

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Cabinet	16 th July 24
Subject:	Star Academy Radcliffe – Capital costs – Part A	
Report of	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 On the 15th March 2023 (CA.147) Cabinet approved the funding of indicative costs to meet the Council’s financial obligations in relation to delivery by the Department for Education (DfE) of the project to construct the new secondary school in Radcliffe.
- 1.2 The DfE has now received confirmed contract costs for the project, including the access road and junction works, the costs of which fall to the Council.
- 1.3 Cabinet is requested to approve revised funding arrangements in respect of its financial obligations.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

Approve the funding of capital costs as set out in Part B of this report,

Agree that the cost of the CYCLOPS junction and active travel elements met from the Council’s Capital Programme

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To enable confirmation of the Council’s commitment to meet its financial obligations enabling the scheme to construct the new school to progress.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Confirmation of the Council’s commitment to meet its financial obligations are essential to enable delivery of the project to construct the new school.

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3.0 Background

- 3.1 Cabinet has received several reports in recent years in respect of the process and arrangements that will lead to the establishment of the new secondary school in Radcliffe (Star Academy).
- 3.1 On the 15th March 2023 (CA.147) Cabinet approved the funding of indicative costs to meet the Council's financial obligations in relation to delivery of the project, to be met from the Children's Services schools capital programme; capital receipts/borrowing; and the Greater Manchester City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.
- 3.2 These financial obligations relate to the construction of a new access road; construction of the related junction from the access road to Spring Lane (CYCLOPS); Site clearance & construction of all-weather pitch; and a contribution to the cost of provision of modular accommodation.
- 3.3 The report set out any conditions relating to each item, and the manner in which they would be funded.
- 3.4 The construction of the new access road to be funded from the Children's Services capital programme; the construction of the CYCLOPS junction and active travel elements to be funded from the GM City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement; the contribution towards the modular accommodation to be funded from capital receipts or borrowing but at a capped cost; and the site clearance and construction of all-weather pitch to be funded from the Children's Services capital programme, but only in the event that the Council failed to provide the DfE with vacant possession of the Spring Lane site by 1st March 2024.
- 3.5 Indicative costs for each item were set out in the report, with the exception of the CYCLOPS junction, with details to be confirmed.
- 3.6 Vacant possession of the Spring Lane site was achieved by the 1st March 2024 and so the costs relating to that item will no longer fall to the Council.
- 3.7 In respect of modular accommodation, whilst the costs in relation to the provision of this has increased significantly, the Council's capital costs were capped at the outset, and there is no additional impact on the Council. The modular accommodation has been procured by the DfE with the units being delivered to site from late June, ready for occupation in September 2024.

- 3.8 The DfE has now received confirmed contract costs for delivery of the substantive project to construct the permanent school building and associated infra-structure.
- 3.9 The DfE is seeing significant inflationary pressures on the costs to deliver the project which is a matter for it to manage, but there are also cost pressures in relation to the access road, and the detailed design and costs are now known in respect of the CYCLOPS junction and active travel, for which the Council is responsible.
- 3.10 Given the significant change from the indicative costs for which Cabinet gave approval at its meeting on 15th March 2023, Cabinet is now asked to approve revised funding arrangements, to reflect the increased capital costs for the access road, and to make financial provision in respect of the CYCLOPS junction and active travel elements, the funding of which will ultimately be met from the GM City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.
- 3.11 DfE require confirmation that the Council will meet its financial obligations and any delay on the part of the Council in confirming its commitment could impact on the timescale for delivery of the new school building.
- 3.12 DfE has only now been able to confirm the costs in relation to the delivery of the CYCLOPS junction that connects the new access road to Spring Lane. It is proposed to fund the works in relation to the CYCLOPS junction and active travel through the GM CRSTS grant, and the specific allocation within this programme for active travel schemes in Radcliffe.
- 3.13 A new link road will be constructed to provide access to the school from Radcliffe. This new link road will connect to the existing highway network at Spring Lane and will incorporate active travel details. The Spring Lane junction will take the form of a CYCLOPS (cycle optimised protected signals), the main features of which are segregated cycle facilities and improved pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian and cycle facilities will also be provided between the Spring Lane junction and the new school. These have been designed to meet current standards including LTN 1/20, the Department for Transport's guidance on designing for pedestrians and cyclists, and Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide.
- 3.14 The CYCLOPS junction is part of a wider plan to create a network of active travel routes in and around Radcliffe that will connect to existing facilities and proposed new developments, including the new secondary school on Spring Lane, the new Civic Hub in the town centre, and the new housing development at the site of the former East Lancashire Paper Mill. It will also connect to the Radcliffe Metrolink Stop, where funding has been secured from the Government's Active Travel Fund to build a new ramp for pedestrians and cyclists and a crossing on Church Street West. The new cycle and pedestrian facilities planned as part of the school development will also connect to existing high quality cycling and walking routes in the area such as National Cycle Network Route 6 and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal towpath.

- 3.15 The Radcliffe active travel network is part of an ambitious plan to create a joined-up network of safe and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling routes connecting all communities across Greater Manchester, the Bee Active Network. The Radcliffe part of the Bee Active Network is being delivered in stages by Bury Council as and when funding is available.
- 3.16 Greater Manchester has secured over £1 billion of funding to invest in the transport network across the conurbation through the Government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). The CRSTS programme awards £9 million of this funding to deliver better walking, wheeling and cycling facilities in and around Radcliffe town centre. The CYCLOPS junction and active travel links to the new secondary school are part of the Radcliffe CRSTS proposals. Access to this CRSTS funding is subject to a GM governance and assurance process, which is administered by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), with final approval to release funding resting with the Greater Manchester Bee Network Committee.
- 3.17 The Council has already secured approval of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the full Radcliffe CRSTS scheme, including the Spring Lane junction. A phased approach is now being taken to bring the Radcliffe CRSTS scheme forward in packages, with the Spring Lane junction prioritised for development to align as far as possible with the delivery programme for the school. The Spring Lane CYCLOPS and associated active travel links to the school will be the first element of the Radcliffe CRSTS scheme to be submitted for full business case (FBC) approval. A detailed design and cost plan has been prepared for Spring Lane and an FBC is now being prepared. We are currently on programme to submit this FBC to TfGM for review and approval by mid-August and are targeting the October GM Bee Network Committee (BNC) for the final approval needed to release funding for delivery of the Spring Lane element. The timeframe for the review and approval process does not allow us to target an earlier date.
- 3.18 The Council is doing all it can to accelerate the FBC process and align it with construction of the school, but despite this the Council will initially need to progress the work at risk. Once CRSTS funding is approved, grant claims can then be made quarterly in arrears so a first claim could be made in January 2025 for costs incurred up to the end of December 2024. The requirement for the Council to incur expenditure in advance of receiving grant from GMCA applies to other transport schemes for which Bury Council has secured CRSTS funding.
- 3.19 In order to provide the DfE with the necessary confirmation that the Council will meet its financial obligations in advance of the Council securing the approval from TfGM, it is proposed that the Council makes provision within its capital programme to underwrite the cost of the junction, on the basis of a business case being submitted to TfGM for the funding of the junction works.
- 3.20 The confirmed capital costs are set out in Part B of this report.

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 below that for Bury as a whole.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

The provision of a high quality secondary school located to serve the community of Radcliffe will have a positive impact on these measures.

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. Also impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

The provision of a new school to serve Radcliffe is necessary as the scale of quantifiable local housing and population growth is expected to generate more pupils than could be accommodated through expansion of other nearby schools, and a new school central to a key community is an important strategic driver in the development and sustainability of Radcliffe.

Given the high level of localized housing development in the immediate area of Radcliffe, the impact of the proposed new school on other schools is unlikely to be significant in the medium to long term. In the short term, it is acknowledged that there may be some turbulence in pupil numbers at local schools as patterns of parental preference shift in response to the new provision. However, it is not considered that this would be sufficient to threaten the viability of any existing schools.

The local authority will seek to mitigate this by requiring the sponsor to manage the growth of the school in such a way as to minimize the impact on existing schools, and to work in partnership with other schools to mitigate impact.

Further, by establishing the school initially as 4fe, and only expanding the school to 7fe if required by local population growth, any negative impact will be minimized.

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

The new school will help to minimize travel distances to school and increase parental choice.

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
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Legal Implications:

This report provides Cabinet with an update in relation to the funding arrangements for this project following earlier reports received in November 2021, September 2022 and March 2023.

Members are asked to approve that this is funded from capital resources. A business case will be brought forward for CTRS funding which will b

Financial Implications:

To be completed by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

The access road, capital cost is contained within the existing DfE funding allocations, approved at February 2024 Budget Council.

The cyclops junction, capital cost is to be funded from the Radcliffe Streets-for-All CRSTS scheme and currently contained within the existing Highways GMCA funding allocations approved at February 2024 Budget Council, pending successful approval of the Full Business Case of the scheme by TfGM.

However, should the Full Business Case submission be unsuccessful then alternative funding source(s) for the scheme will need to be identified and a further report for approval will be required.

Appendices:

Please list any appended documents.

Background papers:

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning