

**SCHOOL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME**  
**SECOND CALL**  
**Protocol for Selection**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The **School Enhancement Programme (SEP)** makes funding of between £500,000 and £4,000,000 available for projects aimed at refurbishing or extending the existing school provision.
- 1.2 The purpose of this protocol, which builds on the procedures set for the first SEP call in January 2013, is to set out the processes to be used to identify and rank proposals submitted to the second call.
- 1.3 **Applicants to the second SEP call should note that if they are successful in securing SEP funding that they will remove the school from consideration of a wholly new build school for 7 years from the date of approval of funding to their SEP scheme.**

## 2. DEFINITION

- 2.1 The School Enhancement Programme will provide financial support for capital projects with a value of between £0.5million and £4million (total capital value of the scheme including construction works, professional fees, furniture & equipment, statutory costs and land). For grant-aided schools the Department will assist VAT in addition to this.
- 2.2 The programme will target investment to meet immediate and pressing needs in schools where new build major capital works are not deemed affordable or deliverable within the capital budget available. The School Enhancement Programme does not include new build solutions, as these will be dealt with separately as part of the Major Works programme.
- 2.3 Only one SEP application per school will be considered under the SEP call for proposals.
- 2.4 All works progressing through this protocol must support at least one of the Minister's priorities for capital investment:
- Enhancement works essential to effect rationalisation proposals for schools with approved Development Proposals, in particular schools currently operating on split sites following such approvals. (e.g. rationalisation proposals requiring an extension and/or refurbishment of one existing school to replace a number of other schools).
  - Enhancement works essential to address unmet need in educational facilities and immediate / serious accommodation inadequacies (i.e. suitability of the existing accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum).

- Enhancement works essential to address significant substandard accommodation and / or undue reliance on temporary accommodation.

2.5 In addition, to reflect where pupils are more greatly impacted by social issues, the following criteria will be taken into account:

- Percentage of SEN registered pupils.
- Percentage of pupils taking free school meals.

### 3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 The programme will be delivered by means of a separate discrete call for proposals.
- 3.2 The programme will only be open to schools already vested within the schools estate.
- 3.3 Proposals may only be submitted by a school Managing Authority ie. by the Education Authority on behalf of Controlled schools, the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools on behalf of Catholic schools, or by the Trustees of an individual Voluntary Grammar, Grant Maintained Integrated or Irish Medium School.
- 3.4 The application form is included at Annex 1 to this document. The application must present the basic project concept including its need, backed up with information on the benefits of the project.
- 3.5 Applications for projects with costs below £500,000 will not be admitted into the programme but will be redirected to the Department's Minor Works team.
- 3.6 An assessment panel will be established within the Department to consider 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.
- 3.7 The flowchart overleaf illustrates the process to be applied:



#### **4 STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT – GATEWAY CHECKS**

4.1 Following the closing date for applications, all project applications received will be subject to the following Gateway checks (Stage 1 assessment):

- i) Is the school considered to be viable and sustainable in the context of the Minister’s Policy for Sustainable Schools?
- ii) Have all outstanding uncertainties in respect of area planning decisions been dealt with, specifically, can it be confirmed that no outstanding development proposal (DP) relating to this or other schools is being considered that could impact school numbers?
- iii) Is the school entitled to the accommodation requested?

4.2 Note that in applying gateway checks, projects where approved enrolments at a school have been increased through a Development Proposal (DP) increasing capacity over time, but where the increased intake has yet to work its way through the school, may still be eligible to proceed. In these cases it may be accepted that the current enrolment does not yet fully reflect the changes approved in the DP.

4.3 If the application to the SEP call does not fulfil any of the above criteria the proposed project will not be considered for SEP funding.

4.4 Projects confirmed as viable, sustainable and without area planning uncertainties will proceed to detailed assessment (Stage 2) as defined below.

#### **STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT - SCORING**

4.5 The criteria adopted for this stage of assessment are based on the Minister’s priorities for capital investment as detailed above in Section 2.4.

- 4.6 The scoring weights applied to each of the criteria are given below. A total of 120 points are available.

**Assessment Criterion 1 – Rationalisation      Total marks available (30)**

*Rationale:*

It is recognised that there are a number of cases where rationalisation has already taken place following an approved Development Proposal within the last 5 years. Such schools will be afforded the marks available in this criterion as part of this assessment. Additional marks will also be available where the SEP project will enable a school to move onto one site following an approved rationalisation.

*Scoring:*                      15 points      *A score of 15 points for schools where rationalisation has taken place as a result of a DP approved within the 5 years prior to the closing date for applications; 0 points where this is not the case.*

15 points      *A further 15 points where, following Rationalisation, a school is currently operating on split sites; 0 points where this is not the case.*

Please note that in relation to split sites Primary, Post Primary and Nursery schools will be considered as separate entities.



**Assessment Criterion 2 – Suitability    Total marks available (30)*****Inadequate or inappropriate accommodation****Rationale:*

The rationalised suitability score will be drawn from the Manhattan Schools Estate database. This provides a systematic, uniform and objective basis for obtaining information on how well the existing school premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers etc. and how they contribute towards raising standards of education. It should be noted that the data held on the Manhattan Schools Estate database at the point at which the protocol is run will be considered final.

*Scoring:        30 points        Maximum score for poor suitability*

*(Scores will be on a range from 0 to 30 points based on the results of the survey data currently held for the school.)*

Please note suitability scores for Special Schools will be assessed separately.

**Assessment Criterion 3 – Condition    Total marks available (50)*****Immediate/serious accommodation inadequacies and /or undue reliance on temporary accommodation****Rationale:*

Sub-standard accommodation continues to be a priority for capital investment in the schools' estate.

Proposed projects will be assessed on the basis of the relative condition of the current accommodation. This information will be drawn from the Manhattan Schools Estate database. Undue reliance on temporary accommodation has been included to take account of the extensive mobile/temporary provision

across the estate, some of which was provided as a temporary solution in anticipation of either an “extend and refurbishment” or a “new build” solution. *(Please note temporary relates to mobile accommodation and excludes modular builds).* It should be noted that the data held on the Manhattan Schools Estate database at the point at which the protocol is run will be considered final.

*Scoring: 30 points Maximum score for poor condition*

*(Scores will be on a range from 0 to 30 points based on the results of the survey data currently held for the school.)*

*20 points Maximum score for temporary accommodation*

*(Scores will be calculated based on the % of temporary accommodation in use. Scores will range from 0 to 20 based on the lowest and highest percentage figures from within the list of schools assessed.)*

#### **Assessment Criterion 4 – Social Issues Total marks available (10)**

*Rationale:*

Additional weight will be given to schools where pupils are more greatly impacted by social issues. The indicators selected to identify these schools are the numbers of pupils identified as having special education needs (SEN) and the level of free school meal (FSM) provision within the school.

*Scoring: 5 points To be allocated based on percentage of pupils with a level 5 statement of special educational need.*

*5 points To be allocated on the basis of the percentage of pupils allocated free school meals.*

4.7 Following application of this scoring process 3 prioritised lists of projects will be produced:

- Primary Schools;
- Post-Primary Schools; and
- Special Schools

## 5. STAGE 3 - SCOPING AND FURTHER 'GATEWAY' CHECKS

- 5.1 Project proposals on the prioritised lists will then be scoped and a business case prepared. Scoping will involve an assessment of the technical feasibility, risks and costs associated with the project and will inform the business case to determine the preferred option for the project.
- 5.2 As part of this process proposals will be assessed to confirm that the estimated cost of the project does not exceed 75% of the cost of a new build project. Estimated project costs 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. Where the estimated cost of the project exceeds 75% of the cost of a new build, the project will not proceed for assessment within this protocol.
- 5.3 Enrolments for schools prioritised for investment will be assessed to ensure actual enrolments are not significantly below the approved enrolment figure, i.e. actual enrolment 15% or more below the approved enrolment figure.
- 5.4 Where this is the case such schools will not be considered for Stage 4 but will be held in their prioritised list until such time as the enrolment disparities are resolved through an approved Development Proposal (DP), at which point these projects can be considered in any future tranches of funding announcements.
- 5.5 Projects where approved enrolments at a school have been increased through an approved DP increasing capacity over time, but where the increased intake has yet to work its way through the school, will still be eligible to proceed.

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## 6. STAGE 4 – RECOMMENDATION FOR ALLOCATION OF FUNDING

- 6.1 The prioritised lists of projects not filtered out as part of the gateway process will then be assessed against budget within the 3 category lists:
- Primary Schools;
  - Post-Primary Schools; and
  - Special Schools
- 6.2 The prioritised lists will be carried forward to the final stage of the process; alignment with the available budget. Indicative capital spend profiles will be developed to assess affordability within the annual and Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) budgetary period.
- 6.3 It is intended that lists will be held for 2 years, to enable potential further tranches of announcements to be made, the timing and scale of which will be dependent on budget.
- 6.4 The Minister will be presented with lists of the ranked applications received and depending on budget availability will be asked to consider how many projects should be approved to proceed. Following announcement of an initial tranche, the Minister will have the opportunity to make further announcements depending on progress with already announced schemes and availability of budget.
- 6.5 It should be noted that the initial approval will only be for projects to proceed in planning and design. 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. Projects to advance in construction will be dealt with in a separate announcement and will be dependent on available funding at that time.
- 6.6 Where projects are approved to advance in planning, a professional team will be appointed to undertake the planning, design and construction of the SEP scheme. Note, the professional team will only be appointed through open competition or through approved lists.

6.7 Programme governance and control structures will be established for the SEP works emerging.

**Annex 1**

**APPLICATION FORM FOR SCHOOL AUTHORITIES FOR SCHOOL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME (SEP) WORKS**

**Attached separately.**