

Agenda Item: 6

Meeting: Schools Forum

Date: 29 June 2009

Subject: Schools Capital Programme – Progress Report

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning

Summary: The report is for information. This report sets out the initial Central Bedfordshire Capital Programme for schools, details current progress and gives an indication of future issues.

Contact Officer: Stuart Freel, Interim Senior Education Officer (Planning)

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Authority-wide

Function of: Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. that the progress report be received.**

Background

1. The current capital programme was established before the Council came into existence in close liaison with the outgoing County Council.
2. Broadly, the work on implementing the programme and the processes for determining schemes within specific grants has followed that used by the County Council. The new Council is anxious to plan and develop the future Children, Families and Learning capital programme, alongside the Council's other capital programmes in an integrated way and will be developing new approaches to ensure that schemes meet priority needs, through the Learning Transformation Board, which has instituted a programme of considering Project Initiation Documents for each scheme/area.
3. The next section of the report sets out progress on particular current schemes. It does not cover schemes relating to the Voluntary Aided (VA) sector, for which separate processes are involved.

Programmes and schemes

School Condition Works (NDS modernisation funding) - £1.51k

4. Just over £900,000 urgent condition works, based on priorities from condition surveys identified by the County Council. This work is now commissioned from Mouchel and schools are contributing towards the costs, as previously. The schemes are set out in the table below:

Brewers Hill Middle	Kitchen ventilation
Hadrian Lower	Boiler plant
Kings Houghton Middle	Replace fan convectors
Leedon Lower	Roofing (1 block)
Ardley Hill Lower	Roofing
Weatherfield Special	Part re-roofing
Parkfields Middle	Window replacement
Potton Lower	Replace windows and doors
Stondon Lower	Replace windows and doors
Burgoyne Middle	Replace windows and doors
Redborne Upper	Replace some heating distribution mains
Harlington Lower	Roofing
Linslade Lower	Roofing
Mary Bassett Lower	Window replacement
Dunton Lower	Damp-proof course
Lawnside Lower	Replace windows and doors
Gilbert Inglefield Middle	Roofing

5. New condition surveys for Upper, Lower and special schools have recently been undertaken and will be completed for Middle Schools in the Summer Term. These survey results will be used to plan the use of the remaining funding in 2009/10 and future years' centrally funded programme. They are key to developing the PCP and BSF programmes too.

Temporary Accommodation/programme to Avoid use of Temporary Accommodation - £500k

6. No new requirements for additional mobile units have been identified currently this year and one case where mobiles can be removed is being explored. Further work will be undertaken during the Autumn Term with schools where mobiles could be replaced with permanent accommodation. This programme will be linked with identifying future priorities for the Primary Capital Programme (see below).

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) and School-Managed Schemes

7. DFC has been distributed with school budgets and the termly opportunity to apply to use future years' funding has been offered to schools. A Panel had recently met to consider 7 applications, this involved a representative headteacher from the Schools' Forum.
8. The school-managed projects regime remains in place, and applications are currently being processed, with technical advice being obtained from Mouchel, as required. It has been identified that that operation of this scheme requires some review and further report(s) will come to the Forum in future.

Schools' Access Initiative - £579k

9. Schools have had an annual opportunity to bid for this funding, which is significantly oversubscribed. A Panel, involving a special school headteacher representative, who has been involved, in some cases in making moderation visits to schools, has considered the bids and a finalised programme is currently being issued to the schools involved.
10. Priority has had to be given to schools where children with particular access needs are currently placed or will be placed this coming Autumn.

Children's Centre Grant - £2.42m and Extended Services Grant - £313k

11. These capital funding streams are for three main purposes:
 - the development of children's centres: a series of 11 new schemes have been identified, based on national criteria, and feasibility studies are currently being undertaken in order to finalise budgets
 - extended services: specific projects are identified and commissioned, depending on local circumstances and current provision
 - delivering the increased and flexible entitlement for three and four year olds: potential providers are invited to bid for allocations, against set criteria, to a multi-agency Panel.

Primary Capital Programme (PCP)

12. An initial 2-year PCP allocation was agreed following Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) acceptance of the readiness to deliver prepared by the County Council. This included a series of initial schemes at Roecroft, Tithe Farm, Greenfield/Pulloxhill, Hawthorn Park, Downside and Thornhill Lower Schools. (Figures given are for identified expenditure in 2009/10 only).

- the Roecroft scheme (£1.5m) involves relocating (and enlarging) the school to a new site in a new housing development. The scheme is fully designed and has been submitted for planning permission, with a view to implementation over the next two years. The project releases the current school site and its value can be used to augment the capital programme in future years
- the Greenfield/Pulloxhill scheme (£50k) will involve the amalgamation of these currently federated small schools on a new site as a single school. Work is currently being undertaken on site acquisition, planning and the desirable size of the replacement school. These two sites will be released to contribute towards the value of the scheme
- Tithe Farm, Hawthorn Park, Downside and Thornhill schemes are substantial refurbishments of current buildings. The scope and design of these schemes is underway and individual budgets will be agreed shortly.

13. Further work is needed to identify the next priority schools for PCP investment for 2010/11 onwards but the level of funding will not be known until the next national budget.

Oakbank Special School - £705k

14. This scheme has involved the provision of a new sports hall and improvements to teaching facilities at this special school for children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Disorders.

Etonbury Middle School Additional Places and Arnold Middle School (phase 3)

15. Further discussions are needed to confirm the details and budgets of these schemes.

Future Issue

Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

16. The Forum will be aware that the Central Bedfordshire area was originally allocated to later 'waves' of the BSF programme. Latterly, the Government have reviewed the processes by which Authorities are prioritised for inclusion in the programme. The next key stage in this process is the development of a statement of readiness. The Learning Transformation Board is overseeing the development of BSF and the staffing structure of the new Directorate reflects the priority given to exploiting this significant national initiative.

Staffing

17. At the point of establishing the new Authority a number of vacancies in the BSF/school-planning team arose causing some capacity issues, partially resolved with consultant support. Interviews have recently been held and appointments have now been made to the posts of:
- Senior Education Officer (Planning)
 - Project Officer
 - Principal Assistant (School Places)
 - Senior Administrative Assistant (Capital Programme).
18. The new officers will take up post during July and August.