

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 4 September 2014
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Enterprise
PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families
SUBJECT: Basic Need Capital Funding
WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update for the allocation and spending of Basic Need capital funding.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the proposal to allocate Basic Need capital funding to the Fairfield Primary School project be approved;**
- 2) a bid process for Responsible Bodies based on Strategic Needs is approved; and**
- 3) the report is submitted to Full Council for approval.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton - Basic Need Capital Funding

The Basic Need allocation supports the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies and by establishing new schools. In Halton pupil forecast data is used to determine if there is a need to provide additional school places in order to meet demand by comparing forecast data with school capacity data.

3.2 Basic Need Capital Allocations

Since 2011 Halton has been allocated Basic Need capital funding as follows:

2011/12 - £1,689,618
2012/13 - £963,081
2013/14 - £601,722
2014/15 - £601,722
2015/16 - £891,818
2016/17 - £936,409

3.3 Halton has used Basic Need capital funding to carry out building works to provide additional school places at Lunts Heath Primary (35 places), Windmill Hill Primary (28 places), St Bedes Infants (45 places) & Juniors (60 places), Weston Primary (35 places) & Beechwood Primary (35 places) therefore alleviating pressure for the demand for school places in these areas. All works are now complete with the exception of Beechwood Primary which started on site in April & will be complete in August 2014. Basic Need funding has also been used to provide vocational and 6th form facilities (42 places) at Ashley School following the re-designation of the school – building works commenced on site in January and were completed in June. Further capital has been allocated to provide independent living facilities for Ashley School by converting part of Inglefields Children’s Home.

3.4 Forecast and School Capacity Data

The model used to allocate previous allocations of Basic Need capital funding has been applied again. The model has been developed in order to objectively prioritise schools identifying those with the strongest case for basic need support. The four key elements of the model are detailed below:

- The total net capacity for each school has been considered in relation to the current total pupil numbers for each school;
- The future capacity has been projected to identify the number of places likely to be required for each school;
- Popular schools indicated by parental preference during the admissions process;
- Priority has been given to schools with temporary mobile classrooms – the highest score has been given to schools with long term use of temporary classrooms.

3.5 Following a recent analysis of forecast and school capacity data there is not an immediate pupil place Basic Need issue to address and therefore it is proposed to use Basic Need capital funding to address significant modernisation and suitability issues within schools. A total of £1,874,818 is available from the allocations which cover 2011 to 2016.

3.6 The basic need allocation of £936,409 will be used to respond to pupil place planning/demographic issues arising in either the primary or secondary sectors. Analysis of forecast and capacity data is routinely undertaken and will inform any future requirements.

3.7 Capital Allocation for Fairfield Primary School

In January 2014 Fairfield Junior School was expanded to allow the integration of the Infants School to form the new Fairfield Primary School. The primary school will continue to operate in two separate buildings, however, addressing the shortage of playing fields, school

building and organisational issues at the newly combined primary school has been identified as the key capital priority. A Section 77 application has been submitted for the previous Fairfield High School Playing Fields. If this application is approved funding from the sale of part of this land will be used to create an Astro Turf Pitch on the Fairfield Primary Site and improve the IT on the site. Basic Need funding will be required to address the urgent suitability issues the primary school now face. It is proposed that the suitability issues are addressed by combining a range of capital sources with £1,400,000 Basic Need, school budget and an allocation from the planned maintenance budget once this has been confirmed.

3.8 Capital Allocation for Responsible Bodies.

Basic Need capital funding is allocated to local authorities to provide school places in any type of school (LA & VA maintained schools, Academies, Free Schools). The DfE require that the building needs of all categories of schools should be taken into account for the distribution of this funding.

- 3.9 £474,818 of Basic Need Capital Funding will be set aside to allow Responsible Bodies to submit applications to the authority to address their strategic building needs. Applications will be assessed against agreed criteria. It is proposed that a report is presented to School Forum on 16th October 2014 which sets out the criteria to be used for the assessment of applications.

3.10 Procedure for Processing Funding

Once a bid has been approved by the LA each responsible body will then cash flow the project and claim re-imburement on production of invoices on completion of the works.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The projects will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance learning environments through capital projects.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In order to undertake the remodelling and upgrading of the existing premises at Fairfield Primary School it will be necessary to allocate in the region of £250,000 from the Local Authority Planned Maintenance Allocation for 2015/2016. A further report will be provided to the Board on the planned maintenance once the capital allocations have been announced by the DFE.
- 5.2 Fairfield Primary school will also contribute towards the costs of the improvement project.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The projects being funded from Basic Need capital funding will address condition and suitability issues within school buildings and will improve the learning environment for children and young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

As 6.1 above.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Currently the existing two existing premises on the Fairfield Primary site require improvements to ensure they are suitable for use as an all through primary. The Basic Need allocation combined with school capital and capital repairs should allow sufficient remodelling to be undertaken to address the key suitability issues.

7.2 To ensure equity and transparency criteria will be drawn up to allow Responsible Bodies to bid for Basic Need funds.

7.3 Funding has been retained to enable the Authority to respond to future pupil changes.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects. The capacity of schools to meet the needs of children with more complex needs and disabilities will be developed further through building works at schools.

9.0 REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 The decision is required to deliver and implement the capital programme.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Distributing the total Basic Need allocation – this was rejected as funding needs to be retained to address emerging basic need issues.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

October 2014 following agreement from Full Council.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
DfE Schools Capital Announcement	C&E Directorate	P Dove