



Department
for Education

Prioritising schools for the School Rebuilding Programme

Government consultation

Launch date 19 July 2021

Respond by 8 October 2021

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Foreword by Baroness Berridge

Investing in our school buildings is vital to delivering a world-class education. Since 2015, we have allocated £11.3 billion to maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and in addition we have replaced or refurbished the poorest condition buildings through the Priority School Building Programme.

In June 2020, the Prime Minister announced the next phase of plans for improving the condition of the school estate, focused on a 10-year programme of school rebuilding. The School Rebuilding Programme was launched with a commitment to replace or refurbish buildings at 500 schools over the next decade. This will transform the education of tens of thousands of pupils, benefitting communities across England.

The programme forms part of the Government's plans to build back better, supporting teachers to deliver a high-quality education, so that pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need to succeed. The investment will support the construction sector, helping drive growth as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also an important commitment to investing in skills, including apprenticeships and T-Level placements in the industry across England.

The new school buildings will be modern, sustainable, energy efficient designs. I am particularly pleased that they will be designed to high sustainability standards, delivering a generation of schools that will be net zero carbon in operation and mitigate the risks of climate change.

We moved at pace to prioritise the first 100 schools in the poorest condition in the estate, using the department's Condition Data Collection. We are now considering how we prioritise schools for the next phase of the programme. We want to hear the views of schools and those responsible for school buildings, in particular, on the proposals we have developed to ensure we replace the buildings most in need.

I am delighted to be introducing this consultation and I look forward to hearing your views. Thank you for taking the time to support us with this process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'ER Berridge'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Baroness Berridge

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for the School System)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Prime Minister announced the School Rebuilding Programme in June 2020. It will carry out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects at 500 schools and sixth form colleges in England over the next decade. We have already announced the first 100 schools. We are now consulting on the approach to prioritising schools for the rest of the programme.
- 1.2. There are over 22,000 schools and sixth form colleges¹ in England with a wide variety of buildings (c.64,000² blocks) of different ages, sizes and construction types across the estate. To determine which schools have the greatest need for rebuilding or significant refurbishment, there are choices about the data and evidence used to understand rebuilding need, as well as the process for collecting and assessing this information.
- 1.3. Responses from this consultation will help to shape the methodology we use for prioritising future places in the programme.

Who this is for

- 1.4. We welcome views from those with an interest in how the condition of the school estate is maintained and funded, including but not limited to:
 - bodies responsible for school and sixth form college buildings, including academy trusts, local authorities and voluntary aided school bodies (including dioceses)
 - governing bodies and boards of trustees
 - head teachers and school senior leaders
 - school business professionals
 - other representative education sector bodies and special interest groups

¹ References to schools in this document typically refer to all state-funded schools in scope: maintained schools (including maintained nurseries), voluntary controlled and foundation schools, voluntary aided schools, special schools, academies (including free schools, UTCs and studio schools) sixth form colleges, city technology colleges and alternative provision (including pupil referral units).

² Condition of school buildings survey: [key findings report](#)

- buildings experts, especially those with particular knowledge of school buildings

Issue date

1.5. The consultation was issued on 19 July 2021.

Deadline

1.6. The consultation closes on 8 October 2021.

Respond online

1.7. To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit <https://consult.education.gov.uk> to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

1.8. If you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a PDF document version of the consultation document and email it or post your response.

By email

SRP.consultation@education.gov.uk

By post

School Rebuilding Consultation
Central Capital Unit, 5th Floor
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
SW1P 3BT

Enquiries

1.9. If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

SRP.consultation@education.gov.uk

1.10. If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the DfE Contact us page.

Additional copies

1.11. Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from <https://consult.education.gov.uk>.

1.12. The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in winter 2021/22.

2. About this consultation

- 2.1. We are consulting on the approach to prioritising schools for future places in the School Rebuilding Programme.
- 2.2. The goal of the School Rebuilding Programme is to identify and carry out projects at the schools most in need of major rebuilding or refurbishment, and to do this in a way that is fair to schools and responsible bodies of all types and sizes. There is a range of factors that can be considered to assess which schools are most in need of rebuilding; choices about the data and evidence used to make the assessment; and different ways the process could work. There are trade-offs between different options. We aim to develop a prioritisation approach which is robust, makes comparisons between schools as consistently as possible, enables rapid delivery and minimises burdens on responsible bodies and schools as far as possible.
- 2.3. From the range of potential approaches, approach B in this consultation strikes a reasonable balance between the information we use to assess need, and the burden placed on responsible bodies in engaging with the process. In this approach, responsible bodies would be able to submit expressions of interest nominating schools they would like considered for the programme. They would also be able to submit supplementary evidence of specific types of severe rebuilding need. The department would then prioritise from the group of nominated schools, informed by Condition Data Collection data for many schools, but also informed by an assessment of the evidence submitted of severe need, where applicable.
- 2.4. Feedback from this consultation will help us develop a robust, fair approach.
- 2.5. The next section of the document (section 3) covers the background, context and aims of the programme.
- 2.6. The subsequent sections of the document (sections 4 and 5) seek views on:
 - the principles and factors that should determine how schools are prioritised for the programme
 - approaches to prioritising schools, including the data and evidence that could be considered, as well as our current lead approach

3. Background, context and aims of the programme

Estate management and capital funding

- 3.1. Safe, well-maintained school buildings are vital to support schools and teachers in delivering a high-quality education, so that pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need. That is why maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate is a priority for the department.
- 3.2. The department publishes regularly updated guidance on [good estate management](#), which provides guidance, policies, processes and documents to follow in order to manage school estates effectively. It also provides information on procurement frameworks and other buying support.
- 3.3. We provide capital funding each year to schools and bodies responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of the estate. Schools and those responsible for school buildings have access to condition funding through different routes depending on their size and type.
 - local authorities, larger multi-academy trusts and large voluntary aided (VA) school bodies receive an annual School Condition Allocation (SCA) to invest in condition priorities across the schools for which they are responsible
 - smaller multi-academy, or stand-alone academy trusts, sixth form colleges, and VA schools not part of SCA eligible bodies are able to bid to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) each year
 - all schools also receive funding to spend on their own capital priorities through an annual Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocation
- 3.4. Since 2015, school condition funding allocations have been informed by consistent condition data on the school estate. Most recently, this includes the Condition Data Collection - a high-level assessment of the condition of publicly funded schools in England, which helps inform capital funding policy and programmes (see further information below).
- 3.5. Major rebuilding and refurbishment of existing schools has been supported through phase one and two of the Priority School Building Programme and now this School Rebuilding Programme.
- 3.6. We also provide capital funding for local authorities to fulfil their statutory duty to make sure there are enough school places for children in their local area. We provide basic need funding for every place that is needed, based on local authorities' own data on pupil forecasts, in addition to places provided through the

free schools programme. Local authorities can use this funding to provide places in new schools or through expansions of existing schools and can work with any school in their local area, including academies and free schools.

- 3.7. The department also provides capital funding to support local authorities to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities, or who require alternative provision.

Organisations with responsibility for estate management

- 3.8. Organisations with responsibility for school buildings are known as responsible bodies. While the department allocates annual condition funding, the responsible bodies are primarily responsible for the condition of the estate and decide how and where the funding is spent, in line with the conditions of each funding stream as set by the department. These organisations vary in type and size, and typically include local authorities, VA school bodies, multi-academy trusts and single-academy trusts. When designing the process for prioritising schools for the programme, we want the process to be accessible and fair for all types and sizes of responsible body.

The Condition Data Collection (CDC)

- 3.9. The CDC was commissioned by the department and collected data on the condition of buildings at publicly funded schools in England. It is the only comprehensive and consistent set of data on the condition of schools in England.
- 3.10. The primary purpose of the programme was to provide a consistent and robust evidence base to enable the department to target the capital funding it provides for maintaining and rebuilding school buildings. Information was collected through non-intrusive visual assessment carried out by building surveyors and did not include inspection for structural need or other issues such as asbestos.
- 3.11. The programme ran from 2017-19 and was one of the largest data collection programmes of its kind. It collected data on 22,031 schools³, comprising 63,942 teaching blocks across England. A new CDC started in 2021, which will provide updated condition data over the next five years.
- 3.12. A report with an overview of the findings has been published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

³ Including maintained nurseries, infant/junior/primary/middle schools, secondary schools, sixth form colleges and 16-19 academies, special schools, alternative provision.

The School Rebuilding Programme

Programme overview

- 3.13. The programme was announced in June 2020 and launched with a commitment to 500 major school rebuilding and/or refurbishment projects over the next decade, prioritised according to their condition.
- 3.14. Given the priority for capital funding to keep school buildings safe and in good operating order, through the programme we aim to target schools with buildings in the poorest condition that need rebuilding or significant refurbishment to resolve. We will focus on those buildings that are required for the delivery of the curriculum and core school services. In particular, we are looking to identify buildings where the condition poses a threat to health and safety, or the ability to remain open and where rebuilding or refurbishment is the most cost-effective way to address the need. As the programme will deliver large projects, managed directly by the department, we are also targeting schools where poor condition affects a significant proportion of their estate.
- 3.15. The new school buildings will be net zero carbon in operation, built to DfE specifications. This will support the government's target to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.
- 3.16. Establishing a ten-year programme means we can support a long-term pipeline of projects. This will provide greater certainty to schools and allow the department to work more effectively and efficiently with delivery partners. The department will build on its existing construction expertise with a continued focus on innovative modern methods of construction, which will support skilled jobs in construction.

Prioritisation of projects for rebuilding

- 3.17. In February 2021, we confirmed the first 50 projects to benefit from the programme, with a further 50 announced in July 2021. We expect construction of the most advanced projects to begin in autumn 2021.
- 3.18. The first 100 schools were prioritised either because:
 - they have buildings of specific construction types that we know require replacement, or
 - their buildings have the highest condition need, identified in data collected by the department in CDC and verified through collecting additional condition information
- 3.19. Using existing data, which was collected in a consistent way across all schools, allowed us to make comparisons of relative condition while putting minimal burden

on the school sector. Further details on the methodologies used to prioritise schools in the initial rounds and lists of the schools included are available [here](#).

4. The factors for determining which schools are prioritised for rebuilding

Prioritising schools with the highest need for rebuilding

- 4.1. The department aims to prioritise schools that most need major rebuilding and refurbishment projects. Maintenance, smaller works and small rebuild projects should typically be managed through School Condition Allocations (SCA) and the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF). By directly delivering larger projects, the department can secure best value for money on these works, while freeing up resources at responsible body level for investment in condition priorities at other schools.
- 4.2. Due to the condition need across the school estate, we aim to identify buildings in the poorest condition with a high need for rebuilding. We do not think that building factors other than condition should be considered when deciding which schools to target in this programme, for example suitability, building/site configuration, or the need for expansion. Taking account of these factors could reduce the funding focused on condition or could overlap with existing and separate capital funding streams (some wider factors may, however, be considered in the scoping of projects, once a school has been selected⁴). We will always try to make the best use of funding streams and join them up where possible.

Defining rebuilding need

- 4.3. There is a range of ways that the highest need for rebuilding can be defined and measured by the department and responsible bodies. To prioritise schools for the programme we need to decide which factors we will consider, and how to compare between schools in a consistent way.
- 4.4. Building characteristics and condition factors that could be considered when assessing rebuilding need include, but are not limited to:
 - a building's structure and structural integrity
 - a building's age and construction type

⁴ The department will consider the needs of the school when scoping projects and aim to provide sufficient good-condition accommodation to support current, agreed pupil admission numbers, built to DfE standards. Local authorities have the opportunity to contribute basic need funding if they would like to expand places as part of a project (to maximise efficiency by combining works into one project); or to agree removal of surplus places.

- the condition of a building's major fabric elements (for example walls, roofs)
- the condition of a building's major mechanical and electrical systems (for example heating, electrical wiring)
- the condition of a building's internals and facilities or fixed fittings (e.g. internal walls, toilets)
- the extent, location and condition of any asbestos present

4.5. No single factor gives a complete view of the need for rebuilding/refurbishment, so the challenge is to objectively measure different factors and decide on the relative weighting between them. The department proposes to define rebuilding need for the purposes of the programme, in order of priority, as:

- i. structural or safety issues that mean a building is not fit for use, or is likely to become unfit for use soon, because it poses a risk to users; and/or
- ii. severe deterioration in the main building fabric (external walls, roofs, windows and doors) meaning that the most efficient way of returning a building to good condition is to rebuild it or carry out a significant total refurbishment; and/or
- iii. mechanical and electrical systems that are close to failure and could cause a school building to close in the near future, but only if this would require a major refurbishment to rectify, or if there is other need in the building fabric that makes a refurbishment/rebuild most efficient overall.

4.6. This is on the basis that:

- structural or other significant issues that pose a risk to safety to the extent a building is deemed unfit for use, may be highly likely to require a rebuild to resolve
- the condition of major external building fabric and mechanical and electrical systems are likely to be a better indicator of rebuilding need than the condition of other building elements (such as internal walls, floors, fixtures and fittings)
- mechanical and electrical systems are crucial to a building's operation, but should only require a rebuilding project in severe cases or if the building fabric is also in poor condition

4.7. Building age and construction type can be a useful signal of rebuilding/refurbishment need. The lifespan of a building depends on a number of factors, including how well it has been maintained or upgraded over time. Many school buildings from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s – including system builds – may be at a stage where patch and mend refurbishments are less cost effective.

- 4.8. As a building's current condition is highly dependent on the maintenance and treatment of a building over time, and because there are many more schools in each category than projects available, age and/or construction type cannot be a deciding factor. We could, however, look at focusing the programme on specific age and construction types and use other data to decide between schools in scope.
- 4.9. The majority of school buildings contain some asbestos⁵. The department follows expert advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), that, as long as asbestos-containing materials are in good condition, well protected either by their position or physical protection, and are unlikely to be worked on, it is usually safer to manage them in place. Where asbestos cannot be safely managed in situ it should be removed and condition funding can be used for this purpose. The School Rebuilding Programme will address asbestos in all buildings included in the programme. To be considered as a primary factor in prioritisation, it is likely that a school would have extensive asbestos in poor condition with professional surveys indicating that rebuilding or significant refurbishment is the most cost-effective solution to address it.
- 4.10. We are interested in your views on the factors that should be considered to make the best assessment of rebuilding need.

Questions

1. To what extent do you agree with the department's proposed definition of rebuilding need?
2. In your view, should the programme target buildings of specific construction types or designs?
3. In your view, should the programme target buildings of specific ages?
4. Are there any other factors that should be included in the definition of rebuilding need, or targeted by the programme?

Comparing rebuilding need across schools of different sizes

- 4.11. Schools are made up of a range of buildings of different sizes and the total size varies considerably from school to school. When considering how to assess relative condition need, we want to take account of how the process applies to
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⁵ The department's Asbestos Management Assurance Programme data indicates that over 80% of schools contain some asbestos.

different school sizes, types and phases, to avoid unfairly favouring some types of school over others.

- 4.12. In comparing the need for rebuilding across schools, we need to decide whether to prioritise schools with the greatest amount of rebuilding need across a site, or schools with higher intensity need (extremely poor condition), even if it is in a smaller building or buildings with less total need. That is, whether a large school with ageing buildings and deterioration across most or all of those buildings should be prioritised over a school with a smaller building(s) which has severe issues, which may mean it is at imminent risk of being taken out of use.
- 4.13. We do not think it is fair to compare sites or buildings based purely on the total amount of need they have. Comparing sites in this way would be strongly biased towards larger schools (predominantly secondaries).
- 4.14. We propose, in principle, that it would be fairest to compare schools based on the intensity of need, so that the assessment of condition focuses on the most intense and urgent need. The intensity of need would be measured as the amount of condition need per metre squared of floor area. This would allow a comparison of sites of all types and sizes on the same basis.
- 4.15. However, to simply measure the average intensity of need across whole sites may fail to prioritise buildings with particularly high condition need. Sites with a variety of buildings of different ages and condition may show a moderate average need across the site but contain some very high-need buildings. So, we propose to compare sites based on the most intense need on each site, comparing the same surface area (gross internal floor area – GIFA). Such an approach was used in round 2 of this programme, where the initial comparison of sites was based on the 1,200m² of their GIFA in the poorest condition⁶. This also helps ensure projects are of sufficient scale for the programme.
- 4.16. The comparison in round 2 was based on the intensity of condition need in prioritised building elements, as recorded in CDC data, across the highest-need area of each site. To find out more about how we calculated this, please see the published methodology for the prioritisation of the second group of 50 schools on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- 4.17. The extent of rebuilding and significant refurbishment on sites prioritised for the programme would be fully assessed, supported by new professional surveys, to determine how much of the site would be rebuilt or refurbished. Projects delivered

⁶ Where a school's total site GIFA was below 1200m² the average of the need across all of the site's blocks was taken, so that all schools were included in the methodology.

would not be limited to the surface area used in the initial comparison.

- 4.18. We are interested in your views on what to prioritise and on the principles outlined above.

Questions

5. To what extent do you agree that we should prioritise schools based on intensity of condition need rather than total amount of condition need?
6. To what extent do you agree that we should compare sites based on the intensity of condition need across the same surface area of their buildings (GIFA), considering the buildings in the poorest condition on each site?

Considering other school characteristics

- 4.19. In pursuing an objective comparison of rebuilding need, the projects prioritised will not necessarily be balanced across schools of different sizes, types, locations or with other characteristics. Furthermore, decisions about how to assess and compare rebuilding need could have implications for the schools prioritised from different categories. For example, secondary schools are typically much larger than primary schools, so could benefit from approaches that look for wide coverage of rebuilding need. Some regions have greater condition need, measured in CDC, than others. We have a choice about whether or not to control for this in the prioritisation process, by looking to balance the numbers of projects allocated to schools with different characteristics.
- 4.20. For example, in the first two rounds of this programme, we used minimum quotas to ensure a number of special and alternative provision schools were prioritised, broadly in line with their overall representation in the school estate. This was to ensure pupils at such schools would benefit from the School Rebuilding Programme and so that the programme could learn from projects at a range of school types.
- 4.21. We are interested in your views on whether we should take account of different school characteristics when allocating projects in future rounds.

Questions

Please select your preference from the following two statements:

7. As regards special schools and alternative provision:

- the department should allocate a proportion of projects to special schools and alternative provision with the most severe condition need to ensure schools of those types are included in the programme
- the department should allocate projects to schools with the greatest rebuilding need, not controlling for type

8. As regards school phase:

- the department should allocate a proportion of projects to each school phase (e.g. primary, secondary)
- the department should allocate projects to schools with the greatest rebuilding need, not controlling for phase

9. As regards school location:

- the department should allocate a proportion of projects to each region
- the department should allocate projects to schools in the country with the greatest rebuilding need, not controlling for location

10. Are there other school characteristics that the department should consider, when looking at the balance of projects?

Additional non-building factors that could be considered

4.22. It is probable that many schools will have buildings in similarly poor condition requiring similar rebuild solutions. It will be hard to differentiate between their relative condition need and they may have equally strong cases for inclusion in the programme. Where we need to make finely balanced judgements on which of these projects should be included at the expense of others – particularly at the cut-off line – we are interested in what other factors we might consider beyond the condition of the buildings. In particular, we are considering how we might factor in the impact rebuilding could have on supporting improvement in school standards.

4.23. We are interested in your views on the extent to which educational performance

and the potential for supporting school improvement should inform prioritisation for the programme.

Question

11. To what extent do you think that educational performance, and the potential for capital investment to improve it, should also be included as one of the factors considered to prioritise which projects are included in the programme?

5. The process for deciding which schools are prioritised for rebuilding

Objectives for the prioritisation process

- 5.1. There is a range of potential approaches to gathering and assessing information on buildings' characteristics and condition, to prioritise schools for the programme. The primary objective of the process is to identify schools with greatest need for rebuilding. We also aim to design and implement an approach that strikes the best balance between the objectives to:
- a) Use information that allows robust assessment of the need for rebuilding
 - b) Use information that is comparable across schools to make a fair assessment of relative need
 - c) Minimise burdens on responsible bodies in having to obtain and submit new information
 - d) Make the process accessible for responsible bodies of all sizes
- 5.2. We are interested in your views on the objectives for the prioritisation process.

Questions

12. To what extent do you agree that the objectives identified for the process are appropriate?
13. In what order of priority would you place the stated objectives?
14. Are there any other objectives for the prioritisation process that you think we should adopt?

The range of possible approaches

- 5.3. Possible approaches to obtaining information to assess rebuilding need lie on a spectrum from relying on existing centrally-held data on the condition of schools (the CDC data), through to requesting new information and evidence from responsible bodies, or using a combination of the two. Each has advantages and disadvantages.
- 5.4. We have identified three broad approaches that would meet the overall objective to identify schools with the highest need. Each strikes a different balance across the prioritisation process objectives set out above. These broad approaches are:

Approach A

5.5. Base prioritisation primarily on CDC condition data analysis. Accept supplementary information from responsible bodies only where it evidences severe types of rebuilding need that CDC does not capture.

How it would work

- 5.6. The department would analyse CDC data to initially identify schools with the greatest need. This approach would not require responsible bodies of schools with general condition need to apply for the programme, because schools would be approached in a targeted way. The department would then take steps to investigate the highest-need schools and verify current rebuilding need, including collecting information from responsible bodies of the targeted schools and making site visits.
- 5.7. Recognising that CDC does not capture all the information needed to assess rebuilding need, in parallel, any responsible body would be able to submit evidence of severe rebuilding need that is not included in the CDC data. For example, evidence of structural issues that mean a building will imminently be unfit to occupy. This supplementary information would then be assessed by the department, with severe cases prioritised.

Rationale and limitations

- 5.8. CDC data is already available centrally for all schools⁷ so its use would limit burdens on responsible bodies in providing information. CDC enables a consistent, comparable assessment of need between schools. Such a process has been used in rounds 1 and 2 of the programme, to achieve a swift prioritisation process based on consistent data for some of the schools with most need, without requiring responsible bodies to apply for the limited number of projects available in those rounds.
- 5.9. As CDC data was collected at a point in time, with the earliest visits taking place four years ago, improvements or further deterioration to buildings could have occurred in the intervening period. This means that this approach may identify schools for the programme which do not consistently match responsible bodies' current priorities for rebuilding or refurbishment, and risks not identifying urgent cases which have suffered significant deterioration since the CDC was conducted.
- 5.10. As it was a non-intrusive survey, using analysis of CDC condition data cannot

⁷ 46 schools were not included at the time of the survey, mainly due to major capital works taking place. There will also be a small number of new openers since CDC completed.

account for all factors that could be important when assessing rebuilding need, such as structural issues. Collecting supplementary evidence would allow the highest-priority issues of this type to be prioritised. For the overall process to have the benefit of reducing burdens on responsible bodies, only severe cases could be considered in this way. In these cases, responsible bodies would need to be aware of the need in their buildings and collect and submit clear evidence supported by professional surveys for it to be prioritised.

Approach B

5.11. Invite expressions of interest from responsible bodies, nominating the schools they would like considered for the programme. We would then prioritise from this group, informed primarily by CDC data. For schools with significant need for rebuilding that CDC does not capture, we would accept and assess supplementary information from responsible bodies and prioritise severe cases.

How it would work

- 5.12. Responsible bodies would have an opportunity to submit the names of schools they would like considered for the programme. The department would then analyse CDC data for the schools nominated and take steps to investigate the highest-need schools and verify current rebuilding need, including making site visits.
- 5.13. For schools with severe need not captured in CDC there would be an opportunity for responsible bodies to submit evidence of this, for example structural need. This is similar to approach A. We would assess this evidence and prioritise those schools where the need makes them currently or imminently unfit to occupy. These cases would be prioritised above nominated schools where CDC data has been used for assessing need.

Rationale and limitations

- 5.14. By prioritising from nominated schools, the department can take account of responsible bodies' priorities in the process while still using CDC data to enable a consistent, comparable assessment of need between schools. This approach still avoids the need for responsible bodies to submit detailed evidence for the majority of the schools they consider in scope.
- 5.15. As CDC data was collected at a point in time, with the earliest visits taking place four years ago, improvements or further deterioration to buildings could have occurred in the intervening period. The expressions of interest give an opportunity for responsible bodies to take this into account and share information on any changes at the point of nomination.

- 5.16. As with approach A, the parallel process to assess severe condition need will allow us to identify and prioritise schools with need that CDC may not capture. However, for the overall process to have the benefit of reducing burdens on responsible bodies, only severe cases could be considered in this way.
- 5.17. Some responsible bodies may have less capacity to engage in the process and less ability to understand their rebuilding need relative to other schools, especially if they have very few schools under their management. There is a risk this could result in some schools with high condition need not being nominated for the programme or having suitable evidence submitted. The department would seek to mitigate this using clear targeted, communications and by providing a straightforward online process for nomination.

Approach C

5.18. Invite responsible bodies to submit comprehensive evidence of rebuilding need and assess this evidence using a scoring system.

How it would work

- 5.19. Responsible bodies would submit evidence of rebuilding need for the buildings they would like considered for the programme. This evidence would be required to show need aligned to a clear definition of the factors that will be considered, outlined in advance by the department. This evidence could for example include condition, structural or asbestos surveys. The department would commission technical advisors to assess the evidence using a weighted scoring system for the different factors, which would primarily focus on general condition and structural issues.

Rationale and limitations

- 5.20. Collecting new information and evidence from responsible bodies could give a holistic view of the need for rebuilding on each site, including some information that the department does not hold in CDC. This information may be more current than CDC data for some schools.
- 5.21. This process relies on equivalent evidence being available for each school, in a form that is consistent enough to allow fair scoring and comparison between schools. However, surveys commissioned by responsible bodies are likely to have been undertaken in different ways, with different surveyor approaches, making a fair comparison between schools harder to achieve.
- 5.22. This process places the highest burden on responsible bodies. It requires responsible bodies to have detailed knowledge of condition need in their schools and have the capacity to submit high-quality evidence. The capacity to do so may vary considerably between responsible bodies. Some responsible bodies may also

need to commission (and fund) additional reports on school condition.

- 5.23. It is likely that overall, responsible bodies would submit many more applications than there are places in the programme, meaning a significant amount of nugatory work. The department would seek to mitigate this through clear communications of the type and extent of condition need the programme is looking to address.

Lead option

- 5.24. Our current view is that approach B may provide the best balance between the different objectives, based on the rationale and limitations above.
- 5.25. We are interested in your views on the approach we should take to the prioritisation process.

Questions

15. Which would be your preferred approach, in order of preference, from options A, B and C?
16. Do you have any suggestions for other approaches that we have not identified?

Supplying evidence of rebuilding need

- 5.26. In all the approaches outlined there are opportunities for responsible bodies to submit evidence for consideration.
- 5.27. In approaches A and B, we are proposing to use CDC data for prioritisation for a proportion of projects. In addition, for schools with severe need not captured by CDC, we would accept evidence of severe need to ensure there is a route for these cases to be considered. In those approaches, we would propose to use these criteria to define severe rebuilding need:
- buildings require rebuilding because they are unfit for occupation or condemned, or due to become so imminently
 - the affected building or groups of buildings are essential to the delivery of the school curriculum and have a minimum total GIFA suitable for a large rebuilding or refurbishment project (we expect this would be a minimum GIFA of 1,200m²)
 - evidence is provided by professional surveyors as relevant to the issue(s) affecting the building(s)
- 5.28. We would expect these criteria to mainly allow for structural issues that may not have been identified by CDC to qualify for the programme. For such issues we

would expect to receive a full structural survey as evidence of need, carried out by a suitably qualified structural engineer. There may be other examples of need that could qualify, such as extensive, poor condition asbestos that cannot be effectively managed in situ⁸. For this we would expect to see an appropriate asbestos survey carried out by a suitably qualified surveyor. Criteria could also include other issues that pose a risk to the health and safety of building users, where the only solution to the issues is a rebuild or large refurbishment project. We would need to see clear evidence of such issues.

- 5.29. In approach C, evidence of a wider spectrum of issues would be accepted and reviewed, including general condition surveys carried out by qualified surveyors.
- 5.30. For all the approaches above, the department would reserve the flexibility to include schools in the programme for a small number of cases where we may become aware of severe and urgent need for rebuilding outside of the processes described above.
- 5.31. We are interested in your views on the criteria for severe rebuilding need, and the types of evidence we should accept.

Questions

17. Do you agree or disagree that the proposed criteria for assessing severe rebuilding need are appropriate?

18. Do you or your responsible body have access to evidence of rebuilding need, in the form of surveys completed by professional surveyors, available to share with the department?

Please only answer these questions if you are answering as a body responsible for school condition:

19. How many schools is your organisation responsible for?

20. How many of them do you expect would meet the criteria for severe rebuilding?

The timetable for prioritisation and programme delivery

- 5.32. The first two rounds comprised 50 projects each, so that we could begin projects
-

⁸ In many cases, asbestos can be managed safely in situ. For the School Rebuilding Programme, it would need to be demonstrated that rebuilding is needed as asbestos is in poor condition and/or so prevalent that it prevents routine maintenance and refurbishment. More information on asbestos in the school estate can be found [here](#).

at some of the highest-need schools right away. We expect in future to identify a greater number of projects in each selection round, covering projects that will enter delivery over a number of years from the point of selection.

5.33. Selection in advance would provide greater certainty to schools and responsible bodies, so that they could plan capital investment over time and avoid investing in buildings due to be replaced. It would minimise burdens on the sector from having to engage with the programme multiple times. It would also give the department greater ability to plan delivery in the most efficient way and provide a defined pipeline of projects for the construction sector.

5.34. However, we also recognise that in a long-term programme, condition need will change over time, and severe and urgent issues may arise in schools over the life of the programme, which need investment in rebuilding to address. So, there would be benefits to being able to allocate some projects later in the programme.

5.35. Options for the selection timetable include:

- i. selecting all 400 projects up-front
- ii. selecting the majority of the 400 projects up-front, but reserving a reasonable number for later in the programme's life
- iii. selecting 50 projects every year

5.36. The order projects are delivered in will depend on a number of factors, including the urgency of any works and the most efficient programming to achieve best value.

5.37. Factors we could consider when sequencing projects for delivery include:

- i. urgency of condition need
- ii. batching projects for more efficient and effective delivery by location, project size, school phase or type of building project

5.38. We are interested in your views on the timetable for prioritisation.

Questions

21. In timetabling the selection process, would you prefer the department (please select one option):

- selects all remaining projects in a single selection round
- selects the majority of the 400 projects in a single selection round, but reserves a reasonable number for later in the programme's life
- selects 50 projects every year
- other [please state]

22. In sequencing projects for delivery, should the department take account of (please select one option):

- urgency of condition need only
- batching projects by urgency of condition need, but also taking into account factors that would allow more efficient delivery, such as location, project size, school phase, or type of project
- other [please state]

23. Do you have any further comments on the proposals for prioritising schools for future rounds of the school rebuilding programme?

6. Public sector equalities duty

- 6.0. The public sector equality duty requires the department to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics are:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender Reassignment
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Race (including ethnicity)
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 6.1. At this stage, we have assessed that the long-term rebuilding programme is likely to have an overall positive impact on individuals sharing protected characteristics. This is on the basis that additional funding will be available to improve or enhance buildings or facilities – which can have a positive impact on attainment, health and safety and well-being for all pupils, including those with protected characteristics.
- 6.2. Our objective for this programme is to identify the highest condition need, working to ensure that centrally held data (CDC) and data submitted by responsible bodies is comparable and fairly assessed. Any disproportionate benefits for different groups with or without protected characteristics would arise from an objective determination of building needs.
- 6.3. We have assessed that prioritising special schools and alternative provision according to their prevalence in the school estate (by percentage of total schools), as we have done in the first two rounds of the programme, is likely to have an overall positive impact on individuals sharing protected characteristics.
- 6.4. We welcome your views as to whether the proposals set out in this consultation are likely to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on any student with relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.5. We will publish an Equality Impact Assessment alongside the consultation response.

Question

24. Do you have any comments about the potential impact of our proposed approach to prioritisation in the School Rebuilding Programme on individuals, on the basis of their protected characteristics?



Department
for Education

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