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News

DIT hopes to proceed with Grangegorman

Sean FlynnThu, Nov 10, 2011, 00:00

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) says it hopes over half of its activities will be based in the new Grangegorman campus by 2016 despite the scaling back of Exchequer funding announced today.

The Grangegorman project and a series of third level building projects - where contracts have not been finalised - are the main casualties of the revised capital spending programme.

DIT today reaffirmed its commitment to its ambitious plan for the 73 acre site in north Dublin.

Originally, the institute hoped to relocate all of its 39 buildings in Dublin city to Grangegorman. Today, it said it hoped that more than 50 per cent of its activities could be based at the new campus within five years.

DIT said it would look to private sources for funding to proceed. It is by no means clear if such funding will be available.

"Unfortunately, in relation to DIT's Grangegorman campus development, Exchequer infrastructure investment will be postponed for the lifetime of the investment framework," Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn said. "Planning will take place towards an initial public private partnership project, for possible completion in 2017."

Overall, the Department of Education will receive €440 million annually for capital projects over the next five years - down from about €500 million this year.

Mr Quinn said soaring birth rates are putting unprecedented demands on schools and the Government had little choice but to prioritise school building projects.

Total enrolment in both primary and post-primary schools is expected to grow by almost 70,000 between now and 2018 - over 45,000 at primary level and 25,000 at post primary - and will continue to grow up to at least 2024 at post-primary level.

The latest figures show the highest number of births registered in any quarter since the series began in 1960.

"The demographic challenge facing the education system has not yet been the subject of extensive public discussion," said the Minister. "It is vital that the schooling system is prepared to cope with these increased numbers".

The Minister said that his priority is now to focus on major school projects and smaller projects devolved to schools to meet the demographic demands. "The primary aim will be to ensure that every child will have access to a school place," he said.

The planned investment for the next five years will provide over 100,000 permanent school places of which over 80,000 will be additional school places - the remainder will be replacement of temporary or unsatisfactory accommodation. This will result in over 1 per cent of the total school population benefiting from new permanent places delivered during the period 2012 to 2016.

Mr Quinn promised to publish details of the school building programme for 2012 next month. Details of the five-year programme of school building will be published early in the new year.

Higher education capital investment projects with existing capital commitments in place will be completed. These include the UCD science centre, the University of Limerick medical school, NUI Maynooth's library project and the new campus development at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

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