

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 07 September 2022
Subject:	Secondary School Provision in Radcliffe – Financial approval to Council's funding obligations – additional site costs – Part A	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 On the 13th July Cabinet received a report setting out the Council's financial obligations in respect of the delivery of the new secondary school in Radcliffe. At that meeting, Members agreed to the recommendation to fund works from the schools capital budget to allow the project to proceed. In July Cabinet agreed to delegate approval to the Executive Director of Finance, once final costs were known, based on the indicative costs provided by the Department for Education (DfE).
- 1.2 Since the report to cabinet in July we have been informed by the DfE that there are additional costs which were not identified in that report. It has subsequently become evident that the indicative costs provided by the DfE did not include all of the elements that would ordinarily fall to the Council.
- 1.3 A condition of the Government's Free School Programme is that local authorities meet the cost of any additional site-specific costs necessary to deliver the project. These costs were omitted from the initial submission from the DfE.
- 1.4 The DfE commissioned a feasibility study in respect of the Spring Lane site to determine indicative costs of delivery of the overall project, and high-level designs. This study determined the full cost of the project, the majority of which will be met by the DfE, but included additional costs relating to the provision of an access road, and the remediation of the site, including demolition of the existing buildings. These latter two elements were subject to the report to Cabinet on the 13th July.
- 1.5 The study also identified a number of site-specific costs in relation to the development of the site, largely relating to the existence of former coal mine workings in the area, which impact on the construction of the building. The Council was not initially notified about these costs but accepts that they should be met by the Council, -
- 1.6 A detailed breakdown of these additional costs has been provided by the DfE. These costs have been reviewed by officers, and confirm these costs will be subject to further scrutiny as soon as final tender costs are available.

- 1.7 The Council is required to commit to meet those costs before the scheme can proceed to the next phase. The next phase will see detailed design work undertaken.
- 1.8 As costs will remain indicative until detailed tender submissions are received by DfE, approval is sought from Cabinet to those indicative costs, and to requests that Member delegate authority to the Executive Director of Finance to agree finalised costs once determined.
- 1.9 The additional indicative costs falling to the Council are set out in Part B to this report.
- 1.10 Provision has been made within the Children's Service schools capital programme to meet these financial obligations. The costs already identified in the report to Cabinet on the 13th July, together with these additional costs are in line with the provisional sum identified for the project from the outset.
- 1.11 The DfE has provided further detail of its programme for delivery of the project, with work ongoing to select a contractor, and formal appointment of the preferred contractor expected by end of October 2022.
- 1.12 Detailed design will then follow, including stakeholder engagement in the design process, leading to a start on site in July 2023.
- 1.13 As previously reported, this start on site date will require DfE to be provided with access to the full Spring Lane site, including land currently occupied by the Pupil Referral Unit (Spring Lane School), and the Radcliffe Leisure Centre.
- 1.14 At its meeting on 7th September 2022, Cabinet will also receive a report setting out the arrangements to facilitate the relocation of the Pupil Referral Unit, and seeking financial approval to those arrangements.
- 1.15 Replacement leisure facilities will be provided as part of the development of the town centre hub.
- 1.16 The Council, and Star Academy are committed to the school opening to its first cohort of students in September 2024 and are working with the DfE to ensure that the challenging timescale for delivery of the new school by that date is met.
- 1.17 This includes taking steps to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays to the project, and that the chosen contractor is both committed and obligated to deliver the project to the agreed timescale.

1.18 However, given the potential for delay in the delivery of a project of this nature, contingency planning is ongoing to ensure that the school will open to pupils in September 2024, including provision of temporary accommodation on site if necessary.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- Approve the funding of indicative costs as set out in Part B of this report, to meet the Council's financial obligations, to be met from the Children's Services schools capital programme.
- Delegate approval of the finalised costs to the Executive Director of Finance.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

- To unlock the delivery of a new secondary school for Radcliffe.
- Utilise a Council owned Brownfield site for development.

Alternative options considered and rejected

In order to deliver the new school in Radcliffe, the Council is required to confirm that it will commit to meet certain financial obligations. Failure to provide such a commitment will prevent the scheme from being progressed.

The alternative option to not proceed with the school was rejected owing to the demonstrative need for new secondary school provision in Radcliffe and the importance of that provision in supporting the economic growth and sustainability of Radcliffe and its alignment with the wider objectives of the Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF).

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Links with the Corporate Priorities:

The provision of the new school will support key ambitions of the Let's do it strategy:

- A better future for the children of the borough
- A better quality of life

The community of Radcliffe faces key challenges:

- The percentage of Radcliffe young people achieving five good GCSE's is 55.8%, for Bury as a whole it is 62.1%.
- A greater proportion of Radcliffe residents are in poor health or with limiting long term illness than for the population of Bury as a whole, and more Radcliffe children at age 4 and 10 have excess weight compared to the same borough-wide cohort, a trend that continues on into adulthood.
- Deaths from heart disease are significantly greater for Radcliffe residents than for Bury.
- Unemployment, including long term unemployment is greater for Radcliffe residents than for Bury residents as a whole.
- A greater proportion of Radcliffe residents live within one of the most 20% deprived areas nationally, when compared with all Bury residents.
- From a total secondary age cohort of 11,203 students in all Bury schools, 1,733 (15.5%) are resident in Radcliffe. 82% of the Radcliffe resident cohort attend a Bury school, with the balance travelling outside the borough.
- 36% of the Radcliffe resident secondary age cohort travel over 2½ miles to access a secondary school place. This compares with 18% of the total Bury resident secondary age cohort travelling over the same distance.
- A high number of extra district pupils, resident in neighbouring local authority areas, have historically applied for and secured places in a Bury school. For the Radcliffe resident secondary age cohort this trend is reversed with 18% travelling outside the borough.

Given this education, health and employment profile, there is a clear need for a fresh and different approach to supporting Radcliffe people, and building community resilience. Strong leadership from schools and in particular the new secondary school is fundamental to this.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010, and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 require the local authority to assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision and also assess the impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

The business case that supported the application for the new school documented the significant inequalities in the education, health and economic profile of the residents of Radcliffe.

The provision of a high quality secondary school will contribute to measures designed to address these inequalities.

The new school will help to minimize travel distances to school, improve accessibility to local school provision, and increase parental choice.

The new school is not expected to have an adverse impact on any group with protected characteristics.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

The Department for Education is responsible for the design and delivery of the project and is committed to lowering the carbon footprint of new schools, both during construction and during the lifetime of the building.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Failure to agree the funding to meet the Council's financial obligations will impact on the timely delivery of the project The full extent of capital costs falling to the Council will not be known until more detailed design and planning has been completed	The recommendations set out in this report respond to these risks in identifying the indicative costs, and the budgets from which these can be funded.

Legal Implications:

Following the Cabinet report in July 2022 additional expenditure has been raised by the DFE with the Authority, Members are to note that the request contained in this report is in addition to the expenditure authorised in the July report. The breakdown of the additional expenditure is set out in part B of this report.

Financial Implications:

The Cabinet report in July 2022 noted that funding had been identified within the Education capital programme for this work.

There is a separate paper on this agenda in relation to the relocation of the pupil referral unit and the costs associated with that part of the scheme are contained within that report. There is separate provision within the Education capital programme for this element of the scheme.

Background papers:

Secondary School Provision in Radcliffe – Financial approval to Council's funding obligations – 13th July 2022

New High School for Radcliffe. Long Leasehold to Star Academy Trust – 18th November 2021.

Radcliffe – Establishment of a new secondary school – Report to Cabinet 24th March 2021. [Radcliffe Establishment of a new secondary school.pdf \(bury.gov.uk\)](https://www.bury.gov.uk/media/1428227/radcliffe-establishment-of-a-new-secondary-school.pdf)

Radcliffe – Secondary School Provision Lease of land off Spring Lane, Radcliffe - Report to Cabinet 26th February 2020. [FINAL 2020-02-26 Cabinet Report Radcliffe School final.pdf \(bury.gov.uk\)](#)

Radcliffe – Secondary School Provision – Report to Cabinet 13th November 2019. [2019-11-13 Cabinet Report Radcliffe School.pdf \(bury.gov.uk\)](#)