

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

22 April 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Lead Cabinet Member - Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook
Lead Cabinet Member - Children and Young People - Councillor Lisa Evans

AN INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR SCHOOLS, SEN AND EARLY YEARS – UPDATE

SUMMARY

The previous investment strategy in for schools reported to Cabinet in July 2019 included indicative allocations to support investment in Secondary school expansion, Pupil Referral Unit and Primary Development based on available Basic Need Grant and estimated Section 106 contributions. This report provides an update on works delivered to date and recommends proposals to address priorities and proposes allocation of resources for incorporation in the Capital Programme in respect of those indicative allocations.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS

To continue to ensure that all children and young people in Stockton Borough continue to benefit from education in high quality environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet approve the revised programme outlined in this report.
2. Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Development and Business Services and the Director of Children’s Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council for expenditure towards Secondary School Improvements at a value of £1.3m.
3. Cabinet note that any future investment included in ‘Primary Schools’ will be brought back to future cabinet meetings for approval.

DETAIL

1. The Basic Need funding currently unallocated as outlined in the MTFP report in February 2021 is £13.3m. In addition we have now received Section 106 contributions of £3.8m from developers which can be added to the programme meaning that we have £17.1m available for investment.
2. We did not receive any further Basic Need Grant in the current year and the position going forward is uncertain. Further developer contributions may be received as part of future housing developments and the allocation of such funding would need to be considered when the funding is secured.

3. The investment plan is a significant opportunity to ensure a number of proposals associated with Academies and Diocesan schools are supported, and it is worth noting that schools are also making some additional contributions from their own resources. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to support Education improvement, development and achievement irrespective of the Governance of the schools.

Changes to Approved Schemes

4. Members will be aware from previous reports that Covid 19 has had an impact on some construction projects both in causing delays and increased costs and this has affected some of the current schools programme.
5. The expansion of All Saints CE Academy to 900 places (additional 200 places) is now underway. The approvals process with the School, Academy Trust and PFI provider is now in place and the contractor is on site with an anticipated completion date of December 2021. However, lengthy legal issues linked to the current PFi contract together with Covid have delayed work to the main school. Costs will be affected due to the delays, this is expected to be in the region of £250k, making a total project cost of £3.4m.
6. Members will remember that Egglecliffe School has some school blocks in poor condition with inefficient layouts and small classrooms and approved a partial rebuild. Phase 1 of the work to improve this is now complete with a much improved 6th Form building. The design for a new teaching block is also now agreed, this will replace a number of aging buildings on the school site and Planning Permission is due to be submitted in the next few weeks. Unfortunately, Covid delays have meant that contractor and material costs have risen as a consequence, indicating an increase of 3% on costs. It is therefore necessary to increase this budget by a further £700k. The Trust are also investing in the remaining buildings together with a full replacement of the all-weather pitch.

Planned investment

7. The current strategy included indicative proposals to increase capacity in Secondary schools in Central Stockton. The current analysis of pupil numbers shows at although there is a sufficient spare capacity across the planning area across all age groups combined, there is a need for additional year 7 places when factoring in numbers currently in Primary schools and estimates of numbers from developments. It is therefore proposed to increase the numbers at Outwood by 60 per year group, a total of 300 pupils, requiring extension work at a cost of an estimated £5m Any further increase in capacity will be considered in the future and will take into account future developments and any future potential contributions.
8. There are also some schools where it would be desirable to make changes to layout and circulation, where schools are at or near capacity where improvements would support the efficient education associated with their increasing numbers. These include Ian Ramsey CE Academy, St Michael's RC Academy and North Shore Academy. In order to respond to these issues, investment of £1.25m is proposed. Further work is required to develop these schemes and it is recommended that the allocation of this amount is Delegated to the Director of Finance, Development and Business Services, the Director of Childrens Services and the Leader of the Council.
9. In summer 2018 some minor modification/suitability works were undertaken at the Bishopton Centre Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to accommodate an additional 20 permanently excluded pupils from September. The numbers of excluded pupils and pupils nearing exclusion has increased in recent years, causing greater demand for provision to meet the needs of those pupils and prevent exclusions. A new model of Pathway Development Centres within schools has been developed for this purpose which will also allow for greater access to alternative provision. The Bishopton Centre is one of these schools and a feasibility has been undertaken that has identified significant work is required to ensure the school is fit for purpose and

supports some of the more vulnerable children in the Borough. It is proposed that £4.5m is allocated to support this improvement that will extend and refurbish the existing buildings to create a modern, flexible and high-quality learning environment. The Bishopton Centre has also recently received approval to convert to Academy status with Tees Valley Collaborative Trust, and this is proposed to be concluded by 1 May.

Future Primary School Development

10. The Council has invested significant resources to increase capacity and improve condition within primary schools. However, there are still some long-term building condition issues with some of the primary school facilities and in conjunction with wider regeneration initiatives, there are opportunities to consider the redevelopment of buildings together with associated access to sport and leisure as part of a wider strategic approach.
11. It is likely that a new Primary school will be required in West Stockton, the timing of which is dependent upon development and pupil growth with this being considered as part of developer contributions.
12. There are also some early indications that birth rates have dropped, across some parts of the Borough, though the impact of the pandemic has yet to be established. This will require some more detailed modelling on primary numbers to inform future planning.
13. It is proposed that the remaining £5.4m is identified to support these primary school developments. Details of the proposed investment will be brought back to future cabinet meetings for approval.

Summary

14. The overall investments can be summarised as follows:

<u>Resources available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
Basic Need	13,300
Developer Contributions	<u>3,800</u>
Total	17,100

<u>Proposals</u>	
Covid Cost Pressures	950
Outwood Bishopsgarth	5,000
Secondary School adaptations	1,250
PRU	4,500
Primary Schools	<u>5,400</u>
Total	17,100

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

15. This will benefit the schools and parents through increasing capacity which should also increase choice.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

16. There are no specific implications for children in our care. The proposals outlined will continue to ensure that all children and young people in the Borough continue to benefit from education in high quality environments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

17. Approval of the available funding of £17.1m outlined in the report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

19. This (subject matter of report) is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

20. Given this report is an update on the overall School Investment Programme it is not specific to an individual ward and no individual consultation has taken place.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

21. Cabinet report 14 June 2012 Capital Investment in Schools;
Cabinet report 14 September 2017 An Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years;
Cabinet report 18 July 2019 An Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years – Update;
Council Report 24 February 2019 Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy.

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