Agenda Item No: 4

SCHOOL BUILDING STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS

To:	Children and Young People's Committee
Meeting Date:	19th January 2021
From:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities.
Electoral division(s):	All
Forward Plan ref:	KD2021/005
Key decision:	Yes
Outcome:	The Committee is asked to consider the standards for the future construction of new schools and major extensions to existing schools in the key areas of:

a. building costs

b. the size of school buildings and the use of Department for Education (DfE) area guidelines

c. the output specification for the building

d. the implications of the national and local policy on the climate emergency and the de-carbonisation of construction

The outcome of this consideration will be:

- the use of the National Schools Benchmarking Data Report (NSDBR) measure for setting a target cost for school buildings and the area of accommodation provided with reference to DfE area guidelines. This will contribute to budget setting within the capital programme and the negotiation of developer contributions (s106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)) towards the cost of schools' infrastructure.

- to improve transparency on the cost of school buildings by establishing a baseline standard for schools in terms of build area(s) and output specification. Justified variations required to support the learning environment or respond to existing or emerging policy requirements will be able to be identified clearly and costed.

  The Committee report will also consider the current approach to maintenance of the existing maintained school building stock to ensure that these schools remain fit for purpose and that emergency incidents and closure days are kept to the minimum possible.

Recommendations: The Committee is recommended to:

a. Approve the proposal that the Council adopt the updated average of the range published in the National Schools Benchmarking Data Report (NSDBR) comparison measures as the target cost per square metre for the construction of school buildings, for both new builds and extensions.

b. Reaffirm the decision taken in the Autumn of 2019 to use DfE BB103 area guidelines, but allow the use of the flexibility it provides to ensure that the building solution best reflects the educational requirements of the school on a project by project basis

c. Adopt the DfE building output specification subject to agreement of the variations set out in section 2.4 of the report.

d. Agree that the costs of meeting policy and regulatory requirements on climate change, the environment and planning that fall outside the standards adopted in a) to c) above are identified separately with additional capital investment subject to the satisfactory conclusion of a supporting business case. That for existing school buildings, central Government grants continue to be sought to fund the replacement of gas and oil heating systems with more sustainable solutions.

e. That current work continues on establishing a needs-based budget for school maintenance and condition works for consideration in the 2021/22 annual review of the capital programme

f. That any change on the current policy in terms of the provision of fire suppression measures in new and extended schools (sprinklers) await the conclusion of the current DfE review of fire management policy for schools

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1. Background

1.1 The Council has an education capital programme for the period 2021 to 2026 with a current value of £460m (excluding temporary accommodation, condition and suitability work). The programme is reviewed annually, with many of the larger schemes being dependent on the pace of new housing development.

1.2 There will continue to be a sizeable education capital programme requiring significant levels of investment. There is a continuing need, therefore, to keep under review the adopted building standards for schools as these feed directly into their capital cost. Across a programme valued at £460m small percentage changes in cost either way represent significant sums of money.

1.3 As part of the consideration of the five-year capital programme in the Autumn of 2019, a decision was taken to adopt DfE Building Bulletin (BB) 103 space standards for schemes funded by the Council. The decision made was in the context of a need to reduce the Council's overall level of borrowing. The decision has the potential to reduce the area of new build 2 form of entry (FE) primary school by up to 15% at the BB103 minimum area.

1.4 The decision taken was in response to a financial need. There was insufficient time to consider the wider implications of this decision for teaching and learning and other Council policies such as those on the climate emergency. It has also resulted in a two-tier approach to the building of schools in Cambridgeshire. In major development areas, new schools are funded largely through developer contributions (section 106 funding). These large housing schemes are planned over many years, which means that some funding was negotiated and agreed ahead of the change to the DfE standards contained in BB103 and the decision taken by the Council in 2019. These schemes often reflected earlier guidance in DfE BB99 (primary schools) and BB98 (secondary schools). These guidelines were more generous on area/space and some elements of the building specification than those in the DfE BB103 that replaced them. The difference does have a cost implication.

1.5. It is against this background that a wider review of school building standards has taken place.

1.6 In addition, there have been a higher number of emergency incidents in schools this year. While some of these might be attributable to more extreme weather events and climate change, it has prompted a consideration of how the Council ensures that schools are fit for purpose and that the risk of closures and loss of school days are minimised.

2. Main Issues

2.1 History of School Building Guidance

2.1.1 Building Bulletin 98 (BB98) and Building Bulletin 99 (BB99) were the Briefing Framework for Secondary and Primary School Projects respectively from 2004 to 2014.

BB98 and BB99 built on the advice of many local authorities at the time, generally acknowledging that teaching methodology had had changed with a move to greater inclusivity for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND). The classrooms were, therefore, designed to adapt to a multi-mode delivery of learning and to be fully accessible to all pupils to reflect the move towards greater inclusion, i.e. they enabled a pupil using a wheelchair to access all areas of the room and all activities easily, without any disruption to classroom

layouts. They also allowed for additional adult support for students, including those with SEND, within the classroom environment.

2.1.2 BB103 area guidelines were introduced as a replacement document for both BB98 and BB99 in 2014. These reduced the overall area of school buildings and through accompanying changes to the output specification for the buildings sought to reduce the building cost measured using the cost per square metre rate. This replacement was, in part, a reflection of some concerns about the overly generous areas and ambitions of the buildings more recently constructed during the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. BSF was the name given to the government's investment programme in secondary school buildings in England in the mid-2000s. The programme was ambitious in terms of design aspiration, funding, timescales and objectives but questions were raised about the cost effectiveness of the scheme and an undue focus on large-scale new build. BSF was terminated before the full programme of identified works was concluded.

2.1.3 BB103 seeks to standardise school design and reduce the area of many school spaces, including classrooms. For example, in BB98 (secondary) the standard classroom area was 56-60sqm whilst in BB99 (primary) it was 66sqm for Reception and 60sqm for Key Stage (KS) 1 and 2. In their successor, BB103, the standard classroom size is 55sqm for secondary and 62sqm for Reception/KS1 and 55sqm for KS2.

2.1.4 Due to overall development planning timescales, and the fluctuating rates of build out of our new communities within Cambridgeshire, certain projects completed after the publication of BB103 (and others that still appear in our current capital programme) were negotiated prior to the introduction of BB103, and to the higher cost/per sqm that BB98 and BB99 allowed. These schools also accord with the design aspirations of both district and county planning authorities and urban design officers (especially where a Development Design Code exists). Some individual developers of major new settlements also require enhanced design of school buildings seeking ‘Landmark’ status using high profile architects for schools that are potentially ‘award winning.’ Developers requiring such an approach have been prepared to support the additional area (above BB103) and design costs in the negotiation of the s106 agreements that provide the capital funding for the schools’ infrastructure required.

2.1.5 As a result of the dichotomy that ensued, Cambridgeshire developed its own set of employer’s requirements which included area schedules that stayed broadly within the guidelines set by BB98 and BB99 but were updated to reflect BB103*. This required the use of the flexibility that exists within BB103 to provide above the minimum areas set out in the Schedule of Accommodation Tool (SoA - see 2.3.2).

* It is worth noting that if the Council were to use the upper end of the area range for mainstream schools in BB103 then it is comparable with BB99.

2.1.6 In the Autumn of 2019, BB103 minimum areas were adopted when the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee considered reductions in the capital programme and overall levels of Council borrowing. The BB103 guidelines were to apply to schools built using the Council’s allocation of basic need funding or prudential borrowing and not those funded through section 106 agreements already concluded or in the process of negotiation. This included reducing the quality standards of schools to DfE output specification for materials and building fabric, as well as using minimum area recommendations – overall a reduction of 15% in area and a reduction of costs.

This, in summary, means that the Council currently operates to two different cost, area and quality standards. That is:

- Schools and extensions supported by S106 that has previously been and continue to be negotiated by the Council and at higher sqm cost that came with the flexibility that BB99 and BB98 allowed. The procurement of better quality building fabric, enhanced space standards and better fixtures and fittings (important when considering the ongoing maintenance and management by the schools and academy trusts).

- Council-funded schools and extensions in line with the minimum areas in BB103 and at a lower sqm cost rate arising from a reduced area requirement and the lower quality output specification for building fabric and fixtures and fittings.

2.1.7 While it may appear desirable to have school buildings across the County constructed to similar standards and costs, whatever the source of funding, there are challenges in moving in that direction. The Council could be seen to be levelling down standards if there are opportunities to negotiate funding at higher levels than would normally be required to deliver a school building to BB103 standards. Equally, the planning framework applied in many of these new communities could mean that gaining planning permission for a school designed to BB103 standards will be extremely difficult.

2.1.8 The adoption of BB103 for all schemes but retaining the ability to use the flexibility available within it would provide an opportunity to bring these two standards much closer together.

2.2 Building Costs

2.2.1 There are two main ways by which the costs for school building projects are calculated. This is either by cost per m2, or cost per pupil place created.

2.2.2 The cost per m2 can be calculated in two ways either net or gross i.e.

- The net cost per m2 represents the cost per m2 of the Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA), exclusive of fees, externals works, abnormal costs, including minor building works, alterations and loose furniture and fittings and ICT. Fixed fixtures and fittings are included. It is inclusive of pro-rata additions for preliminaries, design risk, overheads and profit.

- The gross cost per m2, is the total project cost per m2 of GIFA.

2.2.3 The building cost per place represents the total project cost divided by the number of additional places created by the works. Where the cost per pupil measure is used as a comparator there may be an inherent flaw, as you will not truly be comparing like for like for education projects as there are so many possible variations. This is particularly the case when expanding existing schools, as the amount of space already available and its overall quality will have a clear impact on the area of new accommodation required to facilitate an expansion by any given number of pupil places.

2.2.4 Initially, the DfE used the average building cost per pupil place as a means to allocate basic need capital funding to local authorities using the annual School Capacity (SCAP) return. The national building cost per place was multiplied by the identified shortfall of places in each local authority area to arrive at a capital allocation.

2.2.5 The use of the cost per place measure was subsequently extended by the DfE. It was used as the basis for the DfE Audit of how efficiently basic need funding was being used by local authorities. Officers, in discussion with DfE, have maintained that it is not the most reliable measure of building costs. However, it has continued to be used as the cost measure in the Audit and the Council has subsequently achieved the 5% recommended reduction in build costs using this measure.

2.2.6 Given the significant variations that can occur in the cost per place measure (as set out above), it is not considered a reliable basis on which to cost future projects for inclusion in the capital programme. The SCAP process also excludes “abnormals” from its scorecard costs. Abnormals are items such as ground conditions requiring additional foundations, or planning conditions requiring a particular type of brick. In Cambridgeshire, our projects regularly encounter poor ground conditions requiring piled foundations. Cambridgeshire also develops a significant number of new schools on green field sites and this generates abnormal costs because of the need to provide supporting highways infrastructure and new power supplies and networks for the basic utilities.

2.2.7 The Council, therefore, favours the use of cost measures using the construction cost per sqm. There are various national and regional measures using cost per sqm but the one considered most appropriate is the NSDBR net and gross costs. They best reflect the definitions given above, although the gross costs would include for all abnormals in the rates and additional costs need to be added for statutory fees, survey costs, loose furniture and fittings and equipment, internal client costs including programme management fees and legal costs that are excluded. Land acquisition costs where they arise should be excluded.

2.2.8 Calculating a gross cost per m2 provides a reflection of the cost of the project for inclusion in the capital programme as it will include all abnormals based upon the experience of delivering projects in Cambridgeshire. However, to ensure a fair comparison between schemes and geographical areas it is essential that all abnormals, which vary from project to project, are removed. Their removal provides a net cost per sqm of build.

2.2.9 A net cost per m2 can be used as a straight comparison between two different buildings. When broken down elementally you can then see which part of the build costs more than another and examine the reasons for this variation which may arise from the specification, design and quantities to be provided.

2.10 The NSDBR net cost per sqm should be used for managing performance on the delivery of capital projects and by providing a comparison of our costs with other local authorities and the other regional and national benchmark costs that are available.

Based on NSDBR (June 2019), using the whole sample, average nett rates £/m2 for primary schools for the first financial quarter, that is April-June inclusive, in the year 2021 (@1Q21) with a location factor of 1.00

- New build - Average £2235/m2, including 2% uplift for sprinklers. Therefore, range should be from -5% to +10% which is £2123/m2 to £2459/m2.

- Extensions/Remodelling - Average £2216/m2. Therefore, range should be from -5% to +10% which is £2105/m2 to £2438/m2.

The NSDBR study has been welcomed and supported by the Cabinet Office and the DfE. It is important as it publishes both local and central government costs in a coherent and

standardised manner. It is, therefore, suggested that the Council seeks to achieve the updated national average in this range

2.3 Area Guidelines

2.3.1 BB103 sets out simple, non-statutory area guidelines for mainstream school buildings and sites for all age ranges from 3 to 19 (BB104 does the same for SEND and Alternative School Provision). It was introduced in June 2014 and superseded the area guidelines in BB98 (secondary) and BB99 (primary).

2.3.2 Rather than set specific areas for a particular number of pupils in a given type of space, BB103 provides a range, the bottom being the recommended Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) minimum area.

2.3.3 BB103 supports the use of the SoA tool to calculate the number and types of spaces recommended for a specific school based on its proposed pupil numbers, age range and curriculum. It is the DfE's 'base line'.

2.3.4 Greater flexibility to use the whole BB103 area range for a given size of school would enable officers to develop a schedule of accommodation with maintained schools and academies that allows for specific situations, teaching styles and forms of school organisation. For example, flexibility in the area provided for some spaces may be required where there is a very high level of pupils with SEND, or where the organisation of a school requires class sizes in excess of 30. The Council also needs the ability and flexibility to respond to overall demand or in year movement of pupils between schools, which can mean asking primary schools to organise on the basis of class sizes of up to 32 or 34 in single age year groups. Other schools may require higher levels of specific intervention work taking place with individual pupils or in small groups. In this situation, larger or more group rooms may be required at the partial expense of other types of space.

2.3.5 In new developments, reflecting the demographics, the Council develops and grows schools through a number of build phases. In these situations, the core of accommodation for a much larger school is constructed in the first phase (e.g. hall/kitchen/library) with additional classroom spaces only provided in subsequent phases as the demand for places rises. This practical approach to the development of a new school requires some ability to depart from BB103 area guidelines in phase 1. Equally, the Council's policy in respect of the size of new primary schools, which can now be as large as 4FE or 840 places, requires the use of more two-storey build solutions. A simplified and cost effective two-storey build requires uniformity in sizes of space between the ground and first floors. In primary schools the larger (62sqm) early years and reception classrooms are on the ground floor for both practical reasons and for the delivery of the curriculum. The KS2 classrooms above could, under DfE BB103 minimum areas, be 55sqm but this would require a less efficient and, therefore, more expensive build solution. The use of the flexibility within BB103 to provide larger KS2 classrooms on the first floor avoids such a situation.

2.3.6 The use of the flexibility afforded in BB103 would bring the build areas and standards closer to those of the new schools being provided in new developments because, as explained above, there is overlap between the two standards once you move away from BB103 minimum area schedules.

2.3.7 It is recommended that BB103 area guidelines continue to be used but the flexibility within them is used to respond to different forms of school organisation, different teaching and learning requirements and for the practical construction reasons set out in 2.3.6. Where this flexibility is used, the reasons for doing so will be recorded as part of the process for signing off project milestone reports.

2.4 The Output Specification

The Output Specification defines the client's functional requirements for the proposed school.

General Building Requirements

2.4.1 It is particularly important on public sector projects and, as the Council's preferred approach is design and build, to appoint an integrated supply team (including designers, contractors and suppliers) under a single contract to design and construct the school.

2.4.2 The integrated supply team is appointed with no design information, but with just the output-based specification to set out our requirements for schools and, in particular, the building fabric and materials, mechanical and electrical engineering and school grounds.

2.4.3 The purpose of these documents is to provide guidance on the level of provision and requirements within our existing and new school estate. It is essentially a checklist of items that should be included or, at least thought through, when designing good-quality school provision. Not every space listed within the documents would be required as this will be dependent on curriculum and number of pupils within a school.

2.4.4 The Council's output specification ("the Colour Guides") hold a greater level of detail than the comparable BB103 / DfE equivalent documents. There are a few items where the Council has built on lessons learned and is quite specific in detailing its requirements and, therefore, differ from the DfE specification. These items are set out below alongside the reasons for their inclusion:

- Roofing. Use of either 'Single Ply' or 'Three Ply' Systems. The Council has moved to the more expensive 'Three Ply' system as a result of fabric failures found in the 'Single-Ply' system and the occurrence of leaks in new, and relatively new, buildings. It is recommended that the Council continues to use a 'Three Ply' roofing system, particularly as the requirement for more mechanical plant using the roof space increases (photovoltaic panels, air-handling units etc.) the roofing material needs to be more robust.
- Roof Protection Systems. The Council requires parapets on all flat roofs and this method is preferred over the expensive to maintain 'Man-Safe' harness requirements. From a site safety perspective, they are of benefit both during construction and maintenance (and the fact they 'hide' roof mechanical plant) but it does mean an extra 1.2m of building height to the perimeter of the whole of the footprint.
- Ceiling Heights. Currently the guidance asks for a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.7m (to the underside of any suspended/actual ceiling). Where possible, increasing the ceiling height can improve air quality because of the larger classroom volume, although other measures to achieve effectively ventilated classrooms are often

required. The Council could review and move to the BB103 minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.6m, where this change will not compromise the building function, as it could contribute towards some cost savings.

- Metal Window Casement. To meet Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) targets windows are required that meet the security standards 'Secure by Design.' However, this could be achieved using a number of materials, not just metal, and can be reviewed so that energy efficiency and security are the main considerations in the choice of materials.

- Cladding Materials. The choice of materials has evolved to reflect robustness as the main criterion. For example, brick faced systems can be cost effective and robust and are the preference of the planning authority in many settings. Render can be a suitable alternative and less costly but there are issues at ground floor level concerning its robustness compared to, for example, brick or blockwork. The other issue with choice of cladding material is the risk of fire, as some systems can just melt, and support the spread.

The materials used on our schools are robust and represent a mid-range specification for the required function.

2.4.5 It is recommended that the BB103 / DfE Output Specification remains the baseline for all our projects but the items above continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis dependent on the funds available within the project and the ongoing experience derived from the performance of buildings post construction.

2.5 Sustainable School Buildings

2.5.1 The most significant changes to the output specification for school buildings will arise from the continued development of sustainable school buildings. In 2008, the Council adopted BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) as the measure or standard for the design of new school buildings. The BREEAM ratings range from Acceptable (In-Use scheme only) to Pass, Good, Very Good, Excellent and Outstanding and it is reflected in a series of stars on the BREEAM certificate. The Council's adopted policy is to achieve a Very Good BREEAM rating with an aspiration to achieve Excellent wherever possible. Some planning authorities, in Cambridgeshire, are now pushing for public buildings to achieve the BREEAM Excellent rating as a minimum requirement.

2.5.2 Since the adoption of BREEAM, the policy on the sustainability of buildings has moved on with both national and local policies on the climate emergency increasingly focussing on carbon reduction and near zero carbon buildings (NZEB) in terms of both the construction and materials used, energy use and energy generation.

2.5.3 BREEAM is a much broader definition of sustainability covering issues such as Energy, Health and Wellbeing, Innovation, Land Use, Materials, Management, Pollution, Transport, Waste and Water. There is a need to respond to the new policy requirements and develop an alternative Council measure or standard for buildings meeting the Council's own requirements on NZEB.

2.5.4 The approach being taken is to develop this standard by applying the NZEB definitions and targets to a live school building project. The Alconbury Weald Education Campus (comprising a special school, secondary school and a post 16 facility) is in the early stages of design and has been selected for this exercise. Although, the secondary school and post 16 facility may be delayed, the NZEB requirement can be applied to the special school element if that is the only part of the project to be delivered by September 2023.

2.5.5 The approach will also include a control option of building the schools to the existing standard so that the additional capital costs to achieve NZEB is transparent.

2.5.6 The current working assumption is that any additional capital investment for NZEB will need to be supported by a business case that outlines how, working with the end user of the buildings, the benefits of reduced energy usage and on site green energy generation will be shared to deliver a long-term payback of the Council's investment.

2.6 Existing Schools – Fit for Purpose

2.6.1 Condition and Maintenance

The Council receives an annual condition grant from the DfE to invest in condition works in maintained schools. Multi academy trusts, individual academies and voluntary aided schools receive their own capital allocations for condition works direct from DfE.

The annual allocation of this condition grant from DfE is in the region of £2.4-£2.5m and the Council supplements this with its own capital borrowing. In recent years, this has been in the order of £500K. The DfE allocates funding to each individual local authority with reference to the high-level school condition data it holds and contains details about the age of buildings and the form of construction.

The funding is used to deliver an annual programme of condition and minor works in maintained schools (eg roofing, window and doors, pipework and boiler replacement). The works are prioritised using the Council's own, more detailed, condition reports on its schools that are undertaken every 5-7 years. The programme tackles the highest priority work identified in these reports; priority 1 or 2 items and condition grade D or C. This is based on the DfE formula of condition rating A-D (A being best and D being worst condition) and priority rating 1-4 (1 being highest priority and 4 being lowest). Additional works may be included in the programme if there is considered to be a risk of a school closure or a particular health and safety or statutory compliance issue.

The Capital Programme Board has supported the programme of works but has queried whether the annual programme described above is improving the overall condition of the schools' estate, maintaining it in a steady state or whether it is in decline. It was considered that an opportunity existed to look at establishing a needs-based approach to budgeting for the condition works. This was a particular concern given the number of emergency property incidents schools had experienced recently.

The individual school condition reports will be used to consider the investment needs of schools over the next five years using the new data gathered during 2020. A view can then be taken on the levels of investment required to meet the overall objectives set for the school's estate; level of improvement, steady state, managed decline.

Any proposal for a needs-based budget for future condition works would require the preparation of a full business case for the Capital Programme Board and approval by this Committee when it considers the five-year capital programme.

The available budget is unable to support, or factor in, the Council's current climate policy in which the aim is to bring the Council's owned and occupied assets to a state where they are taken off oil and gas heating to a more sustainable/renewable heating source. This would generally entail additional technologies to support renewable heating (eg Solar PV) and, in a lot of cases, upgrades to the school's power supply network. The condition grant cannot currently sustain the relative high cost to replace existing boiler plant for sustainable technologies.

There are opportunities to consider future funding options in relation to school's boiler plant and energy use. The Council's Energy Team have already undertaken many schemes in schools (both maintained schools and Academies) utilising the Government grant via the Renewable Heating Incentive scheme. Schools pay back the loan over a 15-20-year period. This scheme is due to end in early 2021. Grants are likely to be available via the Government's new Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme, although current bidding rounds are extremely tight in terms of timescale and as many schools as possible are already working with the Energy team to make use of this funding source.

Future funding is likely to be available beyond this current round but bidding rounds are likely to be on a similarly tight turnaround. Grants may also not fund the entire project for each school included in any bid. Therefore, future capital funding may be required from the Council to support future bids.

2.6.2 Fire Safety in School Buildings

Following a fire at Mayfield Primary School, Cambridge, in 2005, the Council considered and adopted a policy to provide fire sprinklers in all new school buildings and in schools which were being substantially expanded and refurbished.

The DfE policy approach differs for schools provided through the national free school's programme and delivered through the DfE contractor framework. The provision of sprinklers here is determined by the outcome of a risk assessment.

In Cambridgeshire, following review and agreement by the Audit & Risk Management team, we have adopted a similar policy provision to that of the DfE. That is, the provision of fire sprinklers in new schools is determined on the basis of a risk assessment. The risk assessment considers factors such as:

- The likelihood and Incidence of arson / deliberate fires in the locality; fires in other schools in the locality (in the last 5 years)
- Security measures – buildings and school grounds and opportunities for arson
- Building height and building construction; building design and routes for fire spread; building size (floor area); building distribution (separation)
- Risk of fire from school activity; out-of-hours use of school facilities (by the public); building users at risk

- Fire safety and fire protection measures: passive fire protection measures (fire engineered buildings); design relaxations of passive measures (for education reasons) (fire engineered buildings); fire detection and warning system; means of escape (and emergency lighting and signage) (fire engineered buildings); occupancy density; Fire Service notification; Fire Service location;

- Consequences/ impact of fire: impact of fire on users (injury); impact of fire on learning; impact on community; potential cost and environmental impact

Upon conclusion of the fire safety / fire protection survey and risk assessment if the score indicates the school is at a high level of risk then sprinklers are provided.

Similarly, if the fire safety / fire protection survey and risk assessment indicates the school is at a low level of risk then sprinklers are not provided.

There is no proposal to review Cambridgeshire's approach at this stage. The new Fire Safety Bill is going through parliament at present. Following approval of the Bill, new regulations/ laws will be created. Initially the emphasis is going to be on high rise residential buildings (as a result of Grenfell) but the expectation is that the use of the word "in-scope buildings" in the legislation is going to provide the opportunity to add more buildings down the line and this will almost certainly include educational and school premises.

The DfE has already consulted local authorities on its review of Building Bulletin 100 (BB100), the guidance document on fire management for school buildings.

The new regulations will take account of all aspects of fire safety, including building standards, fire resistant materials, management and evacuation procedures and fire suppression measures (sprinklers).

2.6.3 Suitability

Suitability is applicable to all types of school: nursery, primary, secondary, special, and alternative provision. It covers the number, size, shape and location of spaces; environmental conditions; fittings and fixed furniture; information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure; and health and safety/security issues. All internal spaces and external areas teaching and non-teaching, are assessed and issues are categorised according to their impact on educational standards.

Suitability is defined as how well premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers and other users, and contribute towards raising standards of education and providing access to the full curriculum. Suitability assessments are concerned with the numbers and characteristics of each type of internal space and external area. They would typically identify issues such as undersized classrooms, the absence of a particular type of specialist space or a space that was poorly equipped for practical work. Assessments also deal with some aspects of health and safety requirements.

Non-statutory guidance for assessing the suitability of school premises was published in April 2000. It was the fourth document published in the then Department for Education and Employment's (DfE) guidance on Asset Management Planning (AMP) in schools.

The guidance states that it is desirable that assessments should be made of all schools but local authorities may decide that with limited resources the initial focus has to be in identifying

those schools with the greatest suitability problems. Local authorities used to receive a specific annual capital grant to address the highest priority issues identified in its assessments and recorded in its schools' Asset Management Plan (AMP). This capital grant was discontinued in 2010.

In Cambridgeshire, suitability issues in schools are only addressed where they are part of an expansion or maintenance project. In the majority of cases the expectation is that the school will fund their individual suitability projects and works, via their Devolved Formula Capital (DFC), although these funds cannot address more significant issues requiring higher levels of investment. The possible exception is Health and Safety/Security issues when the matter is an issue of statutory compliance beyond the scope of a school's DFC. In these cases, the Council will fund works from its minor works programme.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Providing sufficient and suitable school and early years places in good quality buildings will ensure that the full range of children's services can be more easily accessed by families in greatest need.

- Providing access to local and high quality educational provision and associated children's services should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work.

- Schools and early years' education and childcare services are also providers of local employment.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Capital investment in public infrastructure provides employment and supports economic development. Delivery of school projects through the Cambridgeshire Design and Build contractor framework will support the development of local supply chains and businesses. This can be assessed using appropriate KPI measures of social value.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

- The Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that every child whose parents want them educated in the state-funded sector are offered a school place. In addition, it has a duty to secure sufficient and suitable early years and childcare places. The school building programme in our new and expanding communities delivers the infrastructure to achieve this.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- School buildings will be designed to comply with Cambridgeshire ‘s policies on the climate emergency and targets for carbon reduction

- Suppliers to the proposed New Cambridgeshire design and build framework will be expected to meet a set of carbon emissions criteria before being awarded a place on the framework, and will be monitored throughout the duration of the framework via KPIs. The framework will be tendered in the Spring of 2021.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The decisions taken in terms of building standards outlined in this report will be reflected in the costs of individual projects within the Council’s five-year capital programme and the 10 year forward look.

- Local costs will be utilised, wherever possible, as the basis for the negotiation of developer contributions towards the cost of education infrastructure and these will need to reflect the national benchmarks referred to in this report in order to avoid challenge. It is also important to validate costs in this way to ensure that other public infrastructure providers seeking contributions are satisfied and that the overall viability of housing development is not adversely affected.

- The approach suggested in paragraph 2.5 to sustainable buildings and carbon reduction will require additional upfront investment with payback periods determined through the preparation of a business case.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The procurement, evaluation and award of the new framework/term contracts will be undertaken by the 0-19 Education Capital Team, working in partnership with Procurement and LGSS Law to ensure that the relevant compliance measures are met.

- Contractor performance will be managed and monitored against a set of KPIs and regular engagement meetings throughout the period of the framework.

- The re-procurement of the contractor’s design and build will be undertaken in compliance with EU procurement rules. It is proposed to award the contract on a three year (plus one) basis.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The Council is required as part of the construction process to comply with all the requirements of the employer for capital building works. The contractors are scrutinised on their statutory compliance when being evaluated for participation on the Council’s frameworks. Contractors health and safety plans are scrutinised for each individual works contract awarded.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

All accommodation to be provided via the proposed framework has to be compliant with the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty and current Council standards.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

Significant levels of engagement and consultation take place with all schools and early years' settings identified for potential expansion and further in the finalisation of the detailed design proposals. Individual schemes are also presented to local communities for comment and feedback in advance of seeking planning permission.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local Members are kept informed of planned changes to provision in their wards and their views sought on emerging issues and identified actions to address these.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- If children and young people have access to local schools and associated children's services, they are more likely to attend them by either cycling or walking rather than through local authority-provided transport or car.

- They will also be able to access more readily out of school activities such as sport and homework clubs and develop friendship groups within their own community. This should contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes
Name of Officer: Gus da Silva

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes
Name of Officer: Anthony Day

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health Yes

Name of Officer: Kate Parker

5.0 Source documents

5.1 Building Bulletins 98,99, 100 and 103

5.2 CCC colour design guides

5.3 NSDBR cost information

5.4 County Council capital business plan 2021-26

5.5 DFE Audit of Capital Programme

5.6 Documents/ electronic links available on request from Ian.Trafford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk