 4.4 The Chairman of the Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee has been consulted on this proposal due to the need for this decision to come into effect immediately.

## 5 Finance

- 5.1 Capital consequences

	Previous Years £m	Current Year 2021/22 £m	Year 2 2022/23 £m	Year 3 2023/24 £m
Capital budget	0.649	3.859	12.992	2.500
Change from Proposal	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.661
Total				21.661

- 5.2 As of the date of this report approximately £2m of the allocated £21.661m has been committed to this project. This represents costs associated with developing the project to a point where ISG can be contracted to deliver the works on site. It includes, but is not limited to design fees, survey costs, and planning fees. [Decision LS06\(20/21\)](#) refers to the allocation of funding.

### 5.3 The effect of the proposal:

(a) **How the cost represents good value**

Evidence has been provided for the work packages that have been tendered and the costs per square meter have been benchmarked. Alternative options have been considered thoroughly and this proposal offers best value for money.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

N/A

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

## 6 Risk implications and mitigations

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
Unforeseen conditions relating to site and building such as ground conditions and asbestos.	Surveys undertaken to reduce risk.
The Contractor's financial offer is valid until the end of November 2021. Beyond that date the cost will increase	Enter into a Construction Contract by the end of November 2021
Construction noise levels impacting on neighbours, College and Primary school	Early engagement with College, Primary school and neighbours. Noise monitoring to be undertaken and ongoing resident updates/newsletters
Project logistics and interface with the College/school/neighbours during construction phase.	Detailed robust logistic strategy developed and monitored.
Cost increase due to delays leading to budget pressure and worst-case over-run.	Identifying options for programme and cost betterment.

## 7 Policy alignment and compliance

### Legal Implications

- 7.1 The procurement has been completed in compliance with the Council's Standing Orders and in line with the principles of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (although a below threshold procurement). Contract terms that comply with the Council's Standing Orders will be used and will be reviewed by Legal Services.

### Equality Duty and Human Rights Assessment

- 7.2 Everyone has the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. The impact of any proposed changes on the right to family life such as a need to travel further to an appropriate school has been taken into consideration and this proposal will provide high quality Special School places close to home. Article 1 of the First Protocol is the right to education. No person shall be denied the right to education. The proposals therefore support this right as school places will be available in the local area for all children of school age.
- 7.3 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, in exercising their functions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other unlawful conduct under the Act, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This proposal will ensure suitable school places for those with protected characteristics.

#### Climate Change

- 7.4 The County Council's Design Guides have been adhered to in relation to the design of the remodelled accommodation. The Design Guides have recently been updated to ensure school building designs are in line with the County Council's [Climate Change Strategy](#).

Andrew Edwards

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**Background papers - None**