

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 22nd May, 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

WIRRAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT DCSF PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Cabinet approval to the Draft Wirral Primary Strategy for Change document which forms the appendix to the report. This document is a requirement for the national DCSF Primary Capital Investment Programme and requires approval by the DCSF prior to capital funding being released. The document is required to be submitted to the DCSF by 16 June 2008.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following a consultation period in 2006, the DCSF announced details of the National Primary Strategy for Change Programme in December 2007. This initiative is the mechanism for capital investment in primary schools, alongside the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme in secondary schools.
- 1.2 The Primary Strategy covers all primary schools; community including special, aided and controlled and is intended to be a fourteen year capital investment programme in primary schools. It links to the standards agenda and other key primary issues, including the removal of surplus places.
- 1.3 The Strategy is intended to support the National Children's Plan and contribute to every child "having a good experience of childhood", and will play a part in "enabling every child to achieve their potential and have a happy, healthy and safe childhood" (DCSF guidance)
- 1.4 The Primary Capital Programme will support the delivery of the National Children's Plan by:
 - Creating primary schools equipped for 21st century learning, at the heart of the community, with a range of children's services in reach of every family
 - Delivering a strategic approach to capital investment – supporting national policy aims, delivering world class standards, access to joined-up services for children and families; and addressing local needs and priorities
 - Rebuilding, remodelling or refurbishing at least half of all primary schools, including rebuilding or taking out of use at least 5 per cent of school buildings in the worst physical condition (higher for the most deprived communities);
 - Focusing resources on deprivation nationally and in every authority; and
 - Reconfiguring the primary capital stock to account for demographic change.

- 1.5 Nationally, £650 million has been allocated for 2009/10 and £1,100 million in 2010/11 (including £250m PFI credits). Subject to public spending decisions the indicative allocation for 2011/12 onwards is £500 million a year. The national funding is allocated by formula to all local authorities. The indicative allocations for Wirral are £4,837,674 in 2009/10 and £7,215,674 in 2010/11.
- 1.6 These are indicative allocations and are subject to the approval of a Primary Strategy for Change document, to be submitted by each authority by 16th June 2008 to the DCSF. The DCSF will give approval to, or reject, or require additional information in the Strategy for Change document in September 2008, with funding allocated from 2009/10.
- 1.7 The draft Wirral Strategy for Change document is attached as an appendix to this report. The format and content are based upon a template provided by the DCSF. It comprises of six sections:
- Forward/introduction
 - Local Perspective
 - Baseline analysis
 - Long-term aims
 - Approach to change
 - Initial Investment Priorities
- 1.8 The draft Wirral document draws together the LA's position from a number of sources, including:
- The Councils strategic plans
 - The Children and Young Peoples Plan
 - Asset data – suitability and condition
 - Data on surplus places, capacity and numbers on roll (NOR) including predicted NOR's
 - Reports, data and approved policy from the Wirral Primary Place Review process, started in 2004
- 1.9 The draft Strategy identifies priorities which link the national ambitions to the local context and proposes projects which allow more radical and wider-ranging solutions to the requirements arising from the local primary review process. These priorities are also set out in the draft full School Capital Programme which is also a Cabinet agenda item and which sets the specific Primary Strategy proposals into the context of plans across the school estate.
- 1.10 As the draft Strategy for change sets out, the Wirral Primary Review process, begun in 2004, provides a strong starting point for the national initiative. The additional funding will allow more new build than previously planned and will support a range of desirable changes across the school estate.
- 1.11 Headteachers were briefed on the national initiative in January and the draft document has been shared with the Diocese of Shrewsbury, the Diocese of Chester, schools and other Every Child Matters partners. A verbal update on responses will be given at the Cabinet meeting. The DCSF require formal endorsement by the Diocesan Bodies

and the support of the majority of schools. Given the fourteen year span of the initiative, consultation, liaison and information sharing will be on-going.

1.12 The key priorities put forward for the first four years of the programme are in Section 5 of the draft strategy. In summary these are :

- i) Major schemes arising from the Wirral Primary Review, starting with new builds arising from the Park/Poulton review and the Pensby Infant/Pensby Junior/Pensby Park review.
- ii) Completion of the 1940's HORSAs kitchen/dining replacement programme at Heygarth Primary, Stanton Road Primary and Overchurch Infant School.
- iii) Replacement of temporary accommodation at schools which are predicted to remain at or near capacity alongside additional provision as required and agreed. Detailed programme to be developed in consultation with schools and Diocesan Bodies.
- iv) Projects which arise from developments in special needs provision in mainstream and special schools.

2.0 Financial Implications

2.1 There are no further financial implications arising directly from this report. The capital allocations at 1.5 are indicative and subject to DCSF approval of the Wirral strategy.

3.0 Staffing Implications

3.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. Once relevant financial and other approvals are in place, additional project management support will be required.

4.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

4.1 The projects implemented as part of the strategy will take full account of the needs of all pupils and other building users and enhance facilities where possible as part of the works.

5.0 Human Rights Implications

5.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

6.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement

6.1 The implementation of the strategy will allow better use of existing premises, reduce energy costs and remove old, unsuitable, inefficient premises from use. All materials used will comply with the council's Agenda 21 principles.

7.0 Community Safety Implications

7.1 Projects will enhance the safety of school premises for example with improved window and door closing mechanisms, enhanced lighting, removal of detached buildings and will make schools more welcoming to the communities they serve.

8.0 Planning Implications

8.1 All necessary planning approvals will be obtained by the Director of Technical Services. Any proposed development will be assessed against national, regional and local planning policies including the Regional Spatial Strategy, Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Interim Policy for New Housing Development.

9.0 Anti-Poverty Implications

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10.0 Social Inclusion Implications

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 Local Member Support Implications

11.1 The DCFS Primary Strategy for Change is applicable to all Community, Foundation and Aided schools.

12.0 Background Papers

- DCFS guidance on the Primary Strategy for Change
- LEA Asset Management Plan, LEA Statement of Priorities.
- Working files held by the LEA including Condition surveys of premises and school Suitability assessments, Targeted Capital bids and land disposals.
- Working papers and reports relating to the 2004–2008 Wirral Primary review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

(1) the principles of the Primary Strategy be approved and council support of the strategy be confirmed;

(2) the Wirral Strategy for Change document be approved for submission to the DCSF;

(3) the Director of Children's Services be authorised to continue to refine the Wirral document if necessary in the light of further feedback ahead of the DCSF submission date of 16.6.08;

(4) that the Primary Strategy be the subject of further progress reports.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

**Minute 19 - CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING:
WIRRAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT DCSF PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR
CHANGE**

Minute Text :

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which sought Cabinet approval to the Draft Wirral Primary Strategy for Change document which was circulated to Members. The document was a requirement for the national DCSF Primary Capital Investment Programme and required approval by the DCSF prior to capital funding being released. The document was required to be submitted to the DCSF by 16 June 2008.

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That

- (1) the principles of the Primary Strategy be approved and council support of the strategy be confirmed;
- (2) the Wirral Strategy for Change document be approved for submission to the DCSF;
- (3) the Director of Children's Services be authorised to continue to refine the Wirral document if necessary in the light of further feedback ahead of the DCSF submission date of 16.6.08;
- (4) that the Primary Strategy be the subject of further progress reports.