
CHILDREN'S SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to:
 - (a) the proposed Children Services 2007/08 Capital Programme; and
 - (b) releasing capital funds.

Information and Analysis

2. The Authority funds the capital maintenance and improvement of schools from formulaic capital allocations received from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), bid based submissions for Central Government funding programmes, compiled and submitted by Children's Services and Darlington Borough Council corporate funding. In addition, the Department receives funding for specific schemes e.g. improvements to ICT.
3. Attached at **Appendix 1** is a summary of all the capital allocations Children's Services have secured for 2007/08. Additional funding may be secured throughout the year and if this occurs, reports will be brought to Cabinet to formally request the release of the additional funding. There have been some movements in secured funding since the Capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which are detailed below:

	£m's
Medium Term Finance Plan 2007/08	13.912
Add	
Hummersknott Release of funding for 2008/09	5.645
Additional Devolved Formulae Capital Funding	0.056
Less	
Funding in MTFP not confirmed - Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	-0.038
Funding in MTFP not confirmed - School Travel Plans	-0.033
Funding in MTFP relating to Adult Services	-0.080
Total	19.462

Prioritisation Process

4. Children's Services is responsible for working with schools to ensure all funding is targeted to meet the highest priority needs. The prioritisation of projects is undertaken through a programme of Local Asset Management Plan Agreements (LAMPA). These partnership agreement plans with schools initially concentrate on the allocation of school based Devolved Formula Capital whilst highlighting any urgent needs at a school that may require a larger capital investment from Children's Services modernisation allocation. These larger works are collated by Children's Services for consideration against other priority capital works across all Darlington Schools. A process was designed some years ago that the decision on which projects should be supported should be taken jointly between schools and Children's Services through a Premises Improvement Group. This group included staff from Children's Services, Development & Environment, Community Services and representatives of the school population.
5. Due to the backlog of urgent condition based works there has been little need for an advisory group as the works have been of sufficient urgency that a programme is almost self-identified. The key question for Children's Services has simply been which of these urgent condition works should be undertaken first. This has usually been identified following a more detailed site inspection of the building.
6. This has meant the programme has been historically biased towards condition rather than suitability issues but increasingly we are attempting to ensure more emphasis is given on ensuring we have the right environments in which our teachers teach and our children learn. The LAMPA process is helping with this by challenging schools to look at the suitability of their building to deliver the national curriculum in the 21st Century.
7. The Authority is now reaching a position where the backlog of investment in the major condition issues in schools are now nearly all addressed. Increasingly, future programmes of work will see more investment moving into suitability areas to provide schools with the right types of space to deliver a more effective curriculum directly contributing to the raising of standards.

Programme of Works

8. The 2007/08 programme of works has been developed by identifying needs through regular surveys of the schools, and a formal annual meeting with each school to agree and review a programme of capital works at each school (Local Asset Management Plan Agreements). The proposed school-by-school capital investment plan for 2007/08 is attached at **Appendix 2**.
9. Appendix 2 includes figures for each school's Devolved Formula Capital allocation. Devolved Formula capital gives schools direct funding to help support the capital needs of their buildings. It is initially allocated to local authorities which are then required to allocate the funding directly to schools using a simple formula. In line with the Authority's prioritisation process, this funding is invested in the priorities agreed locally and identified in the Local Asset Management Plan Agreements.
10. Devolved Formula Capital is allocated to schools on an annual basis but it can be rolled forward for up to three years to enable larger projects to be planned. For example, DFC allocated in 2006-07 may be rolled forward until 2008-09. **Appendix 3** provides a summary table of each school's DFC, identifying the amount to be spent in 2007/08 and the balance currently uncommitted / anticipated carry forward (+/-) for 2008/09.

Outcome of Consultation

11. By developing individual asset plans for each school we can ensure that all needs are highlighted and through dialogue, a comprehensive capital investment programme is defined that identifies and begins to address the full range of needs at the school. This programme takes into account:

- (a) Physical Condition of buildings;
- (b) Suitability for provision of education; and
- (c) Sufficiency of school places, either geographically or in educational sectors

Risk

12. The capital programme is designed to ensure all funding is targeted at the most high priority works in Darlington Schools. However, it is impossible to cover all eventualities and the Authority remains exposed to potential emergency works, particularly resulting from extreme adverse weather conditions. The contingency sums allow for small scale emergency works to be addressed but any major, serious failures may require the re-programming of some works into future years.
13. The 2007/08 investment plan is based on latest estimates, as contracts of work are let and figures are firmed up, updated projections will be provided to Cabinet as part of the quarterly financial monitoring process.

Legal Implications

14. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

15. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

16. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

17. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Key Decisions

18. This is a key decision in relation to the amount of funding this report is requesting Members to agree to be released to move the project forward.

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that Members:-

- (a) Agree to formally release capital funding of £19.462m, to undertake the agreed works (Appendix 1); and
- (b) Agree the proposed capital investment programme for Children's Services (Appendix 2).

Reasons

20. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) Through the LAMPA process schools have agreed to the proposed programme of works; and
- (b) Detailed planning to target need has been undertaken which ensures effective use of all investment

Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

DFES – Standards Funds 2007/08 Allocation

DFES – Sure Start 2006/07 & 2007/08 Allocation