

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director – Children’s Services

**PORTFOLIO:** Children and Young People

**SUBJECT:** Capital Programme – 2025/26

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides a summary of the capital funding received by the Council from central government to support capital works and programmes within schools for the 2025/26 financial year.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) The position regarding capital funding from the Department for Education for 2025/26 is noted;**
- 2) The proposals to be funded from School Condition Capital Allocation and Basic Need Funding are approved; and**
- 3) The capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the Budget report to full Council.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Department for Education has not yet announced the School Condition Allocation (SCA) Capital Grant for 2025/26, but given the timescales for some of the proposed capital projects, there is a requirement to present this report. The allocation stated in this report is based on the 2024/25 allocation which was £704,785. We are currently unsure if the Department for Education will adopt the same methodology as last year, therefore for the purpose of planning the 2025/26 capital programme, the 2024/25 allocation figure has been used. In the event of the 2025/26 allocation being reduced, or in the event that a school converts to academy status which impacts on funding received by the Council, the amount of funding available for elements of the capital programme will be reduced accordingly.

3.2 Detailed in the table below is the indicative funding available to support capital projects across the school estate:

<b>GOVERNMENT FUNDING</b>	
<b>School Condition Allocation – Local Authority maintained schools i.e. community and voluntary controlled schools (INDICATIVE FIGURE BASED ON 2024/25)</b>  Allocated to fund condition and suitability projects at Local Authority maintained schools.	£704,785
<b>Basic Need Capital Grant – funding available as at December 2024, no indication of any further allocations for this grant.</b>  Allocated by DfE to best meet local capital work priorities across the school estate.	£600,831

#### 4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The programme of works will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the school environment in mainstream and special school provision through capital projects.

#### 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In March 2024 the Department for Education announced that the 2024/25 School Condition Allocation for Halton was £704,785. The 2025/26 allocation has not yet been announced. For the purpose of planning the capital programme for 2025/26, the 2024/25 allocation figure has been used. In the event that the allocation is reduced or should further schools convert to academy status, which will also reduce the amount of funding the Local Authority receives, the amount of funding available for elements of the capital programme will be reduced accordingly.
- 5.2 The table below details how the School Condition Allocation grant will be utilised.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated costs</b>	<b>Description</b>
Asset Management - Computer Aided Design (CAD) Plans and Condition surveys	£25,000	CAD plans of school buildings are updated where improvement works/changes to accommodation have been carried out.  The condition surveys are carried out on a 5 yearly cycle as a rolling programme and are essential for identifying condition issues and planning for future capital repair programmes.
Asbestos Management	£10,000	Annual update of asbestos surveys and undertaking of resulting remedial works.
Accessibility projects	£30,000	Funding that schools can apply for to resolve accessibility issues within school buildings.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated costs</b>	<b>Description</b>
Contingency	£89,785	Used for emergency and health and safety works that arise during the year.
Capital Repairs	£550,000	A rolling programme of capital works undertaken at community and voluntary controlled schools, determined by the Local Authority, based upon a priority of need in discussion with schools and colleagues in Property Services.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£704,785</b>	

For any works undertaken within the Capital Repairs Programme, schools are normally required to make a contribution from their own Devolved Formula Capital allocation.

- 5.3 The Local Authority has previously received Basic Need funding from the Department for Education to assist in pupil place planning and ensure that there are sufficient pupil places across the borough as a whole. However, as there remains an overall surplus capacity, within agreed tolerance levels, in both the primary and secondary sector in Halton in terms of school places, and no forecasted demand for additional places, the DfE has already confirmed that the Council will not receive any Basic Need Funding for 2025/26.
- 5.4 There is currently a balance of Basic Need funding of £600,831 and this will be carried forward into 2025/26 to support general capital works required across the school estate. Where no basic need is identified (i.e. an authority has surplus school places) the funding can be used for general capital works. Officers are in the process of identifying the priority of general capital works needed which will be undertaken during 2025/26 using Basic Need funding.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None

- 6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None

- 6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Capital Programme will address condition and suitability issues within school buildings and will continue to help improve the learning environment for children and young people.

- 6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None

## 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The Capital Repairs Programme will contribute to Halton's Carbon Management Programme by helping to produce more energy efficient buildings.

## 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None

## 7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 It is current practice for schools to contribute towards the cost of the Capital Repairs Programme. Consultation with schools on their contribution to any proposed works will take place following full Council's consideration of the budget report in March 2025. If schools cannot or are not willing to contribute, any proposed projects will not be carried out in 2025/26 and will be deferred for future years.

## 8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Accessibility funding element from the School Condition Allocation (detailed in the table in 5.2 above) provides capital funding to improve the accessibility of mainstream and special schools for pupils with disabilities and the wider community. Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects.

## 9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Capital Repairs Programme will contribute to Halton's Carbon Management Programme by helping to produce more energy efficient buildings.

## 10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 The Council is required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the School Condition Allocation Grant

10.2 The works will provide schools with a suitable learning environment and manage the condition of the educational buildings we are responsible for.

## 11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 None

## 12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 It is intended that all works will be completed by March 2026

**13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
School Condition Allocation (SCA) and Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) provisional allocation 2024/25 Department for Education 26/03/24	Children's Services Directorate	Martin West
SCA and DFC final allocation 2024/25 Department for Education 14/05/24	Children's Services Directorate	Martin West
Basic Need Capital Allocation announcement for school places in 2026/27. Department for Education 25/04/24	Children's Services Directorate	Martin West