

CABINET
11 JUNE 2024

RELEASE OF EDUCATION CAPITAL FUNDS

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
James Stroyan, Group Director of People**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to release education capital funds for the reasons outlined below.
 - (a) Release £184,335 of Childcare Expansion funding for the projects listed at paragraph 7 below.
 - (b) Release £267,245 of Section 106 funding for the Abbey Federation.
 - (c) Release £21,000 of High Needs Capital funding for Hummersknott Academy.
 - (d) Release £38,000 of High Needs Capital Funding for Marchbank Free School

Summary

2. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the release of £184,335 of childcare capital expansion funding, £267,245 of Section 106 funding and £59,000 of High Needs Capital Funding.
3. All projects will be managed in line with the Corporate Capital Process procedures. Projects will be grant funded with the schools managing the projects, so there will be no risk of overspend on the Council.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Members agree to:
 - (a) Release the full allocation of £184,335 for the Childcare Expansion projects.
 - (b) Release £267,245 of Section 106 funding for projects at the Abbey Federation.

- (c) Release £21,000 of High Needs Capital funding for EHCP adaptations at Hummersknott Academy.
- (d) Release £38,000 of High Needs Capital funding for EHCP adaptations at Marchbank Free School.

Reasons

- 5. The recommendations are supported to release the funding which will allow the educational settings to enhance their educational facilities, targeting capital investment in the areas identified as greatest need.

**James Stroyan,
Group Director of People**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	Capital investment to improve facilities and provide better building maintenance will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	Capital investment to improve facilities and provide better building maintenance will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	All work undertaken will be designed and constructed with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources.
Diversity	This proposal projects have no specific impact on protected groups.
Wards Affected	Settings located in: Eastbourne (Maidendale Nursery) Sadberge and Middleton St. George (Middleton St. George Day Nursery) Eastbourne (St Teresa's Catholic Primary) Mowden (Mowden Pre-School) Park West (All Saints Pre-School) College (Abbey Federation) Hummersknott (Hummersknott Academy) Mowden (Marchbank Free School)
Groups Affected	Children and young people (0-16) in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Council Plan	The Capital Programme is consistent with the Council Plan providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Efficiency	Defective materials and plant will be replaced with more efficient products, e.g. increasing 'u' value on windows, insulation and modern highly efficiency boilers.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed projects have no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Childcare Capital Expansion Funding

6. In November 2023 the government announced a package of capital funding as part of the national childcare expansion programme. For Darlington the allocation was £184,335. Officers subsequently sought expressions of interest from a wide range of providers.
7. The successful bidders were as follows:
 - (a) Maidendale Nursery - £60,000 – reconfiguration of premises to provide additional childcare places;
 - (b) Middleton St George Day Nursery - £30,000 – refurbishment of premises to provide additional childcare places;
 - (c) St Teresa’s Catholic Primary - £5,000 – Additional equipment for wraparound provision to allow provision to be moved in-house following closure of the existing provider;
 - (d) Mowden Pre School - £7,740 - reconfiguration of premises to provide additional childcare places;
 - (e) All Saints Pre-School - £25,000 – provision of child appropriate toileting facilities to allow for additional childcare places.
8. The successful bids total £127,740. Two other bids are still subject to further clarification, however as works are likely to be undertaken during the school summer holidays it would be prudent for all of the funding allocation to be released as soon as possible. Remaining projects will follow the same approval process, with any remaining funds allocated by officers in line with the grant purpose.

Section 106 Funding

9. The Council received two Section 106 contributions for additional primary places in the west end of Darlington. £87,000 from the Woodburn Nursery development (15/00513/FUL) and £180,245 for land at Carmel Road South (17/00818/FUL).
10. Taking Darlington as a whole, evidence suggests that there is no requirement for additional primary places. However, locally Abbey Infants is at capacity and Abbey Juniors currently only has 13 spare places across the four-year groups. Both schools have been graded Good by Ofsted.
11. As well as being very near capacity, Abbey Infants and Juniors have seen a significant increase in the number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and are in need of further physical space at the school to provide appropriate education for these pupils. This includes classrooms for small groups teaching and break-out areas.
12. The proposal is to build a three-classroom modular unit to provide the additional space required to meet the needs of the increasing number of EHCP pupils.

13. These funds are due to expire October 2024 and April 2027 respectively, and if unused will have to be returned to their respective developers. Subject to Cabinet approval, the Section 106 funds will be released to the Trust before their expiry dates.
14. Any capital works undertaken using the Section 106 funding will be delivered in consultation with the academy trust.

High Needs Capital Funding

15. Hummersknott Academy has a EHCP pupil starting in September 2024 who will require specific reconfiguration of existing spaces to provide specialist facilities. The requirements are beyond the normal 'reasonable adaptations' that the school would be expected to fund. The total cost of the reconfiguration works is £21,000. This investment will improve access at Hummersknott Academy for a wider range of EHCP pupils in a mainstream school.
16. Marchbank Free School have agreed to provide additional high needs places from September 2024 but require some minor works to create additional classroom space and additional toileting facilities. The total costs of these works is £38,000.

Financial Implications

17. The Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and High Needs Capital are grants from the Department for Education (DfE). The Section 106 funding is from developer contributions. There is no impact on Council funds.
18. The Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and High Needs Capital must be spent in accordance with the DfE's 'capital grants spend guidance', the latest edition being from March 2023. The Section 106 funds will be spent in line with the terms and conditions in the agreements.
19. All funding will be paid through DBC grant agreements to the settings or trusts concerned. As projects will be managed by these entities, there will be no risk of overspends to the Council.

Consultation

20. Any capital works will be undertaken in consultation with the settings concerned.