

Mr Burrett, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills (and Deputy Leader)	Ref No: ES18 (18/19)
February 2019	Key Decision: Yes
Woodlands Meed College Site, Burgess Hill - Allocation of Funding for Design Fees	Part I
Report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Director of Education and Skills	Electoral Division: Hassocks and Burgess Hill South
<p>Summary</p> <p>Woodlands Meed is a Special School and College for 2-19 year olds located in Burgess Hill. This report sets out the potential options to improve accommodation for the 15-19 year old pupils who are currently educated at the Woodlands Meed College site in Birchwood Grove Road, Burgess Hill.</p> <p>The existing accommodation has significant suitability and condition issues meaning the College is unable to offer the full curriculum and unable to accommodate the full range of Special Educational Needs. This currently results in the need for young people to be educated in costly placements in the independent non-maintained school sector.</p> <p>Following a feasibility study to assess different potential solutions for improving the College it is proposed that the County Council develops the proposal to rebuild Woodlands Meed College on its current site and expand it by an additional 30 planned places from 100 to 130. In order to progress this option it is necessary to appoint a design team through the County Council's Multi-Disciplinary Consultant to undertake the design work required to develop the feasibility design into a formal proposal. This will entail the submission of a planning application and for all construction works to be fully designed, enabling costs to be sought for all elements of the proposal including construction, ICT, and furniture and equipment.</p> <p>Once all costs are known, the Full Business Case for the project will be considered within the County Council's Capital Programme governance. Should this result in the development of a proposal to proceed it will be subject to the Key Decision process.</p>	
<p>West Sussex Plan: Policy Impact and Context</p> <p>This proposal is in accordance with the Best Start In Life Policy within the West Sussex Plan. It will ensure access to education meeting the needs of the community.</p>	
<p>Financial Impact</p> <p>The design fees will be met from the available capital budgets for Education and Skills. If the project does not proceed the incurred costs will be a revenue pressure.</p>	

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approves the allocation of £0.5m from the Capital Programme to enable a costed design to be produced for rebuilding and expanding Woodlands Meed College on its current site. The decision is subject to approval by the County Council in February 2019 of an allocation for Woodlands Meed within the Capital Programme.

PROPOSAL

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The County Council's Future West Sussex Plan sets out the corporate priorities and includes 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 In West Sussex there are around 20,000 children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) receiving support in an early years setting, school or college, with over 5,000 of these having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 1.3 Around 50% of West Sussex children and young people with an EHCP are placed in one of the 11 Special Schools across West Sussex. Around 10% of all placements are in independent and non-maintained Special Schools (INMSS). These placements are usually for those children with significant physical disabilities or where maintained provision is at capacity (mainly for Autism or complex social, emotional and mental health needs). These placements in INMSS are costly with an average cost of £42,000 per child per annum. However, costs can be as high as £150,000 per child per annum, depending on the needs of the child.
- 1.4 The Planning School Places 2019 document sets out how the County Council is planning sufficient school places across the county. There is only one Special School serving the Mid Sussex District. This school is Woodlands Meed, a generic Special School meeting the needs of a vast range of SEND, 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. Appendix B shows the location of both sites.
- 1.5 The accommodation on the College site can currently accommodate 100 Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils (age range 15 to 19).
- 1.6 The current Woodlands Meed College buildings have significant suitability issues meaning the College is unable to offer the full curriculum and unable to accommodate the full range of SEND. This is resulting in pupils needing to be accommodated elsewhere, often in more costly INMSS placements.
- 1.7 In order to address this, a feasibility study was undertaken in 2018 to assess potential options for making improvements to the College buildings and enabling an increase in the number of pupils the school could accommodate.
- 1.8 Following completion of various feasibility options, the options appraisal has concluded that the preferred option is to rebuild and expand Woodlands Meed

College. The advantages, disadvantages, risks and estimated costs of the options considered are outlined further in Appendix A.

- 1.9 The proposal to rebuild the College will also enable the school to increase the number of planned places from 259 to 289. This proposed increase will be subject to consultation by the Governing Body as the increase is in excess of 10% of the current capacity.
- 1.10 A design for the preferred option for re-building the College now needs to be developed. This will include designing the preferred option sufficiently to enable a planning application to be submitted and for the construction of the proposal to be fully costed. Once this has been prepared and full costs are known, the Full Business Case for the project will be developed and then considered in accordance with the County Council’s Capital Programme governance to assess if the project should be progressed. Should this result in the development of a proposal that meets the criteria for a Key Decision it will be subject to the appropriate Key Decision process.

2. Proposal Details

2.1 It is proposed that the Multi-Disciplinary Consultant is appointed to take forward and develop the design for the replacement Woodlands Meed College building, including the expansion, on its current site. This will require a full design team, including Architect, Mechanical and Electrical Designers, Principal Designer under the CDM (Construction Design Management) Regulations, and Structural and Civil Engineers. Additional surveys will also be required to enable a package to be produced as required for a submission of a Regulation 3 planning application. The design will be developed to a stage where firm costs can be sought for all works required.

2.2 The table below shows the options considered.

Option	Description	Effect on Capacity
Option 1	Do Nothing	Overall capacity remains at 100.
Options 2 to 5	Rebuild Options	Neutral in terms of overall capacity as it remains at 100 for all of these options. However currently the school is not able to operate at full capacity because of suitability issues. These options will negate this issue.
Option 2	Modular Buildings £1.5m cost	
Option 3	Significant condition works £4.5m to £6m	
Option 4	Rebuild on School site £17m to £19m	
Option 5	Rebuild on College site £16m to £18m	
Option 6	Rebuild College site and increase capacity from 100 to 130 – estimate £19m.	Increases capacity by 30 places from 100 to 130.

2.3 The options in the table above, the risks and associated payback periods have been appraised in more detail in Appendix A.

FACTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The preferred Option 6 (to rebuild and expand on the Woodlands Meed College site) has been chosen following the outcome of the feasibility study and in full consultation with the Woodlands Meed Governing Body. The Governing Body has confirmed they are fully supportive of Option 6 and agree that this is the preferred option due to the significant constraints on the Woodlands Meed School site.
- 3.2 The design work required to develop a proposal to rebuild the College will be carried out in full consultation and agreement with the Woodlands Meed Governing Body.
- 3.3 The proposal will be subject to planning permission.
- 3.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources has been consulted on this proposal.

4. Financial (Revenue and Capital) and Resource Implications

- 4.1 Initial funding is being sought to develop the full design for the proposal to rebuild and expand provision at Woodlands Meed College. The funding requested will enable the project to be fully designed enabling a planning application to be submitted and for full costs to be established against initial estimates provided through the feasibility stage. The table below indicates the estimated expenditure profile. The funding is sought from the Capital Programme and is subject to an allocation for improvement works to Woodlands Meed College being approved in the Capital Programme at County Council in February 2019.

Capital Implications					
Source	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Woodlands Meed		1,000	3,000	16,000	
Implications of the proposed decision		500			
Total		500			

5. Risk Assessment Implications and Mitigations

- 5.1 There is a risk that funding will not be approved in the Capital Programme by County Council in February 2019. If funds are not approved, no design work can be progressed. This would affect the development of the proposed project and may impact on the County Council's ability to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient Special School places in the locality and to meet its statutory responsibility with regard to the provision of school places in safe and properly maintained buildings.

6. Other Options Considered

6.1 A number of options to improve the College accommodation were considered and assessed as part of the feasibility study. Please refer to Appendix A for a summary of the options.

7. Equality and Human Rights Assessment

7.1 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 will be taken into consideration. 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 they set out the aim to create additional school places in the Mid-Sussex area for children with SEND.

7.2 Should the design work result in the production of a Full Business Case to replace and expand the College buildings, consultation to expand Woodlands Meed will be required. As part of the consultation, neighbouring schools, parents/carers and other interested parties will help to gather the views of a wide range of individuals including those with protected characteristics.

7.3 This consultation will include gathering information on nine protected characteristics, including race, sex, disability and religion or belief, and the documentation will take into account the diverse communication needs of the population.

8. Social Value and Sustainability Assessment

8.1 Not applicable.

9. Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessment

9.1 None.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Options, associated risks and payback period

Appendix B – Site Plan

Background papers

None

Summary of Options

Option	Summary of Option	Risk
1	Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to meet statutory duty to deliver secondary curriculum in specialist subjects • Unable to meet statutory duty to provide appropriate accommodation (breach of Equality Act 2010) • Failure to discharge a statutory duty in relation to completion of the new school • Claim against WSCC for discrimination due to accessibility issues • Unable to extend current planning permissions for modular units (due to expire 2019 and 2021) leaving insufficient places and requiring further pupils to be educated out of county • Further pupils/parents will opt for out of county placements to meet the needs of the child • Unable to meet growing demand for Special School placements in Mid Sussex • Unable to treat pupils with level of dignity required due to lack of hygiene/hoist facilities • Health and safety risks, increased incidents due to lack of group/timeout spaces, suitable storage for equipment and poor condition of external areas • Unable to deliver essential therapies on site due to lack of space • Risk of building condition deteriorating
2	Modular units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to meet statutory duty to deliver secondary curriculum in specialist subjects • Unable to meet statutory duty to provide appropriate accommodation (breach of Equality Act 2010) • Failure to discharge a statutory duty in relation to completion of the new school • Claim against WSCC for discrimination due to accessibility issues • Further pupils/parents will opt for out of county placements to meet the needs of the child • Unable to meet growing demand for Special School placements in Mid Sussex • Unable to treat pupils with level of dignity required due to lack of hygiene/hoist facilities • Health and safety risks, increased incidents due to lack of group/timeout spaces, suitable storage for equipment and poor condition of external areas

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to deliver essential therapies on site due to lack of space • Risk of building condition deteriorating • Unable to secure planning permission to replace modular units • Unable to secure funds
3	Significant condition works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to meet statutory duty to deliver secondary curriculum in specialist subjects (dependent on scope of remodelling) • Unable to meet statutory duty to provide appropriate accommodation (breach of Equality Act 2010) • Failure to discharge a statutory duty in relation to completion of the new school • Claim against WSCC for discrimination due to accessibility issues (dependent on scope of remodelling) • Further pupils/parents will opt for out of county placements to meet the needs of the child • Unable to meet growing demand for Special School placements in Mid Sussex • Unable to treat pupils with level of dignity required due to lack of hygiene/hoist facilities – additional provision is required • Health and safety risks, increased incidents due to lack of group/timeout spaces, suitable storage for equipment and poor condition of external areas • Unable to deliver essential therapies on site due to lack of space • Significant risk of undertaking construction works whilst school in occupation, particularly in a Special School with pupils with Autism etc. No 'surplus' spaces available for decant – temporary buildings would be required at additional cost • Unable to secure funds
4	Replace on School Site (existing numbers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to secure planning permission • Sport England objection due to loss of external play space • Concern in relation to all-through 2-19 school on the same site • Unable to deliver PE curriculum due to loss of external play space • Unable to remove Tree Preservation Orders resulting in inability to fit new accommodation on site • Unable to divert sewers, etc, resulting in inability to fit new accommodation on site • Unable to provide for growth in need for Special School places in Mid Sussex • Unable to secure funds
5	Replace on College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to secure planning permission

	Site (existing numbers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to provide for growth in need for Special School places in Mid Sussex • Unable to secure funds
6	Replace on College Site (increase from 100 to 130 places)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to secure planning permission • Unable to secure funds

Table Showing Costs and Paybacks of the Various Options

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total costs excluding borrowing	0	1.5	6	19	18	19
Total capital outlay including borrowing costs	0	2.702	10.811	34.235	32.433	34.235
Annualised borrowing costs and principal per year (additional revenue costs)	0	0.054	0.216	0.684	0.648	0.684
Pay Back in years						
Average pay back (core assumptions)	0	7	25	112	106	32
High pay back	0	5	29	116	110	36
Low pay back	0	9	21	120	114	28
Assumptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% funded - corporate funded through borrowing • Build up in capacity as per service for Option 6 • Inflation is ignored • Borrowing at 2.61% for 50 years reflecting current rates and policy • Average cost of an alternative INMSS Placement = £42,000 • Place funding paid to a Special School (paid whether place is filled or not) is £10,000 • Average top up funding per place (paid over and above place funding when filled) is £6,650 (rounded to £7,000) • Net saving for avoiding INMSS placement is £25,000 (£42,000 INMSS cost - £10,000 place funding - £7,000 top up) • No grant funding or capital receipts funding applied assumed • Scheme does not over or underspend (for average assumption) • Each additional West Sussex Special School place that is filled on census day in October each year will also attract an additional £4,000 of Government funding through the DSG High Needs allocation formula 						

The six options would all have revenue implications.

These are outlined below.

- Reduced INMSS placements from being able to fill up places that cannot be filled currently because of suitability issues (Options 2 to 5).
- Fewer alternative INMSS placements required due to increased capacity at Woodlands Meed (Option 6 only).
- Reduced annual maintenance costs at Woodlands Meed (all options except 'do nothing').
- Increased per place funding from the DSG. (These offset the savings above) (Options 2 to 6 detailed in paragraph 2.2); these are £10,000 per West Sussex created place.
- Increased top up funding from the DSG. (These offset the INMSS saving) (Options 2 to 6 detailed in paragraph 2.2); these are £7,000 per filled West Sussex place.
- Additional revenue borrowing costs, interest on corporate borrowing principal amounts and interest.
- Each additional occupied place at Woodlands Meed on census day in October each year will attract a further £4,000 of funding through the DSG (Options 2 to 6 detailed in paragraph 2.2).

Sensitivity Analysis

There are a number of variables and the effect of varying some of these on the payback period has been modelled for each option. These are shown below.

- Interest Rate changes.
- Rate of take up of extra capacity created.
- Revenue maintenance costs avoided.
- Scheme under or overspend against estimates.

The variables below have been ignored.

- Inflation (would reduce the payback period).
- Home to School Transport costs (cannot be modelled).
- Utilities/Property costs (These are funded from the per place funding above).
- Additional teachers (These are funded from the per place funding above).
- The use of Government grants and capital receipts has been ignored as it cannot be precisely quantified at this stage.