

The Cabinet – 19 March 2008

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Investing in the Future – Primary Capital Programme

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the progress made so far in preparation for the national Primary Capital Programme and the steps that are being undertaken to ensure successful inclusion.

Background

2. The Primary Capital Programme is a national programme of capital investment over 15 years intended to transform primary education. The programme will replace or refurbish 50% (approx 8,900) of the primary schools in England over 15 years.
3. The programme along with other initiatives will enable Dudley to achieve the Primary School Review objectives of creating sustainable schools with excellent facilities. The capital investment from the Primary Capital Programme supported by additional investment from other sources will improve the physical environments that children learn in and, along with other improvements, will secure better outcomes for children, families and their communities.
4. Government commitment to the Primary Capital Programme is evident in several major changes including;
 - a. Major capital investment in children's play facilities.
 - b. The creation of a new Government department focussed on children and families; the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).
 - c. National guidance issued to local authorities on the Primary Capital Programme (December 2007).
 - d. Publication of the Children's Plan – Building Brighter Futures which sets out how the Government will deliver its ambitions for world class standards and access to world class services for children and young people.

5. The Primary Capital Programme will support the delivery of the Children's Plan - Building Brighter Futures by;
 - a. Creating primary schools equipped for 21st Century learning, at the heart of the community, with a range of children's services in reach of every family.
 - b. Delivering a strategic approach to capital investment – supporting national policy aims, delivering world class standards, access to joined-up services for children and families and addressing local needs and priorities.
 - c. Rebuilding, remodelling or refurbishing at least half of all primary schools including taking out of use at least 5% of school buildings in the worst physical condition (higher for the most deprived communities).
 - d. Focussing resources on deprivation nationally and in every authority.
 - e. Reconfiguring the primary capital stock to account for demographic change.

6. The Primary Capital Programme provides an excellent opportunity for Dudley to further develop its strategic approach to capital investment and focus on improving the outcomes for children and families set out in;
 - a. Every Child Matters (DCSF)
 - b. The new Children's Plan – Building Brighter Futures (DCSF)
 - c. Dudley's Children and Young People's Plan
 - d. Children's Services Asset Management Plan 2008 - 13 (draft).

7. The Primary Capital programme will support Dudley's key strategic role in the future development of the Black Country and the West Midlands region. Dudley is an active partner in the development of the Black Country Vision which entails making significant investments in the economy, town centres, housing, the environment, transport and children and young people. At the heart of this programme is investment in schools for the future where children and their families can;
 - a. Enjoy a good experience of education and childhood.
 - b. Access the range of high quality public services.
 - c. Acquire the skills, attributes and qualifications required for employment and independent living.
 - d. Make a positive contribution to the economic prosperity and social well-being of Dudley and the wider community.

8. Dudley has consulted with schools in three phases. In 2006 schools were consulted on a methodology for selecting one school for a pilot Primary Capital Programme bid. In autumn 2007 schools were consulted again on a revised methodology for prioritising projects. The revisions were based on DCSF guidance to the 23 pilot authorities issued in June 2007.

9. The third stage of consultation on the Primary Capital Programme took place from 22 January until 4 March 2008. The consultation sought views on the long term aims, how Dudley should approach this opportunity to transform primary education and proposals for initial investment priorities.
10. The consultation received 105 responses of which approximately two thirds were in agreement with Dudley's proposals. The questions and responses are as follows;

Question 1. Do you agree with the overall approach to developing proposals for the Primary Capital Programme set out in paragraphs 10 - 18? Do you have any further suggestions?

Yes	No	Unanswered
72	14	2

Question 2. Do you agree with the long term aims set out in paragraph 54? If not, please say why.

Yes	No	Unanswered
74	10	4

Question 3. Do you agree with the specific priorities for investment during the first four years of the programme – 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 (see paragraph 63)? If not, what do think the specific priorities should be?

Yes	No	Unanswered
71	14	3

Question 4. Do you agree with the school projects to be delivered in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 (see paragraph 65)? If not, what do think the school projects should be and why?

Yes	No	Unanswered
68	15	5

More detailed information can be found in the summary report on responses to the Primary Capital Programme Consultation attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The full report is available on www.dudley.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/investing-in-the-future/primary-capital-programme

11. Dudley is required to submit a Primary Strategy for Change for approval by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The document must include:
 - a. Baseline analysis of data to demonstrate key issues for Dudley e.g. demographics
 - b. Long term aims to address national and local priorities
 - c. Priorities for investment in school projects for the last two years of the programme.

DCSF approval of our proposals set out in the primary Strategy for Change is necessary to progress within the programme and receive funding.

Finance

12. The Primary Capital Programme is based on allocations to local authorities to transform primary education. The allocation to Dudley is provided by the Government and is based on the total number of pupils attending schools in the Borough. An additional amount is added to the basic allocation to reflect the level of deprivation. An authority with the same number of children as Dudley with significantly higher levels of deprivation would receive slightly more money or an authority of the same size with significantly lower levels of deprivation, would receive slightly less money.
13. The Government pledged an initial £1,150 million extra resources to fund an ambitious capital investment programme for primary education in 2008/9 (£150m), 2009/10 (£500m) and 2010/11 (£500m). The commitment included a continuation of the level of investment for 15 years in total, subject to future public spending decisions. The project would fund around 25 - 30 new primary schools at an average cost of around £4.5million each.

Dudley's allocations for the first two years of the programme are;

2009/10	£4.2 million
2010/11	£6.5 million
2011 – 2023	It is expected that funding will continue at these levels subject to future decisions on public spending.

14. Allocations for the remainder of the programme will be confirmed after the governments spending review. This funding is additional capital and other streams such as Devolved Capital (direct to schools), modernisation, basic need and targeted capital (bids) are expected to continue. Schools therefore will continue to receive their devolved allocations and Dudley will continue to receive funding for allocation through the AMP matrix as now.

15. Dudley is required to set out in the Primary Strategy for Change (see paragraph 19) the total funding that will be committed from both the Primary Capital Programme allocations and any additional funding from other sources. Additional funding sources include;
 - a. Contributions from other schools capital funding streams e.g. Devolved Formula Capital, Modernisation, School Access, Extended Schools, Basic Need.
 - b. Other capital funding from DCSF e.g. SureStart General Grant (Capital).
 - c. Other Government Departments.
 - d. Funding from EU or national funding bodies such as the Big Lottery.
 - e. Local resources including capital receipts and revenue funding.
 - f. 10% contribution from voluntary aided schools.
 - g. Local authorities should also consider the scope for joining up with community health investment e.g. NHS LIFT schemes.
16. Dudley's access to the funding will be dependent on approval by the DCSF. The approval process will involve a series of rigorous assessments set by the DCSF covering the strategy, school proposals, the efficiency of procurement methods and the value for money obtained.

Law

17. As the project develops there will be significant implications covering school organisation, land, employment and finance. The Council's statutory powers relating to the building of schools and the provision of education are contained in the relevant Education and Children Acts. Land, Employment and Finance matters will be dealt with under appropriate legislation such as the Local Government Act 1972, the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Finance Acts.

Equality Impact

18. The report takes into account the Council's Equality and Diversity policy. Children and Young People will be fully consulted on each individual school proposal.

Recommendation

19. It is recommended that:

The Director of Children's Services is authorised to submit Dudley's Primary Strategy for Change to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.



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John Freeman
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Ray Watson
Telephone: 01384 814395
Email: raymond.watson@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses to Primary Capital Programme Consultation
Appendix 2 – Draft Primary Strategy for Change