

Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
Report submitted by: Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People
Date 4 December 2014

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
All

Strategy for the Provision of School Places and Schools' Capital Investment 2015/16 to 2017/18
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

The Strategy for the Provision of School Places and Schools' Capital Investment 2015/16 to 2017/18 is the annual update of the Authority's strategy for the provision of school places and the resultant priorities for schools capital investment.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and Standing Order 25 has been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the Strategy for the Provision of School Places and Schools Capital Investment 2015/16 to 2017/18 as set out at Appendix 'A'; and
- (ii) Note that further reports will be presented on individual projects and their associated costs

Background and Advice

Introduction

The strategy covers the period from 2015/16 to 2017/18, and outlines how the Authority will prioritise the Basic Need Funding allocated from the Department for Education. The Strategy is an update on the previous strategy covering the period from 2014/15 to 2016/17.

The report outlines the local authority's statutory duties in relation to school place commissioning and its role in the appropriate allocation of capital resources to schools.

The revised strategy contains the updates with regards to school place provision and proposed changes in policy and delivery as follows:

- It is estimated that a minimum of 7 additional forms of entry (a form of entry is 30 pupils) will be needed in the primary sector by September 2015, 3 of these will be permanent expansions, whilst the other 4 will be on a temporary basis.
- The priority remains the sufficiency of places ensuring the Authority meets its statutory obligation of providing a school place for every child in Lancashire who wants one. This means existing suitability issues at schools are unlikely to be addressed, unless they relate to standards raising or regularising (by raising) admission numbers at primary schools in areas of high demand for places. The need to provide additional school places and maintain premises in reasonable condition is likely to use most of the available schools capital resource.
- The LA will seek to use standardised design solutions wherever possible for extensions to existing buildings; rebuilding schools or the provision of newly established schools.
- The LA may need to utilise its school place commissioning powers against the wishes of governing bodies if it is unable to arrive at a negotiated solution in order to secure the adequate supply of local school places.
- The LA will seek to expand existing high quality provision wherever possible, but there are likely to be instances where the establishment of new provision is the most appropriate solution. In such cases, the Education Act 2011 makes a presumption for Academy status.
- Information on Lancashire's Alternative Provision (Short Stay) Schools
- The implications of requiring Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 approval from the Secretary of State to build on existing school sites used for playing fields or community use.

The strategy informs the Capital Strategy for Schools, the latest version of which was approved by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools on 5 June 2014.

Priorities for capital expenditure

It is proposed that the three main strands to the authority's capital investment in schools will remain as they were for the 2014/15 to 2016/17 strategy (in priority order):

- Supporting growth in demand for primary school places.
- Targeted investment in mainstream and special schools (particularly where there is a sound invest-to-save business case for expanding special school provision).
- Strategic maintenance of the building stock.

The proposed strategy is set out at Appendix 'A'. The published strategic document will include information on current provision on a school, district and sub-district basis that is not currently available in one document. It is anticipated that, in addition to providing policy context, it will prove a useful reference document for partners and schools, particularly for forward planning purposes.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

The Council's statutory obligations in relation to school place commissioning are set out in the strategic document set out at Appendix 'A'. A school place and capital investment strategy provides a framework against which future decisions can be taken in relation to individual school proposals.

Finance

The amount of capital works that can be undertaken is subject to the level of schools capital allocation received by the County Council for 2015/16 onwards. When the authority sets its schools capital programme, the priorities will be in line with the strategy outlined above and will be subject to further reports to Cabinet Member.

Risk management

A school place and capital investment strategy is required in order to take objective decisions that are fair and equitable across the diverse range of schools and communities in Lancashire.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Nil		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A