

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS, SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT****DATE: 19 NOVEMBER 2015****LEAD OFFICER: JULIE FISHER, INTERIM STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: TO DETERMINE A PROPOSAL TO RE-PROVIDE THE SURREY COMMERCIAL SERVICES GYM AND MACHINE TOOL MAINTENANCE FACILITY AS PART OF THE EWELL PRIMARY RE-ORGANISATION****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Following consideration by the Investment Panel on 30 September 2015, The Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement is asked to determine whether to support the business case for the demolition and re-provision of the Surrey County Council Gym and Tool Maintenance facility. The majority of funding for this would come from contributions made by Commercial Services over a number of years into the Council's Renewals Fund and some funding from the Schools' Basic Need Budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Cabinet Member approves the business case for the demolition and re-provision of the Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance Facility on the site adjacent to Danetree school.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance facility consists of three buildings located on the land adjacent to Danetree Junior School. A significant part of the site is required for the provision of an Early Years and Key Stage One building in order to change Danetree into an all through primary school with a nursery by 2016, as part of the school basic need programme. At least two of the three buildings would have to be removed in order to place the new infant building in the optimum location, avoiding incursion onto the playing fields.

After careful consideration by officers it is possible, and desirable, to demolish all three Commercial Services' buildings and replace them with a single purpose built workshop and storage facility. This would remain on the same site but would be relocated in order to separate it from the new infant school building and play area. The new workshop facility would retain parking and access separate from the school and Surrey County Council (SCC) would retain this portion of land. An area of land used by the current facility would be released and become part of the site of the new infant school building.

The proposal forms part of the overall Ewell Primary school re-organisation project which allows for the conversion of West Ewell Infants, Ewell Grove Infants and Danetree Junior schools to primary school status.

DETAILS:

Business Case

The Issue - As part of Danetree school's viability site survey, all the accommodation occupied by the Commercial Services Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance Team was inspected by an architect and Senior Project Manager. The professional opinion is that the three buildings, including the workshop, are at the end of their usable life. The service has not been able to identify anywhere suitable to relocate to, therefore this potential closure would result in a net loss to the Schools and Learning budget of £90,000 per annum plus costs of closure estimated at £113,000 excluding pension fund costs.

The Opportunity - An opportunity has arisen to rebuild the workshop as part of the Basic Need school expansion project at Danetree Junior School. By demolishing all three buildings this would free up the site, providing optimum space for locating the new infant school building and appropriate play area and rationalise the accommodation for the Surrey Commercial Services operation. This would provide a healthy and safer working environment for the 13 Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance Engineers as well as delivering obvious benefits to the newly created primary school.

Background – to the Basic Need school expansion project

As a result of a Basic Need school expansion project at Danetree Junior School, determined by The Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement in July 2015, it is necessary to demolish at least two of the buildings used by the Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance Team.

Danetree is adjacent to the Commercial Services' site, which it formerly occupied. The school's old dining hall and kitchen buildings were vacated some years ago and taken over by the Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance Team and are currently used as storage. Commercial Services also has a workshop building on the same site. However, the proposed expansion of Danetree, which is intended to meet the demand for primary school places in Epsom and Ewell by September 2016, will require some of the land and the demolition of the two Commercial Services' storage buildings. (see appendix 1 – part two report).

A number of options were taken to Investment Panel and they approved the proposal below:

Option 4: estimated cost £474,658 – Demolition of all three buildings (storage, welfare and workshop) and rebuild a new workshop, welfare area and storage on the same site. This would be part funded by a £100,000 contribution from schools basic need representing unavoidable demolition/site preparation costs to facilitate the expansion of the school. The remaining scheme costs will be met from contributions made by Commercial Services into the Council's Renewals Fund.

The Investment Panel signed off the business case at its meeting on 30 September 2015, subject to officers clarifying that an appropriate level of contingency had been allowed for, which has been done.

Background to Commercial Services Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance Service

Commercial Services offers a Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance service which operates on a commercial basis across the county.

- The service has been operating for many years and currently operates in :
 - 95% of Surrey schools
 - Police Stations

- Further Education Colleges
 - Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units
 - Some neighbouring schools around Sutton and Croydon.
- The service employees 13 long serving qualified engineers with an average of 10+ years continuous service.
 - Annual turnover is £650,000 per annum with a projected annual net contribution to the Schools and Learning budget from 2016/17 of £90,000 per year.
 - The service operates in a niche market offering clients a single point of contact for all Gym and Tool Maintenance requirements. Market competition is from several different suppliers or manufacturers of specific equipment and is generally seen by clients as more expensive, restrictive and complex to manage.
 - The service is looking at potential growth in adult education services and the possibilities that may arise from the Orbis partnership with East Sussex.
 - The service is highly valued by the Head of Strategic Risk Management and by Surrey schools as it provides assurance that the safety of school equipment is well managed.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

1. The key risk to this proposal is the dependency on a successful planning application to develop the Danetree site. This is crucial to the Council's strategy to deliver sufficient Early Years and Reception class places in the planning area by September 2016. The proposed capacity of the school requires the Surrey owned portion of the site to be partially utilised by the academy and thus demolition of at least two buildings will be essential. This leaves the Surrey Commercial Services team in inadequate facilities and with no storage for their materials and with a future maintenance problem. Hence our suggestion to replace all three buildings.
2. Pre-planning application advice has been sought from Highways and Planning to avoid the need to request Section 77 approval by the Secretary of State for use of the school's playing fields in the location of the new infant building. The plan to completely relocate the Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance facility to another part of the site enables this and seeks to mitigate any impact on the Surrey Commercial Services business and on the local amenity.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

3. The estimated cost of the demolition and re-provision of this facility is £474,658. The funding for the scheme has been identified through the school basic need programme and contributions Commercial Services have made into the Council's Renewals Fund. Detailed costs will be developed once the scope of the scheme is agreed. Options for build solutions and delivery will be considered as part of the business analysis to ensure value for money.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

4. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on a Local Authority (with responsibility for education) to ensure sufficient primary and secondary education provision is available to meet the needs of the population in its area. The proposals set out in this report support the Council's strategies to provide additional primary school places in Ewell.

Equalities and Diversity

5. An Equalities Impact Assessment was made in relation to the schools' expansion proposal and an Equalities Monitoring Statement was included on the consultation response forms for this aspect of the project.
6. The main equalities implications for staff employed by Surrey Commercial Services are positive ones. A new workshop building and store would provide both male and female WCs that would be accessible to staff and site visitors with disabilities. There would be improved welfare facilities for all staff and discreet desk and filing space for use by the Head of Service. There are no evident equalities issues for staff with protected characteristics arising out of the proposal to demolish and replace the facility elsewhere on the site.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

7. Danetree School has a robust Safeguarding Policy which is monitored by the designated Child Protection Lead Officer, regularly reviewed by the governing body and is subject to OFSTED inspection. Site access and security, both during the proposed building programme and afterwards, has been considered and addressed in the planning and design of the building project. The Surrey Commercial Services Team is aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and site safety as they already work in proximity to the school.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

8. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. A safe walking route to the school will be identified for use by parents and pupils and facilities will be provided on campus for pupils and adults who cycle or use scooters to get to school. This will be separated from the Gym and Machine Tool Maintenance facility by robust fencing and security gates.
9. The proposed additional provision for Commercial Services will be heat efficient and as carbon neutral as this type of new build workshop facility allows.

Section 151 Commentary

10. The business case for continuing this service provision has been to the Investment Panel and confirmed that it is a going concern that makes a positive financial contribution to the County Council. All financial and value for money implications were considered in this business case and that detailed costings will be developed within the funding available.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- Subject to Cabinet Member approval and a successful planning application, the building programme at Danetree Junior School will commence in spring 2016.
 - The demolition of the two Commercial Services storage buildings will occur early on in the phased scheme and alternative temporary storage will be arranged.
 - The demolition of the workshop building will probably occur in the autumn 2016 or spring 2017 and alternative accommodation will have to be found off site for a short period of time. There will be appropriate arrangements for this as soon as they know whether the new workshop is approved.
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Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Head of Commercial Services

PeterJohn Wilkinson Assistant Director Schools and Learning

Investment Panel

Staff employed by Surrey Commercial Services at the Gym and Machine Tool workshop

Danetree School/GLF (with specific reference to architect's drawings for their new building and its location on site)

Annexes: One – part two documents that consist of confidential/commercially sensitive information included in the Report to Investment Panel

Sources/background papers: Report to the Investment Panel

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