

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 13 December 2018
Title of report:	Peterchurch Primary School Rebuild
Report by:	Cabinet member children and families

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

Golden Valley North;

Purpose and summary

To authorise the commissioning of a feasibility study by (or through) Herefordshire Council Property Services for the rebuild of Peterchurch Primary School on its existing site.

This will enable the commissioning of a feasibility study to Royal Institute of British Architect (RIBA) Stage 2 (concept design) by (or through) Herefordshire Council Property Services for the rebuild of Peterchurch Primary School on its existing site and to delegate authority to the Director of Education to commission further design work to RIBA Stages 3 (developed design) and 4 (technical design).

Following provision being made in the capital programme to replace Peterchurch Primary School discussions have been held with interested parties including the primary school, Fairfield High School, local parish council and ward member to identify the most suitable site for the new building. There is now local consensus that it would be most appropriate to seek to rebuild on the current site. The consultation identified some highways and transportation improvements needed to improve traffic flows and access to the Fairfield High School site; these will form the subject of a separate decision.

This report is seeking approval to undertake detailed feasibility work for the rebuilding of Peterchurch Primary School on its existing site, including provision of permanent accommodation for the onsite charitable pre-school and refurbishment of the building housing the school swimming pool and progress all other activity necessary to inform a final decision.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **the director for children and families be authorised to commission feasibility work and take all other steps necessary to inform a further decision on the replacement of Peterchurch primary school and associated on-site facilities on its current site, and determination of the most appropriate route to procurement, within a budget of not more than £180k.**

Alternative options

1. The problems with the condition and suitability of Peterchurch Primary School have been recognised for some years. Three options were identified for consideration: 1. Do nothing; 2. Rebuild on another location adjacent to Fairfield High School; or 3. Rebuild on the current site.
2. Do nothing: this option is not recommended. The current buildings of Peterchurch primary school are in poor condition. They are not suitable for the provision of a modern learning environment for primary age children. The buildings range from the small original Victorian school and school master's house, to a former community hall with an asbestos roof. The internal rooms are not the size or shape that would be recommended for a modern primary school. The school and the council currently bear substantial costs in maintaining the building. The school is visually unattractive and not in keeping with the village of Peterchurch and the Golden Valley, which is generally regarded as an attractive tourist destination.
3. Rebuild on another location – agricultural land to the north of Fairfield High School: this option was thoroughly investigated and has been rejected. The case for such a relocation was that it could create a 'campus' with some services shared between the primary and secondary school. It would also be an opportunity to address the poor access to Fairfield High School – currently along minor country lanes without pedestrian footways, which can be heavily used by large agricultural vehicles and machinery as well as by cars, school buses and commercial vehicles. There are flood risks associated with the River Dore which runs between the main road and Fairfield. Fairfield itself, an academy, has substantial issues with its site and buildings in terms of their condition and suitability. This option has been rejected because: i) it is not supported by the governing body and headteacher of Peterchurch Primary School; ii) it is not supported by Peterchurch Parish Council; iii) Fairfield High School does not actively support the 'campus' proposal, although it remains very keen to see major improvements to its own site, buildings and access, and iv) it is likely to be substantially more expensive to deliver. Given the lack of

stakeholder enthusiasm for the proposal and its greater costs, it is recommended this option is not taken forward.

4. The recommended option is the third option: to rebuild on the current site. An analysis of the relative estimated costs of the three options is set out below:

Option 1: Do Nothing (except address major condition issues – this would not address the undersized classrooms and other suitability issues)		
Maintenance (roof replacement)	c £1 million	Estimate
Maintenance (other)	c. £0.5 million	Estimate
Total	c £1.5 million	
Option 2: Relocation to Fairfield site		
Site acquisition (minimum area)	c £52k	District valuer
Site acquisition (larger area)	C £70k	District valuer
Construction cost	c. £4 million	Based on Colwall costs
Interventions (highways, flooding etc.)	c. £2.865 million	Based on BBLP/WSP report
Relocation of preschool modular <i>or</i>	c. £50k	Estimate
Provision of preschool in new build	> c. £100	Estimate
Re-provision of swimming pool	c. £500 k	Estimate
Site disposal	c. -£0.545 million	District valuer
Total (based on larger area, provision for preschool, but no new pool)	>£6.390 million	
Option 3: Rebuild on current site		
Construction cost	c. £4 million	Based on Colwall costs
Decanting cost (if required)	c. > £1 million	Based on Colwall costs and 12 month requirement for mobiles
Demolition cost	> c. £0.25 million	Estimate
Interventions (e.g. bus stop, crossing)	Unknown at present: but modest	Some off-site works, but not full set
Total (if decanting required)	> £5.25 million	Plus off-site costs/interventions

Total (if decanting not required)	> £4.25 million	Plus off-site costs/interventions
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Key considerations

6. Peterchurch Primary School is a small community primary school with a planned admissions number of 15 (this means that the school may normally admit up to 15 children in the initial year of admissions – Year R (Reception)). There were 136 on roll in total against an official measured capacity of 105 in Summer 2018 (the admission number is the total capacity divided by seven year groups). It is located on the B4348 – the main road running through the Golden Valley in the village of Peterchurch. The school is accommodated in several buildings, including the original Victorian school building and attached headmaster’s house, some more recent additions, including a building originally built as the village hall.
7. There are a range of serious condition issues with the school which include an asbestos roof on the former community building, which has leaked in previous years requiring ongoing maintenance. The asbestos is not considered to pose an immediate risk to health as it is in a stable condition however it would clearly be preferable to have a completely asbestos free building. The roof failed last winter, with several significant leaks and required extensive patching. There are regular problems with the slate roof on the Victorian buildings, with tiles occasionally slipping, requiring regular attention. The school’s heating system is inefficient, with some rooms overheating whilst others are inadequately heated at the same time. There have been ventilation issues with the pupil toilets which have required intervention.
8. There are also suitability issues, with nearly all rooms undersized by modern recommended standards. The recommended minimum size for a primary school classroom is 55m². All the classrooms at Peterchurch are below this size, some substantially so.

Room	Size m2
General classroom	50.07
General classroom	50.86
General classroom (mobile)	48.48
General classroom	28.15
General classroom	48.49
General classroom	42.68
General classroom	45.63

9. The inadequacy of the building in terms of both its condition and suitability has been recognised for some time. This led to the decision of Council on 18 December 2015 to include £5.5m provision within the capital programme for the replacement of the school subject to work with schools and the community to develop the most appropriate option for education in the area, including exploring options across primary and secondary provision. This has required significant work over a period of time.

10. The council produces school pupil number forecasts on an annual basis. These take into account observed numbers on roll, the operation of parental preference, migration in and out of the area, and expected future numbers of births. The forecast for the Golden Valley planning area which includes Peterchurch shows a small deficiency of places.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Golden Valley Total PAN	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
Golden Valley Forecast YR	59	66	50	63	65	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64

11. The Peterchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (revised 2017) shows a target of 304 new dwellings in total across the Golden Valley to 2031, of which 54 homes are expected in Peterchurch village itself. The biggest development site is immediately adjacent to the school site. The council's figure for expected primary age children is 18 per 100 homes, which would result in 54 additional children aged 4-10 in the Golden Valley. As families which move often tend to be younger than average there are likely to be preschool children who may not require a school place immediately, but will do when they reach the age of 4+. Fairfield High School is popular with parents, which may be another factor which will attract families to the area. It is therefore proposed to build the new school with a planned admission number of 20, and a total capacity of 140, but with a master plan showing how a further ten places per year group could be added at a future date if demand rises, leading to a potential school size of 210 places. There should not be a risk to the viability of other schools in the area, as the total number of children across the planning area will require the capacity added.
12. Alternative options have been considered in respect of the location of the school. The option of re-locating the school to a site adjacent to Fairfield High School was considered in some detail. The high school is located on a lane on the west side of the village. Co-location might have presented an opportunity for the primary and high schools to share some services and form an all-through campus.
13. An issue that demanded attention was that of access for children whether making their journey to school by foot, cycle, bus or car. The lanes leading from the B4348 are narrow and do not have pedestrian footways. There is limited parking space at the Fairfield site, and no dedicated space for school buses. The River Dore runs between the B4348 and the Fairfield site, presenting some flood risk. These issues were investigated in an environmental survey conducted by Balfour Beatty consultants from WSP. This indicated that the cost of the necessary highways and environmental works could be substantial. When all the other costs were taken into account, including the purchase of land, as well as construction costs, this option would have been more expensive than a rebuild on the current site, even taking into account the potential sale of the current site. The option of rebuilding Fairfield on the Peterchurch site is not feasible as the site is too small, and in general major capital projects at academies are funded and managed through the Education and Skills Funding Agency rather than the council. The access and road safety issues relating to Fairfield High School will continue to be investigated and will be fed into the public realm annual planning prioritisation process. A summary of the potential costs of environmental works associated with a relocation are as set out in the following table:

Proposed Intervention		Total appraisal score (out of 30)	Indicative Cost (£k) ³
Ref	Description		
2	New footpath between Peterchurch and Fairfield High School	24	140
7	Improvements to Fairfield-Crossways junction (enhanced provision for pedestrians, cyclist and public transport users)	24	365
8	Introduce a Parking Area for Buses	23	999
9	Provide a new formal Car Park (to serve both schools) (NB this could be on or off site)	23	975
5	Provide Additional Car Parking within the village (serving existing school site)	22	50
1	Produce a School Travel Plan	17	4
6	Improve Pedestrian Access to Peterchurch Primary School	16	47
3	Improve Bus Stop Facilities on the B4348	15	46
4	Introduce a variable Speed Limit on the B4348 (30mph/ 20mph at school start/end)	15	12
10	Improve Flood resilience of the Access Lanes	15	200 ⁴
11	Introduce a variable speed Limit (30mph/ 20mph at school start/end) (Fairfield-Crossways) on roads by Fairfield High School	15	12
12	One-way system (road passing Fairfield High School)	13	15

- 14.
15. A complete high level comparison of the estimated costs of the options is set out at paragraph 4 (above).
16. The strongest argument for rebuilding on the current site rather than a co-location is that it is the clear preference of local stakeholders, including the school itself. Consultation with the governors and headteacher of Peterchurch Primary School indicated a strong preference to remain on their current site. This was also the clear preference of the parish council. Fairfield High School was not opposed to the campus proposal, but did not regard it as a priority in terms of its own vision for the redevelopment of its site and buildings. Given that value for money and the opinion of key local stakeholders both supported the rebuilding of the school on its current site rather than a relocation that is now the recommended approach which this report is intended to progress.
17. The current site is sufficiently large to meet the requirements for a school of the size of Peterchurch. There is a tarmac roadway at the front of the site, and a carpark to the south side of the school buildings. The buildings include several separate blocks built over the years since the construction of the original school building in the mid-19th century. To the rear of the school there is a playground area and a pleasant, rectangular grassed playing field. This however, is of restricted usability because a set of 66,000 volt electricity cables supplying a large part of the Golden Valley run across the field supported by wooden pylons.
18. The school has a small swimming pool. The pool itself and the associated plant are in good order. It is well used by the school, other neighbouring schools and the community. The school uses the pool in the warmer months of the year normally the first half of the autumn term and the whole of the summer term. It is used every afternoon and two mornings per week. Other schools use the pool one morning and one afternoon per week. The swimming pool is winterised by a professional swimming pool maintenance contractor for the winter months. The covering building however, is not in good condition, being an ageing lightweight plastic structure with a limited likely future lifespan. The feasibility study

will also address the question of the longer term maintenance of the pool, including its revenue costs. It would be expected that these revenue and maintenance costs be met in full by the school.

19. The voluntary sector Golden Valley pre-school occupies a modular building on the site. The building belongs to the pre-school and it leases the necessary space from the council and school. It is proposed that this accommodation is re-provided in permanent accommodation which will be part of the new school building.
20. Now that the potential relocation of the primary school to the Fairfield High School site has been assessed as not viable, a detailed feasibility study of how a rebuild on the current site could be best implemented is needed to provide all the necessary information, including estimated costs, to enable decision makers make a final decision about whether to proceed.
21. The feasibility study will investigate all the relevant issues in connection with the proposed rebuilding of Peterchurch Primary School:
 - a. on its existing site at an initial planned admission number of 20 and an initial total capacity of 140 to the standards set out in the Department for Education's Building Bulletin 103 "Area Guidelines for Schools", and meeting all appropriate standards for a modern primary learning environment and having regard to all safeguarding considerations. The proposed increase of the PAN to 20 and the total capacity to 140 reflects the higher numbers that have been admitted to the school in recent years and expected future numbers in Peterchurch and across the Golden Valley;
 - b. with a clear indication for how the planned admission number could be increased to 30 and the total capacity increased to 210 if future numbers justify such an expansion at a future date;
 - c. taking account of the environmental and planning priorities including the Peterchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Council's Schools Capital Investment Strategy;
 - d. including re-providing accommodation for the Golden Valley preschool with an appropriate lease;
 - e. investigating how the current swimming pool could be re-roofed (wholly or partly at the cost of the school and community) meeting any relevant standards for such a facility, and to explore options with the school and community for the long-term management of the facility;
 - f. investigating how linkages and access (e.g. path and gate) might be provided to connect to the playing field/open space which may be provided under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act in the development site to the east of the school;
 - g. providing one or more outline "block plans" showing where a new building for a school with a planned admission number of 20 (expandable to 30 at a future date) could be sited within the boundaries of the existing site;
 - h. providing an assessment of all relevant site and environmental issues including ownership, tenure, restrictive covenants, likely planning restrictions,

topographical, geological and ground conditions, including potential flood risks from the hills and land to the east;

- i. investigating options for putting the overhead 66,000 volt power lines (currently above the school playing field) underground enabling more unrestricted use of the site;
 - j. ensuring that the school travel plan is up to date, and support provided for staff, pupils, parents and the community coming to the school by walking, cycling or by public transport;
 - k. ensuring sufficient parking is provided for staff and visitors, and a safe drop-off area for children brought to school by car, including safe crossing of the B4348;
 - l. ensuring that the school can be maintained cost effectively in the long term, and appropriate environmental measures to reduce energy costs are included;
 - m. that income generating opportunities for the school through community usage are investigated;
 - n. minimising disruption to the work of the school and children's learning throughout the construction phase, setting out clearly the options for a construction programme, including consideration of the costs/benefits of different phasing options and/or the decanting of some school functions into temporary buildings; and
 - o. advising on a deliverable timetable for the construction programme.
22. The feasibility study would not include detailed architectural designs. This would be procured at a future stage, either in advance of the procurement of a contractor, or as part of a design and build contract.
23. The feasibility study will provide robust cost information which will include the following:
- a. The cost of design and construction broken down by main elements (e.g. main building, early years provision, swimming pool), including costs of services (water, sewage, energy, information and communications technology), fixed furniture and fittings;
 - b. The cost of on-site works (removal of electricity pylons and undergrounding of cables, works to playing field, playground, pedestrian access, car parking, perimeter fencing, gates and security);
 - c. The cost of off-site works on the public highway associated directly with the rebuilding of the schools such as marked crossing, lay-by, pull in, signage, etc;
 - d. The cost of options for the demolition/decommissioning of the existing buildings that have no further use;
 - e. any other project costs which can reasonably be anticipated;
 - f. A robust cost and programme time estimate for all the above will be provided, taking into account that the total cost for the project must not exceed the provision of £5.5 million already within the capital programme including the capitalised costs required by the council's property services team.

24. The report will take full account of any relevant planning policies and legislation and the Equality Act 2010. The school is a mainstream primary school, however it is expected that the feasibility report will take account of the current and future needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and the needs of disabled staff, parents and community members, by considering how the building may be fully accessible.
25. The report will advise on procurement options for the project itself, for example whether to use a conventional procurement route, or a 'design and build' approach, or an existing procurement framework.
26. The feasibility work will be procured through an open tender process.
27. The timetable for the feasibility study, further decision making and implementation of the project are as follows:
 - a. Cabinet decision December 2018;
 - b. Procurement of planning/survey/design team to conduct study;
 - i. Tender publication January 2019;
 - ii. Evaluation of February 2019;
 - iii. Appointment of consultant March 2019;
 - c. Feasibility report due June 2019;
 - d. Decision to proceed with main project July / August.
 - e. Procurement of principal contractor September to December 2019
 - f. Construction: January 2020 to August 2021

Community impact

28. The scheme supports the achievement of the council's corporate plan to keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life by ensuring that the educational environment is safe and fit for purpose.
29. 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.
30. The proposed project would retain the pre-school and provide improved accommodation. The proposed project would retain the existing swimming pool, but investigate options for providing a better roof. The possibility of a community contribution to this cost will be explored.
31. The proposed project would explore option of joint use and management of an area of land to the east of the site which may be provided adjacent to the school through section 106 for community use.
32. The proposed project would support the Parish Council's preference for the school to be retained on its current site at the heart of the village as part of its overall vision for the village.

33. The feasibility study will address how the safety of pupils, parents, staff and the community can be assured throughout the construction period. This will include separation of school and contractor spaces, management of vehicle movements, and control of machinery and materials which may pose any health and safety risk.

Equality duty

34. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
35. 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.
36. The new school building is intended to serve all members of the local community in Peterchurch and the Golden Valley, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
37. The principal equalities impact of the decision to rebuild Peterchurch Primary School relates to the design and layout of the building. The current buildings are deficient in many respects. Any new building would conform to all current legislative requirements and would meet the needs of disabled pupils and their families, as well as staff and other users of the buildings.

Resource implications

38. The feasibility study will cost up to £180k. The feasibility study will be funded from the £2.015m preliminary works budget provision already approved in the capital programme. The Peterchurch Primary School rebuild budget has been approved at £5.5m in the capital programme and will be spent in line with future decision reports after the feasibility. The estimated project cost was produced in 2015, and is still considered to be reasonable in the experience of recent procurements of work of a similar scale at Colwall and Marlbrook Primary Schools. The feasibility study commissioned through this report will establish the likely total costs more accurately. In the unlikely event that it is decided not to proceed with the full project the £180k feasibility costs would need to be reattributed to revenue budgets, along with the £6k previously spent on feasibility fees in 2016 on the Peterchurch rebuild budget.
39. The project will be managed in accordance with the Council's project management guidelines. The Project Sponsor will be the Director of Children and Families Services with a project lead reporting to him. The project board will include representatives of property services, finance, procurement, legal services/governance and other disciplines such as planning when required. The school will be invited to be represented as the end user of the completed building; and when appointed the architects and contractors will be represented as design and construction suppliers.

Legal implications

40. The school is a community school thus forming part of the council's portfolio of property assets. The council has duties under health and safety legislation to ensure that all of its buildings remain fit for occupation and safe for use. Additionally the council has specific duties under the Education Act 1996 and the School Premises Regulations 1999 to ensure that school buildings meet minimum standards and to maintain school premises under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.
41. This appraisal work should assist the council in meeting the above legal obligations. A further decision will be taken in respect of the extent of the capital investment and works required, informed by the appraisal work.
42. There are no other significant legal implications at this stage.

Risk management

43. Risks associated with the feasibility are shown below.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The project could cost more than the provision in the capital programme.	The recommended decision is intended to give greater cost certainty before the main project is procured.
The project could expand to include works not originally intended.	The recommendations specify as precisely as possible what the project is intended to achieve.
There could be unforeseen costs in relation to the site or off-site planning requirements.	Major risks, such as the issues around the high voltage overhead cables have already been identified and outline costs obtained. The proposed study is intended to identify other risks as comprehensively as possible.
There could be community concerns.	Discussions have already taken place with representatives of the parish council to identify and mitigate these.
There could be planning or similar regulatory requirements that add to costs.	These have been anticipated and are being mitigated by involvement of planning and public realm colleagues in early decisions.
The work of the school could be disrupted by any resulting building works.	This possibility is anticipated and the feasibility study is asked to address and suggest mitigation strategies for such potential disruptions.
There are opportunities for enhancing community facilities by working with the parish council in relation to the potential public open space to be provided through Section 106.	Possibilities of creating an access between the school site and the potential new recreation site will be explored, and arranging joint use by the school and community members.

44. Risks will be managed in accordance with the council's policy on risk management. Overall the risks at the feasibility stage are low, however the feasibility study may identify issues which need to be addressed before the main project can go ahead.

Consultees

45. Peterchurch Parish Council has been consulted on the current proposal to rebuild the school on its current site. It strongly supported that approach. The parish council takes the view that the current position is preferable because it is in the 'heart of the village', close to many of the other village amenities. It has requested that the swimming pool be retained if possible. It supports the proposal to put the electricity cables underground. It would be interested in having a joint use agreement for the management of the playing field/open space that may be provided on land adjacent to the school site to the east which is part of the Hawthorn Rise proposed development. This land would be provided to the community under a Section 106 planning agreement.
46. The governing body and headteacher of Peterchurch Primary School are supportive of rebuilding on the current site. The ward member has been consulted and is supportive of the proposed approach.
47. Political groups have been consulted, as this is a key decision; no comments have been received.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified