

PRIORITY SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME 2 (PSBP2): GUIDE TO SUBMITTING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

On 1 May, the Minister of State for Schools, David Laws, announced that the Government would fund a further phase of the Priority School Building Programme, with a value of around £2 billion. The new phase is a five year programme (operating between 2015 - 2021) to undertake major rebuilding and refurbishment projects in those schools and sixth form colleges¹ in the very worst condition.

The Department has been provided with a long term capital settlement in order to address the condition of the school estate. The majority of this funding will be allocated directly to those who are responsible for maintaining school buildings, so that they can determine priorities at the local level. The Priority School Building Programme is not intended to replace those wider efforts to support local authorities, dioceses, sixth form colleges, academies and multi-academy trusts in addressing the condition needs of their estates. Rather it will run alongside these in order to address individual projects that are of such a significant scale that it would be difficult to pay for them through regular formulaic maintenance allocations.

For this reason, the Department will set a high bar for inclusion and will take forward a relatively small number of projects at schools shown to be in the worst condition where that condition necessitates a complete rebuild or major refurbishment. The limited nature of the programme should be taken into account when considering whether to apply.

The first phase of the Priority School Building Programme includes a privately financed element as a pilot. Until the results of the pilot have been fully evaluated, the Department would not wish to commit to a further substantial private finance programme and therefore this new phase will be entirely capital based.

This guide provides information and sets out the process for local authorities, sixth form colleges, trustees, faith bodies and academies to submit an expression of interest for schools for which they are responsible. The online system for submitting expressions of interest is expected to go live in early June and **will close on 18 July**. We are therefore making relevant information available now in order to give those bodies the opportunity to consider the questions the Department will be asking and prepare the necessary information. In the event of any changes to the information requested, between now and the online system going live, we will ensure these are clearly flagged. We would expect any changes or additions to be minimal. Please note that applications must be submitted via the online system. No hard copies or email versions of the expression of interest will be considered.

Expressions of interest

Expressions of interest are invited for the entire school site, or for one or more individual buildings where those buildings are in very poor condition. An expression of interest can be made for any state-funded school or sixth form college.

¹ Where references are made to schools throughout this document, this includes sixth form colleges.

These include:

- community schools
- foundation schools
- voluntary-aided schools
- voluntary-controlled schools
- academies (including studio schools and UTCs)
- free schools
- maintained special schools (including general hospital schools)
- non-maintained special schools
- sixth form colleges
- pupil referral units
- city technology colleges

Local authorities will be able to submit expressions of interest for any maintained schools in their area which they think will meet the bar for inclusion, as well as any academy that wishes to be included in the local authority's submission.

Faith bodies and other partners within the voluntary-aided sector may submit their own expressions of interest for individual voluntary-aided schools and where they do so, no submission should be made for the same school through the local authority.

Individual academies may wish to be included in their local authority's expression of interest, or may alternatively apply on their own behalf. Multi academy trusts may apply on behalf of their schools. Schools which are in the process of converting to academy status may likewise choose either to be included in the local authority's expression of interest, or else may apply on their own behalf.

Sixth form colleges should apply on their own behalf.

Only one expression of interest will be accepted per school.

Eligibility

We do not want to discourage expressions of interest where there is significant need. But neither do we want to raise expectations unrealistically and encourage speculative bids which are unlikely to be successful.

To help bodies determine the likelihood of an expression of interest being successful we have provided the following application guidelines. We would strongly encourage all interested parties to consider these guidelines carefully when selecting which of their schools or buildings to include. We anticipate the bar for inclusion will be high, to ensure that we are targeting our resources most effectively on those schools in the very worst condition. We would expect each body to submit expressions of interest for a small number of high priority projects. Lower priority projects should be funded from the regular local authority maintenance allocations, local authority co-ordinated voluntary-aided programme (LCVAP) allocations, sixth form college maintenance allocations, or from the academies capital maintenance fund (ACMF).

General principles

- We will prioritise projects where the cost of addressing the need would be hardest for local authorities, dioceses, academy trusts, or individual academies to fund locally through their regular maintenance allocations – in other words, those where the cost of meeting the need is very significant and would necessitate a complete rebuild or major refurbishment of a school building.
- We will prioritise projects where the costs of continuing to maintain the site or the building are so high that it clearly makes better economic sense to address the need wholesale – either by rebuilding or completely refurbishing it.
- We do not anticipate the programme funding schools which have recently received significant investment.
- We will not include projects which aim to address the suitability of school buildings. Suitability relates, for example, to tailoring a building to meet certain education curriculum requirements as opposed to condition need where the building is in a poor state of repair.
- Expressions of interest will be tested against the Department's knowledge of long term pupil demand from the school capacity data collection (SCAP). We would not expect to prioritise projects where there is little evidence of sustained demand for places.
- Where there is a good case for increasing the size of the school at the same time as addressing the condition, we will work closely with the local authority to bring our funding together with local basic need funding so that this can be done.

Projects to address the need on a whole site basis - Schools may qualify for whole school rebuilds or major refurbishment projects within the programme where they have significant condition needs across all buildings on the school site. This is likely to include a need to replace existing roofs, structural issues (such as cracks and defects in load bearing walls), large scale replacement of windows and doors and mechanical and electrical services replacement.

In assessing these projects we will be considering whether it is more economical to rebuild the whole school rather than continuing to patch and mend the existing structure.

Projects to address the need in individual buildings - Schools may also be selected where significant condition need is isolated to specific buildings rather than the entire school site. Under these circumstances, it may make economic sense to rebuild or refurbish specific buildings and not the entire school.

Voluntary-aided schools - Governing bodies of voluntary-aided schools are required to make a 10% contribution to the cost of capital works at their schools unless the Secretary of State determines that exceptional circumstances apply. In the case of this phase of the Priority School Building Programme, the Secretary of State has made such a determination. Therefore, this requirement will be waived for the programme, and voluntary-aided schools will not be required to make a 10% contribution.

Conditions of the Programme

As is the case with the current priority school building programme, we expect this

second phase to be centrally managed by the Education Funding Agency. However, in some cases, for example where funding is agreed to address smaller individual buildings, the EFA may agree a locally delivered solution may present best value for money.

Baseline designs have been developed by the EFA and have been successfully used as part of the original Priority School Building Programme and the intention is to continue with these for the new phase. Guidance on the baseline designs are on the EFA website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/baseline-designs-for-schools-guidance>.

Inclusion within the programme will be subject to acceptance by the responsible body:

- that the contract will be procured by a central body (or by a centrally determined alternative value for money route) and that, for procurement purposes, each school will be batched together with a number of other schools not necessarily in the same geographic area;
- that the procurement will be based on baseline designs (subject to site constraints, planning requirements and a limited degree of local choice), unless a value for money alternative is identified;
- that they will be required to sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding and a Back to Back Agreement²;
- that the Department will not be liable for the costs associated with any off-site works as a result of the project; and
- that if an applicant is successful and is accepted into the programme they will be required to register the title of the site. Any legal advice taken to support the provision of property and title information will need to be met by the applicant.

How to submit an expression of interest

Once the online system is available, those wishing to submit expressions of interest must first register and then submit a separate entry for each school they wish to be considered via the online form at <https://efadatacollections.education.gov.uk/sites/psbp/>. All information submitted will be hosted on a secure website. No hard copies or email versions of the expression of interest will be considered. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any information provided and bearing any costs involved in expressing an interest.

The expression of interest system is expected to go live in early June. We will shortly confirm the exact date. The deadline for submission is 18 July, **but we encourage applicants to submit their expressions of interest as soon as possible ahead of the deadline to avoid any technical submission issues.**

² These are brief and simple documents which set out the roles and responsibilities of the individual parties involved in the construction works. We do not envisage that applicants will require legal advice prior to entering into them. In any event the standard form documents are not negotiable and so any advice would necessarily be limited to explaining the legal effect of the documents.

The form has been designed to minimise burdens on those completing it. Once you have entered the school's unique reference number (a 6 digit unique number allocated to each school which can be found on www.edubase.gov.uk) the system will pre-populate some fields to avoid asking for information the Department already holds and to allow bodies to verify they are entering information for the right school.

If you have any problems submitting an expression of interest for a school, please email us at PSBP2.EFACAPITAL@education.gsi.gov.uk for assistance.

Details of the information each expression of interest will require can be found in Appendix 1.

Information we are requesting to complement that found in the Property Data Survey

The Department will be using information from our Property Data Survey to assess the scale and severity of condition need. However, in addition we want to identify significant issues that will have had a material impact on the condition of the buildings but which may not be captured in the survey. Please consider the help notes in the table at Appendix 1, but specifically, we are seeking further information on:

- **Structural building issues**

We are aware that individual buildings may have structural issues which may not have been identified by the Property Data Survey. Such issues may warrant inclusion in the programme where they are of such significance that they affect the integrity of the building (for example a structural issue with supporting walls) and would necessitate a full rebuild or major refurbishment of the whole building.

We expect in most circumstances that the school or applying body will have previously commissioned a structural survey to manage these issues and we will be asking for the structural report to be submitted electronically with the expression of interest.

- **Asbestos**

We understand that many schools have asbestos on site, and all schools with asbestos will have an Asbestos Management Plan. The Priority School Building Programme is not an asbestos removal programme as, in most cases, the presence of asbestos can be safely managed with minimal investment. However, we will consider some situations where the presence of asbestos means the annual costs of safely managing it are excessive. Typically we would only expect to include projects where managing asbestos would necessitate a full rebuild or major refurbishment of the whole building.

The school's asbestos register, asbestos management plan and any specific asbestos surveys will need to be submitted to support any expressions of interest for projects to address the presence of asbestos.

- **Recent capital investment**

We would not normally expect to prioritise buildings which have recently benefited from significant capital investment. Where an individual building has had cumulative capital investment (in excess of £0.5m) which has improved its condition need since 2011, when the Property Data Survey Programme began,

applicants will be asked to provide further details of works undertaken, including dates, value and how the work was funded.

- **Changes to building condition need since 2011**

The Department's Property Data Survey Programme started in 2011, but we are also giving applicants the opportunity to highlight significant changes since then that impact on building condition – for example as a result of fire or flood. Again, the issue would need to be significant and such that it would normally necessitate a full rebuild or major refurbishment of the whole building.

Review of expression of interests and prioritisation

By the end of the summer, the Department will have completed our comprehensive Property Data Survey of the school estate. We will use information from that survey, together with information from the expression of interest, to prioritise schools for inclusion in the second phase of the priority school building programme.

It is currently anticipated that applicants will be informed by the end of the year whether their application has been successful.

If you have any queries in respect of the application process please contact:
PSBP2.EFACAPITAL@education.gsi.gov.uk.