Schools Basic Need Capital Projects

Joint report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment and the County Treasurer

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council’s Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendations:
(a) that Cabinet approves additional funds totalling £0.185m to support the a basic need project at Sticklepath Community School, Barnstaple;
(b) that Cabinet approves basic need new starts projects at Highweek Community Primary & Nursery, Newton Abbot and Landscore Primary, Crediton and the allocation of £2.595m basic need funding.

1. Summary

The report is requesting the allocation of unallocated basic need funding identified in the Medium Term Capital Programme towards capital projects (see Appendix A) that will deliver additional primary places for September 2016. The proposals will commit an additional £2.780m from unallocated basic need resources identified in the Medium Term Capital Programme.

2. Background

The provision of sufficient pupil places remains a statutory responsibility of the Education Authority. Nationally there continues to be pressure on primary places and there are a number of areas in Devon where primary numbers continue to rise beyond the capacity of local schools, including Highweek Community Primary & Nursery, Newton Abbot, Landscore Primary, Crediton and Sticklepath Community School, West Barnstaple. Officers have been working with schools on proposals to meet these additional demands and developed, using the advanced design fee fund, a number of projects to ensure sufficient places are provided in a timely manner.

3. Proposal

The proposal is to allocate Basic Need capital resources to projects that will increase the capacity of all three schools to 420, planned admission number 60. The schools have been able to offer a one off 60 for September 2015 but capital investment is now required to ensure they can physically continue to offer increased numbers year on year. The proposal will complete projects in a single project rather than phased investment to avoid additional costs and disruption to the schools. It is therefore necessary to allocate capital funding now to ensure projects are complete in time for the 2016/17 academic year.

Proposals will support both demographic and housing growth and section 106 agreements are in place, which will be applied retrospectively when secured.

Newton Abbot – the town has experienced demographic growth and housing growth. The expansion of Highweek Community Primary & Nursery is a part of an approved strategy for
managing growth in the town. A total of £140,000 has been approved to develop the design of the scheme requiring a further £1,435,000.

Crediton – there has been significant growth in early years numbers in the town alongside a number of proposed housing developments. Officers have agreed in consultation with both local schools, Landscore Primary School and Haywards Primary School, that they will expand to a planned admission number of 60, the latter being a future priority for capital investment. A total of £140,000 has been approved to develop the design of the scheme at Landscore Primary requiring a further £1,160,000.

Barnstaple – the West of Barnstaple is served by only one school, Sticklepath Community School. Additional accommodation is required to support current in area numbers. The original programme allocated £450,000 however due to necessary revisions to the project, it now requires additional funding totalling £185,000.

These projects need to commence in advance of the County Council budget to ensure additional places are provided in a timely manner.

4. Consultations

Under School Organisation regulations a minimum of six weeks consultation will be undertaken. Governing Bodies are now able to make changes to their schools without following a formal statutory process. They are however required to adhere to the usual principles of public law; they must act rationally; they must take into account all relevant considerations; they must follow a fair procedure and they need to ensure effective consultation with parents and other interested parties.

Proposals need to align with wider place planning/organisational arrangements and the published consultation linked to Devon County Council’s consultation website. Highweek, Landscore and Haywards are currently consulting on enlargement of their schools with effect from September 2016. With regard to Barnstaple, the enlargement will not require consultation as the increase in the capacity of the school will not be more than 25% and 30 pupils.

5. Financial Considerations

Capital – the proposals will allocate £2,780m basic need funds approved within the Medium Term Capital Programme, specifically resources from the 2015-16 and 2016-17 Basic Need Announcement. As Section 106 agreements are put in place they will be used to retrospectively fund these planned projects.

Revenue – Any revenue implications to the schools will be met by the Dedicated Schools Grant which includes a Schools Grant Growth Fund which has criteria for supporting expanding schools which will be applied for these expansions.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

The projects will conform to current required standards.

The proposal is consistent with Devon’s policy of providing local schools for local children and therefore promoting walking and cycling to schools.
7. **Equality Considerations**

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people’s needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/ new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

An impact assessment has been carried out for school organisation, a copy of which has been circulated to Cabinet Members, and is available alongside this report on the Council’s website at: [www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/index_exc.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/index_exc.htm)

8. **Legal Considerations**

The proposal at Landscore Primary is subject to planning approval.

9. **Risk Management Considerations**

As identified above, one proposal still requires full planning approval and schools are undertaking the statutory consultations. Contracts will not be let until these requirements have been successfully concluded.

10. **Public Health Impact**

There are no specific public health impacts.

11. **Options/Alternatives**

There are currently limited options for meeting the demand in these areas and proposals are in line with agreed strategies. Alternatives include transporting children to outlying schools which would have implications for the home to school transport budget and not meet Devon’s aspirations of having local schools for local children. New school provision is an option but at this point in time, land and funding is not available and new schools could impact on the sustainability of existing schools until housing development comes forward.

12. **Reason for Recommendation**

The proposals will support Devon in meeting its statutory responsibilities in providing sufficient pupils places.

Dave Black  
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: Crediton Rural, Barnstaple South, Teignbridge North
Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills: Councillor James McInnes  
Cabinet Member for Resources and Asset Management: Councillor John Clatworthy

Strategic Director, Place: Heather Barnes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper Date File Reference
Nil

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### Appendix A
To PTE/15/51

#### Schools Basic Need Capital Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School - Project</th>
<th>Pre 2015-16 £,000</th>
<th>2015-16 £,000</th>
<th>2016-17 £,000</th>
<th>2017-18 £,000</th>
<th>Total Cost £,000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscore Primary, Crediton – Expansion to 420</td>
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<td>202</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1,300</td>
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<td>Highweek Community Primary &amp; Nursery, Newton Abbot – Expansion to 420</td>
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<td>1,575</td>
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<td>Sticklepath Community School, Barnstaple – Expansion to 420*</td>
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