

Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services and Advisory Panel

17 July 2008

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Early Years Capital Resources

Summary

1. This paper:
 - Seeks approval for a second tranche of Extended Schools Projects. At the Executive Member & Advisory Panel (EMAP) in June 2008, it was agreed that these projects should be reconsidered after further development. A number of these are now ready to come forward for approval and are detailed in Annex 1.
 - Seeks approval for the process and criteria for bids from the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector to use the new "Quality and Access Early Years Capital Grant Allocation".

Background

2. The expectations of schools to provide an extended offer of services to children, young people and their local community has been previously discussed at EMAP. Schools in York are making good progress against this requirement. The **Extended Schools** core offer, as it is known, of childcare and a varied menu of activities have often been developed with the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector working on school sites.
3. National capital funding has been made available to support such extended school developments. Bids against this capital funding stream from York schools have been developed in conjunction with local Shared Foundation Partnerships and with the support of the local authority. As part of the Capital Monitoring report at EMAP on the 10 June 2008 (Para 27) it was reported that the Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF) had made available an additional £651K of extended school capital resources for York spread across the next 3 years. This supplements the previous capital grant of £1.01M. As a result we are now in a position to come forward with proposals for part of this additional funding. Using the funding to support families by working in partnership across all settings, is a model, which has been successful. and is therefore hoped to be duplicated with the new Quality and Access funding.

4. In November 2007 the government also announced this new **Early Years Capital grant : Quality and Access**. This funding is in addition to the capital funding announced specifically for the development of children's centres and the capital funding for extended schools announced as part of the School Capital Settlement and described at Paras 2 and 3 above.
5. This new grant has three aims:
 1. To improve the quality of the learning environment in early years settings to support delivery of the EYFS, with a particular emphasis on improving play and physical activities; and ICT resources
 2. To ensure all children, including disabled children, are able to access provision
 3. To enable PVI providers to deliver the extension to the free offer for 3 and 4 year olds and to do so flexibly
6. The government's expectation is that the majority of this capital grant is used to improve the quality of the environment in private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years and childcare settings both to support higher quality experiences for young children and to ensure that all children can access services and benefit fully from them, although spending on the maintained sector is not precluded.
7. This new capital grant must be used for the three broad purposes set out above (and described in more in the annexes to this report) but it is for the Local Authority to decide how best to deploy the grant for maximum impact and value for money. For example, the grant can be used to fund 100% of the cost of work/equipment for those providers which have little or no resource of their own; for others with more resources, the grant can be provided on a matched funding basis with the provider making up the difference.

Consultation

8. As indicated earlier the criteria for application for both sets of funding streams places a clear emphasis on applicants provider clear evidence of consultation with key partners particularly through the Shared Foundation Partnership. The bids approved must also be consistent with the local Child Care Sufficiency Assessment for the authority, a document produced in York following major consultation activity with all stakeholders including users of child care services.

Options

9. With regard to this paper members have the following Options available to them with respect to the two issues relating to Early Years Capital funding.
10. Extended Schools Capital: Members have the Option to approve or not approve any of the recommended allocation of the Phase 2 Capital to the 3 additional projects at Wheldrake CE School, Headlands Primary School and Lord Deramore's Primary School.

11. Quality and Access Early Years Capital Grant Allocation: Members have the Options of approving or amending the process and criteria for bids from the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector to use the new "Quality and Access Early Years Capital Grant Allocation

Analysis

12. Research shows that children will only benefit fully from early education and care if it is of high quality. Alongside adopting the best of professional practice for working with young children, a high quality setting also needs the right built environment and adequate and appropriate resources. This means providing enough space for larger group sizes which can also be used flexibly and up-to-date facilities and equipment to support children's learning and development. This new Quality and Access grant in conjunction with our Extended School Capital grant, will allow Local Authorities to invest strategically to ensure that the PVI sector is able to deliver high quality learning and development for all children. There is a particular desire in York to target this funding to the PVI sector for the provision of services on maintained sector sites. Eligible expenditure includes:
 - equipment to ensure that practitioners can effectively observe and capture children's progress – digital cameras, scanners and video recorders, laptop and desktop PCs
 - information and communication technology – laptop and desktop PCs, digital cameras, video and sound recorders, hi-fi equipment
 - provision of stimulating and accessible outdoor play space and equipment – this includes the purchase of land to be developed for this purpose¹
 - development of adequate indoor space for age-appropriate play activities and suitable rest areas
 - replenishing and replacing toy stocks and purchasing other learning and development materials and resources to support the EYFS
 - resources to encourage a rich and stimulating language environment in line with Letters and Sounds – musical instruments, tape recorders, CDs as well as books, rhymes and signs
 13. Local authorities' role in facilitating the childcare market is supported mainly by revenue funding from within the Sure Start, Extended Schools and Childcare Grant, but capital funding is necessary too, particularly as the sufficiency duty came into force from 1 April 2008 and local authorities need to ensure that - so far as is reasonably practicable - *all* children of working parents are able to access provision. Local authorities need to use available funds in accordance with the findings of their childcare sufficiency assessments the local outcome of which we reported to members in 2007. It is vitally important that all children are able to access early years services, and that every child can benefit fully from early education and care.
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14. Every setting must have an inclusion policy setting out how it will meet the needs of all children, in line with delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). However, ensuring full access, particularly for disabled children, and providing facilities and equipment for disabled children and children with SEN can often require adaptations. In addition, ensuring that settings are fully inclusive – that their facilities are flexible enough to meet the needs of all individual children – can also sometimes require capital investment. This grant will allow LAs to invest to provide key facilities wherever they are required, and work with as many PVI settings as possible to ensure that their built environment and facilities are welcoming and inclusive
15. The allocation of this new Quality and Access creates opportunities for us to further progress this agenda. The criteria described in Annex 2 seeks to use new funding in co-ordination with existing funding in order to be in a position to meet national and local objectives.
16. Should this paper be approved, the bidding application form (attached at Annex 3) along with a covering letter outlining the criteria (Annex 2), will be sent out to all settings within the Private, Voluntary and Independent sectors. They will be invited to send Expressions of Interest and any requests for help in submitting their bid to the Early Years and Extended Schools Service. All bids will be considered by the Early Years and Extended Schools Partnership Places Sub Group and their recommendations proposed to a future meeting of EMAP.

Corporate Priorities

17. This paper clearly contributed to the Corporate Priority aimed at “improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city”

Financial Implications

18. Extended Schools Capital Phase 1 and 2: Allowing for a 10% overall contingency, this shows a total allocation of £1,290K against funding of £1,663K, leaving a further £373K to be allocated to the remaining bids which are being developed to meet the approved criteria.
19. Quality and Access Early Years Capital Grant Allocation: The DCSF has allocated York £2.1M over the next 3 years. £706,473 in 2008-2009, £707,473 in 2009-2010, and £706,473 in 2010-2011, to be spent on capital projects (those with a value of at least £2,500 resulting in a tangible asset.)

Other Implications

20. This report does not have specific HR, Legal, crime and disorder or IT implications. It clearly contributes to an equality strategy which seeks to ensure high quality access to services. The paper does carry property implications and progress against agreed schemes will be reported and monitored to EMAP through the existing Capital Programme monitoring

arrangements.

Risk Management

21. Risks are minimised by the application of recommended and clear criteria, by the transparent process of bidding and by the level of consultation undertaken around use of both of these capital funding streams. The additional capital work such funding stimulates, will carry some risks but they are minimised given the relative scale of the developments, through clear project management and through regular reporting arrangements to EMAP being in place. We recognise that working through the PVI sector will require particular support arrangements.

Recommendations

22. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member:
 - 1) Extended Schools Capital : To approve the 3 additional capital projects named at Para 9 of this report

Reason: to ensure that the extended schools agenda in York continues to progress
 - 2) Quality and Access Early Years Capital Grant Allocation: To approve the process and criteria for bids from the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector to access this new capital grant

Reason: To further improve the quality and inclusiveness of our child care settings

Contact Details

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Report Approved



Date 4 July 2008

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex 1: Extended Schools Programme 2008-11.

Annex 2: Letter to Providers

Annex 3: Application Form