
Meeting of Executive Members and Children's Services Advisory Panel

22 January 2007

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

Building Schools for the Future - Prioritising

Summary

1. This report reviews the progress of the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Schools for the Future (BSF) programmes and recommends to members criteria for prioritisation of the order in which schools should enter the programmes.

Background

2. BSF for the renewal of secondary schools is prioritised on the basis of deprivation and underperformance as has been detailed in previous reports. This leaves York in one of the later waves, although the City has been awarded funding as a 1-school pathfinder under BSF and members have approved the choice of Joseph Rowntree as the school building to be replaced.
3. The primary school programme was consulted on over the summer, in line with the details shown at Annex 1. The DfES (Department for Education and Skills) has not yet announced the results of the consultation, but the probability is that the programme will largely reflect the details proposed. This will mean that the first tranche of funding will be available from April 2008.
4. It is important to agree in advance the order in which schools will enter the programme so that they can plan their own asset management in a sensible and sustainable way and time is made available for advance planning.

Consultation

5. This proposal has been discussed by the Joint Consultative Group and includes amendments suggested by the group.

Options

6. This report sets out an in principle methodology for prioritising capital work on schools to be funded by BSF programmes. The methodology reflects both

the priorities previously approved by the Executive Member and those of DfES.

7. Other options are to ask officers to formulate an alternative methodology or not to adopt a prioritisation system.

Prioritisation Criteria

8. It is proposed that all schools are given a score based on a list of elements that reflect the needs of individual schools and their pupils and communities as follows:.

- **Baseline score**
Every school currently has a baseline score that is used in the current prioritisation for the distribution of the Local Authority Formula Capital. This is based on three surveys, 'condition', 'suitability' and 'sufficiency'. The 'condition' survey is carried out by a professional building surveyor and covers all aspects of the physical state of the school. The remaining two are completed by the schools and agreed with the Local Authority. 'Suitability' is about the barriers to raising standards imposed by the building and 'sufficiency' measures the number of pupil places available. Weightings are used to push up the scores of popular schools where pupil numbers exceed the building capacity.

It is suggested that the baseline be used as the main criterion for prioritising schools, but that all of the surveys on which it is based are fully updated before the first listing is produced.

- **Sector**
There are currently three federations in York, each consisting of two schools. It is recommended that each of the federations that have ambitions to amalgamate have a raised sector score to reflect their strategic importance to the authority.
- **Deprivation**
It is proposed that a deprivation score be produced, based on a range of indicators derived from the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- **Standards**
Insofar as the existing buildings present difficulties in the organisation of high quality teaching and learning, standards issues are considered within the baseline suitability score.

Analysis

9. Bringing the deprivation and standards factors in to the prioritisation reflects the Governments BSF objectives.
10. Once the scores have been sorted, a judgement will be made for each school about its long-term viability and its optimum size in the light of current and

projected pupil numbers. This will satisfy the DfES requirement for consideration to be given to local demographic changes.

11. The DfES expects the Primary Capital Programme to have an effect on at least 50% of the Primary School estate. This means that York should receive a total of £28 million over the life of the programme. Some schools will require full replacement, so others need to achieve their objectives through smaller capital expenditure. Buildability, including issues such as available space and planning consents will also be an important consideration and each project must be achievable within budget. At this stage, all school plans, including any necessary alterations for Extended Schools, will be considered.
12. Proposals are made on the assumption that the primary scheme will be as suggested during the consultation.

Timescales

13. In order to enable a detailed project plan for the school(s) with the highest priority to be worked up and agreed by the time primary programme funding is available, a prioritised list of primary schools will be presented for approval in the early summer of 2007.
14. A list of secondary schools will be presented at the same time, but, with funding so far in the future, should be regarded as indicative. This will enable changing circumstances to be reflected until York enters BSF.

Corporate Objectives

15. The strategy for the prioritisation of the BSF programmes makes a significant contribution to the corporate priority of improving the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York.

Implications

Financial

16. There are no financial implications from setting the criteria for prioritisation as this stage is planning for future funding. There may be other funding requirements arising from individual projects and these will be reported as the projects are proposed.

Human Resources (HR)

17. There are no HR implications

Equalities

18. There are no implications for equalities

Legal

19. There are no legal implications

Crime and Disorder

20. There are no crime and disorder implications at this stage, but detailed school developments incorporate the principles of 'Safer by Design'

Information Technology (IT)

21. There are no IT implications

Property

22. There are no property implications at this stage, but the Head of Property Services is aware of this process and will continue to work with Planning and Resources to ensure that projects are ready to start when funding becomes available.

Risk Management

23. Risks associated with this proposal are largely related to the proposal not being approved and adopted as DfES will be looking for a coherent strategy and sound business case for individual projects before funding will be released.

Recommendations

24. The Executive Member is recommended to approve the criteria for prioritising the order in which schools should enter the programmes.

Reason: have a strategy for prioritisation in place that would allow DfES to release the funding as it becomes due

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Specialist Implications Officers

None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Consultation on the Primary Capital Strategy
DfES June 2006

Annexes

Annex 1: The Primary Capital Strategy