

Report to Cabinet

20 July 2022

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| Subject: | School Condition Report 2022 |
| Cabinet Member: | Cabinet Member for Children and Education Councillor Simon Hackett |
| Director: | Director of Children's Services and Education Michael Jarrett |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Contact Officer: | Sue Moore, Group Head, Education Support Services sue_moore@sandwell.gov.uk |

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That subject to a satisfactory financial appraisal being completed by Strategic Finance, approval be given to the allocation of £1.5m of School Condition grant funding to be used to support cyclical maintenance of local authority maintained schools.
- 1.2 Require in connection with 1.1, that the following actions are implemented to reduce any risk to the council in connection with School Condition; ensure that repair / maintenance work for schools is undertaken following an analysis of pre-determined criteria and that records are maintained to demonstrate the priority need of each school.
 - Ensure that corporate Risk Registers are maintained and reviewed for all projects, and ensure all risks are appropriately identified and assessed, with adequate mitigation;
 - That cost estimates are reviewed to ensure that any future costs can be managed within the allocated funding;



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to allocate School Condition grant funding for cyclical maintenance to support maintained schools.
- 2.2 Building Services and Strategic Assets and Land's Engineering team have identified six schools for 2022/23 which require replacement of oil fired boilers, boilers, water services systems and fire alarms. Works are planned for completion during the school summers holidays and the autumn holidays.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

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|  | <p><i>Best start in life for children and young people</i></p> <p>The recommendation in this report supports the desire of the council to focus resources on the specific needs and aspirations of the community. This contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 Ambition 1 – Raising aspirations and resilience, Ambition 3 – Young people to have skills for the future, Ambition 4 – Raising the quality of schools.</p> |
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4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Department for Education allocates funding each year to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and grounds which continue to operate as maintained establishments.
- 4.2 Investment should be prioritised on keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, and health and safety issues.
- 4.3 **The current position**
- 4.4 In late April the DfE announced the Authority's School Condition allocation for 2022/23 in the sum of £5.1million.



- 4.5 Strategic Assets and Land has a schedule of proposed works for maintenance of maintained schools in the borough. The list is included in Appendix 1, 'Strategic Investment Capital Appraisal'.
- 4.6 Detailed budget costs for all the works recommended for 2022/23 are currently being developed. Initial estimated cost of £970,000.
- 4.7 The remaining £3.6million will be retained for use towards other school building improvement projects. Cabinet reports will be submitted once those projects have been identified.
- 4.8 **Consultation (Customers and other Stakeholders)**
There is no requirement to undertake a wide consultation on the proposed schemes.

In managing the School Repair Account, officers within Building Services meet on a termly basis with representatives from those schools that have bought back into the Account for compliance monitoring, reactive/ planned maintenance and repairs. The meetings are held to review works completed to date, and any critical issues that will require immediate attention over the short to medium term (i.e. up to 5 years).

Any maintained school that has chosen not to purchase a full service from the School Repair Account do however continue to be considered for support from the School Condition grant funding allocation to ensure council assets are appropriately maintained.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 There are either no alternative options for schemes identified, or options have already been discounted through project development:

The terms of the School Condition Allocation mean funds have to be spent on maintained school's cyclical maintenance.

Within the maintained schools sector, it is the primary school building stock that will also require a programme of replacement to commence shortly. The deteriorating condition of school buildings will otherwise continue to be a drain on the School Repair Account.



6 Implications

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| <p>Resources:</p> | <p>Following a decision by the Director of Finance, Capital Appraisals for Town Team funding have taken priority to meet tight deadlines required to draw down funding. All other capital appraisals will therefore be undertaken retrospectively. The Cabinet approval is therefore subject to a capital appraisal being completed but should not prohibit progress with the proposed project.</p> <p>School Condition funding continues to be allocated on a yearly basis and is based on the number of maintained schools the council remains responsible for. School Condition allocation for 2022/23 has been confirmed as £5.1m. The resources are not ring fenced and there is no time limit to expend.</p> <p>Staffing implications: none</p> <p>Land implications: no change to LA's land holding. Programmed works will add value to LA asset.</p> <p>Building implications: improvement of existing school buildings.</p> |
| <p>Legal and Governance:</p> | <p>The council shall ensure that any procurement of contracts necessary for this proposal are undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules.</p> |
| <p>Risk:</p> | <p>The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been complied with – to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation, financial, environmental and reputation risks.</p> |



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| | <p>Based on the information provided, it is the officers' opinion that for the significant risks that have been identified, arrangements are in place to manage and mitigate these effectively.</p> <p>Improvements to the conditions of school buildings may assist in mitigating some of the risks arising from insured perils (such as storms, floods, fire etc) and therefore mitigate the financial costs associated with such events.</p> <p>Project Risk Registers will continue to be prepared and managed during the lifetime of the projects to ensure that time, cost and quality are continually monitored to mitigate any risk to the council once projects are finalised. There are currently no significant risks identified.</p> |
| Equality: | An Equality Impact Assessment initial screening has been undertaken. The screening identified that there will be no adverse impact on people or groups with protected characteristics as a result of the proposals contained within the report. A full EIA is not therefore required. |
| Health and Wellbeing: | This will be a positive impact for children and young people as it ensures schools buildings will be enhance and improved. |
| Social Value | In improving the maintained schools' buildings, it will enhance and improve the teaching environments for all. |

7 Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

8 Background Papers

None.

