

Cabinet

Report Title	Schools Capital Programme 2025/26 – School Condition
Date of Meeting	25 June 2025
Report Author	Martyn Roberts School Place Planning and Capital Manager
Lead Officer	Sally Giles Director of Children and Education
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Jalal Uddin Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Why is this a key decision?	1. Expenditure over £1 Million+ Yes 2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards Yes
Wards Affected	All Wards
Identify exempt information and exemption category	Choose an item. Not Applicable
Is the report urgent?	Yes
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	Not applicable
Appendices (if any)	1. School Condition Allocation Programme – June 2025

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council receives an annual capital grant, School Condition Allocation, from Government for the ongoing cyclical maintenance of those maintained schools it continues to have direct responsibility for. This report seeks approval to allocate £1.77m of the grant to fund a programme of maintenance and repair works for 2025/26. The report recommendations also require additional conditions are applied to the management of the procurement and delivery of individual schemes to ensure any risk to the council is mitigated.

2. Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Approve the Schools Capital Programme 2025/26 investment proposal and authorise the allocation of £1.77m School Condition grant funding to support the cyclical maintenance of local authority-maintained schools as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to a satisfactory financial appraisal being approved by Strategic Finance for the programme and individual component schemes.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Executive Director - Place in consultation with the Director of Children and Education to procure and accept the most economically advantageous tenders for projects detailed within this report subject to the costs of those works being able to be met from the proposed funding allocation and with provision of an appropriate contingency allowance for each scheme.
- 2.3 Delegate authority to the Director of Children and Education to monitor progress and make any necessary in-year alterations to the Schools Capital Programme 2025/26 in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, including the preparation of a reserve list of cyclical maintenance works to be progressed if one or more approved schemes are incapable of delivery during the 2025/26 financial year.
- 2.4 Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Legal and Assurance and Monitoring Officer to execute, seal and complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations.

3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to allocate School Condition Allocation (SCA) grant funding for a cyclical maintenance programme to support maintained schools during the 2025/26 financial year.
- 3.2 Building Services and Strategic Assets and Land's Engineering team have identified 20 schools for 2025/26 which require replacement of boilers, roofs, windows and fire alarm systems. Most works are planned for completion during the 2025 school summer holiday period. The estimated total cost of the programme of works as detailed at Appendix 1 is £1,776,803.
- 3.3 The proposals have been developed following a comprehensive assessment of schools' condition and identification of cyclical and emergent maintenance requirement. In support of this process, the following actions are implemented to reduce any risk to the council in connection with School Condition; ensure that repair / maintenance work for schools is undertaken following an analysis of pre-determined criteria and that records are maintained to demonstrate the priority need of each school:
 - 3.3.1 ensure that a corporate Risk Register is maintained and reviewed to ensure all risks are appropriately identified and assessed, with adequate mitigation; and

- 3.3.2 that cost estimates are reviewed to ensure that any future costs can be managed within the allocated funding.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 There are either no alternative options for schemes identified, or options have already been discounted through project development.
- 4.2 The terms of the SCA mean funds must be spent on maintained school's cyclical maintenance.
- 4.3 Within the maintained school's sector, it is the primary school building stock that will also require a programme of replacement to commence shortly. The current SCA balance is held to support the replacement build of Causeway Green Primary School. The deteriorating condition of school buildings will otherwise continue to be a drain on the School Repair Account.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Officers meet regularly to assess the maintained school sites and agree priority spend based upon condition survey data. For those maintained schools that choose not to buy back into the services of the School Repair Account they were requested to submit their planned priorities for building maintenance for 2025/26 to ensure priority consideration against all other maintained schools.
- 5.2 The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board was consulted and approved the submission of this urgent report to Cabinet for consideration. The proposals are considered urgent in order to allow the procurement, selection and award of contracts to enable contractor mobilisation to complete required capital maintenance work during the school summer holidays. Any delay in completing this process may result in the re-profiling of projects requiring works to be undertaken later in the calendar year with risks from adverse weather conditions delaying completion and impacting on the educational environment for pupils. For this reason, an additional request has been made to the Chair for Call-In to be withdrawn and for the decision to be implemented immediately following any decision of Cabinet on 25 June.
- 5.3 Following Cabinet's decision schools will be advised with regard to progress with the programme for 2025/26 through representatives who attend the School Organisation Programme Board. The board is managed by the Children and Education Directorate, Education Support Services.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 SCA funding continues to be allocated by the Department for Education on a yearly basis and is based on the number of maintained schools that are the council's responsibility. Funding allocation for 2025/26 has been confirmed as £5.0m.
- 6.2 The Local Authority is already holding a balance of £15.2m in addition to this year's allocation. Resources are not ringfenced, and there is no time limit to

expend. Revenue implications associated with the programme are summarised below:

- 6.2.1 there are no implications for staffing – the programme will be managed through existing resources.
 - 6.2.2 there are no land implications as no change is planned to the Local Authority's land holding. Programmed works will add value to council's assets.
 - 6.2.3 the implications for buildings are that existing school buildings will see a direct improvement leading to more efficient use of school revenue budgets.
 - 6.2.4 for any school that does not fully buy back into the School Repair Account they are required to contribute 30% towards the capital cost of the project with the balance funded from a SCA contribution on a match funded basis.
- 6.3 Table 1 provides a high-level summary as to how the SCA funding will be allocated across the programme. Appendix 1 provides details of individual projects:

Type of Works	£
General Building	804,000
Mechanical & Electrical	206,730
Programme contingency	101,073
Mechanical & Electrical (inc. contingency)	665,000
Total	1,776,803

7. Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1 This report supports the discharge of the Council's statutory duties and overall responsibility for the capital maintenance strategy for schools in accordance with s.14 of the Education Act 1996. The Council has a duty under s.22 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to maintain its schools including expenditure relating to premises. This report sets out a programme of capital works to schools across borough following completion of ongoing cyclical and reactive maintenance reviews.
- 7.2 Under s.1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to enter into the arrangements set out in this report, which are within the remit and limits of the general power of competence set out at ss. 2 and 4 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 7.3 Any procurement activities required to enable the delivery of the programme will be undertaken in accordance with applicable procurement legislation from

time to time in force including but not limited to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Procurement Act 2023 and required compliance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules.

Risks

- 7.4 The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been complied with – to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation, financial, environmental and reputation risks.
- 7.5 Based on the information provided, it is the officers' opinion that for the significant risks that have been identified, arrangements are in place to manage and mitigate these effectively.
- 7.6 Improvements to the conditions of school buildings may assist in mitigating some of the risks arising from insured perils (such as storms, floods, fire etc) and therefore mitigate the financial costs associated with such events.
- 7.7 A programme Risk Register will continue to be managed during the lifetime of the projects to ensure that time, cost and quality are continually monitored to mitigate any risk to the council once projects are finalised. There are currently no significant risks identified.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment initial screening has been undertaken. The screening identified that there will be no adverse impact on people or groups with protected characteristics as a result of the proposals contained within the report. A full EqlA is not therefore required.

9. Other Relevant Implications

- **Climate change** – Where possible, the school's capital programme makes funding available for programmes to replace inefficient heating systems and explore renewable solutions; investigate the installation of renewable technologies; upgrade old pipework; install new energy controls that monitor usage; upgrade/improve insulation and installing new LED lighting. Prioritisation methodology targets schools where modernising plant or equipment provides best value returns on investment. In addition to direct financial savings, the investment provides a better learning environment for staff and students through improved heating & lighting.
- **Corporate Parenting** – improvements to the schools' buildings will enhance and improve the teaching environments for all.
- **Social Value** – improvements to the schools' buildings will enhance and improve the teaching environments for all.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – this will be a positive impact for children and young people as it ensures schools buildings will be enhanced and improved.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?

12.1 This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Theme:-

- Growing up in Sandwell
To ensure Sandwell provides great places for children to grow up and to ensure a brighter future for children and young people, where everyone is valued and given access to the tools to succeed. Ensure that every child in Sandwell has access to a place in a good or outstanding school.

Appendix 1

School Condition Allocation Programme – June 2025			
Approval Ref.	School	Works	Estimated Value (£)
		General Building	
SCA/2025/001	Lodge Primary	Roof covering and Gutter works	90,000
SCA/2025/002	Lodge Primary	Bell Tower Refurbishment	85,000
SCA/2025/003	Joseph Turner Primary	Flat roof, gutters, fascia's	75,000
SCA/2025/004	Park Hill Primary	Window replacements	30,000
SCA/2025/005	Albert Pritchard Infant	Boiler works – tanking & sump pump	40,000
SCA/2025/006	Temple Meadow Primary	Roof area overlay	55,000
SCA/2025/007	Rood End Primary	Roof covering & associated flashing, gutters	90,000
SCA/2025/008	Glebefields Primary	Roof area, gutters, fascia's	60,000
SCA/2025/009	Bleakhouse Primary	Area roof covering, gutters, fascia's	88,000
SCA/2024/010	Brickhouse Primary	Flat roof works - kitchen extract works	60,000
SCA/2025/011	The Priory Primary	Tarmac works	20,000
SCA/2025/012	Grove Vale Primary	Steps and paths	35,000
SCA/2025/013	Uplands Manor Primary	Area B - Roof works	76,000
		Mechanical & Electrical	
SCA/2025/013	Ferndale Primary	BEMs Replacement	40,000

SCA/2025/014	Holy Trinity CE Primary	Boiler House Refurb Design for 2026/27	15,000
SCA/2025/015	Wood Green Junior	Pipework Design for 2026/27	15,000
SCA/2025/016	Glebefields Primary	Boiler House Refurb Design for 2026/27	20,000
SCA/2025/017	Tivdale Hall Primary	Boiler works	59,730
SCA/2025/018	Brandhall Primary	Fire Alarm Replacement	57,000
SCA/2025/019	Contingency	Required contingency	101,073.00
Sub-Total			1,111,803.00
SCA/2025/020	Ryders Green Primary	Boiler Replacement and pipework (inc. contingency)	372,000
SCA/2025/021	Temple Meadow	Boiler Replacement and pipework (inc. contingency)	293,000
Sub-Total			665,000
Total			1,776,803

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area:

Service Lead

Date:

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service that you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? No