



Executive
14th November 2005

**Report from the Director of Children
& Families**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALPERTON

Alperton Community School: Application to Dispose of School Land

Forward Plan Ref: C&F05/06-010

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Alperton Community School have sought the Secretary of State's consent for disposing of their land at Woodside Close (between Woodside Avenue, Woodside Close and Woodside Place) and they wish to use the proceeds of the disposal to fund the building of a new sixth form facility at the school.
- 1.2 This report sets out the Local Authority's position and seeks the approval of the Executive for the Council to confirm that it has no need for the site and that therefore it has no objection to the disposal of the land provided that the capital receipts are invested back in the school to provide a new build sixth form facility.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive is requested to:

Direct officers to confirm to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills that the Council has no need for the School site at Woodside Avenue, Alperton (as shown on the attached plan) ("Site") and therefore the Secretary of State may consider granting consent to Governing Body of Alperton Community School for the disposal of the Site on the condition that the whole proceeds of the disposal are re-invested in improving education provision by building a new Sixth Form facility on the school site.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 All Alperton Community School's buildings and assets were transferred to the School at the time that it became Grant Maintained in 1994/95. The School is now a Foundation School.
- 3.2 Paragraph 1 (2) of Schedule 22 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires that the Governing Body of a Foundation School must obtain the Secretary of State's consent before disposing of any land or property transferred to it from the local authority.
- 3.3 The school has applied to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for the Secretary of State's consent to sell surplus land at Woodside Avenue, Alperton. The Secretary of State has asked the Council to confirm whether it has any objections to the proposed disposal and she will make a decision once it has received a formal reply from the Council.
- 3.4 The small parcel of land (approx 0.27 hectares) (see site plan enclosed as Appendix 1) in question is somewhat distant and isolated from the two main school sites. At present it is derelict waste land, has been since November 2002 and is often frequented for antisocial purposes. The school is in desperate need of providing suitable accommodation (the condition of the existing 6th form facility is poor) for its very large sixth form (334 students) and disposal will provide significant funding to contribute to that new build project. In addition, as part of the school's development plan it wishes to open up its facilities to community use. The new sixth form block will offer facilities which can be used by the local adult community as well as neighbouring schools.
- 3.5 The estimated value of the land is set out in Appendix 2. The land was valued by District Valuer on 10 December 2004. The Secretary of State may either by Schedule 22, paragraph 1(3),(a) School Standards and Framework Act 1998 require that the Site be transferred to such local authority as she may specify, subject to the payment by that authority of such sum by way of consideration (if any) as she determines to be appropriate or by Schedule 22, paragraph 1(3),(b) School Standards and Framework Act 1998 direct that part or whole of the proceeds of the disposal be paid to her or such local authority as she may direct and the use to which the whole or any part of the proceeds be put. The Secretary of State may do this if a Local Authority makes such representations but she is not bound to do so. However the need for investment at Alperton High is tremendously high so officers recommend that no such representation should be made by the Council to the Secretary of State but consent for the disposal should be given on condition that the whole proceeds of the disposal be invested in providing a new sixth form facility at the school.
- 3.6 At their meeting of 27 October 2005, the Council's Forward Plan Select Committee was advised that officers had investigated (and discounted) the

potential use of this site for housing (to be provided via an RSL), for the setting of a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and as a site for a new Children's Centre. The Select Committee further requested that officers more fully explored other uses of this land (by the Council or other partner agencies, for the benefit of local residents) and that if no other use was possible, the Council offered support to the school with the view to obtain a consideration beyond the valuation offered by the District Valuer.

- 3.7 Since that meeting, a further trawl was carried out of likely interests from a number of Council departments including Environment and Culture, Housing & Community Care and Children & Families. The Council's Asset and Property Service was also re-approached to establish if they had any other suggestions for the use of this land. All departments responded and re-confirmed that the site is of no interest to the Council. The Headteacher of Alperton High School has confirmed her previous commitment to work with the Council (Asset and Property service) to seek to maximize the proceeds from the site so as to secure greater benefit to the school and community.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are none for the immediate purpose of this report except that in agreeing the recommendations the Council would forego being able to acquire the land (subject to the payment of any consideration determined by the Secretary of State as appropriate) and the receipt of part of or the whole of proceeds from the disposal (assuming of course that the Secretary of States was minded to direct that part or whole of the proceeds be given to the local authority).

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 These have been incorporated into the main body of the report. There are no other specific legal implications arising from the proposal in this report.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate diversity implications for the immediate purpose of this report. However:
- a new and expanded facility will be available to more local families;
 - the proposed improvement in the sixth form provision will be a benefit to families and young people who are increasingly finding it difficult to find a local school place in the area;
 - it is anticipated that the new building will comply with Disability Discrimination Act regulations.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 7.1 The existing school buildings are in a poor state of repair. The main site at Stanley Avenue suffers from considerable dilapidation and structural defects (subsidence); the buildings on the Ealing Road site are built of a light-weight construction and will need considerable investment both immediately and the near future.
- 7.2 Although Alperton Community School is included in the Council's proposals for the Government's programme Building Schools for the Future (BSF), that investment is not expected to come on stream before 2010/2011.
- 7.3 The existing buildings do not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and do not lend themselves easily for adaptations to meet the act.

8. Background Papers

1. Consultation documentation with the DfES
2. School File.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Site Plan.
Appendix 2 Confidential

9. Contact Officers

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