# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **21st Century Schools and Education Programme** |
| **DATE**  | **21 November 2018** |
| **BY** | **Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education** |

*Education in Wales: Our national mission* details the reforms required to education if we are to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of pride and confidence.

The 21st Century Schools and Education Programme was developed in partnership between the Welsh Local Government Association, Colleges Wales and Diocesan Directors. In its first wave of investment ending in 2019, over £1.4 billion will be invested supporting the rebuild and refurbishment of over 150 schools and colleges across Wales.

The success of this Programme undoubtedly plays an integral and critical part of raising the standards of education across Wales. Building on the significant achievements to date, last year, I announced a second round of investment for the Programme. This will begin in April.

It is my intention that in the second round of the Programme we continue with our original ambition of strategic investment, by replacing those dilapidated buildings within the educational estate with modern, efficient and sustainable facilities. We do not wish to see a reversion to the “patch and mend mentality” that pre-dated this Programme.

Furthermore, I wish the ambition of this second wave of investment to provide a new generation of schools and colleges that are learning centers for the wider community. I would also like this Programme to look to provide more hubs for community services, offering not just education but a wider array of community activities through improved planning and join-up of infrastructure budgets.

As with the first wave of investment, the second tranche will be jointly funded between the Welsh Government, Local Authorities and others.  The bulk of the Programme will be funded from capital budgets. However, in contrast to the first wave of the Programme, this next wave will seek to include additional investment with a capital value of around £500 million funded through the Mutual Investment Model.

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting projects, subject to approval of business cases. If we are to achieve the same successes in the second phase of investment that we saw in the first phase, affordability of the Programme is fundamental.

The original level of grant support for capital schemes was 50%. However, in this period of austerity and after listening to our delivery partners’ concerns about the pressures on their revenue budgets, I have decided to increase the Welsh Government grant intervention rate for capital schemes from 50% to 65% of their cost.

In addition, to support facilities for our pupils with additional learning needs and those in pupil referral units, I am proposing a Welsh Government intervention rate of 75% for capital schemes, with our delivery partners meeting the remaining 25% of the costs.

With this increase in capital intervention rates, we will need to work more closely with our partners to agree the pace of delivery for their projects. These increased intervention rates may mean that delivery has to be slowed, but we will look to accelerate the Programme where additional funds come forward.

I believe this shift in Welsh Government support is vital if we are to maintain the affordability and deliverability of this successful Programme. It is therefore paramount that we have affordable investment plans in place that also meet our shared ambition to create sustainable learning environments that cater for the wider needs of our communities.