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Local Authority Chief Executives
CC: LA Directors of Finance / Directors of Education / COSLA officers

Sent by email on 15th September 2020

Dear Chief Executive

Learning Estate Investment Programme – Phase Two

In September 2019, the Deputy First Minister announced the publication of the new Learning Estate Strategy which was co-produced with local government and other strategic partners. This agreed the collective vision of “a Learning Estate which supports Excellence and Equity for all”.

At the same time, the Deputy First Minister also announced the first phase of projects to form part of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). Alongside the announcement of the first phase of projects, there was a public commitment to announce the second phase of projects within a year.

Given the circumstances presented by COVID 19 a decision has been taken to delay this announcement until December 2020. This allows your authority further time to ensure the appropriate political/financial approvals are in place for any investment priority, if still required, while still providing a strong message to the construction industry regarding a future pipeline, which will be a key part of the overall economic recovery.

Over recent months significant work has been undertaken with COSLA and local government representative bodies to support the ongoing development of the LEIP and the Phase 1 projects.

This letter sets out the strategic outcomes of the LEIP, outlines the funding approach, and requests that each local authority provide a brief update to the Scottish Government on the status of its current learning estate strategy and associated investment plans, including any priority project(s) they wish to put forward for consideration as part of phase two.



All local authorities will be eligible to receive funding through a second phase of the programme, with all local authority submissions being reviewed by a working group including Scottish Government, SFT, COSLA and local authority representatives. This group will review potential projects against criteria as defined in the flow chart at *Appendix i*. In line with all previous phases of the Schools for the Future programme and the first phase of the LEIP, project selection will rest with Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Futures Trust will continue to coordinate, facilitate and manage the delivery of the investment programme.

Strategic Outcomes

Consistent with the principles of the Learning Estate Strategy, Scottish Ministers are seeking to invest in projects which connect people, places and learning, deliver improved outcomes for all, and enable sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

In particular, investment will be focused on sustaining and improving the condition of the learning estate, establishing links across the learner journey where appropriate, and supporting sustainable estate planning and improved stewardship.

It is recognised that demographic changes can impact upon need across the learning estate. With that in mind, Scottish Ministers are open to considering projects which are responding to these demographic changes particularly where there is a clear linkage to sustainable and inclusive economic growth and / or there is an associated link to sustaining and improving the condition of the local authorities wider learning estate.

The investment programme is being designed to deliver high quality, suitable, sustainable, low carbon, digitally enabled learning environments. Through the development of the LEIP, alongside the first phase projects, the programme now has approved programme conditions and outcomes which align to these areas.

The national investment programme is intended to augment, not replace, local authorities' own investment plans. Scottish Ministers would anticipate that every local authority will continue to invest in its wider learning estate, in line with the significant local investment which has been undertaken in recent years.

Shared Funding Approach

All local authorities will be eligible to benefit from the new investment programme to sustain and improve the condition of their learning estate or respond to demographic changes outlined above. A project will not be eligible for funding on both a condition and demographic changes basis.

Each local authority must provide a commitment to deliver a new / refurbished facility that will achieve and maintain 'A' good or 'B' satisfactory category condition throughout a minimum of a 25-year period.

To support this investment the Scottish Government has developed, in collaboration with COSLA and local authority colleagues, an outcomes based funding model which will provide funding to local authorities on the achievement of agreed outcomes in relation to condition, energy efficiency, digital and economic growth. The premise of this funding will be on a 50:50 “like for like” basis to support the delivery of the outlined outcomes, as in line with the first phase of the LEIP.

The 50:50 funding approach will also be applied to those projects addressing demographic changes, including extensions and will apply to the specific learning facilities.

Request for Status Update

As noted earlier, the Scottish Government is seeking to announce a second phase of projects to be supported by the LEIP.

It is important that there is a comprehensive current understanding of local authorities’ own plans to support decision making.

It would be appreciated if you could provide a short status update setting out how your authority is developing or has developed its local learning estate strategy and associated investment plans. If the local authority has identified a priority project(s) for investment, that is supported with an approved financial and political commitment, please identify the project(s) in your update and outline how the proposal is responding to the strategic outcomes and phase two criteria outlined.

For any priority project(s) being put forward for consideration, at this stage, please include high level costs and programme.

Responses should be submitted by email or letter to myself at the Scottish Government by close of 13th October 2020 if this deadline causes significant issues then please get in touch. If you have any queries please contact me on 0131 244 3925, or Andy Dailly, Head of School Building, on 0131 244 7866 or Andrew.Dailly@gov.scot or Sarah Watters, COSLA on 0131 474 9329 or sarah@cosla.gov.uk

Andrew Drought
Deputy Director

Appendix i) – Phase 2 criteria flowchart

