

## SBM Network Meeting February 2022

### Diocesan Updates

#### **The DfE's National school building programme**

This rebuilding programme is for schools with buildings in very poor condition which need to be refurbished or replaced. These buildings will be referred to as blocks, as they are in the Condition Data Collection (CDC) report. One school building can consist of more than one block.

There is a very tight turn around for the submission of bids – all Expressions of Interest must be submitted via the online portal by 3<sup>rd</sup> March with the supplementary evidence provided by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

**There are a limited number of places on the programme which will be implemented over a 10 year period (300 schools nationally with 100 places reserved for the final years) and priority will be given to schools with the most severe condition need.**

Responsible Bodies will make bid submissions. For VA schools this will be the Diocese, for academies, this will be the MAC.

A link to the DfE website for further information is included below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme/school-rebuilding-programme>

There are 2 ways to nominate a school for the programme.

#### **1. Block nomination**

Responsible bodies should nominate the school(s) they would like to be considered through an online portal, listing the blocks they consider need rebuilding.

The DfE will then assess this nomination against the first, original CDC1 data.

There must be a minimum threshold of 1200m<sup>2</sup> of severe condition need. The Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) can comprise of several blocks within the school, or one single block meeting the total.

#### **2. Exceptional cases**

Exceptional cases include where:

you deem the condition of the blocks to be so severe as to risk imminent closure (or a block is already closed)

the issues have not been captured by CDC1 (such as structural issues)

the issues can only be resolved through a rebuild

In these cases, you can submit professional evidence to support that the school blocks are likely to be forced to close within the next 3 years. There is no minimum GIFA requirement for severe condition needs that are nominated in this way.

#### **Definition of rebuilding need (as prioritised by the DfE)**

This is in priority order.

**Structural or safety issues** that mean a block is not fit for use or is likely to become unfit for use imminently because it poses a risk to users.

**Severe deterioration** in the main building fabric (external walls, roofs, windows or doors). This means that the most efficient way of returning a block to good condition is to rebuild it or carry out a significant refurbishment.

**Mechanical and electrical systems** that are close to failure and could cause a school block to close in the near future, but only if there is another need in the building fabric that makes a refurbishment or rebuild most efficient overall.

### **Post-war system builds**

Following World War 2 there was a rapid expansion of the school estate to accommodate an increased school-age population. Due to budget constraints and material shortages, several new construction techniques were developed. These new designs were brought to market by a number of manufacturers and are commonly referred to as 'post-war system builds'.

There are many types of post-war system builds typically with steel, timber or concrete load-bearing structural frames. This is not an exhaustive list but common examples include:

Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme (CLASP)

Second Consortium of Local Authorities (SCOLA)

### **Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)**

RAAC is a lightweight, 'bubbly' form of concrete that was commonly used in schools and other buildings from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. RAAC is mainly found in roofs, although occasionally in floors and walls. RAAC is less strong than traditional concrete and there have been instances where RAAC components have failed.

We would welcome nominations for **blocks containing RAAC planks in poor condition** as identified by a structural survey. It is worth noting that in some cases it may be possible to remediate RAAC planks without full school rebuilding.

Evidence submitted for any blocks containing RAAC should clearly demonstrate how the presence of RAAC may result in imminent closure and that localised replacement is not viable.

### **Condition of structural elements**

Structural elements, for example, beams, columns and load-bearing walls, in poor condition may have reduced capacity to transfer loads from the superstructure to the block's foundations. In extreme cases, this may lead to concerns about block safety.

### **Damage by ground movement**

In many cases, repairs can be made to elements that have deteriorated or corroded or they can be locally replaced. If corrosion is advanced or materials are clearly deteriorating with time, rebuilding may be required.

## **External walls and cladding**

Issues affecting external walls and cladding will be considered where they present a building safety issue or are part of the load-bearing structure of the block. Non-structural items (for example, window replacement) will generally not be considered unless in conjunction with other structural issues. Evidence should highlight if the external cladding is thought to contribute to the horizontal stability of a block in steel, concrete or timber-framed construction.

## **Internal non-structural partitions, ceilings and finishes**

In general, issues affecting non-structural finishes, ceilings and partitions will not be considered for inclusion in the School Rebuilding Programme. It is expected that issues affecting non-structural elements (for example, ceilings or internal partitions) should be dealt with through alternative funding routes as they could be repaired locally and would not warrant full rebuilding.

## **Asbestos**

If managed actively and safely, the presence of asbestos in your school or college should not pose a risk to occupants. Poor management of asbestos can pose serious health risks.

Undamaged, sealed materials will not release fibres. If materials containing asbestos are disturbed or damaged, asbestos fibres can be released into the air and breathed in by building occupants. This is more likely to happen as asbestos materials age and deteriorate.

The DfE will consider asbestos cases for inclusion in the School Rebuilding Programme where asbestos:

has been the direct cause or an associated cause of block (or part-block) closure in the recent past, for example, asbestos has been exposed by accident, or is contained in areas that are also deteriorated so there is a risk of exposure, causing a block or rooms to be taken out of use

condition means that the block (or part-block) is at an imminent or urgent risk of being taken out of use without remedial action

prevents routine maintenance or statutory compliance works (for example, fire alarm testing, legionella testing, emergency lighting) being carried out, or asbestos is easily disturbed during normal occupancy resulting in damage

condition has deteriorated such that it cannot be repaired and requires removal so that a rebuild or refurbishment is the best solution to resolve the issue

## **Fire risk**

The DfE will consider cases for inclusion for the School Rebuilding Programme where the evidence shows that fire risk could result in imminent or urgent closure of a school block.

## **Flood risk**

We will consider cases for inclusion in the School Rebuilding Programme where a flood risk assessment is provided that identifies a significant risk to the school resulting in closure or a potential risk to life.

## **Ground conditions**

Ground movements and subsidence are likely to result in cracking to structural elements and finishes or decoration. Where a qualified building professional identifies structural issues resulting from ground movement, evidence should demonstrate the issues are widespread enough to warrant rebuilding as opposed to localised remediation.

## **Temporary buildings**

Temporary buildings, for example, relocatable mobiles and modular buildings, are often much smaller in size than permanent school buildings. It is unlikely that temporary buildings alone will be 1200m<sup>2</sup> in size.

We will consider blocks of this type, which are required to deliver the curriculum and are in poor condition, alongside other school blocks with severe condition need.

**VA Schools and academies are asked to contact Toni Guest at the BDES for further information regarding bid submission. [T.guest@bdes.org.uk](mailto:T.guest@bdes.org.uk)**

## **VASCA programme for 2022/23 update**

Thank you to VA schools for the submission of your bids for VASCA funding from the 2022/23 programme. We are awaiting the DFE to confirm our capital allocations for the year which we anticipate being in the Spring 2022 before informing schools of the outcome of bids.

## **Update on statutory returns and RAAC surveys**

Thank you for submitting your statutory returns and RAAC information. Jane Hatton is chasing those schools that we are still waiting for information from.

## **The Diocesan Response to the Climate Emergency - update**

- The Diocese has set up a working party with many groups represented in response to the climate emergency. There are a number of initiatives underway and planned.
- The Diocese is also developing a strategic Energy Management Policy which will be published in the very near future. We will share more information as it becomes available.
- The UK has a 2050 net zero target and the public sector which includes schools throughout the UK can make a major contribution to enabling our country to reach this target.

One of the greatest challenges today in meeting the UK's Net Zero target is decarbonising the way buildings are heated.

To help tackle this the Government has made grant funding available for academies and maintained schools to develop heat decarbonisation plans. It is being provided under the second phase of the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF).

The purpose of a HDP is to describe how an organisation intends to replace fossil fuel reliant systems with low carbon alternatives (e.g. Heat Pumps). To meet the challenge of net zero, organisations throughout the UK need to decarbonise their buildings.

**I am absolutely delighted** to share with you that the Archdiocese was successful in securing almost £1 million of this funding to produce heat decarbonisation plans for the first tranche of Diocesan schools. The intention being to continue to roll out this programme until all diocesan schools have a HDP in place.

#### **Other initiatives I wanted to bring to your attention:**

- A number of schools are already engaging in CAFOD's Live Simply Campaign and the Season of Creation. If you haven't already done so, please do sign your school up to this initiative. More information and links are available on CAFOD's website:  
[CAFOD's Live Simply Award](#)
- The Woodland Trust is offering free trees to schools, schools can also be provided with tree packs to plant hedges and mini forests. The electronic link to the Woodland trust website is below:  
[Woodland Trust](#)
- IFM is an inter-diocesan energy procurement framework which was established in 1994. It provides renewable electricity (100%), gas (70%) and fuel oil to Catholic parishes and schools. If you are seeking comparable utility prices please get in touch **with Church Market Place** who will tender your requirements to all energy providers on the framework. Further information can be found online.
- The diocese is part of a car leasing scheme which now offers electric cars and is available to school staff and their families. We will circulate a flyer with the notes from this meeting.

#### **Teachers pension**

The education unions have alerted the Department for Education to the potential impact the pay freeze could have on how some final salary pensions are calculated, due to a 'quirk' in the regulations.

This 'quirk' means that certain calculations need to be triggered by a change in the rate of pay, which wouldn't occur for some members affected by the pay freeze in 2021/22. The joint correspondence from unions sets out a practical way of ensuring the regulations work as intended by asking employers to create a change in the pay rate (suggested as small a change as £1 increase per annum) to engage regulation 37 (9) and (10), which will in turn trigger the revaluation of method B.

We encourage members to discuss this with their governing bodies, to consider the implications for their schools.

NAHT has also been in touch with the National Governance Association (NGA) to raise this issue through their channels.

<https://www.naht.org.uk/Our-Priorities/Our-policy-areas/Recruitment-and-retention/ArtMID/689/ArticleID/1386/Impact-of-pay-freeze-on-the-Teachers%E2%80%99-Pension-Scheme-calculations>

**MAC monitoring feedback – key highlights/feedback**

**Diocesan Education Buildings & Finance Team.**

**February 2022.**