

25 June 2014

PRIORITY SCHOOLS BUILDING PROGRAMME 2

Report of the director of children's Services

Author: Trevor Mose, Maintenance & Minor Works Manager (Schools),
Building Management Team, Property & Technology

Tel: 01992 556658

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide an overview of phase 2 of the government's Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP2) and HCC's proposed approach to submitting expressions of interest.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Schools Forum is asked to agree to support the proposed approach to PSBP2.

3. Background

- 3.1. The government recently launched a second phase of its Priority Schools Building Programme to undertake major rebuilding and refurbishment projects in those schools in the very worst condition. £2billion of funding has been made available and the programme will operate between 2015 and 2021.
- 3.2. The DFE will set a high bar for inclusion and will take forward a relatively small number of projects shown to be in the worst condition.
- 3.3. Seven Hertfordshire schools were successful within the first phase of the programme. The most significant changes between the two phases are the move away from PFI funded schemes and the invitation to submit bids for individual buildings within a school.

- 3.4. Local authorities are asked to submit expressions of interest for maintained schools in their area which they think will meet the bar for inclusion.
- 3.5. Faith bodies and other partners may submit their own expressions of interest and both diocese are currently assessing their own estates.
- 3.6. Academy schools and sixth form colleges may apply on their own behalf although they can choose to be included within the local authority's submission.
- 3.7. Detailed guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-school-building-programme-2-psbp2>. The emphasis on a high bar for inclusion is repeated throughout.

4. HCC emerging strategy

- 4.1. The basis for our initial site selection and our subsequent expression of interest is the information held by us relating to outstanding bids for capital maintenance. Schools who feel that they may be overlooked by this approach should contact us urgently.
- 4.2. In the primary sector this approach will result in us submitting a handful of unfunded projects in the worst condition where the value is significant. There is, however, an apparent bias against primary-sector projects since one of the DfE criteria is as follows:

“DfE and EFA will prioritise projects where the cost of addressing the need would be hardest for local authorities, dioceses, academy trusts, or individual academies to fund locally through their regular maintenance allocations– in other words, those where the cost of meeting the need is very significant”.
- 4.3. Primary school projects, by their nature, tend to be lower in value than secondary sector projects, and thus for the authority are relatively easier to fund using local maintenance allocations.
- 4.4. In the secondary sector a number of schools are being approached with a view to developing bids based on unfunded projects. Of these it is proposed that one or two only are put forward as potential whole school rebuilds. All maintained secondary heads have been consulted to ensure that they have the opportunity to present their case.
- 4.5. The overall package will contain a range of projects that we feel represent the very greatest need for funding that cannot be met locally.

5. Expressions of Interest

- 5.1. The requirements for an expression of interest are quite demanding and therefore we will need to work closely with schools in preparing the submission. It will be expected that any bid will be accompanied by structural surveys, condition reports, asbestos information (where relevant).
- 5.2. A number of opportunities are being taken over the next week or two to engage DFE and ECHarris (consultants working on behalf of DFE) to test our understanding of where the 'bar' might be. This will help inform the final shortlist.
- 5.3. **Expressions of interest need to be submitted online to the DFE by the deadline of 18 July 2014.**