

**REORGANISATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN WELWYN
GARDEN CITY AND RELATED CAPITAL WORKS SCHEMES**

Joint Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families and the Chief Financial Officer

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Executive Members: Robert Gordon and David Beatty

Local Members: Mike Hobday, Sue Jones, Bob Mays and Richard Smith

1. Purpose of report

To invite the Select Committee to decide whether or not to scrutinise the timing of implementation of the residual set of capital building schemes that result from the review of secondary education in Welwyn Garden City.

2. Summary

2.1 This item has been requested by Tanis Kent, Chairman of the Select Committee.

2.2 The following are the residual capital schemes that provide for:

- extra facilities at Monks Walk School – expansion;
- the relocation and replacement of Creswick Primary School, and
- Permanent provision for Squirrels Day Nursery on Ludwick Nursery School site
- Enhancement of the facilities of the relocating mid-Herts Music Service to develop an area Arts Education Base.

2.3 These schemes await authorisation following the recent completion of the sale arrangements for the site of the former Sir John Newsom Secondary School.

2.3.1 Officers are preparing a report for the relevant chief officers and Executive Members in order that approvals and timing can be considered.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Select Committee is asked to determine whether or not they wish to scrutinise the proposed item and by what method.

3.2 Possible scrutiny methods include:

- questioning officers/Executive Members
- requesting a further report
- referring the matter to a Panel or Topic Group.

4 Background

4.1 The current position on the series of schemes that form the Welwyn Garden City secondary school reorganisation package is set out in the grid below.

Scheme	Latest cost estimate	Current progress
Stanborough School expansion	£5.177m (inc. £0.328m mobiles)	Scheme complete
Sir Frederic Osborn School expansion	£2.0m +£0.541m New Deal for Schools	Scheme will be completed during Autumn Term, 2001
Temporary building for Squirrels Day Nursery	£ 0.2m	In use
Monks Walk expansion	£1.64m	Awaiting approval.
Permanent provision for Squirrels Day Nursery at Ludwick Nursery site	Further design and feasibility work currently being undertaken	Awaiting approval
Replacement of Creswick Primary School	£3.5m NB scheme generates further receipt from old primary school site. It is expected that the contracts for the sale of the old site and contracts for the provision of the new school would be run contemporaneously and generate a small eventual surplus.	Awaiting approval

4.2 In order to facilitate the developments at Sir Frederic Osborn School it has also been agreed to relocate from that site the mid-Herts base of the Music Service to the former premises of Salisbury Infants' School, Hatfield. Some

adaptations were completed in September, 2001 and will enable the base to relocate during October, 2001.

- 4.3 As shown in the chart above, a group was held back pending clarification of the level of receipt from the sale of part of the site of the former Sir John Newsom School. The County Council's overall balances position, as set out in the next section, is relevant to the future timing of implementation of the residual schemes.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The County Council's balances position was reported to the Executive Committee on 17 September 2001. The report shows that for the second year running the actual level of balances has fallen short of the level agreed in successive budgets for prudent planning and to avoid audit comment.
- 5.2 The situation has come about because of the pre-funding of several major capital projects, mainly at schools, and delays, for reasons outside of our control, in selling the surplus sites needed to replace balances.
- 5.3 A review of current forecasts is currently taking place but it does appear that the shortfall will continue into the next financial year. This could have an affect on the capital programme for 2002/03.
- 5.4 The Executive Committee has agreed a strategy which will support the replenishment of balances but this needs to go forward in parallel with a review of all as yet uncommitted schemes in the context of the imminent 2002/03 capital programme development. In addition self-financing schemes will need to be configured so as to avoid further pressure on balances for prefunding.

6. Scheme Timings

- 6.1 Given the uncertainty over the timing of receipts to redress the balances, the expansion of Monks Walk and a second phase of work for the Mid Herts Art Education Base will be considered for the capital programme for 2002/03.
- 6.2 The work at Monks Walk has been designed. It is top priority and will be undertaken as soon as resources become available. It would take about 12 months in total to implement and the scheme would be delivered to the school in phases. Subject to it being included in the 2002/03 programme, some of the extra facilities should be available in the autumn term 2002 and the remainder in spring 2003.
- 6.3 The design and mode of procurement for the work at Ludwick Nursery School for Squirrels Day Nursery is still being finalised. This scheme would therefore take slightly longer than Monks Walk, but could be finished in summer 2003.

6.4 The further work for the Arts Education Base is less extensive and if it is placed in the 2002/03 programme should be ready for September 2002.

7. Operational impact

7.1 The delay in implementation is having limited operational impact on the establishments involved, as follows:

Monks Walk School – some timetable constraints and continued use of older science and technology rooms

Squirrells – have been provided with temporary provision in new purpose-designed nursery mobile at former Sir John Newsom School site

Creswick School – is continuing to operate in current school buildings.