

BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Report By: HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To note the bid to the DfES for inclusion in the first phase of the Government's initiative, '*Building Schools for the Future*'.

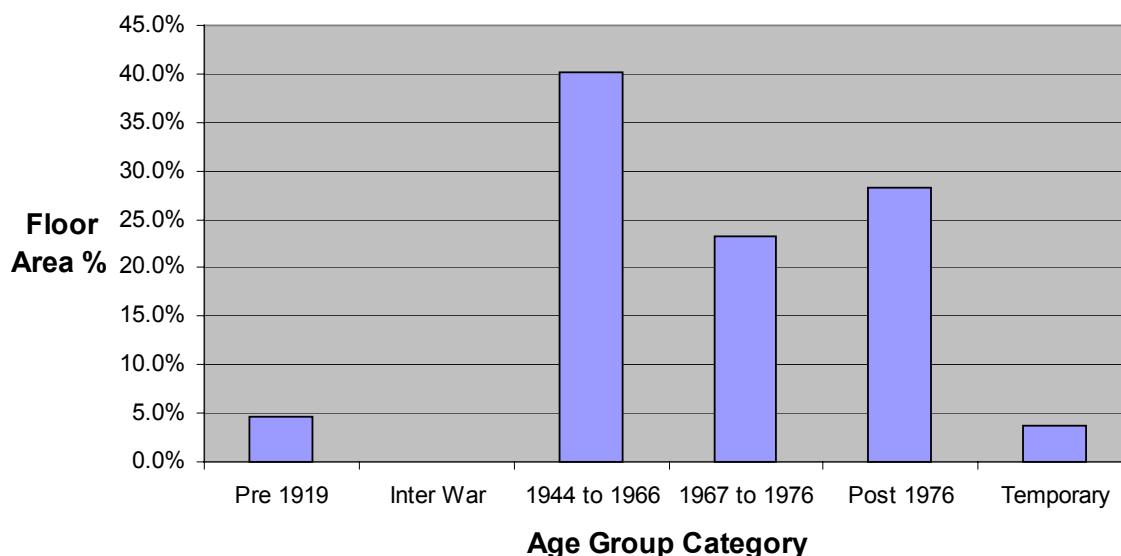
Financial Implications

2. As detailed in the report.

Report

3. The DfES invited all LEAs to submit bids by the end of October, or expressions of interest by December 2003 in response to the initiative, '*Building Schools for the Future*', which aims to replace or refurbish all secondary schools in the country by 2020. The DfES are seeking 'packages' of work with a minimum value of £50 million and a maximum value of £150 million.
4. In response, the Cabinet agreed that Herefordshire should make a bid covering all 14 of the County's high schools. The bid acknowledges that Whitecross High School will require no further expenditure beyond the PFI scheme, and that the strategy for the two aided high schools (St Mary's RC, Lugwardine and Bishop of Hereford CE) may be implemented through national arrangements for Aided Schools.
5. All high schools have been consulted as well as other key bodies such as the Diocesan Education Authorities, the Learning and Skills Council, Connexions service, Herefordshire Colleges and Rural Regeneration Zone. Within the Council, there has been widespread discussion with officers from Education, Property, Finance, Planning and Policy and Community.
5. The DfES have indicated that they are seeking to support one rural pilot in the first phase of the programme, bids for which had to be made by the end of October. Priority will otherwise have to be accorded to authorities serving areas with high levels of deprivation and in which schools have low levels of performance.
6. The last newly built high school in Herefordshire was completed in 1962. Despite some investment in the intervening years there are significant parts of each of the County's high schools that are in poor condition and poorly equipped to meet the needs of the 21st Century. It is estimated that the outstanding maintenance required within a five-year period amounts to at least £7 million.

Buildings By Age % Group Summary



7. The bid proposes that implementation would be undertaken through a Local Education Partnership involving the private sector. It includes imaginative opportunities to contribute to and benefit from other initiatives, including exploring the potential for shared development with colleges and other partners on the Herefordshire Colleges campus. It also includes proposals for widening of provision for community use of school premises through the Extended Schools programme, and for greater inclusion of pupils with special needs and disabilities.
8. The national initiative will provide the accommodation for high school students until at least 2050. The DfES have appointed consultants to produce exemplar designs. Although it is not expected that these 4 designs will be replicated across the country, it is expected that the principles on which they are based will be. All new high schools should:
 - *be safe and secure yet stimulating and inspirational.* In recently completed high schools schemes in other parts of the country, the feeling of excitement and stimulation have often been achieved through provision of high volume entrance and circulation spaces.
 - *meet the needs of the evolving curriculum.* The DfES have stated that schools should have 20% more floor area than at present. Initiatives such as the 14-19 strategy suggest that there should be a greater variety of size and type of spaces. The Herefordshire bid has been costed on the basis of improved space standards.
 - *exploit the benefits of technology.* ICT is changing the way schools work internally. It also allows schools to work in partnership and will increase the possibilities of colleges and schools, and employees and schools working together. The ICT Broadband link to high schools has and will continue for some time to have far greater capacity than links through landlines.

- *meet the needs of pupils outside the curriculum, the needs of parents and the needs of the community.* This will be reflected the facilities provided and through design to make possible greater public use of areas of the school whilst maintaining the security of pupils.
 - *be fully inclusive.* All schools in Herefordshire High Schools will be fully accessible for students with disabilities (currently 20% of teaching space is not on the ground floor). It is proposed to relocate Westfield Special School and Barrs Court and colleges to allow further integrated working with neighbouring high schools and colleges.
9. The needs and proposals for each of the Herefordshire secondary schools are summarised in Table 1.
 10. The DfES are likely to support schemes from only 15 LEAs initially, and only 1 will be a rural pilot. At present there are doubts as to whether or not such an ambitious programme would be achieved nationally even by 2020, though local schools would be delighted if progress could be made in 2005/06.
 11. The DfES have so far provided an outline of the implementation of the programme and of the level of local funding required to support it. The DfES have indicated that the detail would be clarified in discussions between January and April 2004 for those authorities given approval in December 2003.
 12. The scale of the national proposals raises challenges to the construction industry to deliver the size of the programme. The DfES are discussing these issues with the industry at national level.
 13. If the Herefordshire bid is successful, the level of work could affect the operation of each high school during a two-year period. The proposals have therefore set aside a budget to cater for transition costs associated with implementation, and it is recognised that a high quality service must be maintained throughout the period.
 14. If Herefordshire's bid is unsuccessful, the DfES would allocate Herefordshire a place in the national programme at any time in the period between 2006 and 2020. Such delay would make future planning of development in secondary schools more difficult until such time as a programme for Herefordshire is approved.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee comment on any aspect of the proposals that may need further clarification or explanation.

Background Papers

- None identified.