

Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) Consultation Responses

S = A response by a school

C = A response by a Councillor

Q1.	Do you agree with the high level statement of objectives contained in the Estate Vision at Section 3 of the document?
S	As stated in in point 1.6, Foundation Schools come under the Estate vision and Strategy. Therefore, all services should be made aware that Foundation Schools are given the same level of support as other LA schools. This has been something that we have faced over the past years, with services within NY not understanding the foundation status as we are the final remaining one in NY.
S	Whilst it is important to have an overarching strategy it is not clear in the document how this strategy will be delivered or how individual streams are to be prioritised given the clear financial deficiencies and backlogs identified. Why are investment requirements not able to be recorded in a systematic way? (Section 4.6)
C	I don't agree that we should only expand schools that are judged good or outstanding, unless exceptional circumstances apply. Ofsted ratings are transitory, and circumstances can result in poor ratings that do not reflect the school. I think this sentence should be removed.
C	Yes, it is clear the lack of investment and initiative goes back years and all involved should go. A backlog cannot happen in the real world as such companies would close. They know schools have to stay open so have simply shrugged shoulders.

Q2.	Do you support the balanced investment strategy described at 4.7 and elsewhere within the Estate Strategy
S	The Authority seems to have little option to adopt the "balanced strategy" however it might be useful for schools to understand how various projects could be/are prioritised e.g. given the maintenance backlog of c.£25m does time outstanding have any impact? Are there other factors for schools to consider?
C	It is not balanced, simple as

Q3.	Do you agree with all of the eight Strategic Priorities as described at paragraph 4.11 of the document?
S	In our view, 3 should be the priority. All pupils attending a NYCC school should be entitled to this and to ensure all schools are fit for purpose, thereby making them safe and secure. 6 should be a higher priority as this would offer financial efficiencies longer term.
C	You made this mess, you need a proper strategy to sort

Q4.	Do you agree with the actions the Council will take to deliver on the priorities as set out in 4.11.1 to 4.11.8 ?
S	H&S compliance – schools buy into part of this service. How does the LA ensure compliance IF schools don't buy in? A schedule of visits and who's who would be helpful.
S	Yes. However, I suspect that a case could be made for the majority of funding requests that they “will have a direct impact on the quality of provision” (4.11.4). Is it not a reasonable expectation that all works undertaken by the Council are in accordance with Building Regulations? (4.11.8)
C	Sort of. Years of under investment and lack of doing the right thing leave cllrs no option but to use a sticking plaster

Q5.	Do you agree with the statement on Arrangements for Management and Delivery in 4.12.1 to 4.12.8?
S	Is there a definition/threshold for “significant”? (4.12.4)
C	Need new people who will agree to recover this

Q6.	Do you have any comments on the section covering School Funded Projects from 4.12.9 to 4.12.11?
S	Would a joined up planned approach be more efficient and wider reaching? Particularly from a procurement and VFM perspective, offering economies of scale.

Q7.	Do you have any comments on the section covering the Design of Projects at 4.12.12?
S	No reference to SEND within BB docs.
C	We need a better spread of schools to reduce journey times and traffic. We also need to lobby Government to change the criteria for rural schools and the need for schools based on housing figures, they are too crude.

Q8.	Should you have any further general comments about the Estate Strategy please enter them below.
S	We are fully supportive of the LA and its approach to estates management. We would simply ask that small schools are not overlooked in the AMOs process and in the allocation of projects.
S	All services should be made aware of the Foundation School's coming under the same remit as the other LA schools. This has been something we have battled with over the past years and has been a challenge to develop our school. We do not receive high amounts of DFC, so It is challenging for school to build up sufficient funds to be able to carry out such projects.
S	I believe it is right and proper that headteachers/senior leadership teams and governors should have an awareness and opportunity to comment on this type of document and thus have an opportunity to shape the strategy. Thank you. However, this is a lengthy document titled “School Estate Strategy” with significant sections given over to Education and items I suspect would be regarded as a “given” by the majority of staff, with no real detail on how schools can expect funds to be allocated or timescales? If the expectation is for staff and governors to read these documents and provide sensible, timely

	feedback then, in my opinion, they need be much more focussed, succinct and relevant.
S	<p>It's good that it is recognised that the environment children learn in, is aspirational in itself.</p> <p>It does seem quite restrictive though. For example if we decide to go ahead and build another meeting room. It seems we need a lot of additional approval which may make the process much longer and in turn more expensive, especially if we have to use specific contractors.</p> <p>I'm also not 100% convinced that the new scheme that is replacing MASS will work for us. It may end up more cost effective to use local contractors.</p> <p>I do think it would be good for us as a school to relook at the current asset management plan in light of this. I would like to look at the school as a whole and what we can achieve each year, so that we are regularly updating classrooms on a rolling basis.</p>
S	<p>Having read the document, I just wanted to make a comment from a small school perspective. We have 3 small schools in our federation, each with 3 classes and nursery provision and all with Good Ofsted judgements. We have the infrastructure and leadership team in place to deliver quality education across the federation. With investment in the current buildings, we have capacity to run another class to take on more pupils, alleviating capacity issues in central Selby.</p>
C	<p>Yes. We need to invest in the simple things in schools like heating and ventilation systems. Local schools near me often have to close due to breakdown of heating systems, some of them have heating that is on during the warmer months.</p> <p>We have to urgently look at making our school climate change neutral or more.</p>
C	As stated, lack of trying in the knowledge someone else can fix it.