

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	12 APRIL 2021		
TITLE:	SCHOOL ESTATE FABRIC CONDITION PROGRAMME		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PEARCE COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	EDUCATION; STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	EDUCATION ASSET MANAGEMENT	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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JOB TITLE:	EDUCATION ASSETS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Linda.church@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Surveys carried out across the Council's community schools and nurseries to ascertain the current fabric condition of the buildings, has identified the need for works of the order of £15m.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval for the release of designated capital programme funding to carry out a three-year programme of works totalling £6m. This aims to cover the items identified as requiring urgent action or requiring action within the short term (i.e next 2/3 yrs). Further works after this 3 year programme would be identified in a programme formulated after this one with updated survey reports where appropriate. Delegated authority to the **Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhoods** is recommended to enter into the contracts required to deliver the works.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1. That the release of designated capital programme funding of £6m to deliver a three-year programme of works across Reading Council's Community schools and nurseries, up to March 31st 2024 be approved
- 2.2 That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhoods be authorised, to enter into the contracts required to deliver the works, as described in the report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 At Council on 23rd February 2021, the Capital Programme, detailing the planned expenditure on Education projects was approved. This included £6m of funding for the works set out below.

- 3.2 The Council receives an annual allocation of £2m approx. ‘Schools Condition Allocation’ (SCA) grant which has been calculated using the DFE’s formula based on the Council’s pupil numbers. It is proposed to spend the grant to fund this programme - the funding is allocated specifically for large condition items on school buildings.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Option Proposed:

In 2020 Hampshire County Council’s (HCC) building surveyors carried out a borough wide survey of the Council’s school estate to establish the condition of the fabric of the buildings.

- 4.1.1 The survey identified 1300 items of work totalling approximately £15m across all community schools and nurseries. These items covered smaller items such as redecoration that the schools would be responsible for These were categorised into 4 Condition Levels:

- Condition A includes new/recent items of fabric
- Condition B includes items in ‘sound’ condition
- Condition C - includes items which are operable
- Condition D -includes items which are ‘inoperable’

- 4.1.2 On the basis of the Condition ratings above balanced with risk ratings the items have been further categorized into appropriate timescales for the work to be carried out:

- Urgent and year 1
- Short Term - 2-3 yrs
- Medium Term 4-6 yrs
- Long term 7-10 yrs
-

- 4.1.3 The summary of the costs of works each year are shown in the table below:

Year	Year 1 2021/22	Short Term Years 2-3	Medium term years 3-4	Long term Years 7-10	Totals costs
Costs	£1,237,965	£4,016,950	£5,183,625	£5,081,300	£15,510,840

- 4.1.4 Other factors included in prioritising works included:

- Other condition factors such as Life expectancy and obsolescence.
- Health and Safety in terms of issues such as likelihood to result in building closure
- Financial factors such as costs effectiveness of carrying out with other works,
- reduction in maintenance liability.
- Sustainability and environmental benefit opportunities

- 4.1.5 The programme has also been compiled with the recently successful Decarbonisation bid to the DFE which was the subject of a committee report to Policy Committee in January 2021. The offer of an additional Decarbonisation Grant of £1.293m, to be spent on school window replacements by end of September 2021, represents a significant injection of resource to the school condition programme, and enables a marked acceleration of the windows replacement programme. The Council has been offered a grant of £1.293m on condition of providing match funding of £1.184m A match funding requirement was not envisaged in the original bid, but sufficient potential match funding has subsequently been identified within approved capital budget for school condition works, enabling the grant to be accepted. To find the match funding necessary to claim the grant will, however, require some re-

prioritisation of the school condition programme for 2021/22. The Council's school estate team has therefore reviewed the programme to identify urgent and health and safety compliance work which could not be reasonably deferred, and other work which can reasonably be re-programmed to the next year.

Original 21/22 condition programme		Proposed 21/22 condition programme to allow match funding	
3 schools pitched roofs	£855,000	3 schools flat roof projects (urgent only)	£713,000
3 schools flat roofs	£850,000	1 windows project	£120,000
1 windows project	£120,000		
Total	£1,825,000	Total	£833,000

* The window project included in the table above requires historic buildings consent and was therefore not included in the Decarbonisation bis as it could not be completed for Sept 2021

The Council's Annual Schools Fabric Condition Budget - £2 million
 Required Match Funding - £1.184 million
 Available Match funding with reduced programme - £1.167 million

This leaves a small notional shortfall of £17k but savings are anticipated in procurement which would bring the actual cost under the estimated cost when they are tendered. If any urgent unexpected issues arise with school condition then, in discussion with Finance colleagues, we have identified scope to make a temporary virement of funds from approved Council energy efficiency capital budgets to enable the match funding to be provided, to be refunded from the school condition budget subsequently.

The original programme included 3 pitched roofs, however due to the requirement for bat surveys within the summer months, the likely start on site dates would have been from September 21 onwards. By pushing the start date back to the following financial year to make match funding available for the windows replacement projects, we would have the added benefit of improved summer weather. Two of the flat roof projects will continue as planned, with the third project reduced to include only the urgent works, with the remaining roofs picked up next year (2022/23).

If any urgent unexpected issues arise with school condition then there is the opportunity to make a temporary virement of funds from approved Council energy efficiency capital budgets.

This use of the Decarbonisation Grant will enable the Council to further tackle the total £15m condition liability.

4.1.6 As per best practice DFE guidance the funding will be allocated to large capital projects in work area packages. The packages will be collated and tendered annually.

Schools will be expected to fund routine maintenance works such as gutter clearance, repainting etc which will allow more of the 'major' items to be funded by the Council within this programme.

For 22/23 the priorities will be those items on the survey results spreadsheet itemised requiring renewal in the short term and those that score highest in terms of priority in the medium-term works. As with the Electrical and Heating Programme which is currently running the works will be carried out on a priority basis to match the annual allocation. This information has been shared with the Schools who support this informed approach.

- 4.1.7 Prior to each financial year more detailed surveys will be carried out on proposed works to inform the future programmes.
- 4.1.8 Each school has been assisted by the Asset Management team to produce a detailed Asset Management Plan for their school and ongoing discussions with each school will clarify the works the Council will be aiming to undertake and those which the schools should be budgeting for.
- 4.1.9 Works will be carried out using either the Council's Intend system or the Southern Construction minor works framework in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules.
- 4.1.10 This proposal has been agreed with Brighter Futures for Children, Director of Education

4.2 Other options Considered

The Council has funding from the DFE specifically for large items of fabric condition for Schools. The Condition surveys have identified works which should be included in such a programme and therefore there is not an option to 'do nothing' in this case. Without a strategically coordinated programme the Council would be undertaking ad hoc works as issues arise - which would not be best practice

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The project will contribute to the Council's strategic aims:

- Healthy environment - The proposed works will reduce RBC's carbon footprint as currently calculated for the purposes of formal Greenhouse Gas Emissions reporting. Further initiatives will emerge as part of the Action Framework currently under development.
- Thriving Communities - The Council has a responsibility to provide the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living. The council therefore needs to ensure the buildings we provide to our schools are in good condition, fit for purpose and meeting all statutory requirements.
- Inclusive Economy - All children should be able to access buildings fit for purpose to promote equality,

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.2. Community engagement or consultancy will be carried out for works where required for the planning process. Parents, staff and pupils will be informed by the Schools individual contact systems.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the equality Act 2010, section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

7.2 The project was assessed against the EIA template, however all community schools have been surveyed and the jobs prioritised based on statutory and strategic risk. The prioritisation is purely based on the needs of the building and not on the users of the building and therefore no discrimination to user groups has been made. A full EIA was therefore not thought to be necessary. See Appendix 1

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council as an employer must, as far as is reasonably practicable, safeguard the health, safety and welfare of its employees under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, in particular a safe place of work with safe access and egress. The school buildings must be safe for the pupils using them.

8.2 In addition, the Council has responsibilities for the safety of its property portfolio under the Building Act 1984, under which regulations have been issued concerning asbestos, water management, electrics, wiring, lighting, ventilation, materials, structure testing, resistance to moisture etc.

8.3 The works to be procured will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts regulations 2015 (as applicable)

8.4 This report has been agreed by the Council's Legal team

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Capital Implications

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
Proposed Capital Expenditure	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Funded by: Grant	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
Net	-	-	-	-

9.2 The Council receives an annual £2m 'Schools Condition Allocation' (SCA) grant. It is proposed to spend the grant to fund this programme unless the funding allocation from the DFE changes

Local authorities, larger Multi Academy trusts (MATs) and larger Voluntary Aided (VA) school bodies receive direct SCA to invest in priorities across the schools for which they are responsible.

9.3 Value for Money

Value for money will be delivered via a planned programme of works which prevents the Council addressing building failure on a reactive basis, incurring additional expenditure and potential school closure. The works have been packaged to optimise savings through better prices. The works also have been packaged together so that if for example scaffolding is required - other works are carried out at the same time which also might also require scaffolding.

9.4 Works will be carried out using frameworks and contractors where there is an agreed schedule of rates, ensuring value for money

9.5 Assessment of key financial risks

Works will be taking place on buildings in use and complications may arise through a need to carry out noisy, disturbing works out of school hours. This may generate

additional cost and time requirements should contractors need to operate at weekends or later into the evening to complete works when the children are not on site.

The on-going COVID-19 pandemic may impact on workforce practices, subcontractor availability and potential supply issues

These financial implications were reviewed by Mark Jones, strategic business partner on 26/3/21.

10. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The corporate estate offers significant opportunities to contribute to the Council's sustainability objectives, and much has been achieved in this regard over recent years. The estate will continue to play a key role in delivering such objectives in the context of the Climate Emergency Declaration for Reading. The proposed works will reduce the Council's carbon footprint as currently calculated for the purposes of formal Greenhouse Gas Emissions reporting. Further initiatives will emerge as part of the Action Framework currently under development.

10.2 Work to all Council buildings is carried out with regard to best sustainable practices and all projects are shared with the Sustainability Team to ensure any opportunities to deliver additional measures and/or attract external funding to support sustainability are explored and maximised.

10.3 This report has been agreed by the Council's Head of Climate Strategy

11.0. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 The project is included within the Capital Programme 2021 - 2024, which was presented to Council and approved on 23rd February 2021.

11.2 External Funding Applications for Low Carbon Investment - Policy Committee report 18 January 2021

11.3 School Estate Heating and Electrical Programme - Policy Committee 15 July 2019

Provide basic details

School Estate Fabric Condition Programme

Directorate: Economic Growth and Neighbourhood services

Service: Education Asset Management

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Linda Church

Job Title: Education Assets manager

Date of assessment: 17/2/21

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

To run a programme of Fabric Condition works across the school estate

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Children from across Reading aged 2-18 in Reading Borough Council Schools and nurseries

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

The programme will provide a planned approach to condition improvements in the school estate

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The schools - safe, comfortable environment

Pupils and their parents - buildings which facilitate learning

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

No *(delete as appropriate)*

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

No *(delete as appropriate)*

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

All community

schools have been surveyed and the jobs prioritised based on statutory and strategic risk. The prioritisation is purely based on the needs of the building and not on the

users of the building and therefore no discrimination to user groups has been made.

Signed (completing officer)

Date

Linda Church

17/2/21

Signed (Lead Officer)

Date