

Funding split change to school building programme could save local authorities millions – Kirsty Williams

Under changes planned for Band B of the programme, the Welsh Government will cover 65% of the capital costs for a new school building or project, with local authorities and colleges covering the remaining 35%.

The Welsh Government will also increase its share of capital funding for facilities for pupils with additional learning needs and those in pupil referral units to 75%, with delivery partners meeting the remaining 25% of the costs.

Previously, the match funding for the capital programme was typically 50-50.

The change in match funding will be introduced for Band B of the programme, which starts in April next year.

Band B will include additional investment with a capital value of around £500m funded through the new, made-in-Wales, Mutual Investment Model.

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

“We are all working against a backdrop of austerity but if we can ease the funding pressures on local authorities and colleges, then we will do so.

“This change has the potential to save local authorities and colleges millions of pounds which could be invested elsewhere in our education system.

“I’m not pretending that this is going to solve every issue, but making such a significant change to our flagship school building programme shows we are willing to take a different approach and explore alternative ways of funding.

WLGA Leader, Councillor Debbie Wilcox (Newport), said:

“This is a very welcome announcement from the Welsh Government and will help alleviate some of the pressures faced by our councils.

“WLGA strongly supports the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme. The programme represents the largest investment in our schools and colleges since the 1960s. It is an excellent example of what can be achieved when local government and the Welsh Government work together and has transformed the school estate across the

length and breadth of Wales.

“This investment will help take Band B of the programme to a new level and I look forward to seeing the many fantastic school and college buildings that will be delivered as a result of this renewed partnership with the Welsh Government.”