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View your response

Personal Details

- Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.
- Please tick if you are responding on behalf of an organisation.
- Please tick if we can contact you in the future.
- Please tick if you would like us to acknowledge your response.
- Please tick if you would like us to inform you when the consultation results are published.

Respondent Information Questions

Please tick one category that best describes you as a respondent.

- Local Authority Children's Services
- LA Building Officer
- Cabinet Member
- Academy
- School Applying for Academy Status
- Voluntary Aided School
- School Forum
- Private Sector (construction)
- Maintained School
- Campaign Group
- Governor's Association
- Other Children's Services Provider
- Other

Please Specify: Combined response on behalf of SCALA/SCEME/COPROP

Consultation Questions

Use of Basic Need and Condition Data to Determine Local Budget Allocations

Recommendations 'Review of Education Capital: Sebastian James, April 2011'

Rec 1: Capital Investment and apportionment should be based on objective facts and use clear, consistently applied criteria. Allocation should focus on the need for high-quality school places and the condition of facilities.

Rec 8: That the Department:

- *gathers all local condition data that currently exists, and implements a central condition database to manage this information; and*
- *carries out independent building condition surveys on a rolling 20% sample of the estate each year to provide a credible picture of investment needs, repeating this to develop a full picture of the estate's condition in five years and thereafter.*

1 What data on the condition of the local estate should be used alongside pupil and student numbers data, as the basis of a fair allocation to address need across the range of children's and young people's institutions and facilities?

Answer: We would welcome funding allocation based on Basic Need and Condition Data, but would want assurance that data used is comprehensive and recent. Local Authorities have for a number of years collected data on the condition of the

stock using the indicators produced by NaPPMI (National Property Performance Management Initiative). NaPPMI was set up by the Property Societies in England and Wales and has support of CIPFA. The indicators have been endorsed by DfE and CLG. We also feel that in addition to Basic Need and Condition Data, schools energy performance should also be considered, so that Energy Efficiency measures can be carried out where necessary. If the Government is serious about reducing the schools estate's carbon emissions then we need a mechanism for directing funding to the schools and buildings which would most benefit. Condition Data will not pick this up. Access requirements and whole life cost predictions should also be considered when assessing the viability.

2 Access to, and quality of, condition data can be variable. Do you have robust and complete data available, or have you proposals on how it can be gathered and managed most effectively, but at the same time with minimal cost? Please outline.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- No Response

Comments: NaPPMI data has been collected for the past five years via the AMP Network working with the National Best Value Benchmarking Scheme. (NBVBS) Over 150 Local Authorities have been members of the benchmarking scheme. We would suggest that to start off with, LAs should submit data that they already have, as long as it is less than 3 years old. The major problem with any data collection is a uniform method of collection so that results may be considered to be comparable. The data collection also needs to be kept relatively simple and produce factual (credible) data that is clear and uncomplicated. Any process used to evaluate building condition must inspire confidence by property professionals. The approach should follow the 7 C's methodology i.e. what is needed is Clear, Concise, Consistent and Co-ordinated - Construction, Condition Criteria. Previous DfE Condition Survey methodology was complicated e.g. difference between Priorities and Condition was not clear. We would like to see DfE consult on any new method of carrying out Condition surveys. The collection of condition data is costly, in the current climate how will this be funded? We would prefer LAs to carry out the surveys using national methodology, issued by DfE. Funding should be made available for this.

Flexible capital budget with local decision-making

Recommendations 'Review of Education Capital: Sebastian James, April 2011'

Rec 2: Demand-led programmes, such as Free Schools, are most sensibly funded from the centre and a centrally retained budget should be set aside for them.

Rec 3: The Department should avoid multiple funding streams for investment that can and should be planned locally, and instead apportion the available capital as a single, flexible budget for each local area, with a mandate to include ministerial priorities in determining allocations.

Rec 4: Notional budgets should be apportioned to Local Authority areas, empowering them fully to decide how best to reconcile national and local policy priorities in their own local contexts. A specific local process, involving all Responsible Bodies, and hosted by the Local Authority, should then prioritise how this notional budget should be used.

Rec 5: The local prioritisation decisions should be captured in a short local investment plan. There should be light-touch central appraisal of all local plans before an allocated plan of work is developed so that themes can be identified on a national level and scale-benefits achieved. This must also allow for representations where parties believe the process has not assigned priorities fairly.

Rec 6: Individual institutions should be allocated an amount of capital to support delivery of small capital works and ICT provision. Wherever possible, this should be aggregated up to Responsible Bodies according to the number of individual institutions they represent, for the Responsible Body then to use for appropriate maintenance across its estate, working in partnership with the institutions.

3 Do you think that the Department should move to a system for capital investment that apportions the available capital as a single, flexible budget for each local area, and that investment should then be determined through a specific local process, involving all Responsible Bodies and ultimately hosted by the Local Authority?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- No Response

Comments: We would agree with the premise that there should be a single flexible budget and that this should be based on Local Education Authority areas. Adding any Regional level body or forum would make the whole process complicated and bureaucratic. There would have to be clear guidelines on who responsible bodies are and how an organisation to bring these together should be set up, including dispute resolution. We would agree that the Local Education Authority should host such a forum.

4 a) What do you consider to be the benefits or risks in establishing a single capital funding model of this nature?

Answer: Biggest risk in the single capital funding model is that some of the schools might feel that their needs have not been properly addressed. Hence any decision making process must involve a range of Responsible Bodies, with the LEA being the ultimate adjudicating body. Role of accurate data also becomes very important so that everyone can clearly see where the need is and how funding is allocated.

4 b) How would you address the risks you have identified?

Answer:

4 c)

Specifically, how could the local area decision-making arrangements be established to ensure that the process represents the range of Responsible Bodies, takes account of all needs, leads to fair prioritisation of investment within the available resource, and is not unduly bureaucratic?

Answer:

5 **Would you prefer to see the current funding model used for the 2011-12 allocations retained until at least 2015 or for the foreseeable future? What are the risks and benefits of this approach?**

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure
 No Response

Comments: The current system needs to remain in place until there is robust condition data available for the whole stock. If the decision is that 20% of the estate should be surveyed each year, then we would suggest that the current system remains in place for the next five years.

6 **Should some of the ring-fenced programmes currently managed centrally, for example maintenance of Academies and Sixth Form Colleges, become ring-fenced programmes managed locally? What would be the risks and benefits?**

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure
 No Response

Comments: Ring fenced programmes can only be managed locally if the local body has complete responsibility of the funding. If funding to certain areas remains ring fenced then it should be managed centrally.

7 a) **Would you support a model that includes a fair proportion of maintenance capital being directly allocated to Responsible Bodies that have assets in several local authority areas, so that they can make their own decisions on how best to deploy that maintenance funding across their estate? What are the benefits and risks of this approach?**

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure
 No Response

Comments: We feel that splitting the maintenance capital between Responsible Bodies and Local Education Authority would create division of responsibility and lead to problems. Many schools in the past have not spent their maintenance allocations properly, giving rise to larger capital project later which then has to be funded by the LA.

7 b) **How would such Responsible Bodies be identified?**

Answer:

8 **Do you agree with the principle that there should be a Local Investment Plan to support local and national transparency and better procurement? If so, what should be included in a Local Investment Plan?**

- Agree
 Disagree
 Not sure
 No Response

Comments: A Local Investment plan should be produced based on the individual plans of its members. These individual plans should be subject to Peer Review by other members of the local body. As minimum, the Plan should include process of how allocations are made, funding made available and outcomes achieved. Government would need to set down clear guidelines on how Local bodies are to be set up, their make up and how disputes will be resolved

9 **Do you agree that each local authority area should provide the department with an initial Local Investment Plan in spring 2012, drawing from the respective plans that all Responsible Bodies make for their own allocations?**

- Agree
 Disagree
 Not sure
 No Response

Comments: Yes, but each member of the Local body should prepare a plan based on need and condition

10 **Do you believe there are other models which incentivise the creative and efficient use of capital at school level?**

- Yes

No

Not Sure

No Response

Comments: Creativity would be enhanced by allowing local flexibility. Imposing the standard designs or specifications will not always be most efficient. Better way to incentivise would be let the Local Area keep any savings from delivering the programme.

National Contracting and Procurement

Recommendations 'Review of Education Capital: Sebastian James, April 2011'

Rec 13: That the Central Body should put in place a small number of new national procurement contracts that will drive quality and value from the programme of building projects ahead.

Rec 14: That the Department uses the coming spending review period to establish a central delivery body and procurement model, whereby the pipeline of major projects - to a scale determined by the Department - is procured and managed centrally with funding retained centrally for that purpose.

Rec 15: That the Department quickly takes steps to maximise the value for money delivered through maintenance and small projects and puts in place a simple and clear national contract to make this happen.

11 Do you agree that there are benefits and efficiencies to be gained in building and capital maintenance from using national expertise, national procurement frameworks, a standard contract with suppliers and national project management? What do you consider to be the potential advantages and disadvantages?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

No Response

Comments: There is no clear advantage in using national procurement frameworks and project management. In any case a number of local and Regional framework agreements have already been set up across the country. There is a need to build on the current agreements that are in place, ensuring that standards are formalised and maintained. There is a constant need to check and challenge VFM as market conditions change. Some form of network of the current and future frameworks would be useful so that developments and best practice can be shared. This could be based on the NEIP.

12 Do you have evidence to show that local or regional procurement arrangements offer better value for money for certain types of projects or within certain values? If so, please describe.

Yes

No

Not Sure

No Response

Comments: The major advantage from framework agreements comes from, fewer disputes, reduced overheads and increased speed of procurement.

13 Are there limits - contract value or type of project - where you think the case can best be made for local or regional contract procurement? Please specify below.

Yes

No

Not Sure

No Response

Comments: Local and regional frameworks are better attuned to the need and requirements of the local area.

14 What criteria do you suggest for projects to be potentially exempt from project management by the central body?

Answer: National bodies do not have a good track record (e.g. PfS) of delivering on time or on budget. Also project management from a central body is an unnecessary overhead. The principles of project management to be followed by all organisations should be set down as part of the process.

15 Where local or regional procurement or project management is used, how can its benefits and learning be shared so as to achieve the same gains in all procurement?

Answer: Networks should be set up to allow best practice and developments to be widely shared. A number of networks already exist which should be built upon, e.g. West Midlands Property Alliance, East Midlands Property Alliance. There is also significant skill, capacity and resources within local authorities for design and project management which should be embraced.

Other recommendations not covered specifically by this consultation that are set out in the Review

Review of Education Capital: Sebastian James, April 2011

Rec 7: The Department ensures there is access to clear guidance on legal responsibilities in relation to maintenance of buildings, and on how revenue funding can be used for facility maintenance.

Rec 9: That the Department revises its school premises regulations and guidance to remove unnecessary burdens and ensure that a single, clear set of regulations apply to all schools. The Department should also seek to further reduce the bureaucracy and prescription surrounding BREEAM assessments.

Rec 10: There should be a clear, consistent Departmental position on what fit-for-purpose facilities entail. A suite of drawings and specifications should be developed that can easily be applied across a wide range of educational facilities. These should be coordinated centrally to deliver best value.

Rec 11: The standardised drawings and specifications must be continuously improved through learning from projects captured and coordinated centrally. Post occupancy evaluation will be a critical tool to capture this learning.

Rec 12: As many projects as possible currently in the BSF and Academy pipeline should be able to benefit from the Review's findings to ensure more efficient procurement of high quality buildings. This should be an early priority to identify where this could be done.

Rec 16: That the Department revisit its 2004 Cap Gemini report and implement proposals where they are appropriate.

16 Do you have any immediate further comments you wish us to consider on other parts of the Recommendations from the Review?

Answer: The review does not take into account the "Whole Life" relationship of design and maintenance. This is a key area in avoiding problems in the future. Also if the Government is not happy with BREEAM, then it should give clear alternative direction on sustainability.