

CABINET

4 OCTOBER 2011

BRADFIELDS SCHOOL – BUSINESS CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER UNIT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Wicks, Children's Services

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Summary

This report seeks approval for business case, based on an initial feasibility study, for the Autistic Spectrum Disorders Unit at Bradfields School and permission to proceed to detailed design stage at Gateway 1 from Cabinet.

1. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.1 The project is within the policy and budgetary framework, being consistent with the provisions outlined in the council's Special Educational Needs (SEN) strategy and the overarching Children and Young People's Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bradfields School, incorporating the buildings previously occupied by Ridge Meadow Primary School, has been identified as the preferred site to establish a base for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Following the Cabinet decision on 2 August 2011, (Cabinet Decision Number 93/2011), a public consultation commenced on 19 September 2011 on the proposals to make prescribed alterations to Bradfields Community Special School by way of:

- an expansion of the upper and lower age limits;
- an addition to the SEN categories;
- an increase in the number of pupils.

- 2.2 Dependent on the outcome of consultation and any subsequent prescribed alterations to the school, the purpose of the associated building project would be to provide accommodation to enable up to an additional 40 ASD pupils to be educated by Bradfields School. The current draft SEN Master Plan notes there are 316 Medway resident pupils with ASD as a primary need, of which 216 are currently educated in Medway. 100 pupils are educated out of area or in independent or non-maintained schools. The unit will accommodate pupils from age 3 through to 19, with support services for older pupils to the age of 25, with the possibility of an integrated foundation stage in the future. The Cabinet is scheduled to receive a report on the outcome of consultation for the prescribed alterations on 20 December 2011.
- 2.3 Bradfields School now includes the accommodation previously occupied by Ridge Meadow Primary School, following the closure of the primary school in August 2010. This building is now known as the Lower Bradfields School. The school's existing Key Stage 3 pupils moved into this building in September 2011. This has given sufficient space in the main school buildings, known as the Upper Bradfields School for the post 16 students previously sited on the Youth House site in Gillingham.
- 2.4 Full council agreed a scheme be added to the Capital Programme to create a Specialist Autism Unit on the Ridge Meadow site and that a sum of £1,500,000 be approved at the Full Council meeting on 24 February 2011
- 2.5 A feasibility study has been undertaken that has identified the accommodation required for a unit for up to 40 additional ASD pupils. Seven classrooms, a therapy room, two sensory rooms, staff and office spaces, one to one rooms and calming and ancillary spaces, will need to be provided. External areas will provide sensory gardens and a semi-enclosed walkway between the Upper and Lower Bradfields School buildings.

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 Two options have been developed which deliver these requirements in the following way:
- Refurbishment works in the Lower Bradfields building to reconfigure the existing space and create three classrooms to accommodate the Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. This will be a secure area from the existing KS3 pupils, with access to dedicated outside social spaces. Small group rooms and a sensory room will be located within this area for use by these younger pupils. The works will include lift access to rooms on the first floor.
 - New accommodation will provide four classrooms for Key Stage 3 to 5 pupils, office and staff space, a therapy room for use by all key stage pupils. The new building will be located on land between the Upper and Lower Bradfields School buildings.
 - New external sensory garden areas

3.2 Option 1

Option 1 locates the new building as outlined above to the western boundary of the land between the Lower & Upper Bradfields School buildings as per the attached plan (Appendix 1). This option maintains the existing access road for services to the kitchen and boiler room. It provides a semi-enclosed walkway to link the Upper school with the new accommodation, providing protection in inclement weather. It leaves the external grassed area largely open. The option includes the refurbishment works outlined above for the Lower Bradfields building. The indicative cost estimate provided by the quantity surveyor including contingencies and fees for option 1.

3.3 Option 2

Option 2 locates the new accommodation as outlined above to the eastern boundary of the land between the Lower & Upper Bradfields School buildings, as per the attached plan (Appendix 2). As the new classrooms will be used for the KS3, KS4 and Post 16 pupils, this location allows them to be closer to other pupils of their own age. This option also allows for a semi-enclosed walkway to link the Lower and Upper schools. It provides a shorter route between the Lower and Upper schools buildings, which will be semi-enclosed to provide protection in inclement weather. The route of the walkway also subdivided the external grassed area into more usable zones for pupils learning and social spaces. The option includes the refurbishment works outlined above for the Lower Bradfields building. The indicative cost estimate provided by the quantity surveyor including contingencies and fees for option 2 is included in the exempt appendix.

3.4 Preferred Option

Option 2 is the preferred option of the design team and the school, as the location of the new accommodation will provide better integration between the two school buildings with the adjacencies more age appropriate. The external access route between the lower and upper school is a shorter distance, this being particularly beneficial for pupils with reduced mobility.

4. ADVICE AND ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The project will support the council's Special Education Needs Strategy in developing specialist provision in Medway to meet the needs of children who currently have to be placed out-of-area, due to a lack of provision. In addition, the provision is included and supported by the draft SEN Master Plan, which is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet on 1 November 2011.

4.2 Benefits

The project will deliver benefits in the following areas:

4.3 Cost Savings

It is expected that the 40 additional places at an expanded Bradfields would have a similar SEN profile as the existing school, i.e. 72% level 5 and 28% level 6. Based on a comparison of the average cost of independent placements at both level 5 and level 6, against the costs of purchasing special school places via the funding formula, it is estimated that revenue savings of £710,000 could be achieved. This is illustrated in the table below for 2013/12 with projections for future years. The education of more pupils in Medway, would also lead to savings in transport costs.

	Unit Costs		Total Costs		
	Independent Sector £ pa	Expanded Bradfields £ pa	Independent Sector £ pa	Expanded Bradfields £ pa	Estimated Net Saving £ pa
2012/13					
29 children at SEN level 5 (72%)	27,100	10,684	785,900	309,836	476,064
11 children at SEN level 6 (28%)	37,285	15,956	410,135	175,516	234,619
Total costs for 40 children			1,196,035	485,352	710,683

	Unit Costs		Total Costs		
	Independent Sector £ pa	Expanded Bradfields £ pa	Independent Sector £ pa	Expanded Bradfields £ pa	Estimated Net Saving £ pa
2013/14					
20 children at SEN level 5 (50%)	27,100	10,684	542,000	213,680	328,320
20 children at SEN level 6 (50%)	37,285	15,956	745,700	319,120	426,580
Total costs for 40 children			1,287,700	532,800	754,900

	Unit Costs		Total Costs		
	Independent Sector £ pa	Expanded Bradfields £ pa	Independent Sector £ pa	Expanded Bradfields £ pa	Estimated Net Saving £ pa
2014/15					
14 children at SEN level 5 (35%)	27,100	10,684	379,400	149,576	229,824
22 children at SEN level 6 (55%)	37,285	15,956	820,270	351,032	469,238
4 children at SEN level 7 (10%)	50,283	24,376	201,132	97,504	103,628
Total costs for 40 children			1,400,802	598,112	802,690

NB. Costs used for future years are based on 2011/2012 costs

4.4 Time and efficiency gains

The provision of on site therapy spaces will enable pupils to access these services without leaving the school site, reducing the amount of time away from the classroom.

4.5 Improved quality

The project will deliver appropriate accommodation for 21st century learning, including additional sensory and therapy spaces.

4.6 Process improvement

This project will enable better curriculum delivery for pupils and improvements for learning, particularly for pupils currently in tuition placements, some of which are not full time.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Site issues

Bradfields Special School is a local authority school and as such Medway Council owns both the land and the buildings on this site. There are no title requirements to develop on this site.

5.2 Resources & Project Management

The project will be managed by Medway Council's Building & Design Services Team. The design team will be commissioned from consultants on the Kent County Council framework. The project sponsors are Jane Marriott, Psychology and Inclusion Service Manager and Chris McKenzie, Head of School Organisation and Student Services. Full details of the governance structure are attached in appendix 3.

5.3 Contract Management

The contract will be managed and monitored via Building & Design Services. Progress reports will be presented to the Children and Adult Services Capital Cabinet Advisory Group at key milestones. The financial monitoring will be completed by the School Organisation Team and reported to Members through the capital monitoring reports to Cabinet.

5.4 Risk Management

A copy of the full risk register is attached as appendix 4. The approval risk to the project numbered 2 on the register highlights that delaying the commencement of the detailed design until the prescribed alternations have been approved will delay completion of the project by approximately 6 months. The cost implication of completing the detailed design work and the prescribed alterations not be approved would be approximately £70,000.

5.5 Stakeholder consultation

As part of the feasibility process, we have undertaken internal stakeholder engagement with members of Medway Council's SEN Team to establish the project brief. External stakeholder engagement has been undertaken with the headteacher of the school and members of the senior management team to

develop options that will deliver the requirements for this project. During the detailed design stage and through the planning process, there will be internal stakeholder consultation with Medway Council's Planning department, Section 151 Officer and Strategic Procurement and the Monitoring Officer. We will undertake external consultation with the headteacher and Senior Management Team, pupils and members of the school and local community.

6. COSTS/TIMESCALES

- 6.1 A quantity surveyor has provided indicative cost estimates for both options including professional fees and contingencies. The indicative costs provided at this stage are based on a typical build rate, and not on detailed designs, and do not take into account the actual ground conditions, or any other key design risks. During the next stage of the project, surveys and more detailed design work will be undertaken, to allow a more accurate cost estimate to be developed, prior to the works going out to tender.

A more detailed costing will then be presented at Gateway 1 stage, and the final project budget will be set, when the contract is to be awarded at Gateway 3 stage.

The indicative costs provided by the quantity survey for both options are in the region of the provisional project budget, which is £1.5m, although option 1 is likely to be more expensive.

The scheme will be funded by £1.5 million approved by Full Council on 24 February 2011 from the proceeds of the Temple site.

6.2 Option 1

The indicative cost estimate provided by the quantity surveyor including contingencies and fees for option 1 is included in the exempt appendix.

6.3 Option 2

The indicative cost estimate provided by the quantity surveyor including contingencies and fees for option 2 is included in the exempt appendix.

7. PROCUREMENT

- 7.1 The preferred option consists of two distinct elements, which are the refurbishment works to the existing Lower Bradfields building and the new build accommodation.
- 7.2 In order to deliver the required improvements for the school and the appropriate facilities in the most timely fashion, we will look to procure the works through two phases, one for refurbishment works and a second for the new build accommodation. Consideration for procurement of the new accommodation will be using modular off-site construction methods. This will

minimise the disruption to the school during the construction period by reducing the period of works on site.

7.3 The timetable for this project will be:

- Business case approval October 2011
- Gateway 1 approval December 2011
- Gateway 3 approval March 2012

7.4 Confirmation of the expected construction period and completion date will be established during the detailed design period.

8. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any procurement will go through the full gateway process. Design work needs to be undertaken now so that there is no delay should the prescribed alterations to the school described in paragraph 2.1 be approved, but the ability to proceed with the full development proposed within the business case is clearly subject to those prescribed alterations being approved. Approval of the business case and proceeding with design work at this stage does not and (as the prescribed alterations have not yet been approved) cannot commit the Council to undertake the development set out in this report

8.2 Financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve this business case and the preferred option (Option 2) to allow more detailed design work to be undertaken.

10. SUGGESTED REASONS FOR DECISION(S)

10.1 Option 2 is the preferred choice of the design team and the school, as it provides the provision of the new accommodation adjacencies allowing for opportunities of fuller integration between the two existing school buildings. This option also provides best value for money.

10.2 The cost estimates indicate that the preferred scheme, which will deliver the identified accommodation requirements, should be affordable within the provisional budget envelope of £1.5m. Accurate cost estimates will be developed during the detailed design stage and presented for approval at Gateway 1 stage, prior to going out to tender.

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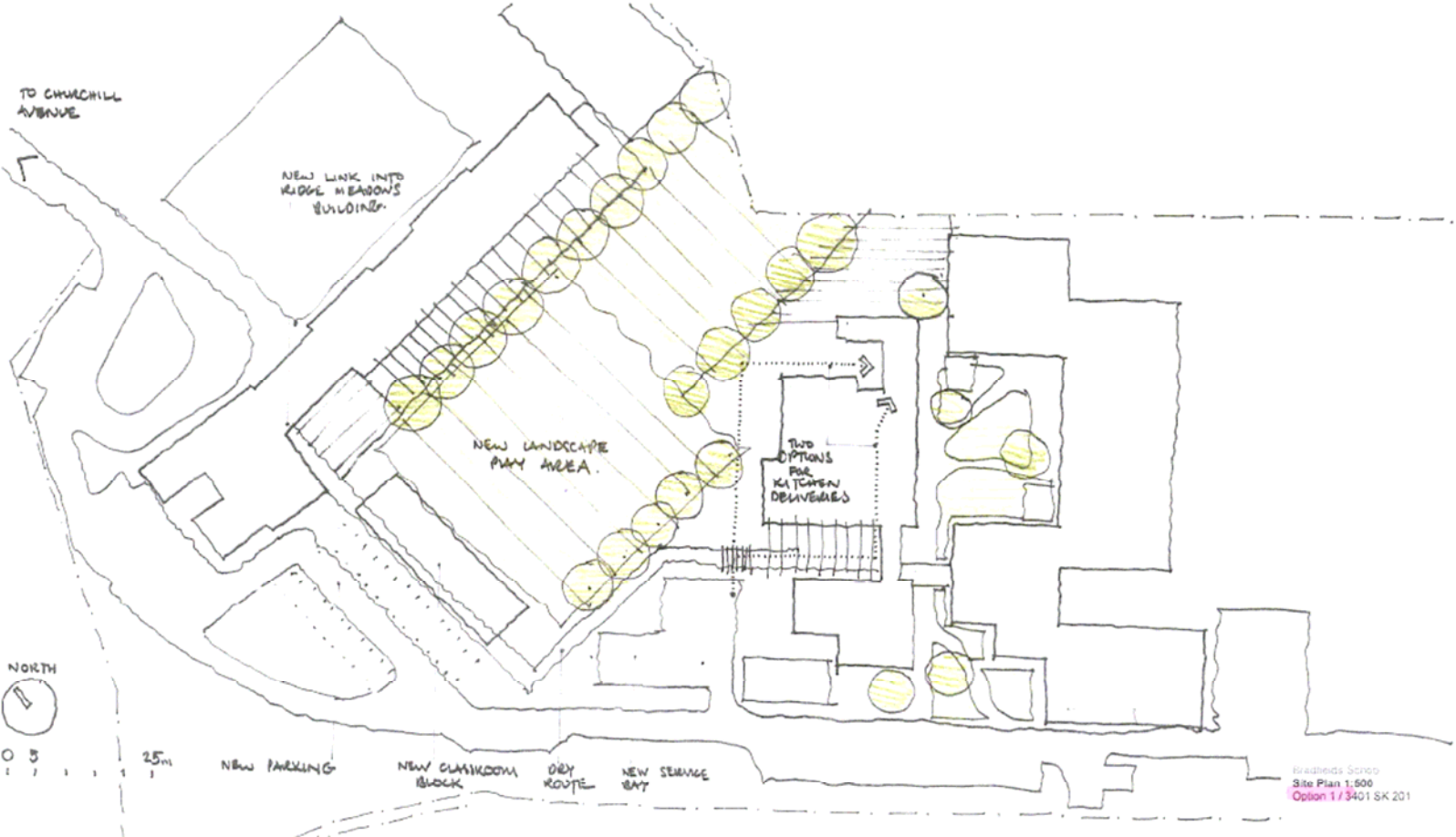
Background papers

The following documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Description of document	Location	Date
Full Council Meeting Minutes	W:\School_Services\Planning_Review\Live Projects\9X476 Bradfields School - New ASD Unit\Approval Reports	24 February 2011

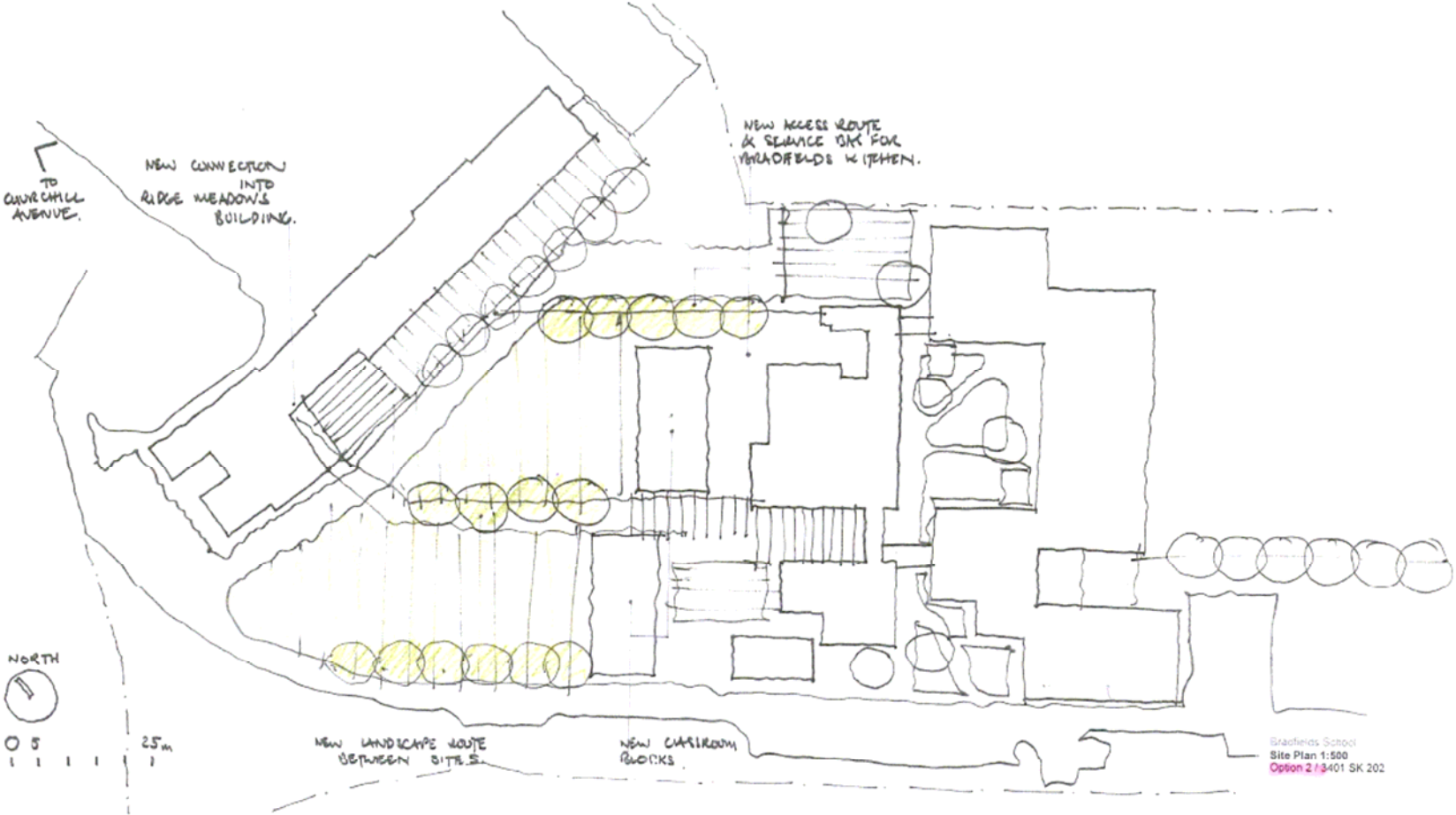
Appendix 1

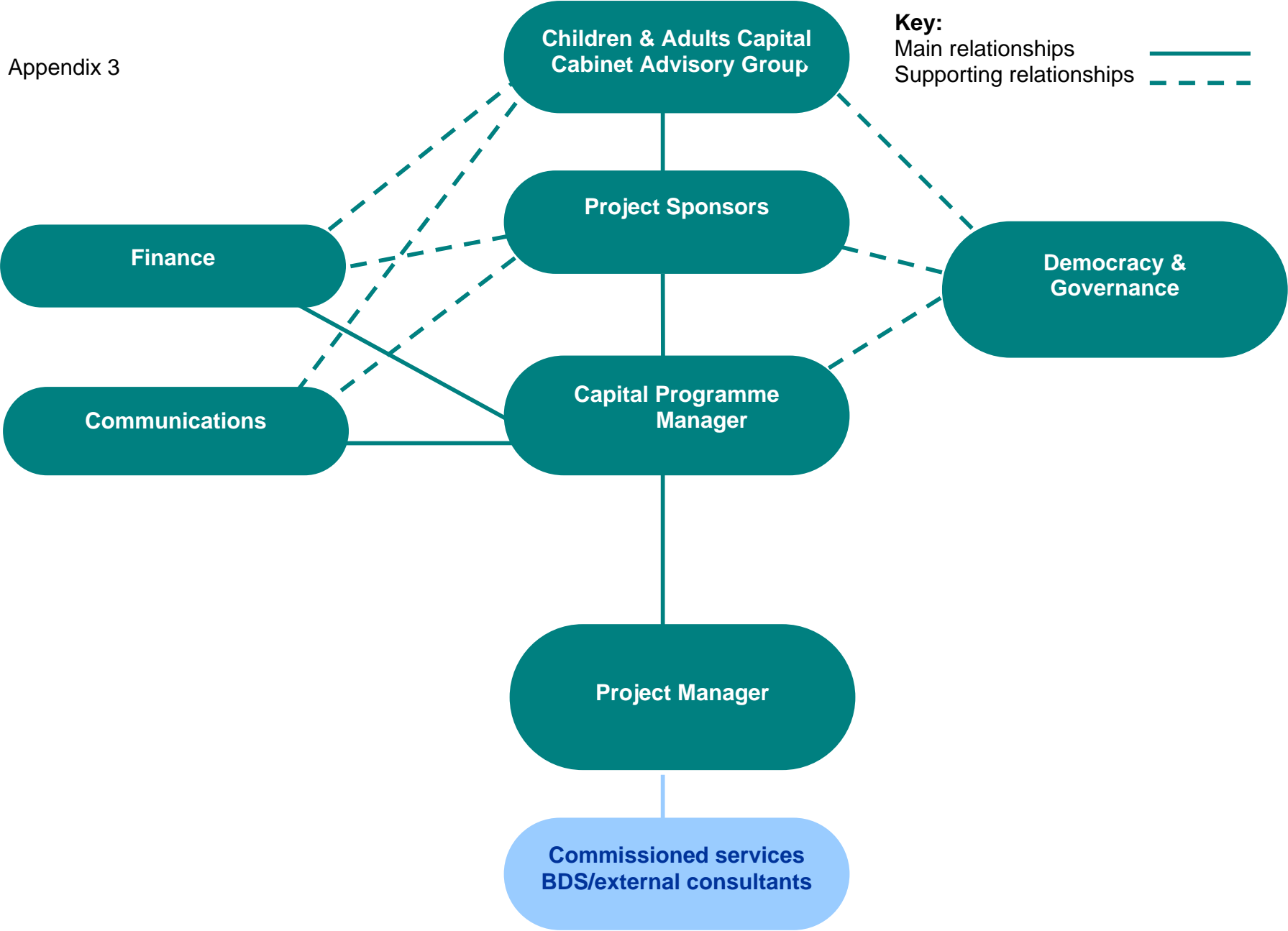
OPTION 1



Appendix 2

OPTION 2





Appendix 4

No	Category	Risk Identification	Impact	Date Identified	Risk Owner	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Risk Score (L x S)	Risk Ranking	Contingency and Mitigation Action	Action Owner
1	Funding	Insufficient funding to satisfy requirements	Scope delivered reduced	27/06/2011	Client	3	3	9	Medium	Close management of developing brief to ensure it can be delivered within the funding availability.	ALL
2	Approval	Proposals to make prescribed alterations to Bradfields Community Special School rejected	Scheme not allowed to go ahead. Feasibility costs lost.	14/09/2011	Client	2	5	10	Medium	Identify an alternative site for this provision or except costs for education out of area.	Client
3	Programme	Timetable does not fit with Schools requirements	Delay in delivery	09/09/2011	Client	5	5	25	High	A clear and realistic project programme to be agreed.	ALL
4	Scope	Sponsor is not clear from outset of it's requirements	Delay in overall delivery	09/09/2011	Client	3	4	12	High	Project timetable to identify when School needs to have finalised requirements to achieve programme	Client
5	Building	Scope / Specification Change	Introduction of changes will increase programme, Construction cost and professional fees	09/09/2011	Client	4	5	20	High	All changes to be approved through the change control procedure.	Lead Designer
6	Building	Detailed survey of existing building identifies conditions that will incur cost and money to rectify	Delay in overall programme as the team identifies how this can be accommodated within budget	27/06/2011	Client	3	3	9	Medium	Detailed surveys undertaken to establish the extent of this risk	BDS
7	Building	Scope of works not fully understood	Expectations raised unnecessarily. Client not satisfied.	09/09/2011	Client	4	3	12	High	Lead Architect to go through specification with school to ensure scope is understood and expectations are met. School to sign off spec.	Lead Designer
8	Health & Safety	Construction works in close proximity to pupils, staff & visitors	Disruption or injury	27/06/2011	Client	2	3	6	Medium	In establishing method statements for inclusion in any tender this issue to be prioritised.	BDS