

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 1 April 2021

Report of the Director of Strategy and Performance

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Capital Strategy for Schools – Condition Led Capital Investment Programme 2021/22

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposals for the allocation of schools capital funding, to address a further phase of high priority building condition repairs on Community, Voluntary Controlled and Maintained Schools in Lancashire.

The condition programme is funded by a grant from the Department for Education. However, there has been a delay in the announcement of the grant amount this year. Previous years allocations indicate that approximately £10.000m should be received, and the programme has been developed to utilise this. Once the amount is announced, the programme will be adjusted accordingly.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No. C19 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed list of maintenance schemes in Lancashire schools, detailed at Appendix 'A', totalling £9.850m, as a further phase of high priority school repairs, subject to the grant settlement being £10.000m.

Background and Advice

The Schools Condition Led Programme began in 2011. Utilising Department for Education grant monies, each round of the programme has addressed the worst condition issues that have been identified. Through a process of cross-referencing asset management building condition data held by the county council, officers have prepared a schedule of Priority 1 school repairs. These are set out at Appendix 'A'.

The programme has been formulated using the most current information available, but from experience on earlier programmes, and the complexities of assessing the condition of existing buildings, there could be a risk that further Priority 1 issues may become apparent. With this in mind, a significant contingency is recommended, which will be available to capture any justifiable projects which come to light, during the delivery of already identified works and which meet the Priority 1 criteria.

The criteria for schools being included in the programme is based on the Department for Education Schools Asset Management Guidance which defines Schools Priority 1 repairs as:

Priority 1. Urgent work that will prevent immediate closure of premises and/or address an immediate high risk to the health and safety of occupants and/or remedy a serious breach of legislation.

The Department for Education provides annual funding for Schools Condition. This is based on their set methodology for Local Authority controlled schools. Due to the finite budget, it will not be possible to address all high priority issues in all schools. The remaining Priority 1 issues and any Priority 2 issues will be reviewed, prioritised and considered for any future condition led programmes.

Legionella remedial works

School's premise managers are required to undertake Legionella Risk Assessments to ensure the buildings remain safe and comply with legislation. The testing and inspection regime produces remedial actions that are then prioritised, and technical solutions identified to ensure buildings remain safe and compliant. There is an allowance in the programme to address the most urgent known Legionella priorities.

Specialist surveys and investigations

There is also an allowance in the programme to undertake further investigations and specialist surveys on buildings, where there is deemed to be a potential risk due to the age, type of construction or condition. This will assist in managing risk and determining priorities in future programmes of work.

All schemes will be commissioned with and delivered by the council's Design and Construction Service. The delivery timescales will be dependent on several factors, linked to the practicalities of undertaking the work in occupied premises which would have an impact on education. It is anticipated therefore that the programme will be delivered when possible in school holidays, and this will likely include the summer breaks in both 2021 and 2022.

It is anticipated that 40% of the proposed programme will be delivered in 2021/22, with the remainder of the programme being delivered the following financial year.

Due to the continued impact of COVID-19 and the potential effect on school working patterns the programme may be affected, and the delivery of projects delayed.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

If the recommended work is not undertaken, the risk would be managed by further regular reactive maintenance to 'patch' the problems. However, in some cases, further deterioration of the building fabric or discontinued components would result in closure of parts of, or the whole school, until significant emergency repairs could be undertaken.

Due to the nature of building maintenance works, the full extent of repairs required may not be apparent until the building infrastructure is exposed, which may result in the need to undertake additional work and therefore increased project costs. Furthermore, there may also be additional severe condition related projects that come to light, and it is recommended therefore that a contingency fund is retained to be approved and managed by the Asset Management Service. This contingency figure is included in the overall programme value.

It should be noted that this condition works programme does not address all condition works required in the Lancashire schools building stock, but addresses the worst known condition works that can be addressed within the funding available. There remains a risk that as yet unknown issues may arise in the year which will require further works.

Financial

The Department for Education is yet to announce the 2021/22 schools condition grant allocation. Based on allocations in the previous two years, it is anticipated that the county council will receive approximately £10m.

The Department for Education School Condition previous allocations are as follows:

- 2019/20 £10.600m (confirmed) and spent;
- 2020/21 £9.600m (confirmed) and committed to existing projects;
- 2020/21 £4.463m additional one off in year allocation (confirmed) and committed to existing projects
- 2021/22 £10.000m (anticipated allocation announcement due April 2021)

Whilst the proposed works utilise the majority of the grant anticipated the scheduling of the works over two years allows for flexibility to apply 2022/23 grant to some for these works should the 2021/22 grant be lower than the 310m anticipated.

Procurement

The selection of contractors to undertake the capital works will be carried out in full compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, either through the use of established frameworks, or through undertaking a compliant procurement exercise, where appropriate.

The programme in Appendix 'A' will be reviewed if there is a significant variance from the expected amount for 2021/22.

The financial implications are set out at Appendix 'A' and are deemed to be Part II for the reason set out below:

This section of the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Appendix 'A' is not for publication - Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.