

Meeting date: 13th December 2022

Report to: Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Report title: Children's Services Capital Programme 2022/25 Update

Report from: Assistant Director of Children's Services & Skills and the Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive

Report author/lead contact officer: Peter Carroll, Head of Strategic Land and Property

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood | Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle | Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South | Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a mid-year update on the Children's Services Capital Programme for 2022/25

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member for Children and Education is asked to approve:
- 2.2 a) The update to the Children Services Capital Programme for 2022/23 together with the outline programme for 2023/24 and 2024/25 (Appendix A) and;
- 2.3 b) The draft School Maintenance Programme for 2023/24 (Appendix B).

Report Title: Children's Services Capital Programme 2022/25 Update

1. Matters for Consideration

- 1.1 On 27th June 2022 the Cabinet Member approved the Children's Services Capital Programme for 2022/23 and the indicative programme for the following years 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 1.2 This report seeks to update the programme to reflect the mid-year position for 2022/23, which is attached as **Appendix A**. Presently the update, which remains fully funded as illustrated through the funding streams within Appendix A, represents a revised total investment of £25.352m in the schools' estate for the 3 year period.
- 1.3 Additionally, a draft of the Schools Maintenance Programme for 2023/24 is attached as **Appendix B**. This highlights the schools that have been prioritised for essential maintenance works during next year and is also highlighted for the Cabinet Member's approval. This programme is subject to detailed design and costing.

2. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 2.1 The Children's Services Capital Programme includes projects which address the sufficiency, suitability and condition of the schools' estate.
- 2.2 The sufficiency of school places across the borough is evidenced within the School Organisation Plan, which was last approved by the Cabinet Member in September 2020.
- 2.3 Appraising the suitability of the school estate continues to be about ensuring our school premises are fit for purpose to support the effective delivery of teaching and learning and the drive to raise education standards. Asset management planning with individual schools continues to enable suitability issues to be identified and where possible addressed, often in works that are complementary to other projects focused upon places and condition. This can also be through the Landlord Approval process where schools have proposed using their own funding, given the priority they attach to such schemes.
- 2.4 In improving the condition of the school estate through planned maintenance, long term improvement or new build schemes, we are fundamentally addressing priorities, including backlog items, determined from our rolling programme of local stock condition surveys.
- 2.5 The SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy 2021-24, approved by Cabinet Member in September 2021, has identified a number of key priority areas for development of additional special places including expansion of existing schools to meet the short to medium term need, and through the delivery of a new special school to meet ongoing demand over the longer term.
- 2.6 This is also evidenced by the Government's Delivering Best Value programme suggesting the need for development of sufficient new specialist provision within borough.

3. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 3.1 The delivery of the Children's Services Capital Programme is structured through its subordinate programmes.

The North Solihull Primary Programme

This programme is now complete, and a minor contingency remains.

The School Improvement Programme

- 3.2 The expansion scheme at Alderbrook Academy is on programme to deliver the required additional 150 secondary pupil places by September 2023.
- 3.3 Following unforeseen delays during the initial stage of the expansion works at Cheswick Green Primary School, phasing has been adjusted for this project to reflect the current progress on site, with a planned greater proportion of the works to take place within the 2023/24 financial year. However, the scheme is still on programme to provide the additional 210 school places for September 2023 with remaining phases to be completed by the end of the calendar year.
- 3.4 A further longstanding proposal in this section of the programme is for the split site Valley Primary School to merge onto its junior campus. This received in principle approval from Cabinet on the 6 January 2020 enabling the project to progress to a broader development stage. Significant constraints have arisen owing to the requirements of Sports England to maintain the extent of playing field provision and the impact of inflation on the wider Capital Programme. Options are therefore being reconsidered, to include the future use of the vacant infant site, and further discussions will take place with the school. In the short to medium term there is a need to address some condition items.
- 3.5 Recent migration into the borough has seen a significant increase in demand for school places. Planning work is in progress to install additional modular accommodation at Widney Junior School to alleviate pressure on places in this area. This is to be part funded by the school and also by an additional 2022/23 Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) allocation to support pupil growth. Feasibility works are also underway with secondary schools in targeted areas to provide additional places.

The School Improvement Programme (High Needs Block)

- 3.6 A key investment is the conversion of the former Daylesford Infant School site creating a new space for Summerfield Education Centre. Work is progressing to programme and it is intended the new provision, under the Solihull Academy MAT will take occupancy early in 2023, vacating their current site at Auckland House. Work will then begin to demolish Auckland House as referenced in a report to Cabinet Portfolio Holder Children and Education on 27th June 2022 for and a provisional allocation has been made within appendix A to facilitate this. Discussions for the vacant Auckland House site and its future use are ongoing.
- 3.7 Works are complete for the Primary ARP North with both KS1 and KS2 pupils now in

occupation.

- 3.8 We have now prepared and handed over the site on Bosworth Drive to the DfE for the creation of the new Free School (The Heights). A bid for a second free school has also been submitted for 150 pupils. Should this bid prove successful an allocation will be made available from contingency to facilitate site preparation here.
- 3.9 Feasibility work on the expansion of SEMH primary provision south, at Tudor Grange Primary Academy- Yew Tree to include KS1 pupils is ongoing to deliver a new and expanded provision, an increased allocation has been included in the capital programme for this.

The School Maintenance Programme

- 3.10 The programme this year has delivered a roof replacement at Reynolds Cross Special School, and heat pump replacement schemes at Kingshurst Primary School and Forest Oak and Merstone Special Schools are underway.
- 3.11 The draft programme for next year, 2023/24 is highlighted in Appendix B and addresses priority maintenance items in the Council's schools. A core budget has been made available for this programme, as indicated within Appendix A. Additional funding from the Devolved Formula Capital Grant will be allocated when announced by the DfE.

General and School Programme

- 3.12 Three NHS properties were transferred to SMBC in October 2022 to enable the creation of Children's Homes. Works are anticipated to commence imminently with an estimated completion of Spring 2023.
- 3.13 This element of the capital programme, focused on school premises, relates to contingencies held for specialist access works for individual vulnerable pupils, works to sites and payments for temporary classrooms.
- 3.14 In the report to the Cabinet Member for Resources on 4th July 2022, regarding the reprovision of accommodation for youth facilities at Brackleys Way, it was approved that officers would be progressing designs for a new build solution. This design work is ongoing and an allocation, using the capital receipt resulting from the sale of Youth Workshops, has been made within the Appendix A to facilitate works here with a view to completing 2023/24. This amount will be supplemented by additional funding streams outside of this programme and will be subject to a separate report.

School Managed Projects

- 3.15 This section of the programme reflects schemes of work undertaken directly by our schools and depending on their value, individual projects are highlighted. In this instance, Fordbridge Community Primary School are no longer proceeding with their procurement of the modular classroom. Appendix A has been updated to reflect this.

4. Implications and Considerations

4.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>Schools are very much at the heart of communities and giving access to and improving the education and life chances of all citizens, irrespective of needs, remains at the forefront of strategic considerations.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	<p>Schools planning, funding and development are fundamental to the economic development of the borough.</p> <p>There must be sufficient and suitable school places to accommodate industrial and housing growth.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. 	<p>All school development activities are subject to environmental considerations. New developments will comply with the latest legislation on energy efficiency and appropriate technologies will also be considered as part of the Council's rolling programme of repair and replacement.</p> <p>Where possible, schemes include biodiversity enhancements.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Promote employee wellbeing 	<p>N/A</p>

4.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

4.2.1 This programme reflects corporate, collaborative and school priorities in consultation with the various stakeholders and is also subject to the bi annual approvals by the Cabinet Member.

4.2.2 Individual proposals are further refined through public consultation with school stakeholders and their local communities at key stages of the development process.

4.3 Financial implications:

4.3.1 Appendix A highlights the revised budget for 2022/23 of £10.960m and the proposed 3 year programme for 2022/25 total of £25.352m

4.3.2 In particular, Section 106 contributions from local developments have been allocated to maximise the most appropriate use of funding for certain key capital projects. Specifically as all education contributions relating to the Blythe Valley development have now been received, £0.817m this sum has now been applied to the secondary expansion previously undertaken at Tudor Grange Academy.

4.4 Legal implications:

4.4.1 The Local Authority has a legal duty to secure sufficient childcare places in its area in line with its published sufficiency plan.

4.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

4.5.1 Corporate Risk Registers are maintained for various elements of the Service Asset Management Plan and Children's Services Capital Programme and, essentially, it remains the case that across this relatively straightforward programme of works there are no red risks to report.

4.5.2 However, as with all areas of the Council's activities the effects of the pandemic and wider market conditions have generated uncertainty. With reference to projects within the programme it is the position that the feasibility work that underpins the early stages of our pre planning schemes will have been prolonged, consultation processes will have been delayed in line with corporate guidance and tenders and costs will have been reviewed.

4.5.3 Generally, that position, being dynamic and susceptible to rapid change, is currently improving but any specific concerns members have can be elaborated upon against individual project lines.

4.6 Equality implications:

4.6.1 All existing and future schools building provision will take full account of the Public Sector Equalities Duty and access needs for staff, children and visitors with disabilities.

5. List of appendices referred to

5.1 Appendix A – The Children's Services Capital Programme 2022-25. The following Appendix is not for Publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

5.2 Appendix B – The draft Schools' Maintenance Programme 2023/24. The following Appendix is not for Publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. Background papers used to compile this report

6.1 None

7. List of Other Relevant Documents

7.1 None