

## **Manchester City Council**

### **Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** **Schools Forum**

**Subject:** **Schools Condition Surveys**

**Report of:** **Directorate Finance Lead – Children’s and Education**

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#### **Summary**

The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to consult the Schools Forum on school funding matters. Planned maintenance is a significant issue for schools for the continuing safe and effective operation of school buildings.

The LA is seeking to commission detailed condition surveys, updated floor plans, and refreshed net capacity assessments. The updated suite of information will be used to effectively prioritise capital investment in the school estate on a needs basis to ensure the ongoing suitability and safety of buildings.

The Local Authority is working through financing options for the commission and will present the proposals to Forum at January 2022 Schools Forum.

#### **Recommendations**

The LA has a duty to consult the Schools Forum on school funding matters. Planned maintenance is a significant issue for schools for the continuing safe and effective operation of school buildings.

The Local Authority is working through financing options for the condition surveys commission and will present the proposals to Forum at January 2022 Schools Forum.

All School Forum members are asked to note and comment on the report.

**Contact Officers:**

Name: Amanda Corcoran  
Position: Director of Education  
Telephone: 0161 234 4314  
E-mail: [amanda.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk)

Name: John Francoli  
Position: Lead for School Places  
E-mail: [john.francoli@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:john.francoli@manchester.gov.uk)

Name: Reena Kohli  
Position: Head of Finance Children, Education and Schools Finance  
Telephone: 0161 234 4235  
E-mail: [reena.kohli@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:reena.kohli@manchester.gov.uk)

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Day to day management and responsibility for the safety and use of school buildings and their sites rests with a member of the school's senior leadership team who must hold responsibility for the estate, ensuring it is compliant and suitable. The governing body must provide oversight and hold the school leadership team to account on matters of performance, including that of the estate.
- 1.2 To enable effective estate management, the DfE expect that schools have the three following documents; Estate Vision; Estate Strategy; and an Asset Management Plan. Maintenance of the estate is expected to be formalised in a clear plan which includes a prioritised programme of maintenance works based on current and costed condition data i.e. a full condition survey.
- 1.3 Devolved formula capital (DFC) is direct funding for individual institutions to maintain their buildings and fund small-scale capital projects. It is allocated to maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools, special schools, pupil referral units, academies and free schools, non-maintained special schools and sixth form colleges. Every school gets a fixed lump sum and a variable amount based on pupil numbers
- 1.4 Every institution eligible for an allocation is assigned to a responsible body, which is the body responsible for maintaining the condition of that institution's buildings. They are local authorities, multi-academy trusts, state-funded special schools, and other specialist providers for state-funded pupils. Allocations for voluntary aided (VA) schools are calculated for all VA schools, as a group, in each local authority area. Responsible bodies receive funding for all the institutions for which they are responsible.
- 1.5 School Condition Allocations (SCA) provide funding to those bodies responsible for one or more schools to meet their own local condition priorities across their schools. Allocations are updated annually to reflect new or closing schools and where a school has moved to a new responsible body. The SCA takes into account the information the DfE collected through the Condition Data Collection (CDC) about the condition of schools. Manchester's allocation of SCA in 2021/22 was £3.985m.
- 1.6 The DfE are clear that the CDC is a data collection programme and is not a full condition survey. The CDC cannot, on its own, provide enough information to support a comprehensive condition report for any individual establishment that is suitable for asset management planning.
- 1.7 A report detailing the key findings of the CDC was published by the DfE in May 2021 and identified a total condition need across the school estate of £11.4 billion.

## **2. SCHOOL CONDITION SURVEYS**

2.1 The Council is committed to raising standards of attainment in all schools and believes that the quality of school premises plays a key part in achieving this aim. There is an ongoing commitment to ensure the suitability of local authority maintained schools which requires up to date condition surveys to inform prioritisation of works and capital investment.

2.2 Condition surveys should be undertaken every 5 years and are used to:

- identify what work is needed to maintain the estate
- consider how much works might cost
- prioritise work within available funds
- understand if the nature of the buildings change

This information will inform the planned maintenance programme, which reflects potential future capital investment.

2.3 In February 2021 the DfE announced the first 50 schools which would be rebuilt as part of the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) with an additional 50 schools announced in July 2021. These schools have been identified using data collected in the CDC programme to target those with highest condition need. Sandilands Primary School is the only setting in Manchester which has been announced to date. The DfE held a consultation in Summer 2021 about possible changes to the approach for identifying schools for future rounds of the SRP which may enable responsible bodies to submit bids.

2.4 To achieve effective investment of both DFC and SCA there is a requirement to commission a new programme of school condition surveys, updated floor plans, and net capacity assessments across all schools for which the Council is responsible - the total cost of this work is £0.7m. The Council is currently working through options to identify how this will be funded. A refreshed suite of school condition surveys may also prove useful in submitting evidence-based bids to rebuild more schools in Manchester in future phases of the SRP.

2.5 The surveys will be undertaken at community, voluntary controlled and foundation schools where the council is the responsible body. They will likely be completed in batches with the first 10 schools visited between January and March 2022. Schools are being prioritised for a visit based on CDC data, age of building and known issues.

2.6 The condition survey will enable the Council to prioritise work which represent a significant investment in the school estate. This investment will deliver improvements in conditions, reduce health and safety risks, and make a substantial contribution towards the Council's energy and carbon reduction targets.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The LA has a duty to consult the Schools Forum on school funding matters. Planned maintenance is a significant issue for schools for the continuing safe and effective operation of school buildings.
- 3.2 The Local Authority is working through financing options for the condition surveys commission and will present the proposals to Forum at January 2022 Schools Forum.
- 3.3 All School Forum members are asked to note and comment on the report.