

DE/2026-030– Freedom of Information Request

Request:

Can the department outline how long the Curriculum-Led Capital Investment Programme was established?

Can you provide any briefings which led to the development of this programme? Ie details of why it was established and feedback from civil servants.

Since it was established, please list all of the schools that were successful, breaking it into each year and detailing:

- a) The school name;
- b) Where it is located;
- c) What it applied for, including specifics;
- d) How much funding it was approved for.
- e) The school sector it belongs to, meaning Controlled, Catholic Maintained etc.

When it comes to the inclusion of Lumen Christi College in Derry, I'd like the department to specifically state when it was decided that Lumen Christi would get funding.

I would like you to share all communications between officials, up to and including the Minister, and schools about any Derry schools that were included in the programme

Department Response:

Thank you for your request for information relating to the Curriculum-Led Capital Investment Programme. I can confirm that the Department has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 18 February 2026.

I can confirm that the Department holds some of the information requested.

You requested the following:

1. Can the department outline how long the Curriculum-Led Capital Investment Programme was established?

The Minister of Education, Paul Givan MLA, announced the Curriculum-Led Capital Investment Programme on 3 December 2024, by oral statement and by Statement to the Assembly. A full record of this statement is available through the Assembly's Hansard. A letter to all schools launching the Curriculum-Led Capital Investment Programme was issued on 3 December 2024 (Annex 12).

2. Can you provide any briefings which led to the development of this programme? i.e. details of why it was established and feedback from civil servants.

I can confirm that the Department holds this information. However, Section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides a qualified exemption for information relating to formulation of government policy. Release of this information is therefore subject to a public interest test (PIT).

In making its decision, the Department has considered the following public interest test factors:

Arguments in favour of disclosure:

- The Department acknowledges the general public interest in the transparency and accountability of government, and the public interest in policy making.
- The release of the information would provide the public with insight into policy making.
- Disclosure would give confidence that decisions are taken on the basis of the best available information.
- The release of this information would allow the public to assess the quality of briefings being given to the Minister.
- Release of this information may increase understanding and inform public debate.

Arguments in favour of maintaining the exemption:

- It is important that departmental officials can exchange views on available options and openly discuss and understand potential implications, especially on live issues, and that they are not inhibited by the prospective disclosure of these discussions/options at this time. It is similarly important that officials have a safe space to think through all the implications of particular options and to explore those options in communications and discussions with Ministers and with other officials.
- Departmental officials need to be able to undertake rigorous and candid assessments of all the available options away from external interference and distraction.
- There is significant public interest in maintaining the integrity of the policy development process which would be likely to be adversely affected by providing this information at this time.
- The Minister and officials must be able to discuss issues without fear of intrusion.
- The information is likely to be used to inform future policy regarding targeted capital investment. Good government depends on good decision-making and this needs to be based on the best advice available without fear of premature disclosure.
- Development of government policy requires the ability to fully and freely discuss options, alternatives and cost implications. Release would be likely to curtail the Department's ability to discuss all options and alternatives fully and without interference and this would not be in the public interest.
- There may be a deterrent effect on third parties who might in future be reluctant to provide information if it may be disclosed.

Overall consideration:

- The Department is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the withheld information.

In conclusion, it has been decided that the arguments to withhold the information outweigh those for disclosure and the public interest would be best served by non-disclosure at this time.

3. Since it was established, please list all of the schools that were successful, breaking it into each year and detailing:

- a) The school name;**
- b) Where it is located;**
- c) What it applied for, including specifics;**
- d) How much funding it was approved for.**
- e) The school sector it belongs to, meaning Controlled, Catholic Maintained etc.**

The Curriculum-Led Capital Investment Programme covers a number of different provisions, as follows:

Refresh of Desktop Computers – A refresh of desktop computers was provided to post-primary and special schools, across multiple locations and sectors in 2024/25. This programme was taken forward by the Education Authority (EA), therefore it may hold relevant information regarding which schools received this equipment and the relative costs. You may therefore wish to redirect your request to the EA at infogov@eani.org.uk.

Outdoor Learning Project 2025 – Funding, based on enrolment numbers, was provided directly to all nursery and primary schools, across all locations and sectors in 2024/25 & 2025/26 to purchase outdoor play equipment. The Minister’s letter of 4 February 2025 to all settings, including the funding allocation and enrolment brackets, is included at Annex 1. Details of the allocations to all schools are attached separately. A copy of an email to all schools reminding them to place their orders before the cut-off date is included at Annex 2.

Mobile Phone Pouches – a pilot exercise which includes 9 schools is ongoing. The EA has been allocated £248k in capital funding to cover the costs associated with procurement and delivery. The schools are as follows:

- Glenlola Collegiate, Bangor
- Friends School, Lisburn
- Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast
- St Genevieve's High School, Belfast
- St Joseph's Boys', Londonderry
- St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen
- Larne High School
- Markethill High School
- St Ronan's College, Lurgan

Provision of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) to schools in Northern Ireland – a survey issued to schools on 06 November 2024, followed by reminder letters dated 25 November 2024 (Annex 3) and 15 January 2025 (Annex 4). The separate guidance document which was issued along with the letter dated 25 November 2024 is attached separately. AEDs have been provided to all schools in 2025/26, across all locations and sectors, which responded to the survey advising they did not currently have a defibrillator. A list of all schools provided with AEDs under this programme is attached separately. A standard letter was issued to all intended recipient schools on 18 November 2025 (Annex 13).

Provision of Covered Outdoor Sport Space – primary schools were invited to apply for inclusion in a pilot for the provision of covered outdoor sports spaces in a letter issued on 22 August 2025 (Annex 5). Schools were selected for inclusion by identifying a proportionate cross-sectoral makeup with schools from each sector subsequently being selected at random. The selected schools were advised by letters dated 02 February 2026. A list of all schools selected under this strand is attached separately. No funding has yet been approved under this programme.

Provision of Synthetic Pitches – schools were invited to complete a survey to identify those which did not have access to a synthetic pitch. Letters were issued to all schools on 17 November 2025 (Annex 6). All schools which responded to say they did not have this access were selected for inclusion in this strand. The selected schools were advised by letters dated 02 February 2026. Letters issued to schools in the Londonderry area are included at Annexes 7-10. A list of all schools selected

under this strand is attached separately. No allocations have been made and no funding has been approved at this time.

Provision of Sports Halls – schools were invited to complete a survey (Annex 11) to identify those which did not have access to a synthetic pitch. All schools which responded to say they did not have this facility were selected for inclusion in this strand. The selected schools were advised by letters dated 02 February 2026. A list of the schools selected under this strand is attached separately. No allocations have been made and no funding has been approved at this time.

4. When it comes to the inclusion of Lumen Christi College in Derry, I'd like the department to specifically state when it was decided that Lumen Christi would get funding.

Lumen Christi College received an AED unit as part of the initial rollout of AED provision, in January 2026.

As noted above, Lumen Christi College was advised by letter on 02 February 2026 they were selected for inclusion in programme strand for provision of a synthetic pitch.

5. I would like you to share all communications between officials, up to and including the Minister, and schools about any Derry schools that were included in the programme.

Relevant communications have been referenced in the preceding sections and are attached in Annexes 1 – 13.

Please note some information has been redacted in Annexes 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13 under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as this information constitutes the personal information of junior civil servants or third parties and disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This is an absolute exemption and is not subject to a public interest test.