

Meeting:	Cabinet member contracts and assets
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 16 October 2018
Title of report:	Almeley Primary School: new permanent build accommodation
Report by:	Sufficiency Planning and Capital Investment Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Castle;

Purpose and summary

To authorise the replacement of a double mobile with permanent build accommodation at Almeley Primary School.

Almeley Primary School is rated as a Good school by Ofsted and has been consistently admitting children up to its planned admission number.

Funding has been identified in the council's capital programme to enable the replacement of mobile accommodation with permanent build.

The scheme will provide replacement accommodation for two classrooms with associated support spaces and will remove the last of the mobile accommodation from site.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The replacement of a double mobile with permanent build accommodation be authorised at a cost of no more than £450k; and**

- (b) The assistant director education development and skills (interim) be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the above recommendation within the approved budget including award of contract.**

Alternative options

1. The existing mobiles continue to be used as classrooms by Almeley. This is not practical as the mobiles are in poor condition. One side of the mobiles appears to be sinking resulting in a requirement to regularly lift it. The jacks used to adjust the height of the mobiles have reached their maximum extent with any further adjustment being covered by the insertion of concrete slabs below. This continual movement is causing a difference in level between the classrooms which is causing a health and safety concern to the school.
2. The existing mobiles are replaced with new mobile accommodation. The siting of a mobile would not be considered best value as they are looked upon as temporary solutions, have a finite planning term and do not have the life span that a permanent build accommodation would have. The school has demonstrated the requirement for these additional classrooms over previous years by consistently admitting to their planned admission number. Replacement mobiles would also not support the principles of the council's schools capital investment strategy which includes the objective that "children are not taught in temporary classrooms".

Key considerations

3. Almeley Primary School is a small council maintained school located in the west of Herefordshire approximately 6 miles to the south east of the market town of Kington. It is currently rated Good by Ofsted and is at the heart of the local community, providing a rich context for learning and contributing effectively to village life. The school is a one third form entry school with a planned admission number of 11 pupils per year and has been consistently taking in pupils close to this admission number each year.
4. The school occupies an old building which was extended in 2011 to provide a secure entrance and reception classroom and removing an existing single mobile classroom. This was funded using Primary Strategy for Change, Maintenance, Individual pupil needs and School Devolved Formula Capital funding. The remaining two classroom spaces are provided by a double mobile. This mobile was also extended in 2011 at the same time as the school extension to create a cloakroom area for the children.
5. The mobile accommodation does not meet the requirements in terms of space standards as defined by the Department for Education's Building Bulletin 103 Area Guidelines For Schools which set out nationally agreed standards. The classrooms are small and the mobile is in poor condition.
6. The mobiles are sited at the far end of the playground on a piece of ground with a steep slope at one end. Over the last few years the school have been regularly appointing contractors to lift the mobiles on the one side where it appeared that they were sinking into the ground causing a difference in floor level between the units. Further adjustments are complicated by the jacks used to adjust the height of the mobiles having reached their maximum extent. Additional adjustments therefore require the insertion of concrete blocks below the jacks.
7. The new building proposed will be located to the side of the main school building on a small separate hard play area. It will compromise two appropriately sized classrooms with storage and toilets. Building the facility in this area will help to reduce the costs of the

project as the mobiles can be retained whilst the build is in progress resulting in no additional costs to relocate the children whilst the work is underway.

8. The project would include the removal and disposal of the existing mobiles which will not be required once the new block has been completed and made ready for occupation.
9. The completed works would be required to conform to all relevant safety standards in respect of fencing and controlled access.
10. Plans will be finalised and subject to open tender in line with the council's contract procedure rules in October/November 2018 to enable a contractor to be appointed and work on site to commence by January 2019. This will enable completion and occupation of the building by April/May 2019.
11. The building will be added to the assets of the school and therefore all responsibility for insurance, running costs and day-to-day maintenance will lie with the school.

Community impact

12. Almeley Primary School is a popular and successful village school rated as 'Good' by Ofsted.
13. The scheme supports the achievement of the council's corporate plan priority to keep children and young people safe and given them a great start in life by ensuring that the educational environment is safe and fit for purpose.
14. The decision supports the council's school capital investment strategy that recognises the important contribution a high quality education brings to the lives of children, the wellbeing of residents and to future economic prosperity. Almeley Primary School has a detailed financial plan in place which sets out its arrangements to ensure its continuity.
15. The creation of these permanent build classrooms on the school site will eliminate the safety issues encountered by using the existing poor condition mobiles as these mobiles will be removed as part of the project.
16. The health and safety policy of the school will be amended to incorporate the classroom block, which will come into effect once the build is complete. Responsibility for the on-site health and safety during the construction phase of the project will lie with the contractor once appointed. The contractor will need to conform with the CDM 2015 Construction Design and Management Regulation, under which they will need to produce the necessary method statements and risk assessments for the work undertaken. The site will be kept separated, as far as possible once work has started, from the school, and will be kept secured at all times to prevent unauthorised access.

Equality duty

17. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
18. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
19. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
20. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes. The new building will be fully compliant with disability legislation, support improved accessibility and will take into account the needs of pupils with protected characteristics..

Resource implications

21. The extension created in 2011 to provide a replacement classroom and secure entrance was delivered at a cost of £279k. These costs were met by the council £184k and the school £95k.
22. The school has contributed a total of £95k towards the replacement of mobile accommodation with permanent build. There will be no further contribution from the school.
23. £450k corporate funding has been made available in the capital programme by full Council for the replacement of mobile accommodation with permanent build in the corporate capital programme and is included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Estimated build cost and mobile removal	£ 380k
Professional fees	£ 40k
Contingency	£ 30k
Total cost	£ 450k

24. The figures shown are not final costs however they are based on a detailed analysis of the proposed scheme and current professional advice on the cost range per square metre for new school construction projects.
25. The new building will be more energy efficient than the existing mobiles however, the overall footprint will be larger. The extent of the differential, in terms of revenue savings from energy efficiency or additional revenue costs from a larger footprint, is not known; however the school is prepared to cover the costs of any increase in revenue, should this occur, as it will result in more suitable accommodation being available for the children.

Legal implications

26. There are no significant legal implications arising from this report. The council has a number of legal obligations in respect of the maintenance of its buildings and the delivery

of sufficient educational provision for the children in the county and the provision of additional capacity in this school site is consistent with those duties.

27. The construction contract should be procured in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules and through a competitive process to ensure that a best value solution is procured.

Risk management

28. There is a risk that the final costs of delivering the scheme exceed the budget available. The costs will be monitored at all stages and value engineering applied to realise the project within budget. Regular site meetings will take place with stakeholders to ensure that costs are kept to a minimum and no unnecessary works are undertaken. There is a contingency in the capital budget which is not expected to be exceeded.
29. There is a risk that users of the adjacent village hall will be affected by the work. These users will be made aware of the work and will be kept informed as the scheme progresses.
30. There is a risk that planning permission is not granted. Planning has been contacted. Initial comments are that they do not foresee any objections in principle and that issues are likely to relate to the detailed design of the building and whether the scheme results in a loss of play space. These areas will be included as the design progresses.

Consultees

31. The head teacher and governors of the school have been involved from the start of the project and are aware of any financial risks in terms of revenue costs.
32. A capital strategy consultative group, with a number of head teachers, diocesan and arch-diocesan representation and council property services officers meet at least termly. The outline proposals were agreed as a constructive use of the funding.
33. The local ward member has been consulted and has not objected to the scheme.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None identified.