

**SCHOOLS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME**  
**Protocol for Selection**

## 1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Department's strategy for capital investment for the coming years will be shaped by the outworking of the Area Planning process. Working within the capital resources available the focus will be on supporting the development of a network of viable sustainable schools and on prioritising infrastructure projects which deliver the best value in the years ahead.
- 1.2 The design, planning and approval processes involved means there is a time lag between identifying priorities for investment and actually delivering capital works. It is therefore important that the Department continues to develop a range of investment projects which are ready to effectively utilise the funding available.
- 1.3 However, the reduced capital budget available to the Department in the coming years means there cannot be a presumption of a new build in every case where investment is needed. More needs to be done within the existing estate.
- 1.4 The Department currently only has two funding streams for capital investment:
- Minor Works for projects less than £500,000
  - Major capital works (new build) where costs exceed £500,000
- 1.5 The Minister in his statement to the Assembly on the 25 June 2012 announced the establishment of a new **Schools Enhancement Programme**. This programme is to make funding of between £500,000 and £4,000,000 available for projects aimed at refurbishing or extending existing school provision. Priority will be given to projects aimed at facilitating amalgamation or rationalization in support of the area planning work being undertaken.
- 1.6 The purpose of this protocol is to set out the processes to be used to identify and rank proposals submitted to this new programme.

## 2. DEFINITION

- 2.1 The Schools Enhancement Programme will provide financial support for capital works, with a value of between £0.5million and £4million (total capital value of project including construction works, professional fees, furniture & equipment, lands and VAT).
- 2.2 The programme will target investment to meet the immediate and pressing needs in schools, through smaller scale works, where new build major capital works are not deemed affordable or deliverable within the budget available. The Schools Enhancement Programme does not include new build solutions, as these will be dealt with separately as part of the major works programme.
- 2.3 In recognition of the range of infrastructure issues facing schools the programme will consider project proposals within one of the following three streams:

Application Stream:	Objective:
1.	Enhancement works essential to effect rationalisation proposals. (Rationalisation proposal requiring extension and/or refurbishment of existing school to replace a number of other schools.)
2.	Enhancement works essential to address evidence of unmet demand arising from insufficient places to accommodate pupils in existing schools, (i.e. Provision of extension and/or refurbishment of existing school based on how well the premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers etc.. and how they contribute towards raising standards of education).

Application Stream:	Objective:
3.	Enhancement works essential to address immediate / serious / significant accommodation inadequacies or substandard accommodation. (Confirming existing provision but noting poor rating in the condition survey).

2.4 Applications should identify which stream the proposal relates to. Proposals considered as having met the necessary criteria will be considered and ranked within each work stream. The ranked lists will be submitted to the Minister for a final decision on which projects will be approved to proceed to full business case.

2.5 Initially up to £20million will be available for this programme in 2013-14 with the option of increasing this in 2014-15 depending on the number and quality of proposals.

### 3. PROCESS

#### *Stage 1 – Call for Project Proposals*

- 3.1 The programme will be delivered by means of separate discrete calls for proposals. Proposals can only be submitted by a school managing authority ie. An Education and Library Board on behalf of controlled schools in its area, the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools on behalf of catholic schools or by an individual Voluntary Grammar, Grant Maintained Integrated or Irish Medium School. The programme will only be open to schools already vested within the schools estate.
- 3.2 In order to reduce the administrative and financial burden on individual schools and Managing Authorities a two staged approach will be operated with regard to application process. The initial application will take the form of a Strategic

Outline Case setting out the case for the project. A copy of the SOC Template is included at Annex 1 to this document. This will introduce the basic project concept, backed up with information on the cost, benefit and timing of the project.

- 3.3 Projects will be sifted and selected on the basis of the information provided in this application. Projects selected for support will then be required to work up a detailed business case for consideration and approval. Only after approval of the detailed business case and subject to availability of funding at that time will projects be permitted to move to award of contract.
- 3.4 The estimated capital value of any proposed project must not be greater than £4million, and not exceed 75% of the estimated cost of a new build solution. Where the estimated cost of the project exceeds 75% of new build costs (i.e. estimated cost to demolish and re-build entire school) the project will not be considered within this programme. Projects with costs below £500,000 should not be submitted to the programme but should be submitted as a Minor Works project.
- 3.5 Given the differing scale and accommodation requirements of primary and post-primary schools it is difficult to develop an effective mechanism for relative comparison of need. Therefore applications received for Primary and Post-primary schools within each of the application streams will be assessed separately.
- 3.6 Applications will not be considered from schools where there is any uncertainty as to its long term viability or sustainability.
- 3.7 A group will be established [within the Department] to consider proposed projects against the set assessment criteria and scoring matrix set out in this document. This group will report to the Director of Investment & Infrastructure and will make recommendations for the Minister's consideration as to which projects should

proceed.

3.8 The indicative timetable for the first call under the Schools Enhancement Programme is as follows:

- January 2013 – Minister’s Statement to Assembly – announcing projects to proceed in planning, introducing the Schools Enhancement Programme (including timetable and budget) and announcing the call for projects to school authorities;
- January 2013 - Call for projects – , the Department issues letter to school authorities setting out process, copying the approved protocol, programme application form and confirming the programme timetable;
- 12 April 2013 – deadline for submission of proposals by School Managing Authorities;
- Mid May 2013 - conclusion of assessment process and Submission of proposals to Minister;
- Mid June 2013 – Minister’s Announcement of programme; Selected proposals advised to proceed in planning, including securing professional team as required.

### ***Stage 2 – Assessment of Project Proposals***

3.9 Following the closing date for applications, all project applications will be assessed to confirm that the estimated cost of the project does not exceed 75% of a new build project. Estimated project costs will be taken as those set out in the application and will be compared against either the new build cost estimates already registered with the Department, or an estimate based on unit cost of construction calculated against the approved floor area of the school.

3.10 This examination is a gateway and will not be subject to scoring. Where the estimated cost of the project exceeds 75% the project will not proceed for assessment within this protocol.

- 3.11 As set out at 2.3 above, applications will be assessed under the relevant Application Stream. The process for selection will be based on the scoring of applications against defined and weighted criteria, as follows:

**APPLICATION STREAM 1.**

**Objective:** Enhancement works essential to effect rationalisation proposals. (Rationalisation proposal requiring extension and/or refurbishment of existing school to replace a number of other schools.)

***Application Stream 1 – Assessment Criteria******Assessment Criteria 1***

This criterion is a gateway and is measured with a simple Yes or No. There are no points attributed to this criterion.

Has the planning authority confirmed that the school to which the application relates is viable and will form part of the long term provision within the area as determined by the emerging area-based planning process?	<b>YES / NO</b>
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Project proposals not deemed to meet this requirement will not be considered further at this time, but this does imply that the project will not be considered at a later stage).

Projects deemed to meet this requirement will proceed to Assessment Criteria 2.

***Assessment Criteria 2***

The application must include a high level assessment of the cost of the project together with quantitative and qualitative benefits. The Department will determine the backlog in maintenance at the schools from the Manhattan



database. The reduction in maintenance backlog (cost per m<sup>2</sup>) as a result of the proposed works will be determined. In the case of a rationalisation this will be taken as the total reduction in maintenance backlog for the schools involved in the rationalisation.

There are 25 points available within this assessment criteria and will be scored as follows:

- Proposed projects will be ranked highest proposed cost reduction per meter squared to the lowest.
- Highest cost reduction per meter squared will equate to 100% of the available score
- Zero cost reduction will equate to 0% of the available score
- All savings registered will be stratified within these two parameters.

*Example Calculation:*

Proposed Reduction (£/m<sup>2</sup>) / Highest Proposed Reduction (£/m<sup>2</sup>) x Available Score (25)

Project X: £2m/£2m x 25 = 25 therefore – Score for project X = 25

Project Y: £0.3m/£2m x 20 = 3.75 therefore – Score for project Y = 3.75

Project Z: £1.2m/£2m x 20 = 15 therefore – Score for project Z = 15

**Note:** Proposed savings as set out in the application will be proofed by professional staff within the Department as part of the assessment. Clarification may be sought from the school authority as required.

*Assessment Criteria 3*

The programme is also aimed at addressing accommodation inadequacies and sub-standard accommodation in the schools estate. Condition and suitability of

the school(s) to which the application relates will therefore also be assessed and scored as part of the selection process.

The condition surveys already provide a systematic, uniform and objective basis for getting information on the state condition of premises. How well premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers etc and how they contribute towards raising standards of education will be assessed using the scoring from the suitability surveys.

Combined rationalised scores are available covering both the condition and suitability of each of the schools being considered. Scores for primary and post-primary will be treated separately in this assessment criterion as the combined rationalised score for both condition and suitability cannot be compared for primary and post-primary schools.

Overall a maximum of 75 points are available at this stage of the assessment.

The scoring as part of this assessment criteria is calculated as follows:

$$(100 - \text{Rationalised Combined Score}) / 100 \times X = \text{Score}$$

**Note:** The highest rationalised combined scoring from the asset surveys will be the school in best condition.

**APPLICATION STREAM 2.**

**Objective:** Enhancement works essential to address evidence of unmet demand arising from insufficient places to accommodate pupils in existing schools, (i.e. Provision of extension and/or refurbishment of existing school based on how well the premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers etc.. and how they contribute towards raising standards of education).

***Application Stream 2 - Assessment Criteria:******Assessment Criteria 1***

This criterion is a gateway and is measured with a simple Yes or No. There are no points attributed to this criterion.

Has the relevant school authority confirmed within the application/ area plan that the school to which the application relates is viable, sustainable and will form part of the long term area provision	<b>YES / NO</b>
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Project proposals not deemed to meet this requirement will not be considered further at this time, but this does imply that the project will not be considered at a later stage).

Projects deemed to meet this requirement will proceed to Assessment Criteria 2.

*Assessment Criteria 2.*

The suitability surveys already provide a systematic, uniform and objective basis for obtaining information on how well the premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers etc.. and how they contribute towards raising standards of education will be assessed using the coring from the suitability surveys.

The rationalised suitability score for each school being considered within the workstream will be drawn from the Manhattan Schools Estate Database.

Projects will be ranked from least to most suitable. The highest rationalised suitability score from the asset surveys will be the school in best condition (Primary and Post-primary schools must be assessed separately).

### **APPLICATION STREAM 3.**

**Objective:** Enhancement works essential to address immediate / serious / significant accommodation inadequacies or substandard accommodation. (Confirming provision but recording poor rating in the condition survey)

#### ***Application Stream 3 - Assessment Criteria:***

##### *Assessment Criteria 1*

This criterion is a gateway and is measured with a simple Yes or No. There are no points attributed to this criterion.

Has the relevant school authority confirmed within the application/ area plan that the school to which the application relates is viable, sustainable and will form part of the long term area provision	<b>YES / NO</b>
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Project proposals not deemed to meet this requirement will not be considered further at this time, but this does imply that the project will not be considered at a later stage).

Projects deemed to meet this requirement will proceed to Assessment Criteria 2.

##### *Assessment Criteria 2.*

Accommodation inadequacies and sub-standard accommodation have historically been considered a priority for capital investment in the schools estate. The condition surveys already provide a systematic, uniform and objective basis for getting information on the state condition of premises.

The rationalised condition score for each school being considered within the workstream will be drawn from the Manhattan Schools Estate Database.

Projects will be ranked from the worst condition to the best condition. The highest rationalised condition score from the asset surveys will be the school in best condition.

### ***SUMMARY***

Project proposals will be assessed and scored using the above criteria and a prioritised list developed, with separate lists for Primary and Post-primary projects. The prioritised lists will then be carried forward to final stage of the process.

### **Stage 3 - Alignment of prioritised list with available Budget**

The Minister will be presented with a ranked list of the applications received under each stream. Each stream will have two ranked lists, one for primary and one for post primary. The Minister will be asked to confirm the overall budget for the programme, previously announced at £20million and to consider, based on the ranked project applications, how many projects he is prepared to approve to proceed in planning.

It should be noted that Minister's approval is only for projects to proceed in planning. Approval to proceed in construction will be subject to an approved full business case for the project and the individual project satisfying all Departmental and statutory approvals. Project to advance in construction will be dealt with in a separate announcement later and will be dependent on available funding at that time.

#### **4. Capital Funding**

- 4.1 Indicative capital spend profiles will be developed across the remainder of the CSR based on the outcome of the above process.
- 4.2 As part of this exercise it will be essential that the financial profiles of each project, aligned with the programme of works for the project, are consolidated to assess affordability within the annual and CSR budgetary period.

#### **5. Approval of Programme**

- 5.1 The Minister will approve projects to proceed in planning. Managing Authorities for projects will be informed of the final decision at the time of the Minister's announcement.
- 5.2 Approved projects will advance in planning to the development of a full business case. The full business case, when submitted will be considered within the normal business approval processes and in line with NIGEA guidelines including value for money and affordability. Only after approval of the full business case can a project proceed to tender and construction.
- 5.3 Projects not selected for advancement in the call will be returned to the Managing Authority. The project may be submitted to subsequent calls for consideration.

#### **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Programme governance and control structures will be established for the programme of major enhancement works emerging.
- 6.2 Project plans will be sought from the School Managing Authority for all approved projects.

## **7. Economic Appraisals**

- 7.1 A full business case (Economic Appraisal) must be prepared for each approved project proposal. Business cases must be completed in accordance with NIGEA guidelines. No project shall be permitted to proceed to tender / construction within an approved full business case and confirmation from the managing authority of affordability and available funding.

## **8. Procurement**

- 8.1 All professional appointments arising on approved projects must be carried out in full compliance with procurement guidelines and regulations. Where a professional team has already been appointed, the relevant managing authority must provide evidence that the team has been procured in compliance with procurement guidelines and regulations, otherwise the Department will not support the appointment.



## Schools Enhancement Programme – Application Form

The Schools Enhancement Programme will be delivered through a distinct, single call to Managing Authorities.

All project proposals must be supported by a completed application form which will form the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the capital enhancement proposal.

The application form will help the Department to assess whether it is worth committing resources to take the project forward to develop a more detailed design and Economic Appraisal.

**The completed application form must be returned to reach the Department by 12 April 2013**

- by post, marked for the attention of: The Director  
Investment and Infrastructure  
Directorate,  
Room 307,  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR
- or by email to: [sep@deni.gov.uk](mailto:sep@deni.gov.uk)

The form is designed to help Managing Authorities make an application using appropriate and proportionate effort. There is flexibility over the amount of information to be included under each heading below, but note that the Application Form is intended to be a short document and should not exceed 10 pages.

Ultimately the selection of projects to be funded through the Schools Enhancement Programme will be for the Minister's consideration, approval and announcement.

Note, the Schools Enhancement Programme does not include new build solutions, as these are dealt within the major works programme.

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**Project Title:**

**Managing Authority:**

**Senior Responsible Officer:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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### **Section 1: Project Overview**

*Briefly describe the basic project concept.*

*Confirmation must be given that the application relates to a school which is viable and core to emerging area plans.*

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### **Section 2: Rational, Aims, and Need**

*State the rationale for capital funding.*

*Identify the relevant aims and objectives of the proposed project;.*

*Outline how the project will address one of the following ranked priorities:*

- to effect rationalisation;*
  - to address deficiencies in existing provision; overcrowding or undue reliance on temporary accommodation;*
  - to address significant accommodation inadequacies or substandard accommodation.*
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### **Section 3: Constraints**

*Identify likely constraints e.g. lands issues; legal constraints; planning approvals.*

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### **Section 4: Stakeholder Issues**

*Identify the key stakeholders and confirm their agreement to the project proceeding.*

*Indicate their level of commitment to the project as specifically as possible.*

*Describe any consultations held or still required.*

*Are there any outstanding stakeholder issues?*

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**Section 5: Management & Implementation**

*Give a preliminary indication of the proposed project management arrangements.*

*Is any consultancy support likely to be required?*

*Describe any legal, contractual or procurement issues.*

*Are there any important outstanding management/Implementation considerations?*

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**Section 6: Consideration of Options**

*Provide an initial list of options identified that could meet the objectives and briefly describe their main features.*

*(Consider variations in scale, quality, technique, location, timing etc).*

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**Section 7: Costs, Benefits & Risks**

*Provide broad estimates of the capital and revenue costs of the project.*

*If savings are anticipated, for example of planned minor works or maintenance, explain their nature and quantify them broadly.*

*Describe the non-monetary costs and benefits that are expected to arise.*

*Explain the key risks that the project is likely to face and any potential mitigation measures.*

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