

BOROUGH OF POOLE

COUNCIL

21ST OCTOBER 2008

**LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICE ACCOMMODATION: REPORT OF THE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Council on the current position of finding a suitable permanent base for the Learning Support Service (LSS), central service and administration; and on the current position of finding temporary accommodation for the pupils displaced from the GAFF (Hamworthy Youth Centre) as a result of the Hamworthy Library Project until the permanent base for the Learning Support Service is completed. Also to seek approval of the Project to locate temporary buildings on the site of Hamworthy Liberal Club at a cost of £470,000.

2. DECISIONS REQUIRED

- (i) That Council approves the acceptance of the grant funding and the virement of £1M from within the Children's Services Capital Programme for the building of a new LSS Unit and the Project be included within the Council's Capital Programme.
- (ii) That £470,000 of unearmarked reserves be set aside to fund the temporary accommodation of the LSS Unit on the site of the Hamworthy Liberal Club.

3. BACKGROUND/INFORMATION

- 3.1 Cabinet, at its Meeting on 7th October 2008, unanimously recommended that Council approve the grant funding and virement of £1M for the building of a new LSS Unit and that £470,000 of unearmarked reserves be set aside to fund the temporary accommodation of the LSS Unit on the site of the Hamworthy Liberal Club.
- 3.2 I attach, for Members' Information, the supporting Report to Cabinet and I urge Members to accept the recommendations.

**Councillor Tony Woodcock
Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People**

COUNCIL – 21ST OCTOBER 2008 – FOR INFORMATION

BOROUGH OF POOLE

CABINET

7TH OCTOBER 2008

LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICE ACCOMMODATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the current position of finding a suitable permanent base for the Learning Support Service (LSS) central service and administration.
- 1.2 To update Cabinet on the current position of finding temporary accommodation for the pupils displaced from The Gaff (Hamworthy Youth Centre) as a result of the Hamworthy Library project until the permanent base for the Learning Support Service is completed.
- 1.3 To seek a recommendation from Cabinet to Council to approve the project to locate temporary buildings on the site of Hamworthy Liberal Club at a cost of £470,000.

2. DECISION REQUIRED

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council acceptance of the grant funding and the virement of £1m from within the Children's Services Capital Programme for the building of a new LSS unit and the project to be included within the Council's Capital Programme.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommend to Council that £470,000 of unearmarked reserves is set aside to fund the temporary accommodation of the LSS Unit on the site of the Hamworthy Liberal Club.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Learning Support Service has a statutory duty to provide education for children out of school in the Borough of Poole. The LSS provides for pupils who:
 - Have been permanently excluded from school
 - Are unable to attend due to long term health problems
 - Are returning to school following a period of exclusion, illness or school phobia.
- 3.2 The hospital service provides individual programmes for children and young people with medical conditions and this part of the service is currently based

at the Hospital and Pine Cottage. Statutory provision for these pupils is a minimum of five hours a week and their access to educational opportunities will largely be dictated by the severity of their condition.

- 3.3 In addition, there are currently two pupil referral centres which have a statutory duty to provide full time, individualised educational programmes for children and young people who have been permanently excluded from Poole schools.
- 3.4 The LSS currently has its administrative base at the Borough of Poole Children and Young People's Integrated Services offices above the Dolphin Central Library and has teaching bases at Broadstone Youth Centre and Hamworthy Youth Centre (The Gaff). It also uses Creekmoor and Turlin Moor Youth Centres and the Central Library.
- 3.5 The required movement of pupils around the Borough resulted in the OfSTED inspections in 2004 and 2007 identifying a priority need for more suitable accommodation as the current arrangements are considered unsatisfactory. The Service has now been placed under special measures.
- 3.6 The current accommodation has no specialist facilities to deliver the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum, no facilities for staff in terms of a staff room or space for lesson preparation and there is a lack of areas, which can be used for confidential discussions.
- 3.7 The bid to the Big Lottery Fund to redevelop the Hamworthy Library and Youth Centre was successful. The current site includes The Gaff which is occupied by the LSS, unfortunately the new Community Library facilities require the demolition of the Gaff are the new facilities are unable to accommodate the LSS. In order to secure the Lottery Funding, the LSS has been asked to vacate The Gaff by the end of December 2008.

4. PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

- 4.1 CYPS Integrated Services and SQI have worked with an external consultant and Property Services over the past two years to identify and investigate possible suitable options for a permanent base for the LSS. Options considered have included:
 - Existing Poole school sites
 - Existing Borough of Poole non-school sites
 - Industrial units
 - Office buildings
 - Residential accommodation
 - Sharing facilities with Bournemouth Council
- 4.2 The outcome of the options appraisal was that no sites were identified as representing best value.

- 4.3 In August 2007 Property Services reported that the sale of the former Rossmore Library site was likely not to proceed and that this might be a possible suitable base for the LSS. A feasibility study was undertaken which concluded that this site best met the requirements of the LSS.
- 4.4 In October Property Services confirmed that the sale of the site for redevelopment as affordable housing could not proceed due to restrictions imposed by Natural England preventing any new housing development within a 400 metre zone of heath land. The former library is situated within the restriction zone and therefore the use of the land is restricted. Planning approval for change of use will not be required as libraries and education are within the same planning category.
- 4.5 An options appraisal has considered the feasibility and comparative costs of either refurbishing the existing building or new build. The conclusion is that new build at an estimated cost of £2.5m would meet the accommodation brief in line with DCSF design guidance and would provide best value.
- 4.6 Children's Services Capital Programme Board, Cabinet and Full Council agreed that a Targeted Capital Fund bid should be submitted to DCSF by 30th June 2007. The bid sought DCSF funding for 60% of the project costs (£1.5m) with 40% matched funding (£1m) from the Children's Services Capital Programme. Under the terms of the grant, the maximum bid was meant to be 50% but the Council made a very strong case for a 60% grant and received this on the basis that this would be a new build project. This means the Council can invest in a much better building which will be fit for purpose for the same investment that was being made in the refurbishment of a building that was not fit for purpose.
- 4.7 The DCSF advised the Council on 1st October 2008 that the funding bid had been approved by Ministers.

5. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR THE GAFF

- 5.1 Property Services have advised that the project to develop the former Rossmore Library site will be completed ready for occupation by September 2010. As the Learning Support Service can no longer use The Gaff after December 2008, temporary accommodation will be needed from January 2009 until August 2010.
- 5.2 The Service drew up the following accommodation brief:
- 3 teaching rooms – 5m x 5m minimum. Built in cupboard space in each.
 - One teaching space to have a sink – for Science / Art.
 - Two small offices – one admin and one HT office. Admin office needs to be at the entrance.
 - Small reception area for students to wait before lessons am and pm.
 - One small space for “cool down” for students.
 - Staff and student toilets – disabled access.
 - Staff room with secure lockers for staff.

- Recreational space – large enough for table tennis and table football and for meals – approx 50 – 55m².
- Access to IT in each teaching room.

5.3 Three options were identified as possible locations for the temporary accommodation:

Option 1 – Hamworthy Fire Station

- 5.4 Once the new Poole fire station opens, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service will no longer operate the Hamworthy Fire Station as a “manned” station. In future there will only be a retained presence, probably one fire appliance and Land Rover vehicles. The site will also be used for training but the surplus parts of the main building will be used for various community uses.
- 5.5 Although there would be no available space in the main building for the LSS, the grassed area adjacent to Carter Avenue was considered as a possible location for temporary buildings.
- 5.6 Initial investigations by officers from Property Services and Children’s Services have concluded that the site would not be large enough to accommodate the 250 m² – 300 m² required. There are also concerns regarding the proximity to neighbouring residential properties, large vehicle movements and turning on the site, the petroleum store and tower which could prove a distraction to students, and little remaining space for recreation. However, a planning application was submitted for this site and approval was granted on 29th August.
- 5.7 Property Services have advised that the estimated costs of providing temporary accommodation, which meets the accommodation brief, would be approximately £575,000.

Option 2 – Turlin Moor Community Centre

- 5.8 Following a fire, the Turlin Moor Community Centre was demolished last year and the site is currently unused. It would be suitable for the location of temporary buildings. The estimated costs would be broadly the same as for the Hamworthy Fire Station site.
- 5.9 It was decided that this site was unsuitable for use by the LSS due to it being further for pupils to travel and an inappropriate message to the local community.

Option 3 – Hamworthy Liberal Club

- 5.10 The Liberal Club committee are planning to close the Liberal Hall Club and are keen to find an alternative use for the building, and or the land at the rear of the site.

- 5.11 Initial investigations by officers from Property Services and Children's Services have concluded that due to the age and numerous previous uses of the building the cost of conversion would be prohibitive. However, the land at the rear of the site would be suitable for a modular building of circa 255m².
- 5.12 Discussions with the Chairman of the Liberal Hall Trustees have been very positive and outline 'heads-of-terms' are being drawn up. A planning application is being prepared for a modular/temporary building to be located on a hard standing area at the rear of the site.
- 5.13 Property Services have advised that the estimated costs of providing modular/temporary accommodation, which meets the accommodation brief, would be approximately £470,000.
- 5.14 It was concluded that the land at the rear of the Hamworthy Liberal Club is the preferred option because:
- It represents better value for money than the only other viable option, the Fire Station site.
 - It has good public transport, vehicular and pedestrian links.
 - Unlike the fire station site it has outdoor space.
 - There is adequate parking space for staff, visitors and deliveries.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The former Rossmore Library site is suitable for meeting the requirements of the LSS but it will take approximately two years to deliver the scheme.
- 6.2 Temporary arrangements need to be made to accommodate the students displaced from The Gaff by the Hamworthy Library project from January 2009 until the permanent accommodation is ready for occupation.
- 6.3 The estimated cost of locating temporary buildings on the site of Hamworthy Liberal Club is £470,000. These costs cannot be met by the Rossmore Library project or from the Children's Services Capital Programme and approval is sought to fund them from corporate resources.
- 6.4 The Medium Term Financial Plan was taken to Cabinet on 9th September 2008 setting out that £0.5m would be required to fund temporary accommodation for the Learning Support Service due to the tight timetable for the Hamworthy Library project. It was agreed to set aside reserves to cover this awaiting a detailed report on costs.

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