

MEETING:	SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING DATE:	24 OCTOBER 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	CAPITAL AND MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE ON HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

Classification

Open

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To update Schools Forum on planned capital and maintenance works on Herefordshire schools.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing's decision of 25 September 2014 to approve capital and maintenance expenditure on Herefordshire schools as set out in appendices 1 and 2 be noted; and**
- (b) the development of a Herefordshire schools estates strategy by June 2015 be noted.**

Alternative options

- 1 The capital and maintenance grants supporting building work in schools are profiled differently. The profile has been considered extensively by Property Services department of the council, individual head teachers and the capital consultative group, involving head teachers. The proposed works are addressing the known priorities.
- 2 The Basic Need grant is not used to support what are essential maintenance

schemes at schools. This would mean essential urgent building works are delayed as there is insufficient maintenance grant.

- 3 Basic need schemes at different schools are prioritised. The priorities have been formulated on the best information and advice available and consulted upon. Delaying the decision until further information is available would mean known, urgent condition issues of some schools were delayed.

Reasons for recommendations

- 4 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Wellbeing approved the profile of expenditure set out in the appendices in September 2014.
- 5 The Government grants Local Authorities three separate funding streams for capital works. (Maintenance, Basic Need and Local Education Voluntary Aided Programme LCVAP) There should be an open and transparent approach to the amounts and their use, which this report provides. Academy schools may access the Department for Education academies capital fund for building works.
- 6 There is a backlog of urgent and essential maintenance works at Local Authority maintained schools. Based on the best information available these have been prioritised for action within available resources.
- 7 There is a surplus of places across Herefordshire schools but consistently over time some parents have not been able to get a place for their child at outstanding high performing schools. Allocations from Basic Need have been made to alleviate this position.
- 8 There is no specific government allocation for funding special school places. Allocation has been made to support the finishing off of works at Blackmarston, the creation of additional spaces for primary aged children at Brookfield and remodelling of Westfield to provide more suitable spaces in an adjacent building.

Key considerations

- 9 There are a variety of funding streams to support capital works at schools. The national schools funding formula means all schools receive a relatively small devolved capital allocation to support minor works and maintenance. Schools may convert revenue budgets to capital to make improvements. Bigger maintenance works like the replacement of a roof, a new heating system or windows are funded through a central maintenance grant awarded to the Council or via the academy capital maintenance scheme. Denominational schools are given a separate LCVAP grant to support works.
- 10 The local authority's wider duties and responsibilities associated with the wellbeing of children and the oversight of its estate are such that it maintains assurances that schools are undertaking their maintenance duties. The Local Authority asks governors of all schools annually to complete a document called "duties associated with running a school". The document sets out necessary health and safety checks and other maintenance work that should be undertaken.
- 11 The planned maintenance 2014/15 (line 1 of the appendix 1) is the known essential work that needs to be undertaken. An outline of scope, the forecast cost and at which school is set out in Appendix 2. The fees required for this work (line 2) are 10%.
- 12 The Local Authority has not recently fully reviewed the safeguarding arrangements at

all its schools such that they meet modern expectations. In 2013/14 the local authority was expected to rectify fencing that was considered a potential safeguarding risk. The allocation in line 3 is to fully understand the problem and work with schools as necessary on suitable modifications.

- 13 In order to ensure the works at schools are properly targeted it is important that accurate and up to date surveys are undertaken. There is a backlog of surveys needing completion. These will be completed in preparation for the 2015/16 programme of works. Subsequently a 5 year rolling programme will be in place.
- 14 The Trend heating system (line 8) is a centrally controlled system that is designed to create efficiencies for schools. Many schools prefer to take responsibility for their own heating systems. This one off funding will ensure schools that want to buy in to the central arrangement can do and schools that want to maintain their own systems can do so too. There would then be no future centralised charge to the local authority maintenance budget.
- 15 There are proposals to support the newly federated Aylestone and Broadlands schools. An allowance has been made in line 9 for this.
- 16 There is a unique situation at Colwall C of E with water ingress (line 10). It has been agreed the school decant into temporary buildings. While the costs of the project are projected to be circa £2m over 2 years a significant portion of the LA maintenance grant needs to be allocated to support it. The financial estimates linked to the Leader's decision to make the arrangements require the 2015/16 grant to allocate a further £300k
- 17 Basic Need funding is being redirected to support the maintenance programme (line 14). Without this essential schemes could not progress and more work would become emergency work and potentially increase the future cost.
- 18 The Basic Need schemes (line 17) for each school are set out in appendix 2 and are for special schools and primary schools. Marlbrook, Staunton on Wye, and Mordiford are all outstanding schools that have been oversubscribed in year R for the last 3 years. They have all admitted over their planned admission number to support parents. All the schools are planning additional building works to accommodate the extra children and the profiled expenditure is to support this work. The funding is a proposed contribution to the individual schools schemes which have been discussed with the schools.
- 19 The challenges of keeping schools, up to date with maintenance work, ensuring suitability of the schools accommodation and minimising the risk of a similar situation to Colwall has led the Authority to conclude that a more detail examination of the position needs to be made and it has committed to developing an estates strategy.

Community impact

- 20 Schools are a key part of communities and as such it is important they are well maintained. Parents are encouraged to choose a suitable school for their child. The basic need proposals support outstanding schools that are in demand from parents.

Equality and human rights

- 21 The proposed capital and maintenance schemes have given due consideration to equalities issues particular in relation to disability. The Council maintains a disability access scheme. While there are no specific proposals for adaptations at mainstream

schools (line 6 of the appendix 1) maintenance and basic need allocations have been given to the county's special schools.

Financial implications

22 The proposed expenditure is set out in appendix 1.

Legal implications

23 The purpose of this report is to update the Schools Forum on decisions that have been made and as such there are no specific legal implications.

24 Herefordshire Council has a duty to provide and support places of education that are both fit for purpose and health and safety compliant. The proposals set out in this report and its appendices support the Council in meeting these legal duties.

25 Failure to make repairs to known defects, such as those set out in this report and its appendices, increases the risk to the Council of litigation from matters arising from these defects.

Risk management

26 Without undertaking the maintenance programme more children are going to be attending schools with defects including those that are significant health and safety concerns. This programme will address the highest known risks

27 The council has not got a fully comprehensive understanding of the condition and suitability of its schools. Therefore some emergency maintenance work might be needed. This is being addressed through the creation of an estates strategy and monitoring of schools completion of the "duties associated with running a school document "

28 Schools may feel the expansion of outstanding schools which are in demand from parents is disadvantaging other schools. The Local Authority, as part of its approach to an estates strategy is engaging with governors of school to discuss and debate implications.

29 The scheme costs are significantly above or below the forecast. All schemes will be monitored by the capital strategy consultative group and a capital project board with officers from Education and Commissioning and Property Services. The board will meet monthly to review schemes and make local professional decisions about virement while remaining within the overall forecast.

Consultees

30 A school capital strategy consultative group, with a number of headteachers and property services officers, meets at least termly. At the meeting on 2 July the outline proposals were agreed as a constructive way forward for use of the grants.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – proposed profile of expenditure

Appendix 2 - schemes associated with schools.

Background papers

- Leader's decision – Colwall CE Primary School – Investigation into damp – 8 August 2014