

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 7.00pm

EDUCATION COMMISSION 8 MARCH 2005

Present: Councillor MacDonald (in the Chair)
Councillors Khan, Latham, Winter and Wynn

Co-opted Members: Mr T Johnston, Dr K Devendra (Parent Governor), Mr D Edwards (Church of England Diocese)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dhamrait, Hird and Liversedge, Ms N Iqbal (Parent Governor) and Mr T Walsh (Derby Racial Equality Council).

Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

Declarations of Interest

Name	Type of interest	Reason
Mr D Edwards	Personal	Chair Governor – St James Infants and Vice Chair Governor - St James Junior Schools
Councillor MacDonald	Personal Personal	Governor – Lees Brook Community Sports College Member of National Union of Teachers
Mr T Johnston	Personal	Vice Chair Governor – Murray Park School Chair Governor – St. Clare's School
Councillor Winter	Personal	Governor – Mickleover Primary School

Councillor Wynn	Personal	<p>Chair Governor – Beckett School</p> <p>Chair Governor – Bemrose School</p> <p>Wife a teacher employed by the LEA</p> <p>Governor – Nightingale Junior School</p> <p>Son employed by Woodlands School.</p>
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Items for Discussion

45/04 Education Capital Projects Report

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Education which set out the Education Service Capital Programme 2005/06 – 2007/08. The report would be considered by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 15 March 2005. Simon Longley, Assistant Director of Education explained that the report was written to satisfy corporate accountancy requirements and might not necessarily be in a format in which the Commission could easily understand what was proposed. He circulated a more detailed appendix 3 giving a breakdown of the cost and nature of the capital works proposed. In his presentation, the Assistant Director gave the background to the information contained in the report and explained that most of the proposed school capital schemes were to address urgent condition and health and safety issues, with projects being prioritised in accordance with Asset Management Plan Local Policy Statement and a Statement of Priorities.

Having considered the report, Commission members expressed concern that many of the proposals were for works to repair school buildings which were considered to be generally unsuitable for their purpose. Commission members asked whether the Education Service was confident that this was the best way of utilising capital funding, especially as it was known that there were surplus school places in the city. Commission members also queried the amount of slippage on the 2004/05 Capital Programme.

In response to the Commission's comments, the Assistant Director said that Capital Projects Programme was driven by necessity. If the school roof was leaking it had to be repaired, even though the building itself might be less than ideal. He also said that although pupil numbers had fallen and were still falling, the drop in numbers were scattered across the city and there were as yet, no schools where numbers had fallen to the level that would justify closure. Referring to the slippage from the previous year, the Assistant Director said that it was not possible to be confident that all the works proposed could be completed in one financial year. He said this was due to a number of factors

including the availability of suitable contractors. However, he pointed out that the money was not lost or put at risk if slippage occurred.

Having considered the report and the Assistant Director's comments, the Commission expressed support for the proposed Capital Works Programme. Members did however consider that it would be possible to improve the presentation of the information contained in the Education Service Capital Programme report and they supported the suggestion by the Assistant Director that this could be done by revising the format of some of the tabular data contained in the report.

Resolved

- 1. To recommend to Council Cabinet to approve the Education Service Capital Programme 2005/06 to 2007/08.**
- 2. To request that future reports be revised to a format to make it more readily understandable and easier to interpret.**

MINUTES END