

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET
MONDAY 24 MARCH 2003 AT 2.00 P.M.

Agenda Item No.

9

SEED CHALLENGE PROGRAMME 2003/04

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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Executive Member: Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of report

To allocate "Seed Challenge" funding to 60 schools for 2003/04.

2. Summary

The "Seed Challenge" programme is a DfES funded capital allocation for Hertfordshire.

There were bids from over 150 schools this year which, at £2,499,000, is more than double the allocation of £1,237,997 for Hertfordshire.

This report explains the process for prioritising the bids and it presents the proposed approved schemes that were recommended by the CSF Resources Cabinet Panel at their meeting on 24 March.

3. Conclusion

The Cabinet is requested to consider the list of schemes for "Seed Challenge" funding in 2003/04.

4. Background

- 4.1 This is the fourth year of “Seed Challenge”, a government initiative which encourages “outside” investment for capital works in schools. The purpose is to increase pupil achievement through the improvement of school buildings.
- 4.2 To be eligible primary schools must raise half the cost of the capital scheme. Three quarters of their share must be “new money” e.g. from PTA fundraising, sponsorship, lettings, etc. and only a quarter of the school contribution can come from savings within the school budget share or from devolved capital.
- 4.3 For secondary schools they have to find 2/3rds of the cost of the scheme in the same way as for primary schools i.e. three quarters of their contribution must be “new money”.

5. Present Position

- 5.1 This year the Government has made one significant change which will impact on some schemes. If a proposed project supports one or more of the Government priorities then the “new” money requirement is relaxed (i.e. the “matched” funding can come from any source including other government funding such as LEA formula allocations or schools devolved formula capital). For other projects the “new” money element of the matched funding is as in previous years.
- 5.2 The Government priorities are as follows:
- Support for schools causing concern, particularly those in challenging circumstances, where well-planned capital investment, linked to other improvement measures, can impact strongly on raising standards;
 - Support for the school workforce programme;
 - Support for the development of a broader, more flexible curriculum for 14 – 19 year olds, in line with the proposals in the Green Paper;
 - Expansion of successful schools;
 - Support for the inclusion agenda, including measures to improve behaviour and projects for improved facilities with Special Educational Needs.
- 5.3 Hertfordshire agreed local priorities with schools for the allocation of the funds.

In priority order these are as follows:

- A School cannot function efficiently in terms of curriculum delivery/organisation and/or a health and safety risk has been identified.
- B School's accommodation/facilities reveal a significant weakness which hinders curriculum delivery/organisation/health and safety.
- C the project would improve the school's accommodation to a level that a school of that size and type would normally be provided with.
- D the project would provide accommodation significantly beyond the level that a school of that size and type would normally be provided with.

5.4 Attached is the Seed Challenge letter which was sent to all schools inviting bids dated 2 January 2003 (Appendix 1).

6. Prioritisation Process

6.1 All the bids which meet the Government criteria have been given a higher priority. There are 78 bids in this category. However these bids amount to £1,760,694 which is more than can be funded in 2003/04.

6.2 The 78 bids were further prioritised using the HCC criteria which are based on asset management information (particularly condition and sufficiency data) and the top 60 schemes have been selected for funding in 2003/04.

6.3 The 60 schemes are shown in the first two pages of Appendix 2, while the non-funded schemes are shown in pages three to five of the Appendix.

INFORMATION	
TO:	To All Schools
FROM:	Planning Unit
ABOUT:	Seed Challenge Funding 2003/04
RESPOND BY:	Friday 7 February 2003

**County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF**

Tel: 01992 555860
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 E Mail: paul.wray@hertscc.gov.uk
 My ref: PAW/jlh
 Contact: **Paul Wray**
 Date: 2 January 2003

Dear Headteacher

SEED CHALLENGE FUNDING 2003/04 – OPPORTUNITY TO BID FOR CAPITAL FUNDING

2003/04 will be the fourth year of Seed Challenge funding (grant from DfES). The final year for this grant will be 2004/05 i.e. the year after next. After that the funding will be redirected within the DfES schools capital programme.

Hertfordshire has received £1,237,997 for allocation to Community, Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools on the basis of LEA priorities for capital building schemes.

For the final two years of the programme i.e. 2003/04 and 2004/05 there is one significant change which will impact on some schemes. If a project supports one or more of the government priorities as set out below then the “new” money element is relaxed (i.e. the “matched” funding can come from any source including other government funding such as LEA formula allocations or schools devolved formula capital. It can continue to include “new” money in any proportion if it is available).

The Government priorities are as follows:

- Support schools causing concerns, particularly those in challenging circumstances, where well-planned capital investment, linked to other improvement measures, can impact strongly on raising standards;
- Support the school workforce programme;
- Support the development of a broader, more flexible curriculum for 14 – 19 year olds, in line with the proposals in our Green Paper;
- Expand successful schools;
- Support the inclusion agenda, including measures to improve behaviour and projects for improved facilities with Special Educational Needs.

For other projects the “new” money element of the matched funding is as in previous years.

The grant must be allocated on the following basis:

Primary and special schools – if a grant is approved the school can receive up to ½ the total cost of a capital scheme from the Seed Challenge fund. Of the other 50% of the scheme three quarters must be “new” money.

Secondary schools – if a grant is approved the school can receive up to 1/3 of the total cost of a capital scheme from the Seed Challenge fund. Of the 66.6% the school must raise, three quarters must be “new” money.

Example:

Nursery, Primary, Special schools, Primary PRUs		Secondary schools Secondary PRUs
Total project cost	£40,000	£100,000
Seed Challenge	£20,000	£ 33,000
“New” money	£15,000	£ 50,250
Remaining balance	£ 5,000	£ 16,750

Hertfordshire has created a ceiling of £50,000 of Seed Challenge funding for any project (this will enable more schemes to be undertaken).

The DfES expects LEAs to prioritise the allocation to schools in line with their educational priorities. It is also for the LEA to decide if a capital scheme addresses one or more of the DfES priorities and therefore whether the “new” money element is a requirement.

The funding is for capital projects and therefore it:

- Must not be used for general maintenance, redecoration or routine repairs;
- Must not be used for the purchase of books, ICT software or training materials/services;
- Is distinct from any element for routine repairs and maintenance that may be included in delegated Fair Funding budgets;
- Must not fund operating leases in respect of equipment or facilities (finance leases are classed as borrowing, for which approval from the Secretary of State must be sought);
- May not be used for the hire of temporary accommodation, unless it is part of a larger project which has a short-term requirement to re-house classes.

Hertfordshire intends to agree the allocation of Seed Challenge funding on the basis of the following:

In priority order:

- A School cannot function efficiently (in terms of curriculum delivery/organisation) and/or a health and safety risk has been identified.
- B School’s accommodation/facilities reveal a significant weakness which hinders curriculum delivery/organisation/health and safety.
- C the project would improve the school’s accommodation to a level that a school of that size and type would normally be provided with.
- D the project would provide accommodation significantly beyond the level that a school of that size and type would normally be provided with.

Notes:

- I. the funding is available for capital works but not for the providing or replacing computers.
- II. in assessing bids a factor for consideration will be how much capital has been allocated to the school in recent years.
- III. the maximum any school will receive is £50,000.
- IV. it is important that:
 - schemes are clearly defined and costed.
 - the school has a written guarantee that the “new” money required will be available should the project be approved.
 - the Seed Challenge funding must be spent by 31 March 2004.

Timescale

1. Bids must be submitted to CSF Planning by **Friday 7 February 2003**.
2. The outcome will be communicated to all schools before the beginning of the new financial year.

Format of the bid

Please send your bid in a letter format using the following headings:

- i) Summary of the proposal which must include any consequential changes (e.g. where a classroom is extended into a playground and further playspace needs to be added.)
- ii) Estimated cost of the scheme including fees and the breakdown of the funding sources which must comply with the DfES conditions for allocation of the grant. The bid must include written guarantee of available funding from external sources.
- iii) Size of the proposed new building in square metres (where applicable).
- iv) Area of refurbishment in square metres (where applicable).
- v) Building and/or site issues Are there any particular issues about your school's site that might be relevant to implementing your proposals?
- vi) Additional information (if any) including a sketch plan where possible.

Help and advice

If you need any further information or advice please do not hesitate to contact your Quadrant Planning Manager, particularly if you want the "new" element of your project to be relaxed.

North	Pauline Davis	01992 555865
East	Vacant	01992 555863
South	Tony Williams	01992 555864
West	Paul Wray	01992 555860

Yours sincerely

Paul Wray
Area Planning Manager