

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

26 April 2023

Report title	Investment in our School Assets 2023-2024	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Chris Burden Education, Skills and Work	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Education	
Accountable employee(s)	Nicholas Beeston	Asset Officer (Schools) Tel 01902 554172 Email Nick.beeston@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Education Leadership Team	30 March 2023

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the allocation of budgets to the detailed projects for schools' condition allocation capital works in 2023-2024 as listed in section 4.6. These budgets will be fully funded by Devolved Formula Capital grant or Schools Condition Allocation grant.
2. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work in consultation with the Executive Director of Families, to initiate works in relation to emergency works preventing a school closure.
3. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work in consultation with the Executive Director of Families, to initiate works in relation to asbestos removal preventing a school closure.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is asked to note:

1. The provisional resources available for implementing the Investment in our School Assets 2023-2024 programme
2. The resources available for Basic Need are being committed toward the expansion of the primary and secondary school estate, to support the provision of additional pupil places given a continued increase in demand.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the priorities for Investment in our School Assets 2023-2024 funded by the school condition allocation (SCA) grant and confirms funding for devolved formula capital to schools and basic need up until 2023-2024 (including top ups).
- 1.2 Cabinet (Resources) Panel is asked to note and where requested, approve the detailed projects in the report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 23 March 2022 approved Investment in our School Assets 2022-2023. This programme has continued to be updated by quarterly capital budget monitoring reports during the financial year.
- 2.2 The schemes referred to in this report are those proposed to be carried out in 2023-2024 and are shown in section 4.6.of the exempt report.
- 2.3 During December 2022 the Department for Education (DfE) announced the finalised figures for the 2022-2023 school condition and devolved formula capital allocations.
- 2.4 At this time it also announced the condition funding eligibility and methodology for 2023-2024 and stated that it would largely stay the same as previously with some minor updates. This gave some stability and enabled an indicative figure of what responsible bodies would receive in future years, although the School Condition Allocation (SCA) grant will be revised annually to reflect schools moving responsible body, opening, or closing.
- 2.5 On the 28 March 2023, the DfE announced the provisional school condition allocations 2023-2024 for Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) and School Condition Allocation (SCA).
- 2.6 The DfE is carrying out a phased condition data collection to every government-maintained school in England, this will provide them with an up-to-date picture of the condition of the school estate. This information will help form the future capital funding policy for schools, based on the building condition rather than a set national formula.
- 2.7 The school condition allocations and basic need allocations are not time limited. Given that condition data is continually updated and the demand for pupil places continues to fluctuate, an amount of funding has remained unallocated to allow us to respond to change.

3.0 Capital Funding Allocations

- 3.1 The resources available from Government for the period, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024* at this point are summarised in the exempt report . Some of the resources, such as elements of the schools devolved capital and the locally co-ordinated

voluntary aided programme, are not directly controlled by the City Council, but managed in partnership with the Diocesan Authorities and schools. They have been included in this report to show the totality of the investment in services for schools over this period.

* Provisional grant announced 28 March 2023, but subject to change until confirmation of final grant received from DfE

School Condition Allocation

- 3.2 Each year the Department of Education (DfE) allocates capital funding to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and grounds.
- 3.3 The allocation methodology continues to ensure that responsible bodies receive a fair share of available funding that takes into account investment needs.
- 3.4 There are three components to the formula for allocations:
- Core condition funding, based on responsible bodies pupil numbers
 - High condition need funding, for those with disproportionately high need
 - Floor protections, to continue to provide stability in the system

Basic Need

- 3.5 The authority continues to review the level of school accommodation against anticipated future levels of demand across the City.
- 3.6 Basic need allocations for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 contributed towards further expansion schemes in both primary and secondary schools, which was approved by Cabinet on 3 June 2020.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) Non-Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools

- 3.7 Schools have historically received an annual DFC allocation, based on a formula of a lump sum per site plus an allowance per pupil, with a weighting dependent on the type of school. During December 2022 it was announced by the DfE that this funding methodology would continue for the near future. The allocations will be calculated using the latest spring school census.
- 3.8 An additional allocation was made to the DFC grant during December 2022 totalling £843,000 across all Local Authority controlled Schools. This was provided with the intention to improve energy efficiency in the school estate, normal DFC procedures apply to the spending of the grant.
- 3.9 The amount of funding available can vary from those confirmed in previous years from the DfE, the reason for this being the funding each year being linked directly with the number of schools converting from community schools to academies and an increase (or decrease) in pupil numbers.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) VA Schools

- 3.10 Voluntary aided schools receive their DFC allocations direct from the DfE and this is administered through the relevant Diocesan Authorities. These are therefore outside the control of the Council; however, City Assets will provide Dioceses Authorities with support where necessary

Locally Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP)

- 3.11 LCVAP is a programme of works on voluntary aided schools agreed in consultation with the Diocesan Authorities and the schools concerned.
- 3.12 These are therefore outside the control of the Council; however, City Assets will provide Dioceses Authorities with support where necessary

4.0 Programme of works

- 4.1 The report proposes a one-year programme of works given the potential for the amount of funding available in subsequent years varying considerably from those confirmed in previous years allocations from the DfE. The reason for this being that the funding each year is linked directly with the number of schools converting from community schools to academies.
- 4.2 The proposed programme set out in the table below captures those works considered to be the most urgent covering condition, compliance and health and safety issues and to increase the efficiency of the schools portfolio.
- 4.3 The programme of works has been established using the priority data contained within condition surveys carried out on behalf of City Assets and the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme carried out by the DfE. These surveys, along with information from surveyors and engineers within City Assets, benchmark the condition of schools across the city into three levels of priority.
- 4.4 A line item have also been included within the 2023-2024 programme to cover asbestos removal and emergency works. These items require urgent attention when they arise to prevent a school closure or health and safety breach, the nature of which would not allow sufficient time to gain normal Council approvals.
- 4.5 Written authority will always be sought from the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work in consultation with the Executive Director of Families prior to any action and will be confirmed through an Individual Executive Decision Notice (IEDN) or through the quarterly capital reviews to Cabinet.
- 4.6 Proposed schemes for approval are detailed in the exempt report.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

5.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that all its assets are statutorily compliant and fit for purpose and as such, the programme of works and allocation of funds identified in section 4.6 in the exempt report is required to sustain an operational portfolio.

6.0 Reason for decision

6.1 Approval of the projects detailed in section 4.6 in the exempt report will result in future avoided costs for the Council due to utilisation of the SCA grant supplied by the DfE and not having to use Council resources to fund the required works.

7.0 Financial implications

7.1 The contingency also gives an allowance for fluctuations in quotation and tender prices to ensure the affordability and delivery of the schemes.

7.2 Individual schools included in the programme will be approached and asked for a contribution towards schemes where funds allow. Those contributions will be used to support the programmed schemes or additional works at those schools, subject to further approval.

7.3 The Voluntary Aided programme of works, to be confirmed, has no direct implications as all expenditure will be incurred by the Diocesan Authorities not by the local authority.
[JB/30032023/A]

8.0 Legal implications

8.1 The Council has a statutory duty for the effective management and maintenance of the Councils schools' as they need to be fit for purpose and safe for all site users.

8.2 The Council will need to ensure that legal arrangements are in place to secure access to the relevant schools for the schedule of works before the Council enters into any contracts for the works. Any contract that are procured will need to be in accordance with the Council's Constitution and relevant legislation.
[JA/30032023/C]

9.0 Equalities implications

9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a statutory duty to pay due regard to impact of how it carries out its business when making budget decisions. In practice, this means that the Council must consciously think about the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of its decision-making process.

9.2 An initial screening has been undertaken and has concluded a full equality analysis is not required given this is not a new initiative or policy. The works proposed do not affect

people differently or the needs of certain groups differently given the works are of a maintenance nature maintaining the existing school settings.

10.0 All other implications

- 10.1 The wide range of projects delivered through the capital programme has significant environmental implications and are geared to promote improvements to the physical environment. Specifications for building works will ensure that materials, site work and equipment involved in all projects covered by this report follow the Council's Environmental Policy and the Council's commitment to carbon reduction.
- 10.2 In order to enable 'Strong families where children grow up well and achieve their full potential', one of Wolverhampton's key priorities within the Council plan, the continuous investment in the school estate is required to ensure that pupils are taught in a safe, suitable environment which is of a high standard. The programme of works outlined in this report supports this across the maintained school estate.
- 10.3 City Assets manage a rolling programme of school condition surveys which identifies the priority works and feeds into the development of the Schools Capital Programme.
- 10.4 There is a range of individual projects delivered through the schools' capital programme which could have health and wellbeing implications, these will be considered when individual capital schemes are being developed.
- 10.5 There will be Covid implications arising from the school's capital programme. These will be addressed through ensuring all appropriate guidance in relation to social distancing, required PPE and risk assessments are undertaken where applicable.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

- 11.1 Cabinet (Resources) Panel (23 March 2022) [Investment in our School Assets 2022-2023](#)
- 11.2 Cabinet (3 June 2020) [School Expansion Programmes 2021 and 2022](#)