

Executive Summary Report

New Primary School for Whiteley

Bunney Land and Temporary School Options

December 2006

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council requested a feasibility study to be undertaken for locating a primary school on land being offered by Messrs G & J Bunney to the north of the current settlement boundary. The feasibility study has been undertaken and a report produced which confirms and summarises the findings.
- 1.2 The County Council also asked for a study into the potential of a further alternative to provide a temporary school for primary aged children; this temporary school would then move to a permanent building and site within the future development to the north of Whiteley. The study has been undertaken and a report produced which confirms and summarises the findings.

2.0 The Bunney Land Option

- 2.1 The County Council have commissioned surveys and a soils investigation for the proposed site and appointed consultants to provide advice on the implications of the proposed location and site for the new school. Their advice includes consideration of two options for an access road to the site and the report summarises these proposals. Also included is consideration of services and drainage proposals for the school and access road.
- 2.2 The costs and programme implications are highlighted in the report and key risks identified.

3.0 The Temporary School Option

- 3.1 Consideration has been given to the temporary school option and proposals summarised in the attached report. The viability of this option has been considered following a visual inspection of the site and by way of desktop information to date. No site surveys or soils investigation have been carried out as yet.
- 3.2 *Not for publication – relates to confidential financial information to a third party.*
- 3.3 The costs and programme implications are again highlighted in the report and key issues identified.

4.0 Costs

4.1 The costs for the options are,

Bunney land option

£7.8m - £8.2m @4Q08 depending on the infrastructure option.

Temporary school option

£650,000 initial cost @2Q07 to establish the school (4 classrooms plus hall and ancillary accommodation).

If numbers were to increase to 1FE the cost of providing the additional capacity is estimated to be in the region of a further £300k @ 2Q07.

Should there be a subsequent need to relocate the temporary school to the Meadowside site then there would be further costs to be considered.

4.2 The feasibility report for the Bunney Land has required the commissioning of specialist consultants to carry out investigative work, undertake surveys and consult with statutory bodies. Inclusive of in-house professional time the fees expended in producing the feasibility report amount in total to £37,875.

It should also be noted that the professional fee expenditure incurred in developing the early proposals and funding arrangements for the new school, and including the Meadowside feasibility amounts to a further £73,000.

4.3 The current approved funding for Whiteley is as follows:

Approved TCF bid:

£2,798k (construction), £420k (fees), £257k (F&E), £608K (VAT) = £4,083k

Church funding:

£370k (construction), £56k (fees), £74k (VAT) = £500k

06/07 capital programme:

£1,438k (no VAT)

Total £6,021k inclusive of fees, fit out and VAT.

The VAT status of the project is to be confirmed in due course by the DFES.

4.4 The proposal for a school on the Bunney Land does generate a significant level of cost associated with the site and infrastructure abnormalities as noted above. The overall estimated cost of £7.8m - £8.2m for the Bunney Land option compares with the previous estimate of £5.5m for the Meadowside scheme proposal.

5.0 Programme

- 5.1 The feasibility study for the Bunney Land concludes a school could be completed and opened by September 2009.
A temporary school could be established and opened by September 2007 subject to a decision in January 2007.
Both these assessments of possible timelines for delivery of the school are subject to those decisions, agreements and approvals highlighted in the attached report.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The following specific points are highlighted in relation to the proposed Bunney land option,
- 6.1.1 - If the option of providing the primary school on the Bunney is pursued then the school will be constructed approximately two years' later than the option of the school adjacent to the existing Meadowside Centre which had been planned for a September 2007 completion. The 2009 opening on the Bunney land would be after the peak intake year for Year R children (2007) and something like three years too early for the proposed housing at North Whiteley. Each year that the new school is not available will mean that more children from Whiteley will attend schools south of the M27, with the likelihood that their siblings will follow them
- 6.1.2 - The normal gross cost per square metre for a 1FE school would be in the order of £2,500/m² compared to £4,250/m² for the Bunney Land, which is a percentage increase of 70%. This raises questions as to whether this option could be supported in terms of value for money.
- 6.1.3 - The planning position for a school in North Whiteley remains, after the feasibility work, unresolved. What is clear is that planning a school in this way would be considered high risk in normal planning conventions; without a sensible master plan for its relationship to other services, infrastructure and housing.
- 6.1.4 - The building of the school now on the Bunney land would reduce the County Council's ability to leverage the money from the developers at a future date through Section 106 contributions when Whiteley North is brought forward. This could only be off set by trying to establish payments in advance which is unlikely given the uncertainty of the planning position and with no formal legal agreement.
- 6.2 The key issue on the temporary site option is the securing the early availability of the site for the school from the land owner. A consensus view with all parties including the landowner, Winchester City Council and the Parish Council is required in January 2007 to facilitate a school to be built and operational by September 2007.