Department for Education

Transparency data

School Rebuilding Programme: methodology for prioritising the first 50 projects

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Introduction

On 29 June 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the government would establish a ten-year School Rebuilding Programme. The School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) will undertake major rebuilding and refurbishment projects, with investment targeted at school and sixth form colleges[footnote 1] buildings in the worst condition across England.

This document describes the principles and methodology used to identify the first 50 projects in the programme.

Methodology for prioritising the first 50 projects

The department has prioritised schools for the first 50 projects based on the condition of their buildings. Schools have been prioritised that:

- are known to have Laingspan or Intergrid buildings – two types of system buildings explained below
- have buildings that are in the poorest condition, as identified in data collected by the department in the Condition Data Collection (CDC)

Prioritisation of specific construction types

Laingspan and Intergrid are two types of system buildings used to construct schools in the post-war period, which are reaching the end of their design life and have potential structural weaknesses that mean they should not be retained beyond that. The department has prioritised these for replacement and included in the first 50 projects all identified school buildings of these types that are still in service. Twenty-two of the 50 schools have been prioritised for this reason.

Any remaining school buildings of these types that are identified later will be prioritised in future rounds of the programme.

Prioritisation using condition data

The CDC dataset brings together condition data covering almost all schools in the English school estate[footnote 2] . The data was collected between 2017 and 2019, with schools having the opportunity to review their information before the data was finalised. A full explanation of how CDC data was collected can be found at Condition Data Collection programme: information and guidance.

Schools have been prioritised where CDC data shows that poor condition is most highly concentrated and urgent. 28 of the 50 schools have been prioritised in this way.

The methodology for prioritisation consists of the following steps:

1. Calculation of condition need per metre squared for each block

Condition need in each block[footnote 3] was calculated using the sum of the condition need in C and D rated external walls, roofs, mechanical equipment and electrical equipment, as identified in CDC data. These building elements were used to give the most representative view of whether a block has a need for rebuilding. C and D ratings mean elements are "exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended" or are "life expired and/or have serious risk of imminent failure" respectively. The calculated need was divided by the gross internal floor area (GIFA) to produce a value for the condition need per metre squared, for each block.

This step was completed for every block of every school in the CDC dataset.

2. Calculation of condition need per metre squared for the highest-need area of each school

For each site, blocks were ordered from highest need per metre squared, to lowest. Blocks were then added in order of need, until their combined GIFA met or exceeded a minimum threshold of 300m^2. We grouped blocks in this way to create a minimum project size and avoid prioritising very small projects that are less suitable for a centrally delivered rebuilding programme, while allowing sites with a collection of small buildings to be considered as one project. The total need in the blocks above was divided by the total GIFA of the blocks, to give the condition need per metre squared for the collection of the highest-need blocks on each site.

In practice, on some sites a single block was included in the calculation while on other sites several blocks were included, depending on the size of blocks that had the highest level of need on each site. On some sites the GIFA used for comparison was close to 300m^2 while on others a greater GIFA was used because the method always included whole blocks. Where a school's total site GIFA was below 300m^2 an exception was made and the average of the need across all of the site's blocks was taken, so that all schools were included in the methodology.

This step was completed for every school in the CDC dataset.

3. Verification of current condition need and prioritisation of schools

Having completed the above steps, schools showing the greatest need were investigated in detail to verify the condition need on each site, before taking decisions to prioritise schools for the programme.

Schools were not prioritised if:

- the school had closed since the CDC data was collected
- the need identified in CDC had since been resolved
- following review, the need identified through CDC did not require a rebuilding or significant refurbishment project to resolve it

This step was completed only for those schools showing the greatest need in step 2.

4. Inclusion of special educational needs (SEN) schools and alternative provision (AP) schools

To ensure these school types were represented in the first round of 50 projects some schools were prioritised specifically from these categories. The special educational needs (SEN) schools and alternative provision (AP) schools showing the greatest need in step 2 were identified as high priority candidates for the programme and taken to step 3. Three SEN schools and one AP school were included in the 50 projects, broadly in line with the proportion of these schools in the school estate.

Types of schools included in the methodology

School types in scope of the School Rebuilding Programme are:

- maintained schools, including maintained nursery schools
- foundation schools
- voluntary-aided schools
- voluntary-controlled schools
- academies (including free schools, studio schools and UTCs)
- maintained and non-maintained special schools
- sixth-form colleges
- alternative provision (including pupil referral units)
- city technology colleges

1. Where references are made to schools throughout this document, this includes sixth form colleges. ↩
2. There are 22,031 schools in the CDC dataset. This is all publicly funded schools and sixth form colleges in England as of September 2019, with the exception of 46 schools not included due to having ongoing major building works at the time of the CDC visits. Any schools that have opened since September 2019 are also not included in the CDC dataset. ↩
3. The CDC dataset holds data by block. One building can consist of more than one block. For example if a building was extended after originally being built, those separate parts will be categorised as separate blocks, because their age, construction type and condition could differ. ↩