

Proposed Decision to be taken by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property on or after 21 April 2017

Addition of Early Years Capital Grant for Dunchurch Infant School to the Education & Learning Capital Programme

Recommendations

1. The Portfolio Holder (Finance and Property) gives approval to accept a Capital Grant from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for work at Dunchurch Infant School.
2. The expansion of nursery provision at Dunchurch Infant School is added to the Education and Learning Capital Programme at a cost of £175,764 fully funded from the EFA grant and a contribution from the school.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 The Government is introducing a new statutory entitlement to 30 hours per week of funded early learning for 3 and 4 year olds with working parents. The entitlement will begin in September 2017. Introducing this offer will be very challenging for councils as a significant number of new nursery places will need to be created to accommodate these additional hours.
- 1.2 Councils were invited to bid to the Education Funding Agency for capital grants to support the implementation. Warwickshire (classified as a 'high demand' local authority) was allowed to submit 6 bids. Bids had to be submitted by 31 August 2016 and local authorities were notified of the outcome on 23 December 2016.
- 1.3 Bids were assessed against the following criteria:

Stage 1

- a. track record with Ofsted
- b. completion by 31 August 2017 guaranteed
- c. total cost of project below £1 million
- d. minimum of 25% of total project cost funded from alternative sources

Stage 2

- a. evidence of local need to increase sufficiency of places
- b. value for money

- 1.4 Warwickshire was initially awarded grant funding for 4 of the 6 projects, and approval to add these to the Education & Learning Capital Programme was given at Cabinet on 9 March 2017.

2.0 Options and Proposal

- 2.1 The Council was informed on 10 March 2017 that the Education Funding Agency has embarked upon another funding round, and has now awarded a capital grant for the project based at Dunchurch Infant School, one of the 2 projects initially refused funding.
- 2.2 The scheme will expand nursery provision by adding another room, so that the full time equivalent of 26 additional new places will be created, to accommodate children entitled to the new 30 Hours offer. The room will be sited adjacent to the existing nursery classroom and will have suitable outdoor play space.
- 2.3 The total cost of the project will be £175,764, and a grant of £131,823 has been awarded, equivalent to 75% of the total cost. All approved schemes need to demonstrate that at least 25% of the funding for the project can be found from sources other than this capital grant. The governors of Dunchurch Infant School have confirmed that the nursery holds sufficient funds to be able to contribute the required 25% (£43,941).
- 2.4 This grant notification arrived too late for the project to be included within the Cabinet report of 9 March 2017. All works need to be completed by 31 August 2017 at the latest, so that nursery places can be offered from the start of the autumn term. Grant funding will be withdrawn if this condition is not met.
- 2.5 Approval is therefore sought now to accept the Early Years Capital Grant from the Education Funding Agency to develop additional 30 Hours nursery places at Dunchurch Infant School, so that works may commence and the 31 August deadline met.

3.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 3.1 Subject to approval, this project will be added to the Education and Learning Capital Programme. It is expected that works will be completed by 31 August 2017.

Background papers

None

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This report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

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Local member: Councillor Roberts