

**CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026**

MAINTAINED SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMER 2026

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

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to:
 - (a) Release the 2025/26 school condition allocation for the schools' summer works programme 2026.
 - (b) Release the 2025/26 devolved formula capital to the maintained schools.

Summary

2. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the release of the 2025/26 School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding of £154,388 to undertake a programme of works across the maintained schools in Darlington during summer 2026. Works will include condition, electrical and mechanical surveys, works identified as a priority and any urgent works arising.
3. The report also seeks the release of the 2025/26 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £32,668. This funding is a formula-based grant provided to all maintained schools to help support their ongoing capital needs.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Members:-
 - (a) Agree to formally release the 2025/26 School Condition Allocation of £154,388 to support the 2026 maintained schools' summer works programme.
 - (b) Agree to formally release the 2025/26 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £32,668.

Reason

5. The recommendations are supported in order to release the School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital will enable capital investment to be undertaken in the areas identified with the greatest need, in terms of asset management priorities.

**James Stroyan,
Executive Director of People**

Background Papers

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

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| Council Plan | These capital works will ensure children are learning in a safe high-quality environment to make sure they have the best start in life. |
| Addressing inequalities | This programme has no specific impact on protected groups. |
| Tackling 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. |
| Efficient and effective use of resources | Defective materials and plant will be replaced with more efficient products e.g. increasing 'u' value on windows, insulation and modern highly efficiency boilers. |
| Health and Wellbeing | The capital strategy outlined in this report will continue the Council's drive to provide buildings that enhance children's life chances and opportunities to thrive. |
| S17 Crime and Disorder | Capital investment to improve facilities and provide better building maintenance will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder. |
| Wards Affected | Schools located in: North Road (Harrowgate Hill Primary and Rise Carr College), Park East (Borough Road Nursery), Pierremont (George Dent Nursery), Red Hall and Lingfield (Red Hall Primary). |
| Groups Affected | Children and young people (Aged 2-16) in Darlington. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework. |
| Key Decision | This is a key decision. |
| Urgent Decision | For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | The proposed projects have no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers. |

MAIN REPORT

6. The Authority funds the capital maintenance and improvement of maintained schools from a variety of sources including capital allocations received from the Department for Education (DfE), bid-based submissions for Central Government funding programmes (compiled and submitted by Officers or individual schools) and Section 106 agreements.

School Condition Allocation (SCA)

7. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated the local authority £154,388 of School Condition funding for 2025/26 to address capital maintenance needs across the borough's remaining maintained schools. The Education and Inclusion Service within the People Group is responsible for ensuring all funding is targeted to meet strategic priorities and the highest priority needs across maintained schools and nurseries.
8. Once a school has converted to an Academy it is no longer eligible to be considered for capital maintenance funding allocated to the LA but can apply direct to the Department for Education (DfE) for funding as required.
9. The annual summer works programme is compiled using the information from local authority commissioned surveys covering building condition and electrical and mechanical services. A list of the highest priority works that fits within the available funding envelope is developed in conjunction with Building Design and Building Services. That list is then agreed between the local authority and the maintained schools in the spring prior to the works.

Asset Management Costs

10. An amount equivalent to 13.0% of the SCA is set aside to cover survey and design fees as part of the asset management process. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes.

Contingency / Urgent Works

11. The summer works programme retains a 17.0% contingency within the estimated value of the works. This is used to cover any unexpected costs or emergency works. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

12. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated £32,668 to Darlington-maintained schools for 2025/26 on a formula-led basis. Local authorities are required to distribute DFC to their schools in accordance with the DfE-published allocations. Schools will be encouraged to manage spend in line with agreed priorities.

Financial Implications

13. The School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital are all grants from the Department for Education (DfE). There is no impact on Council funds.

14. All funds must be spent in accordance with the DfE's 'condition methodology and spend guidance', the latest edition being from March 2025.
15. The local authority is receiving less and less as schools academise. This means less flexibility to undertake any serious condition issues at the remaining settings and a higher likelihood that Council funds would be required to supplement the DfE grant.

Consultation

16. Any capital works will be undertaken in consultation with the schools concerned and in line with the priorities identified as part of the school's surveys.