

# Capital Strategy Group

## Minutes

19 February 2011

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**Present:** Cllr P Hodgins (Chair), Cllr M Eady, Cllr S Chappell, Judy Pearce, Ron Percival, Niki Crookdake, Jason Bickerstaff, Beverly Butler; Paul Bettles, Sue Ritson

**Apologies:** Christine Brett, Jo Longhurst & Claire Briggs

### Minutes

### Action

#### 1. Introduction and apologies

Sue Ritson, Head of Early Years & Childcare, was welcomed to the Group. Apologies were received from Christine Brett, Jo Longhurst & Claire Briggs.

#### 2. Declarations of interest

Niki Crookdake declared an interest as a Governor of Sheen Mount Primary School. Cllr Chappell declared an interest as a Governor at St. Mary's Primary School and Orleans Park Secondary School. Cllr Eady declared an interest as a Governor of St. Mary's & St. Peter's Primary School. Jason Bickerstaff declared an interest as a Governor of Christ's Secondary School. Judy Pearce declared an interest as Headteacher of the Vineyard Primary School.

#### 3. Terms of Reference for the Capital Strategy Group

BB introduced the revised Terms of Reference which were agreed with the inclusion of an additional officer to represent the interests of Children's Centres (SR).

#### 4. Overview & Scrutiny Report of 7 February 2011 – New Administration's Strategy

BB introduced the O&S Report of 7 February 2011 detailing the Education, Children's & Cultural Services capital budget for 2011/12.

St. Margaret's and Heathfield/Whitton areas are still showing the main pressure on primary places, although the demand extends across the borough and additionally there are 3 major housing developments likely to result in further demand. Cllr Hodgins referred to the Authority's 10-year strategy for providing high quality primary school places. Of the £5.9m capital funding allocated by the DfE for 2011/12, £5.5m is earmarked for the primary expansions programme. The substantial drop in Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) funding for schools was highlighted.

SR advised that the present early years strategy is to provide for seven Children's Centres. Past budgets for Sure Start initiatives, including Children's Centres maintenance, have been provided by separate grant – this is now included within the £5.9m DfE Capital Maintenance funding stream.

SR requested that £10,000 be made available for maintenance at Children's Centres. An additional £100,000 would enable further works offering significant improvements to the Norman Jackson Centre and remodelling works at Heathfield. SR to summarise and provide a paper to Cllr Hodgins for further discussion with members.

SR

#### Post meeting note:

Confirmation has been received that the Norman Jackson Centre works are not

required as the Hampton Family Centre (on the Tangley Hall site) will be developed to serve the Hampton area.

Heathfield Children's Centre alterations are still needed to improve the service but given the overall demands on the capital programme this is not progressing now but will need to be considered in any future review.

## **5. Draft Education Capital Maintenance Programme 2011/12**

BB introduced the Draft Education Capital Maintenance Programme and advised that supportive comments had been received from Hampton Wick Primary School and Grey Court Schools, and general agreement to the condition and healthy & safety projects from Jo Longhurst.

BB advised that the Authority used to expect schools to undertake capital maintenance projects that were the equivalent of one year's funding from DFC, while this Group concentrated on larger projects. It remains to be seen how the substantial reduction in DFC will affect this strategy. The outcome of the Government's James Review of Capital spending is not now expected until the summer.

Discussion followed on the proposed projects to be included in the programme and the level of contingency. It was agreed that updating of condition surveys be moved to 'stand-by', the Children's Centres maintenance allowance be incorporated and the contingency be increased. Further information to be provided by email with regard to Christ's pavilion as this was not considered to be a high priority project. Subject to a final decision on Christ's pavilion the Group agreed that the programme should now be submitted to Cabinet for final approval.

**Post meeting note:** The Building Development Team have written to Christ's School twice to advise of the Capital Strategy Group's discussions that £30,000 to rebuild the pavilion could not be justified. It was accepted that the re-build was a low priority therefore has been removed from the programme.

It has now been agreed that condition surveys will be updated. This followed information received from DfE during the summer 2011, regarding the need for up-to-date data and drawings.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

To be confirmed by Cllr Paul Hodgins – November 2011