

Introduction

The Primary Capital Programme (PCP) was outlined in the CSR 2007 in October 2007 and final guidance issued by the DCSF on 6th December 2007.

Objectives

The programme's national objectives are:

- To rebuild, remodel or refurbish at least 50% of all primary schools
- 5% of the worst condition schools taken out of use or rebuilt. The IWC Children's Services Directorate has been set a higher target of **10%** for the most deprived areas.
- A strategic joined up approach to capital investment
- Infrastructure changes required to deliver the Children's Plan and national policies relating to world class standards, Every Child Matters, diversity, extended services and personalisation
- Targeted to address deprivation nationally and in every local authority
- Primary schools equipped for 21st Century learning, at the heart of the community, with children's services in reach of every family.

The Primary Strategy for Change

Before releasing the funding, the Government wants to be sure that authorities are adopting a strategic approach, and that their plans for investment will enable the Government's targets and objectives to be met. The strategy will need to address the following points:

- **The local perspective** by setting out a high level strategic vision and describing the local area, its people and its schools
- **A baseline assessment** which includes an analysis of information on number of places, building condition, educational performance, deprivation and extended and community services
- **The long term aims** for the authority's schools and children
- An outline as to how those long term aims will be achieved and how the investment will contribute to the achievement of the aims including capacity building, design, the use of ICT and procurement
- **Initial investment priorities** which outline those areas and schools that will be the first to benefit from the programme.

Local authorities are required to submit their Strategy for Change to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) by 14 June 2008. The Isle of Wight Primary Strategy for Change was submitted to the DCSF and has since received category 2 approval. Authorities are also required to submit outline investment plans for the first four years of the programme. The outline investment plans for the first phase of the programme are attached as Appendix 3 of the Cabinet Report submitted for the meeting on 3rd June 2008.

Consultation

The recent informal consultation during January/February 2008 including the consultation document, 'Which Way Forward for Island Schools' and the Area by Area meetings in April/May 2008 have indicated the introduction of the Primary Capital Programme and how this funding is to be broadly applied in respect of the Primary School phase.

The establishment of a Primary Advisory Board/ Steering Group with representatives from Councillors, Headteachers/School Leaders, Diocesan and Church Organisations and Senior Officers is proposed following the next stage on a school by school basis regarding the implications of the chosen organisational model - (Cabinet decision on 3 June 2008) and in conjunction with the formal Statutory Consultation period between June to September 2008.

Finance

Indicative PCP allocations have been provided for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 which total £8.378m (£3m and £5.378m respectively). The release of PCP funding in April 2009 is subject to approval of the IWC Primary Strategy for Change by the DCSF. Notification of approval will be now announced by the end of September 2009 with funding available in 2009/10 financial year.

Approval

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) have approved the Council's capital plan for primary education (Primary Capital Programme - PCP), subject to the provision of some further detail in respect of special educational needs and risk assessment. Approval of the PCP submission confirms the release of the additional capital grant for the rebuild and refurbishment of the primary school stock.

Initial Investment Priorities

In addition to the Strategy for Change, the national guidance on the Primary Capital Programme issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in December 2007 requires authorities to submit details of their proposed investment plans for the first four years of the programme. This covers the financial years 2009/10 to 2013/14. The DCSF have issued a template at the end of April 2008 which sets out how the information is to be presented.

In prioritising schools for the Primary Capital Programme, the emphasis will be on those schools and areas with highest need as determined by demographic change, the state of school premises, educational standards and levels of deprivation. In addition, initiatives that benefit all schools will be progressed, such as improving dining, kitchen, sports and ICT facilities.

In determining the prioritisation for initial investment, the Advisory Board/Steering Group will recommend the use of the objective matrix of need as set out in the Strategy for Change document. The matrix will be based on a number of key indicators as set out below:

- Condition and suitability of primary school buildings
- Deprivation using a multiple index of deprivation and free school meals as an amalgam of measures
- Sufficiency of school buildings, i.e. level of surplus places or overcrowding
- Test results at Key Stage 2
- Popularity of schools as measured by oversubscription.

The information will be collected in relation to all primary schools and collated at a level designed to capture clusters of schools that largely served particular communities. The matrix involves a scoring system and will then rank according to the scores. The draft components of the matrix and the scoring system will be the subject to consultation with schools, the School Organisation Project Board and the Policy Commission for Children and Young People. The matrix will be designed to assist the prioritisation process not to be the sole determinant as other judgements are needed to set the best time for investment in a particular area.

Surplus Places

One of the aims of the PCP is to reduce surplus places. In some cases this can be done by removing or changing the use of surplus accommodation but in other cases it requires a detailed review of the existing school(s) infrastructure. The authority is currently to begin a statutory consultation period and this will be in line with and must follow national guidelines. The Strategy for Change and associated prioritisation of investment will not be approved by the DCSF if it includes proposals to invest in schools in urban areas with a high proportion of surplus places without a commitment to reduce surplus places.

Reviews and reorganisation create disruption and a revised school infrastructure can take time to settle down to a point where future needs can be properly assessed. The Island's school re-organisation project has already gone through a significant period of informal consultation between January 2008 to date and this will continue through the next phase of formal consultation, consideration, competition, statutory notices and the final decision. This combined approach of informal and formal consultation is designed to minimise the overall disruption and achieve a level of stability and re-assurance to all children, schools and families and stakeholders on the island.

Recommended Prioritisation Programme

Taking into account existing commitments, recently completed capital projects and the issues outlined above, the Advisory Board/Steering Group will consider a possible approach to investment during the first two/four years of the PCP. This will focus initially on the 2007 Deprivation Indices and the requirement to 'take out' or decommission the 10% of poor condition school building stock (utilising AMP Condition Assessment information). The future PCP programmes will then need to consider the wider aspects of prioritisation including the correlation with educational standards, the transformation agenda of teaching, learning and school buildings, Children's Plan, ICT, national priorities together with deprivation and AMP information.

The recommended approach involves:

1. Taking out and removal of the poorest condition school buildings in conjunction with the school re-organisation project and those with significant deprivation indices (greater than 60%):
 - Ryde Swanmore Middle School site for a new two Form Entry 4~11 Primary School (proposed as an enlargement for Ryde Haylands Primary School).
 - Ventnor Middle School site for a new two form entry 4~11 joint faith Primary School (proposed for the amalgamation of Ventnor St Margaret's CE Primary School, St Boniface CE Primary School and St Wilfrid's RC Primary School).
 - East Cowes Osborne Middle School site for a new two form entry 4~11 Primary School (proposed amalgamation of East Cowes Primary School and Whippingham Primary School).
 - Newport Downside Middle School site for a new two form entry 4~11 Primary School – in conjunction with the new housing development progressing as planned over the forthcoming years.
 - West Wight Middle School site for a new two form entry 4~11 community primary school.
 - There may be other major Aided School projects to be added.
2. Maintaining close monitoring of those schools and areas that continue to have relatively high levels of surplus places. If the situation regarding surplus places deteriorates to the point where one or more schools become vulnerable then the area may need to be brought in to the PCP earlier. The broad areas involved are:

Rural
West Wight

3. Undertaking a number of investment projects in those areas that scored highest on the matrix where no significant premises related work is likely to be needed. The areas include:

Ryde area
Cowes area

4. Maintain ongoing monitoring and identifying those areas that could be included in the first four years if circumstances allow and identify those areas that are likely to be in the second wave of the PCP as soon as possible but no later than September 2010. The areas/issues to be given particular scrutiny are:

South East Wight area
South Wight area
Rural areas
Cowes area
Individual projects including possible Aided School reorganisations
An ICT improvements/infrastructure programme particularly for rural schools.

The recommended approach to prioritisation involves all four of the above factors and the overall programme of prioritisation will be formally reviewed each year as part of the capital planning process.