

School Capital Investment Strategy - Draft Principles

Under the 1996 Education Act section 14(1) a local authority has a duty to ensure there are enough school places for the children in their area. In Herefordshire we want to do this in a way that supports the delivery of high quality education and contributes to the attractiveness of the County as a place to live and work.

The School Capital Investment Strategy is a key strand of our overall Strategic Plan for Education which in turn complements the Childrens and Young Peoples Plan. The Schools Capital Investment Strategy sets out our collective approach to delivering our lawful duty and is based on the following principles:

1. High quality learning environments are more likely to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people.
2. A high quality learning environment is one where;
 - a. The building is in good condition with an affordable and planned programme of maintenance. Where the combined cost of any backlog and future maintenance commitments becomes disproportional to the asset value renewal should be considered.
 - b. The building(s) have the right number of suitable places that are at least of the size as set out in the government building specifications. (Building Bulletin 103)
 - c. The buildings are supportive of the delivery of a suitable curriculum and learning.
 - d. There is sufficient suitable outdoor space including playing fields and all weather surfaces.
 - e. Children are not taught in temporary classrooms.
 - f. The building is energy efficient.
 - g. The school is fully accessible to children, staff and parent/carers with disabilities.
 - h. The school meets all health and safety requirements.
3. There will be a mix of size of schools in the city, market towns and villages across Herefordshire that will support the future population trends. We anticipate most parents choosing their local school but do want to support parents/carers choice. We will aim for 95% of parents to get their first preference school. There will be an appropriate number of faith places. We have no preference about whether schools are academy or not.
4. High quality popular schools will be supported to expand. Judgements about quality and popularity are based on;
 - a. Ofsted judgement is outstanding/good
 - b. 3 year trend of outcomes is good
 - c. Total number of parental first preferences received is in excess of published admission numbers over time.

- d. The schools expansion does not unduly compromise the quality aims set out in paragraph 2.
5. There is no preferred size or organisation of school. Opportunities to consolidate provision through development of all through schools and nursery provision will be encouraged.
6. All schools should be planning 5 years ahead. There are risks of continuity of education for small schools. Schools with less than 105 on roll, particularly those that are stand alone, are to have a detailed 5 year plan setting out arrangements for continuity. These plans could include succession planning arrangements, shared leadership and/or merger, federation or amalgamation.
7. Across Herefordshire as whole there should be no more than 10% surplus places. This margin is designed to reflect population variations and trends over time.
8. We want to be increasingly responsible towards the environment. This means
 - a. All schools are to work towards achieving a displayed energy certificate (DEC) rating level of grade C or above.
 - b. All schools are to sign up to and to work towards achieving a silver rating on the Eco schools status.
 - c. All schools are to seek to reduce energy consumption per child/ building area.
9. We will promote non-vehicular access routes to schools and seek to have schools located conveniently to the community assets.
10. Schools are to be accessible and achieve the highest standards compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements and Approved document M.
11. Financial investment will need to come from a variety of sources. These will include;
 - a. Specific grants and one off government schemes.
 - b. The planned release of sites to sell and reinvest.
 - c. Conversion of revenue funding to capital.
 - d. Herefordshire Council capital programme.
 - e. A local community council tax charge if they want support the continuation of a local school.
 - f. The Education Funding Agency Academy funding stream.
 - g. Diocesan board.
 - h. Developer contributions
12. There will be detailed consultation on any changes or investment proposals.