



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

Inner West Area Committee

Date: 6 December 2007

Subject: Building Schools for the Future – Phase 2: Reserved Matters Planning Application for New School at West Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley
Bramley & Stanningley

Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

The report briefly sets out the present position regarding progress towards the replacement of the existing Wortley and West Leeds High Schools with a new school on the West Leeds site and the refurbishment and extension of three further schools in the West Leeds area under Phase 2 of Building Schools for the Future. It is anticipated that a Reserved Matters Planning Application for the West Leeds High School site will have been submitted by the time that this meeting takes place.

It sets out the likely programme for dealing with the application in anticipation of starting on site in late February 2007 and the likely issues that will arise from the planning application.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to notify and inform the Inner West Area Committee of the latest update on the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme and, in particular, how this relates to the creation of a new school on the current site of West Leeds High School, specifically:

* Highlighting the Reserved Matters Planning Application that should have been submitted by the time that this meeting takes place; and

* Inviting questions and comments on the proposals from members of the Area Committee.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Wave One of the Leeds BSF Programme involves the re-building and refurbishment of 14 Secondary Schools, to be procured in three phases. The procurement includes the formation of a Local Education Partnership (LEP) which, under the terms of the Partnership Agreement, has been granted certain exclusivity rights for future investment in the City Council's Secondary School estate that may be approved under the Government's Building Schools for the Future Programme.
- 2.2 Phase 1 of the programme is now on site, with new schools under construction at Allerton, Pudsey Grangefield and Rodillian High Schools (scheduled to open in September 2008) and partial rebuild/refurbishment schemes at Cockburn and Temple Moor High Schools (to open early 2009). Work has also now commenced at Allerton Grange High School (where the new building is due to open in September 2009). The new schools are being procured under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) with the others being procured from the LEP partners under a Design and Build contract.
- 2.3 The Phase 2 schools are at West Leeds (new-build to be procured under PFI) arising from the merger of the existing Wortley and West Leeds High Schools), and partial rebuild/refurbishment schemes at Pudsey Crawshaw, Priesthorpe and Farnley Park (Design and Build). Outline planning permission was granted for the schools in Phase 2 in February 2007 (with the exception of Crawshaw, where the extent of new build was insufficient to justify an outline application).
- 2.4 It is anticipated that Reserved Matters Planning applications will have been submitted for the new school at West Leeds and for Priesthorpe before the end of November 2007, with the aim of obtaining planning permission during February 2008 and, subject to permission being granted, work commencing on this site shortly afterwards and Priesthorpe in June 2008. The detailed schemes for Farnley Park and Crawshaw are currently in preparation.
- 2.5 As part of the consultation process on the planning applications, reports are being submitted to the relevant Area Committees, explaining the proposals, setting out what the key issues are likely to be and inviting and comments on the proposals from members of the committees. In addition, a pre-application consultation meeting was held at West Leeds High School on Wednesday 7 November, in relation to the specific proposals for the new West Leeds School. Ward councilors for the Armley and Farnley and Wortley Wards were invited, together with John Battle MP. Any comments from these consultations will be taken into account when the applications are reported to the West Plans Panel early in the New Year.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The proposed development is a replacement high school, to replace the existing buildings at West Leeds High School and Wortley High School. The new building, which will be based around a large central courtyard, is proposed to be predominantly 2-3 storeys in height and sited immediately to the west of the main buildings that comprise the existing West Leeds High School. This will enable the development to take place with the least possible disruption to the school, which will remain open

while building takes place. The three-storey block forms the east side of the building – away from residential property. All existing buildings, including the CLC but not the Caretaker’s House, will be demolished when the new building is complete.

- 3.2 The principal vehicular and pedestrian accesses to the new school will be from Heights Drive. A service access will be taken from Congress Mount, adjacent to the turn into Conference Road and pedestrian accesses will also be provided from Congress Mount and Heights Way. In addition there will be a pedestrian gate onto Heights Lane, giving access over the railway bridge to the existing Heights Lane playing fields and new provision on the currently-disused and overgrown triangle of land on the opposite side of the road. The existing footpath along the top of the railway embankment is proposed to be widened, surfaced and straightened and provided with lighting.
- 3.3 When the school is complete, in addition to the existing playing fields at Heights Lane, there will be two multi-use games areas and training grids within the main school site as well as new facilities on the triangle to the north of the railway.
- 3.4 The issues which were raised at the outline planning stage have featured strongly during a lengthy period of negotiation on the designs and layouts of the schools that have taken place since the granting of outline planning permission, involving planning, urban design, highways and other officers, together with input from CABA, LADI and the Civic Architect. In the case of this site, the key issues have been:
 - The quality of the design and appearance of the development, in particular, fitting it onto a restricted site area and making it a focal point for the local community;
 - Its relationship with and impact on the adjacent area of the proposed development especially houses backing onto the site in Heights Walk and Heights Way, which are at a lower level than most of the school site;
 - Vehicular and pedestrian access – including catering for increased numbers of students from the Wortley direction and reducing the amount of traffic using Congress Mount;
 - Provision of a sufficient area and quality of playing fields and other sports facilities to meet the needs of the school itself and community users;
 - Providing a safer pedestrian link over the railway bridge between the main school site and the sports facilities on Heights Lane;
 - Improving the attractiveness and safety of the footpath, adjacent to the railway between Congress Mount and Heights Lane.
- 3.5 The submitted scheme seeks to address most of the above issues – although the details of off-site highway works (including pedestrian crossing facilities, improvements to the pedestrian route over the railway bridge and other traffic management together with detailed matters – for example, details of planting as part of the landscaping scheme will follow, pursuant to outline planning permission conditions.
- 3.6 Copies of plans, elevations and other drawings showing the siting, appearance and layout of the proposed new school will be presented at the meeting.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 The scheme forms part of the Council's programme for refurbishing and renewing secondary schools throughout the city as part of BSF Wave 1. Consultation is being carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the planning applications will be determined by the appropriate Plans Panel.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 These schemes are all part of the BSF funding allocation.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The reserved matters planning application for the new school at West Leeds referred to above has been subject to an extensive and collaborative design process. However, any comments, ideas or suggestions that the members of the Area Committee may wish to put forward prior to consideration by the Plans Panel will be most welcome.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Inner West Area Committee is requested to note the content of the report, and provide comment on the proposals.