



## Next steps for school buildings in England

progress on the School Rebuilding Programme | RAAC and building safety concerns | decarbonisation | community use | policy priorities

WESTMINSTER  
EDUCATION  
FORUM  
Morning, Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Westminster Education Forum policy conference **taking place online**

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with

**Emma Willson**, Director, Education Value for Money Team, National Audit Office

**Lara Newman**, Chief Executive, LocatED

**Robert Gould**, Partner, Barker Associates

and

**Lucy Archer**, *Let's Go Zero*; **Wayne Bates**, *NASUWT*; **Chris Felgate**, *Ginger Energy*; **Claire Jackson**, *Galliford Try*;

**Councillor Wendy Meikle**, *Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council*; **Negar Mihanyar**, *Hawkins\Brown*

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This conference will examine the future of school buildings in England and priorities for the education estate.

It will be an opportunity to discuss the progress, implementation and rollout of the Government's 10-year *School Rebuilding Programme*, looking at lessons learned, the process of prioritising schools and ways that delivery could be accelerated.

The conference takes place with the National Audit Office's *Condition of School Buildings* report finding:

- 700,000 children being taught in unsafe or ageing buildings
- regional variations in how much money should be spent per pupil to put schools back into good condition
- insufficient planning by the DfE for making school buildings more environmentally friendly

It also takes place in the context of concerns surrounding the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in some school buildings. Delegates will consider how to address the issue, and priorities for assessing building safety and minimising disruption to students.

Further sessions will look at strategies for the modernisation, decarbonisation and retrofitting of existing schools, including steps to reduce energy demand, alongside the design and building of new schools which meet environmental standards.

The agenda includes a focus on utilising the opportunity to create more effective spaces for learning within schools, and to ensure school buildings meet the needs of those with disabilities and other special needs.

There will also be discussion on adapting school buildings to meet the needs of local communities, and how the value of the education estate can be maximised, including partnerships with local communities and increased use outside of school hours.

Areas for discussion include:

- **current condition**: the outlook for school buildings across England - key priorities moving forward
- **building safety**: addressing the impact of RAAC and concerns over building materials - allocation of funds and resources to address concerns - reducing disruption in the schools impacted
- **School Rebuilding Programme**:
  - rollout so far - priorities for schools outside the programme
  - maximising the value of the education estate - ensuring sustainability and longevity of refurbished schools
- **refurbishing schools outside the programme**: targeting funding and policy to meet the needs of different regions in spending per pupil - prioritising underfunded schools
- **local needs**: improving building facilities for use by the wider community - creating partnerships and improving relationships between schools and people in the surrounding area

- **decarbonisation:** modernising existing schools - implementation of retrofit programmes - reducing energy use - planning for future climate challenges moving forward - utilising green spaces
- **policy:**
  - implementing measures in the *Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy*
  - the way forward for government strategy - assessing the impact of proposals to change the approach to meeting net zero objectives in schools

[\[jump to more detail on the discussion\]](#)

The conference will be an opportunity for stakeholders to consider the issues alongside key policy officials who are due to attend from DfE; DLUHC; and HSE, as well as with parliamentary pass-holders from the House of Commons.

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## The agenda:

*Draft subject to change*

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **The current condition of school buildings in England and priorities moving forward**  
**Emma Willson**, Director, Education Value for Money Team, National Audit Office  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 Break
- 9.40 **'The future of the education estate - meeting the needs of the community while delivering net zero'**  
**Lara Newman**, Chief Executive, LocatED  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.10 **Building safety in schools and addressing concerns surrounding RAAC**  
**Robert Gould**, Partner, Barker Associates
- 10.20 **The School Rebuilding Programme - rollout so far, priorities for schools outside the programme, and maximising the value of the education estate**  
**Councillor Wendy Meikle**, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council  
**Wayne Bates**, National Negotiating Official, NASUWT  
Senior representative, construction  
Senior representative, school  
Senior representative, local communities
- 10.45 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.10 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.15 Break
- 11.25 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.30 **Modernising the education estate - priorities for both the existing estate and new schools, decarbonisation and reducing energy use, innovation in efficient and inspiring spaces for learning, and supporting accessibility and inclusion**  
**Claire Jackson**, Education Director, Galliford Try  
**Chris Felgate**, Director, Ginger Energy  
**Negar Mihanyar**, Partner and Education Sector Lead, Hawkins\Brown  
**Lucy Archer**, Climate Action Advisors Project Manager, Let's Go Zero  
Senior representative, school  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.20 Break
- 12.25 **Policy priorities for developing the education estate to meet demands now and into the future**  
Senior representative, policy  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Sean Cudmore**, Deputy Editor, Westminster Education Forum

Additional senior participants are being approached, but if you or a colleague would like to be considered as a speaker at this seminar, please contact us at [speakeroffers@forumsupport.co.uk](mailto:speakeroffers@forumsupport.co.uk) specifying the event and session where you would like to speak and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. If you are offering to speak yourself please don't fill in the booking form, as this will be taken as an order and you will be charged for a place subject to our T&Cs.

## Relevant developments:

- [Condition of School Buildings](#) - published by NAO in June 2023, highlighting funding issues for school buildings in the coming years
  - o it suggests that funding was being used for emergency maintenance rather than progressive changes, and warns of the impact of RAAC within school buildings and what needs to be done to fix this issue
- [Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete \(RAAC\): Identification guidance](#) - published by DfE in August 2023, in response to the RAAC crisis
  - o it aims to help bodies from the education sector identify RAAC in their buildings and outlines how the Government plans to deal with the issue moving forward
- [The school rebuilding programme](#) - published by DfE and last updated in December 2022, detailing plans to improve the quality of school buildings in England, especially those in the worst condition, with:
  - o the ambition to deliver 500 rebuilding projects over ten years
  - o construction of the first set of 50 projects beginning in September 2021, supported by more than £1bn in funding
- [DfE offers £3.9m for contractor to help schools on climate action plans](#) - reporting from Schools Week in April 2023
  - o the funding covers recruitment and management of a team of expert volunteers to provide advice on meeting government's new climate change strategy requirements
- [Unions demand extra money for school rebuilding](#) - reporting from the Independent in September 2023
  - o eight unions and the body representing school governors called for an extra £4bn to upgrade school buildings, in a letter to the Prime Minister
- [Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems](#) - published by DfE in April 2023
  - o with measures for education services to participate in the implementation of climate adaptation
- [Condition Improvement Fund: 2023 to 2024 outcome](#) - data updated by DfE in July 2023, including the list of successful applications
  - o it will provide £11m of funding for 25 projects at 24 academies, sixth-form colleges and voluntary aided schools

## Booking arrangements:

To book places, please use our [online booking form](#).

Once submitted, this will be taken as a confirmed booking and will be subject to our terms and conditions below.

You can also pay in advance by credit card on 01344 864796. If advance credit card payment is not possible, please let me know and we may be able to make other arrangements.

Options and charges are as follows:

- Access to *Next steps for school buildings in England* (plus a permanent record of proceedings) is **£260** plus VAT per delegate
- Concessionary rate places for small charities, unfunded individuals and those in similar circumstances are **£115** plus VAT. Please be sure to apply for this at the time of booking.

For those who cannot attend on the day:

- full transcripts of all presentations, the questions and comments sessions, and further articles from interested parties, will be available [via our website](#) approximately 12 days after the event for **£95** plus VAT
- Concessionary rate: **£50** plus VAT

If you find the charge for places a barrier to attending:

- please let me know as concessionary and complimentary places are made available in certain circumstances
- typical eligibility: individual service users or carers not supported by or part of an organisation, full-time students, unemployed and fully retired people with no paid work, and small charities
- concessions are not offered to businesses, individuals funded by an organisation, or larger charities/not-for-profit companies.

Please note [terms and conditions](#) below (including **cancellation charges**).