



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
DATE:	Thursday, 7 March 2024

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children, Young People and Education
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Billinge and Beardwood; West Pennine; Mill Hill & Moorgate; Blackburn South & Lower Darwen;
KEY DECISION:	Y

SUBJECT: Variation to the Schools Capital Programme

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To present for consideration and approval variations to the 2023/24 schools' capital programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board approves:

- a new scheme to the value of £390,000 at Turton and Belmont Primary School
- a budget increase of £95,000 for the expansion at Witton Academy
- variations to a number of smaller schemes to the value of £12,500

3. BACKGROUND

Turton and Belmont Primary School is a small rural school with an admission number of 98. The school is a traditional stone built village school built in 1898. The school has 4 classrooms, one small multiuse space (typically used for music, drama, professional meetings) and operates mixed age range teaching. The school has benefitted from some expansion and refurbishment over the years to make best use of the available space for pupils, however some challenges do remain.

Witton Academy are expanding the capacity of the school from an admission number of 240 to 270 per year group to support the boroughs increased secondary school place pressures. An initial grant of £650k was approved by the Councils Executive board in March 2023 for the refurbishment of the former Witton City Learning Centre, alongside approval to enter into a 125-academy style lease.

Other variations to the total value of £12,500, including:

- Meadowhead Junior replacement doors and shutters, requires a budget uplift of £9,000 due to additional asbestos works and the tender value return being greater than the initial estimate.
- Lower Darwen Primary School Heating Scheme requires a budget uplift of £1,100 due to required changes to the scope of works.
- Meadowhead Infant Schools Drainage installations requires a budget uplift of £2,400 due to additional collapsed drains.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Turton and Belmont Primary School is a small rural school that serves the areas of Turton and Belmont. The School is full to its current capacity of 98 pupils.

Turton and Belmont is an area cited for significant housing growth. One of the proposed housing developments (Springside Works), if progressed is forecasted to produce an increased pupil yield of 9 primary aged pupils, with the nearest school to this housing development being Turton and Belmont Primary School. There is capacity to extend and remodel the school to create additional space to accommodate this forecasted increase at a cost circa of £190k.

The school (similar to other schools) is experiencing higher numbers of its existing pupil cohort requiring additional support and pupil forecasts suggest this demand will increase in future years. The current space requires some internal remodelling to create 2 smaller intervention spaces for the provision of specialist support which is a priority need.

In addition to the above, space for staff is also compromised, with the only available staff space being in the eaves of the attic with access being via a very small, narrow and steep staircase to a staff room that at best can accommodate 8 staff. Access to staff washroom facilities is at the opposite side of the building and again access is via a very small, narrow and steep stairwell. The current staffing establishment is 20 (not including facilities staff). It is estimated that a further £200k would be required to remodel the internal space to create 2 smaller intervention spaces and extend to the rear of the premises to create improved staff facilities.

Whilst the school is not required to increase its admission numbers at this time and the progression of the proposed housing development at Springside Works is yet to be confirmed, financially and logistically it would prove sensible to undertake one capital programme to both expand the school and undertake internal remodelling within the same scheme, estimated at £390k.

Witton Park Academy have committed to providing increased capacity moving from an admission number of 240 pupils per year group to 270 pupils per year group as part of the boroughs Secondary school capital expansion programme agreed in March 2023. During the programme of refurbishment, issues have presented in relation to fire compartmentalisation and additional work of circa £95,000 has been required to ensure that this Council premises is fit for future purpose. This accommodation is essential to the school delivering the additional capacity of places needed to support secondary school place pressures.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

National Policy Context – The council has responsibility to ensure that all allocated funding for maintained sector schools is used in accordance with the associated grant terms and conditions.

Performance Indicators – The Capital programme, will be closely monitored against agreed performance indicators representing measures of quality, cost and timescales.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the proposed schemes is through a combination of funding sources including Schools Basic Need, Schools Condition and Schools Devolved Formula Capital. The proposed variations for the Schools and Education portfolio are attached at Appendix 1.

It is expected that the proposed housing development at the former Springside Works will result in demand for additional primary school places and as such a request for s.106 funding to the sum of £169,488 has been detailed. It is intended to use the Schools Basic Need funding stream to cashflow the place creation element of the proposed capital programme (190k) at Turton and Belmont Primary pending the progression of the claim for s.106 funding in relation to the housing development at the former Springside works. Any receipt of s.106 funding will reduce the amount of Basic Need Grant utilised.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The report has been compiled with regard to the Council's Constitution, in particular the Financial Procedural Rules and the Contract Procedure Rules. All procurement and contract activity in connection with this programme must be carried out in accordance with the relevant parts of the constitution and legislation.

All contracts prepared in relation to the programme must be in conjunction with Legal Services/CAPS team.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource requirements for managing and coordinating the capital programme will be met from within the current Schools and Education team and the Councils Growth Team.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

Schools are consulted annually as to estate needs and submit an annual asset management plan that supports the detailing of each school's capital programme. Where there have been changes to a scope of works, officers have discussed these changes and any impact of them with the relevant schools.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Carol Grimshaw , Head of Service, Schools System Support
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DATE:	12 February 2024
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix 1 – Education Capital Programme 2023/24 Variation Report
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