

**Walsall Children's Services**

**Report to** Schools Forum

**Date** 3 March 2009

**Subject** Primary Capital Programme

**Contact** Susan Lupton, Head of Planning and Development Services

**Purpose of the report** To update Schools Forum on the Primary Capital Programme

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### Primary Capital Programme - Update

#### DCSF approval of Strategy

Walsall was one of only 41 local authorities to receive full approval from the DCSF of its Primary Strategy for Change which set out how the Programme would support national policies and local priorities to take forward transformational change. In supporting the strategy, the DCSF acknowledged a convincing approach to change.

#### Funding

The DCSF has confirmed Walsall's capital allocations of £4,357,729 in 2009-10 and £6,735,729 in 2010-11, giving a total of £11,093,458. As yet, there is no firm indication of the level of funding in future years although we have been advised that it is more likely to be similar to that in 2009-2010 rather than 2010-11.

One of the key features the DCSF required in the strategy document was a commitment to joining-up funding streams including other formulaic allocations, section 106 developer contributions, and devolved formula capital, being brought together to support the programme.

Major schemes usually require funding across more than two financial years in order to cover the scheme development costs, construction costs and retention payments.

In order to maximise the investment potential offered by the Primary Capital Programme and enable Walsall pupils to benefit from improved school accommodation and facilities from as early a date as possible, Cabinet approved the schemes to be funded from other resources pending release of the Programme allocation.

#### School contributions

It is a general principle that schemes in the Education Capital Programme are taken forward in partnership with schools and are jointly funded. School contributions are usually funded from devolved formula capital and on occasions this may be supplemented by a revenue contribution from the school budget. The flexibility to draw forward devolved formula capital makes it possible for school contributions to be significant amounts.

#### Prioritisation

The highest priority schools were identified following the detailed consideration of a range of factors including deprivation, demand for school places (surplus places / additional places), condition and suitability, temporary accommodation and standards. Deliverability within the timescale of the funding period following the delayed announcement was also a key factor for this first phase.

#### Schemes

Details of the schemes being taken forward using Primary Capital Programme funds are provided in the table below.

School	Scheme
Chuckery Primary	Extensions, remodelling and refurbishment to enable the remaining mobile classrooms to be removed, address the issue of numerous undersized classrooms, provide a suitable secure entrance and improved staff accommodation. This is the final phase of a major programme of works.  Estimated Cost £1.9 million
Leighswood Primary	Work to the junior building including the replacement of 2 dilapidated mobile classrooms, the provision of a secure entrance and additional cloak areas and also associated works to address outstanding condition and suitability issues at the school.  Estimated Cost £1.0 million

The Radleys Primary	Replacement of double mobile teaching block with an extension to the main school building, provision of ICT room and some internal remodelling to improve staff accommodation. The main school building was replaced some years ago following a fire; replacement of the mobile classrooms was not included in that scheme.  Estimated Cost £800k
Woodlands Primary	Remodelling of nursery, reception and Year 1 accommodation including the provision of a new nursery entrance and new toilet facilities for KS1 pupils.  Estimated Cost £700k
Birchills CE Primary	In January 2009, Cabinet approved a statutory proposal to significantly enlarge Birchills CE Primary School from 1.5 FE to 2 FE. The associated capital investment will also address major longstanding structural and suitability issues.  Estimated Cost £4.815 million

It is hoped that Cabinet will approve other schemes over the next few months and details of these will be shared with Diocesan officers, schools and unions.

### **Informing schools**

A letter updating all schools was sent in February 2009. Staff in the Asset Management Team will be contacting schools later this term to give a general indication of what the Programme may mean for them. Priorities will be reviewed regularly in the light of capital allocations, strategic priorities, changing demographic information, significant changes relating to schools, and scheme deliverability.

It is expected that half of Walsall schools with primary-age pupils will benefit from capital investment over the life of the Programme. Every effort will be made to secure additional resources to ensure that as many pupils as possible benefit from investment in school accommodation and facilities.

### **Transformation of Learning**

PCP and BSF will provide Walsall with the opportunity to transform teaching and learning in all schools and settings through the use of up-to-date technology, flexible spaces and a culture of innovation. In Walsall we hope that the projects will promote collaboration between schools and will be a key driver in the regeneration of the Borough. All children, young people and the whole community will benefit from these projects.