

# Written Ministerial Statement

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## Department of Education

### SCHOOL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME: ANNOUNCEMENT OF SECOND CALL FOR PROPOSALS

*Published at 12.00 noon on Wednesday 25 January 2017.*

**Mr Weir (The Minister of Education):** I wish to make a written statement updating this Assembly on my proposal to make a second call for applications under the School Enhancement Programme (SEP).

The Schools Enhancement Programme will provide financial support for capital projects with a value of between £0.5million and £4million.

It is expected that the second Call will mirror the continuing successful outworkings of the first SEP call, announced in March 2014, which will see a total investment of over £136m across 53 projects.

Twenty one of these SEP projects are now complete, 25 are currently on site and a further 4 schemes are at the pre-tender stage with final designs approved. The remaining 3 projects are continuing to advance in planning to the final design stage.

I am conscious that it is incumbent on me to balance the limited capital resources made available to me against the scale of investment needed across the very wide and diverse schools' estate.

The new call under the SEP 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 Department's strategy for capital investment has been, and will remain, focused on supporting the development and delivery of a network of viable and sustainable schools, set firmly in the context of "Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools" and shaped by the outworking of the Area Planning process.

The Protocol setting out the processes to be used to identify and rank proposals submitted to the second SEP call will be published on the Department of Education's website.

All proposals progressing through this protocol must support at least one of the Education 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.

In order to ensure that these priorities are met the following weighted assessment criteria will be used.

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Total Marks Available</b>
Rationalisation	30
Suitability	30
Condition	50
Social Issues	10
Total Marks available	120

In addition to this SEP call I am continuing to advance my programme of major capital builds as well as a sizeable programme of much needed minor works across the estate. I am also investing substantially in maintenance works across all schools, despite the considerable constraint on the resource budget.

I will conclude by noting that this announcement today is not only good news for schools but it will also represent a welcome boost to the economy, especially the construction industry, over the coming years as projects come to fruition.