

Appendix 3.

Responses to further queries raised by Cllr. Toon following Cabinet on 27th March 2008.

- i. ICT provision – To sign off the S151 Officer assurance statement, there should be an ICT specification in place and ICT costings within the OBC. BECTA have confirmed that this is what is required. The Outline Business Case does include a figure for ICT so presumably there is something to back this? Also, there is a letter from George Salmon to the Chair of the Trust dated mid February asking for commitment on the ICT issues – so not sure if there is anything after this point in time that show the specification and costings are in place. If the rules say these things should be ready before the OBC is signed off, we do need to produce them.

It is the Sponsors who are responsible for drawing up the ICT specification, and it will also be their responsibility to procure the ICT hardware initially using the £1,624,000 capital allocation from PfS to do this. This will have to be done in close consultation with the building design and construction but it does mean that the Local Authority is not responsible for that element of the project. The Local Authority is responsible for the provision of ICT infrastructure within the building, and £252,000 has been allocated within the overall sum to do this. In financial terms it does mean that the quarterly drawdown payments from PfS are divided between the costs of construction which are due to the Local Authority and the costs of ICT which are due to the Sponsor. The specification is being completed at present and should be available to include in an annex to the OBC on Monday 7 April.

The letter to the Chair of the Trust sought the Sponsors commitment to ICT in teaching and learning and their reassurance that future annual revenue spending on ICT will be at the level of £80.00 - £160.00 per pupil per annum, and so secure the Sponsors commitment to maintain and upgrade any system provided initially. As the expenditure at the school is at this level, it is anticipated that the Sponsors would be able to commit to this.

- ii. There is a query whether we could rely on the letter from the Planning Officer as a letter of comfort that the planning issues would be okay as it does contain quite a number of queries even for OBC stage. Councillor Toon has spoken to planning, and has reported that they are quite concerned about the proposals.

Planning

The discussion with Planning and the consultant architects were over the size and location of the buildings, and access to the site. There would seem to be no objection from planning officers on these points. It is expected that a traffic impact analysis will be needed, and at this stage of the design process, it is to be expected that there will be many issues to be resolved. Kevin Bishop in development Control has been asked if additional issues have emerged since his meeting with the architects. We do need to remember that in a national context, OBC's will be attempting to assess the likelihood of obtaining planning permission for academies on sites which have had no previous educational use. The fact that the site already is used by a 900 place high school suggests that discussion will be over the detail of the design rather than fundamental issues.

- iii. Funding for the Academy once open and running will go direct to the Academy and not via us as the Local Authority.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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 Tel: 01432 260802

Revenue Funding

The same formula will be used to identify a budget for the academy as applied to other high schools in the County. Malcolm Green's understanding of the 'routing' of the money is as follows:

The DCSF allocate the full Dedicated Schools Grant to the Local Authority, taking into account the number of pupils attending Academies. The Local Authority then calculates each school's budget and informs the DCSF of the budgets due to the Academy, who deduct the monthly DSG payments made to the Authority and pay the Academy the equivalent amounts.

- iv. Is there a letter from Sport England confirming they are happy in principle? Councillor Toon also says that an officer has told her that Sports England funding for this school has never been pursued 'because it's too much paperwork'. This compares to the Blind College that recently got £1,000,000 out of Sports England for improved facilities and wonders why we can't have a slice of the action?

Sport England

Following the advice of the Planners, Navigant arranged a meeting with Bob Sharples, West Midlands Sport England representative as soon as it became clear that the new build option was viable (15th February 2008.) The first opportunity to meet with Bob Sharples was on 12th March 2008 to discuss Hereford Academy Sports proposals, (meeting notes sent by Annabel Choppen on 19th March 2008 are attached). The sports provision shown on the OBC drawings was limited to an exercise demonstrating the maximum sports provision that could be reprovided. Bob Sharples was supportive and appreciated that significantly improved sports facilities outweigh the issue of building on the sports fields. It was in this meeting that we became aware of the need for a Sports Development Plan to support any planning application, to be approved by Sport England.

The outcome of this meeting has prompted John Sheppard to meet with Brenda Grace, Youth Sport Trust Support for DCSF to expand the Academy Sports Development Plan. Working with the Academy there will be a Sports Stakeholder Group with representatives from Herefordshire Council, Sports Partnerships, Academy Trust and Navigant Technical Advisors. Its aim is to identify community sports clubs/ partnerships to use facilities out of school hours, to strengthen the Sports Development Plan and to establish a scope of facilities at the Academy. The initial meeting of this group on 16 April 2008.

In terms of wider funding streams Bob Sharples did identify organisations for the Stakeholder group to consider. The Sports Stakeholder Group are also in a position to recommend other available funding sources and if the Academy meets the funding criteria then applications will be recommended. At this point there is no certainty of additional sports funding, but this could be referred to in the OBC to be submitted to PFS as possible further funding opportunities.

There is no knowledge of any advice being offered about 'too much paperwork' in grant applications, although there is an impression that much of Sports England funding is being directed towards the Olympics, and less towards Sports Development.