

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET
MEMBER**

PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the council's submission to the government regarding the Primary Strategy for Change (PSC).

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In December 2007, the government announced its full programme for rolling out the Primary Strategy for Change (PSC). The PSC is a 15 year scheme to invest heavily in improving the stock of primary school buildings. This investment is intended to support improvements to the way learning and teaching is delivered within the primary sector. The scheme contains targets to re-build or improve at least 50 percent of primary schools. Additionally, five percent of the schools in the worst physical condition must be replaced.
- 2.2 In order to secure funding for a start in April 2009, each authority must submit an application in a standard format to the Department for Schools, Children and Families (DCSF), in June 2008. The government will announce the results of its evaluation in September 2008. The application must cover two main issues; details of how the authority plans to organise the whole programme of school improvement for the primary sector, and proposals for the initial prioritisation of capital schemes between 2009 and 2014.
- 2.3 The plans for the whole programme cover the following headings; the local perspective, a baseline analysis of the current position and objectives; the authority's long-term aims and our approach to change. The list of prioritised schools needs to be based on clear criteria. The government has made it a priority to target deprivation in areas served by schools, so this is our first criterion. The second criterion is the physical condition of schools, as measured by an evaluation of the asset management plans. Other criteria could have been used. For example addressing excessive surplus places, but North Lincolnshire has already taken steps over the years to manage this. The government might also have expected attainment levels to have featured, but there are no issues in the authority with regard to primary schools meeting floor targets.

- 2.4 Therefore, an initial priority list of eight schools has been drawn up, based solely at this stage on the two factors of socio-economic disadvantage (using government-derived statistics) and physical condition. The next stage is to undertake an options appraisal of what is feasible at each site. This will inform the decision on how each of the schools' priority issues will be addressed. Where there are infant and junior schools in the prioritised list, later consideration will be given to the potential for a re-organisation to deliver the optimum outcome. Any such proposals will be subject to the usual formal consultation process before any decision is made. Proposals for the remaining schools to be included in the remainder of the 15 year programme will be submitted at a later stage.
- 2.5 For those schools not included in the 50 percent target, the DCSF has confirmed that Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) will continue to be available for capital improvements over the period.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 There are only two options available. These are:
- Agree the proposed document for submission to DCFS.
 - Reject the proposed document for submission to the DCSF.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Rejecting the proposed document would mean that the council's submission could not be made according to the DCSF's timetable and therefore the funding would not be secured. Accepting the proposed document would allow the submission to be completed according to the DCSF timescales.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

The government has so far confirmed capital funding of £8.4m for North Lincolnshire to the end of the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2011). Further allocations to the end of the initial investment period (2014) will be subject to public spending decisions. However, the government has made it clear that all other potential funding streams should be considered to supplement government funding. The submission makes it clear that the authority is prepared to consider this and the use of DFC in contributing to total funding has been agreed in principle with schools.

5.2 Staffing

There will be staffing implications in the delivery of our long term aims, most notably in terms of training and development. These will be considered in detail at a later stage.

5.3 Statutory

None.

5.4 Environmental and Other

The PSC will offer opportunities for significant environmental improvements as the investment rolls out.

6 OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report

7 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 The authority has consulted widely on the proposals within the submission. Details are given in the submission itself, but in summary we have presented the proposals to the public, headteachers and governors, the Schools Forum and stakeholders on the Children's Board. There has been no adverse comment, and there is a broad consensus of support for the proposals at this stage from headteachers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the submission to DCSF be approved.

SERVICE DIRECTOR LEARNING, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

DCSF Guidance Document on Primary Strategy for Change