

**COUNCIL CABINET  
11 JUNE 2002**

**SCHOOLS ACCESS INITIATIVE 2002-2003**

**Report of the Director of Education**

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Council has received a capital allocation for £312,270 in 2002/03 for Schools Access Initiative projects in schools. Funding is to be used to improve physical access in schools (paragraph 4.1).
- 1.2 The DfES has issued prescribed criteria in using the funding. Proposed projects need to improve the physical access in schools: the interior of school buildings to assist the environment of disabled pupils; and to purchase equipment to improve the accessibility of the curriculum for special needs pupils (paragraph 4.2).
- 1.3 The proposed projects shown in Appendix 1 have been prioritised using DfES guidance and are in line with the Council's policy on Disabled Access (paragraph 4.7 and 4.8).
- 1.4 The Council's policy involves integrating pupils with physical and sensory impairment into mainstream schools, through providing facilities for pupils who are joining schools and for existing pupils progressing through school (paragraph 4.8).
- 1.5 Disabled Access Audits for schools are to be completed later in the year as a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act. The small balance of un-allocated funding will be used for projects identified from the audit.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To agree the projects proposed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 To incorporate the results of a Disability Discrimination Audit of city schools into future capital allocations.
- 2.3 The Director of Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning, to agree further Schools Access Initiative projects using the balance of unallocated funding in 2002-2003 as a non - key decision.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The proposed projects are in line with the DfES prescribed requirements of the grant.
- 3.2 Projects need to be agreed as soon as possible as funding needs to be used by March 2003.
- 3.3 To use the small balance of un-allocated funding for projects identified in the Disabled Access Audits for schools to be completed later in the year as a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## **MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 4.1 The DfES has informed local authorities of support to improve physical access to mainstream schools. Funding allocations are based on pupil numbers. The Council has been allocated £312,270 in 2002-2003. The DfES previously indicated a higher figure of £338,0000, as reported in the capital programme.
- 4.2 The DfES has issued prescribed criteria in using Schools Access Initiative funding. The funding is intended for projects to improve access to mainstream schools, including physical access, improving the internal environment for disabled pupils, and improving access to the National Curriculum by using specialist furniture and equipment, including ICT.
- 4.3 All nursery, primary, and secondary schools are eligible for support under the initiative. Projects based solely in special schools are not eligible.
- 4.4 The process of prioritising projects involved consideration of the disabled access survey completed by schools in 1999, and the schools suitability survey completed by schools in 2000 as part of the Asset Management Planning process. Issues raised by schools for the needs of pupils with particular educational needs have also been considered.
- 4.5 There has been consultation with all schools. Schools were asked to suggest projects to improve disabled access, giving consideration to the viability and benefits of projects. The prioritisation process included reports from advisory teachers for hearing, visually and physically impaired pupils.
- 4.6 The issues considered in prioritising projects included improvements to wheelchair access in schools and the provision of disabled toilets for pupils currently in school or likely to be admitted. The provision of specialist ICT equipment for special needs pupils as suggested by advisory teachers has also been considered. Specialist equipment relates to purchasing computer hardware and software for special needs pupils. Proposed projects are shown in Appendix 1.

- 4.7 The proposed projects are in line with the Council's policy on disabled access. The Council's policy involves integrating pupils with physical and sensory impairment into mainstream schools, through providing facilities for pupils who are joining schools; providing facilities for existing pupils progressing through school; creating a strategic 'network' of schools, so that pupils may join the school system at nursery level and progress through to secondary level through a series of schools, having the necessary facilities to enable them to pursue their learning objectives.
- 4.8 The long-term aim is to ensure key facilities in schools are 100% accessible to disabled pupils and staff. The short to medium term aim is to use Schools Access Initiative allocations to ensure each area of the city provides "school career paths" so that disabled pupils can move from nursery through to secondary education without travelling undue distances.
- 4.9 Proposed projects must take into account a realistic balance between access to schools and the cost of projects. DfES guidance indicates that headteachers and governing bodies should make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of individual pupils. This includes the development of accessibility of schools for parents, staff and community users with mobility and other difficulties
- 4.10 A sum of £60,000 shown in Appendix 1 has been allocated to the Special Educational Needs Service for equipment. This sum is based on the priority applications for equipment received from schools and supported by advisory teachers. This equipment budget will be used for the specific needs of disabled pupils within schools and to improve access to the curriculum. Equipment includes computer hardware and software, mobility equipment for the mobility impaired and specialist equipment for the hearing and sight impaired. Special Needs Advisory staff will be responsible for purchasing necessary equipment.
- 4.11 Included in the amount allocated for Special Educational Needs Equipment is £2000 which will be used for small building works such as the fitting of handrails and small adaptations for the specific needs of individual pupils.
- 4.12 Disabled Access Audits for schools are to be completed later in the year as a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act. The small balance of un-allocated funding will be used for projects identified from the audit.
- 4.13 Proposed Voluntary Aided projects as agreed by the DfES are shown in Appendix 2 for information. These projects are not funded from the Council's allocation. The Dioceses will be progressing the Voluntary Aided projects.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Schools Access Initiative funding takes the form of an earmarked supplementary credit approval for £312,270.
- 5.2 Projects must be completed within the financial year 2002-2003. The supplementary credit approval applies for one year only.
- 5.3 The funding for the Voluntary Aided projects is held by the DfES and is not included in the Council's allocation. The Dioceses will be claiming funding directly from the DfES.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6. The benefits of this investment in access improvement will extend to other public and community use of the buildings and in so doing will assist the City Council's compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

## **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7. None arising directly from this report.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

8. None arising directly from this report.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9. The intended expenditure will improve access to the facilities and equipment for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. The benefit will extend to wider community and parental use of these buildings.

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Background papers: None

Ref: I: Educat / Committee / Committee / Council Cabinet / 11 June 2002 / Schools Access Report 2002 - 2003

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## Proposed projects using Schools Access Initiative funding – 2002/03

<b>Total 2002-2003 Funding Available</b>		<b>£312,270</b>
<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>Project Details</b>	<b>Est. Cost</b>
Becket Primary	Disabled toilet	£14,548
Brackensdale Junior	Final phase of disabled toilet	£3,540
Central Nursery	Soft surface area for sight-impaired child	£2,600
Grampian Primary	Disabled toilet	£19,000
Harrington Nursery	Equipment for disabled child	£900
Harrington Nursery	Ramp	£2,700
Markeaton Primary School	Playground fence	£3,800
Portway Infants	Disabled toilet	£18,515
Reigate Primary	Quiet room for hearing-impaired students	£23,805
Reigate Primary	Disabled toilet junior building	£13,225
Reigate Primary	Ramp to infant playground	£10,580
Reigate Primary	Ramp to junior playground	£9,258
Reigate Primary	Ramp to junior building entrance	£1,000
<b>Secondary</b>		
Chellaston Community	Disabled lift (part of building project)	£50,000
Derby Moor	Provision of path	£16,100
Sinfin Community	Disabled toilet conversion	£6,900
Sinfin Community	Improved access to disabled toilet	£2,100
Sinfin Community	Disabled lift (part of building project)	£41,000
	Laptop for sight-impaired student	£1,500
<b>Equipment SEN</b>		£60,000
<b>Small works SEN</b>		£2,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£303,071</b>
<b>Un-allocated balance</b>		<b>£9,199</b>

**Voluntary Aided Projects approved by DfES – for information**

<b>School</b>	<b>Project details</b>	<b>Est. cost</b>
St Albans RC Primary	Provide two ramps	£1,700
St Werburghs Primary	Provide access ramp	£3,400
St Peters Junior	Provision of external ramps	£6,800
St Benedicts	Upgrade lift	£7,480
St Benedicts	Provide tactile markers colour coding	£6,482
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£25,862</b>