



Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

Estates Management Strategy

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Part A– Introduction

The effective and efficient management of the Trust’s estate is critical to providing a safe, secure, high quality and stimulating environment in which pupils can learn. At the heart of the Trust’s work, is an understanding of everyone’s responsibility to be stewards of creation and, therefore, of the land and buildings which the Trust owns and manages. Underpinning this document is therefore a commitment to ensuring the effective and safe management and maintenance of all its premises, ensuring full compliance with all legal and regulatory frameworks.

DGAT has therefore both a legal and moral responsibility to manage its estate and all capital expenditure in a responsible and integrated way in order to deliver best value against the vision of the Trust, whilst acknowledging the rapidly changing demands of the sector. The Estate Management Strategy has therefore been developed to provide a structured, well-reasoned and long term response to the management of the estate, enabling a responsive and flexible approach to unforeseen and emerging priorities.

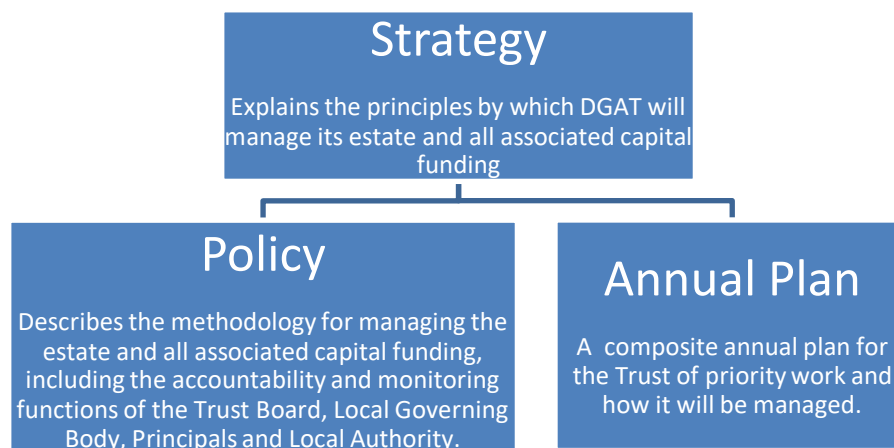
This high-level strategy will remain in place until 2023, subject to discretionary review by the Estates and Free School Committee. The action plans and supplementary policies which sit underneath this strategy will be updated annually, or as appropriate.

This strategy applies to all land and property owned, managed or maintained by the Trust. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes all premises leased or occupied by the Trust under agreements with third parties. It does not include furniture, fittings, equipment or educational resources which are moveable and are not a permanent connection to the structure of the building or utility.

The RICS Public Sector Asset Management Guidelines 2nd Edition and the Department for Education ‘Good Estate Management for Schools’ (GEMS) guidance has been used to inform the process for the Estate Management Strategy.

Key elements of the Estate Management Strategy include:

- Aligning the Estate Management Strategy to the Trust’s wider vision for education
- Understanding the estate portfolio and identifying legacy issues
- Identifying priority areas aligned to the vision
- Delivering the strategy
- Identifying roles and responsibilities in managing the estate



Part B – Estate Management Strategy, Vision and Values

Linked to the Trust’s vision, the Estate Management Strategy (‘the strategy’) identifies the high-level strategic framework for managing DGAT’s property portfolio effectively over the next 5 years.

The Vision of the Estate Management Strategy

The aim of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust’s (DGAT) Estate Management Strategy is to align all matters of estate management to the wider vision of the Trust in order to provide children of all faiths and none with excellent educational provision which transforms lives within a deeply caring and supportive Christian ethos.

Whilst the strategy will be reviewed in 2023, the underpinning policies and procedures will ensure that the Trust’s portfolio remains “fit for purpose” and continues to meet the changing needs and priorities of the pupils, schools, and communities within it. Regular reviews, audits and discussions between central staff and those working in its academies will ensure that the Trust remains agile and responsive in effectively managing the estate in order that pupils may enjoy life in all its fullness.

The strategy will maximise the advantages of the Trust’s status as a multi-academy Trust (MAT). The strategy, and all subsequent decisions arising from its application, will therefore be made in the interest of the whole organisation, rather than on the basis of simply individual academies.

Within its work, the Trust will identify opportunities to reduce expenditure and increase efficiencies, for example, maximising Trust-wide procurement opportunities.

Values Framework

If others are of ultimate worth, then we are each called to responsibility towards the other, and to contribute responsibly to our communities. The good life is ‘with and for others in just institutions’ (Paul Ricoeur)¹

In delivering the 5 year Estate Management Plan DGAT will:

- Work for the common good of the shared life of the whole DGAT community;
- Promote open and transparent engagement from the Trust Board, local governing bodies, Principals and key personnel in the development and implementation of the plan;
- Promote active and responsible stewardship of resources within the management of premises in order to access the environmental impact of decisions;
- Take a holistic approach to the portfolio, understanding the whole-life costs of properties;
- Create opportunities for innovation and new ways of working, particularly where there is a mutual benefit to a scheme across more than one setting.

¹ Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good (2016) Education for Community and Living Well Together, page 7.

- Ensure at all times that capital expenditure and estate management represents value for money for life and is affordable.
- Ensure efficiencies, wherever possible, whilst protecting the value of the estate for future generations.

Part C – Estate Management Priorities

DGAT will deliver its Estate Management Strategy focused around 2 strategic priority areas. Each area is subdivided into a number of sections. These are listed in priority order:

Health and Safety / Building Condition and Compliance

1. Ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all by managing ongoing building repairs and maintenance, and meeting all statutory and regulatory requirements:

a) **Health and Safety and Building Compliance;** fire protection, gas and electrical safety and fixed wiring, emergency asbestos work, water systems (legionella), safeguarding and DBS requirements, ventilation and extraction, lifts, managing other plant and active control of substances hazardous to health.²

b) **Building Condition:** roofing, windows and weather tightness, structural weakness, boilers, heating or other pipework failure, replacement air-conditioning.³

The nature of these items is such that planned maintenance and replacement will be the aim, but there will be occasions when outright failure occurs and emergency work is required.

With a number of ongoing legacy issues, including the number of temporary buildings and asbestos related matters, it is a priority of the Trust, where appropriate, to minimise associated risks. Reducing the number of priority 1 health and safety and maintenance related matters in the Trust-wide Estate Plan is therefore a priority. For further information, please see appendix I.

2. **Ensuring a safe and secure environment for people to work and learn** - including through the provision of additional or replacement perimeter fencing and landscaping, security lighting, alarm systems, security surveillance systems, further enhanced access control.

3. **Promoting active stewardship, sustainability and custodianship by seeking opportunities reduce utility and other revenue expenditure by increasing energy performance and reducing the overall carbon footprint of the Trust** - for example, this may include the installation of cistern dams, urinal controllers, flow restrictors and self-closing taps to reduce water consumption or a consideration of methods of insulation to reduce heat loss, including ground source heat pumps, solar photovoltaics or wind turbines.

A target of the Trust is to achieve a minimum 5% reduction in property estate revenue costs, in real terms, over the life of this strategy and demonstrate a greater alignment

² With regard to health and safety and building compliance, please refer to the standards as defined in the RICS Public Sector Asset Management Guidelines 2nd Edition and the Department for Education 'good estate management for schools' (GEMS) guidance.

³ Priority is categorized as referenced in the Trust's risk assessment, with priorities being given to category 1 repairs, where urgent/immediate action is required within 12 months to prevent immediate closure of premises and / or address an immediate high risk to the health and safety of the occupants and / or remedy a serious breach of legislation. Where all category 1 incidents are covered, category 2 remedial action will be addressed, where essential maintenance or repair is essential within 1 to 2 years to prevent serious deterioration of the building fabric or services and / or address a medium risk to the health and safety of the occupants and / or remedy a less serious breach of legislation. This will then extend to repairs which are desirable within a 3 to 5 year period, and then beyond to eliminate further deterioration to the fabric of the building.

with Government environmental targets:

<https://www.parliament.uk/about/sustainability/targets-and-performance/>

Educational Outcomes and the Common Good

1. **Providing a stimulating and engaging environment which is fit-for-purpose, and promotes learning and teaching** - this could be reconfiguration to facilitate new ways of teaching, facelifts to improve the learning environment, making better use of external space, or any such projects that can be justified as a benefit to the individual school or wider trust.
2. **Developing provision which supports the physical and mental health and well-being of children** - including the possible development of sporting facilities or the development of external spaces, such as a spiritual garden, or specialist facilities to support children in danger of exclusion.
3. **Promoting opportunities for wider community engagement in the school** – including the development of communal spaces or further enhancement to secure lines

For more detail about the prioritisation list and information pertaining to the Trust's policy on the funding of such projects, please see the Trust's Funding Estate Management Policy.

Part D – Delivering the Policy

With regard to the Trust's approach to defining priorities, this will be defined in four main categories:

- Emergency repairs (unforeseen and unplanned for)
- Health and Safety / Building Condition and Compliance
- Scheduled repair and maintenance
- Improvement and enhancement to the buildings

In order to ensure a transparent, fair and equitable process, condition surveys will be conducted by a third party. The survey results will be amalgamated into a composite action plan for the Trust, as a means of determining the priorities for capital expenditure. This Trust-wide action plan will be shared with individual academies, in order for all parties to be clear about how the priorities of individual institutions compares with that of the wider Trust.

In order to meet the Estate Management Strategy, the following approach has been adopted.

Trust-wide Policy and Guidance documentation

The Trust has developed a range of policy and guidance documentation, relating to health and safety, compliance checklists, accessibility audit tools and asset management plans to support Local Governing Bodies and Principals to understanding the statutory and regulatory responsibilities. Relevant policies to be read in conjunction with the Estates Management Strategy include: Accessibility Plan; Financial Procedures Policy; Health and Safety Policy and the Risk Management Policy.

Funding

The Trust has adopted a differentiated approach to the allocation of capital funding in order to allow individual academies to retain some funding to address priorities for such things as routine maintenance and life-cycle replacements, whilst, at the same time, enabling the Trust to retain a significant proportion of the capital allocation for the most pressing priorities across the whole estate. For further information, see the Estate Funding Policy.

Condition Surveys and Valuation Survey

As part of the estate management due diligence, all academies which join the Trust will undergo a condition survey and valuation. In the first instance the baseline information that will be used for assessment of each school will be the School Condition Survey Data undertaken by an external surveyor appointed and commissioned by the Trust. The condition survey will identify maintenance backlogs and priorities, and make recommendations with regard short and medium term priorities. It will be undertaken by a third party.

Audits

The use of health and safety and other compliance audits (for example asbestos, five year electrical test, fire risk assessment) will be used to identify essential compliance work.

Academy Annual Estate Plans

Each Local Governing Body will review and update their annual Estate Plan in light of DFC spends, emerging priorities and the results of compliance tests. The Estate Plan will be driven by the three Trust-wide priorities and issues identified in the School Condition Survey Data and compliance testing.

Trust-wide (consolidated) Estate Management Plans

The Trust's Capital / Estate Management Plan will provide the Estates and Free School Committee with a composite strategic overview of the whole estate, identifying spending against strategic priorities.

IT based monitoring

The implementation of a cloud based computerised system will enable Principals and Local Governing Bodies to manage their buildings effectively in line with statutory requirements. The aim of the computerised system is to support reactive maintenance and ensuring schools are kept safe, warm and dry.

Emergency and contingency planning and managing risk

The Trust-wide framework for risk assessments and emergency and contingency planning supports individual academies in managing and mitigating risk. The Trust-wide risk register will also identify issues which need to be escalated for consideration by Trustees. The Trust-wide risk assessment is reviewed at each meeting of the Estates and free School Committee.

Partnership Working

Senior officers work in partnership with the Local Authority, supporting the negotiation of Section 106 agreements, and identifying opportunities for growth and expansion of schools, as appropriate.

Training and Support

The Trust supports individual academies to ensure that all staff are adequately trained and / or supervised in carrying out their legal obligations. The Trust regularly contracts a range of key professionals with specialist expertise to support with advice and guidance on the management of the school estate, as appropriate

Communication

The strategy will be / has been adopted by the Trust after consultation with Local Governing Bodies, Principals and key personnel in order to appraise all those involved in oversight of premises management of the three strategic priority areas which underpin the Trust's approach to estate management.

Minutes of the Estates and Free School's Committee will be made available to Local Governing Bodies via the DGAT intranet, alongside the strategy document and all health and safety and property related policies.

Academy clerks will share the minutes of all Local Governing Body minutes where the estate or health and safety related matters are discussed.

Three forums will be used to update academies on estate management related matters. These are: the Principals, Business Managers and Chairs' Forum. In addition, the Trust's monthly bulletin to academies will be a further way of sharing important information.

Part F – Role and Responsibilities

Schemes of Delegation

The Trust-wide Scheme of Delegation and associated policies identify the responsibilities of Trustees, Local Governing Bodies, Executive Officers and Principals in the execution of all estate and health and safety related matters.

The following information summarises areas of responsibility:

The Trust Board

Land and Buildings: The Trustees are ultimately accountable for the negotiation of, and compliance with, the legal requirements and obligations set out in any lease, licence and / or Church Supplemental Agreement for its academies. This includes, but is not limited to all conditions governing adequate insurance provision for buildings, the maintenance and repair of the building, the continued development of the Christian foundation of church schools, and appropriate consents from local custodian trustees and / or the Diocese of Gloucester Board of Education, as appropriate.

The Trust Board is ultimately accountable for all statutory and regulatory compliance, including matters relating to health and safety. They will be ultimately accountable for the Trust's risk register (relating to Estate Management) and ensuring the necessary steps are taken to mitigate risk.

Government Funding: Trustees are ultimately accountable for ensuring that all government grants are allocated in strict accordance with the terms of any grant. In allocating any funds to DGAT academies, Trustees will be responsible for ensuring allocations comply with the requirements of Funding Agreements and the responsibilities and requirements relating to academy trusts' financial governance and management, as set out in the Academies Financial Handbook.

The Board of Trustees will approve funding recommendations made by the Estates and Free School Committee and annually review the effectiveness of spend and reserves balances against the priorities in the Estate Management Strategy. They will regularly monitor the Trust's risk register (relating to Estate Management).

The Estate and Free School Committee (a subcommittee of the Trust)

The Estate and Free School Committee will make all funding recommendations to the Trust Board for centrally-held grants. They will review and make recommendations on all policy documentation relating to the Estate Management Policy, as well as regularly reviewing funding spend against budgets and ensure that project funding is carefully aligned to Estate priorities. They will monitor progress of projects against agreed milestones and ensure compliance with, and value for money for, all related tendering and procurement processes relating to capital spend.

The Estate and Free School Committee will monitor and make recommendations to the Trust on all matters relating the provision of new Free School builds.

Senior Trust Executives

Senior Executives are responsible for the development of clear policies to address the strategic priorities of the Trust. They are responsible for the delivery of all capital projects, focusing capital resources on the condition, suitability, sufficiency and accessibility of the school estate in line with the Trust's estate management strategic priorities. Senior staff will ensure effective project and estate management supports the work of individual academies, including commissioning School Condition Surveys and compiling the consolidated Trust-wide estate management plans for scrutiny by the Estate and Free School Committee.

Staff will monitor maintenance plans and ensure efficient facilities management addresses areas of work, as appropriate. Senior officers will also negotiate and set-up all insurance arrangements for the Trust and manage all tendering and procurement processes on behalf of the trustees. They will be responsible for escalating issues to the Trust's risk register and supporting academies to manage and mitigate risks associated with individual academies.

Where there are opportunities for growth, staff will work closely with the Local Authority to ensure sufficient school places, leading the negotiation of Section 106 agreements, as appropriate, as well as leading the management of any subsequent capital projects.

Local Governing Bodies

It is the responsibility of the Local Governing Body to review and update their annual Estate Management Plan in light of DFC spends, emerging priorities and the results of compliance tests. This includes completing the supplementary data form for requests for SCA funding under priority area 2 ('Educational Outcomes and the Common Good') where the School Condition Survey Data provides insufficient information regarding the nature, cost and benefits / outcomes from the initiative. For further information, please see the Estate Management Funding Policy.

It is the responsibility of the Local Governing Body to spend their DFC funding on the highest priority issues identified in the School Condition Survey Data or from subsequent compliance tests.

Principals

The routine day-to-day health and safety responsibilities affecting individual academies will be delegated to Academy Principals. The Principal, or designated person, will ensure that: the school meets statutory compliance; risk registers and records are regularly monitored, updated and reviewed; adequate training is provided to staff and that competent persons are engaged to assist with the various compliance areas.

The responsibility for day to day repairs, maintenance, upkeep and smart appearance of each academy will reside with the Principal. Principals will work collaboratively with senior Trust executives to ensure effective site management and full regulatory and statutory compliance on all building matters.

Where the Local Authority request specific work to be undertaken to meet the needs of pupils, the Principal will inform the Trust immediately of the request, in order to secure the necessary consents.

The Local Authority

Where Local Authority intervention is necessary, particularly to support the provision of pupils with special educational needs, the Local Authority will seek the agreement of the Trust before undertaking any work. It will then be the responsibility of the Trust to seek consent from the site trustees to undertake the work.

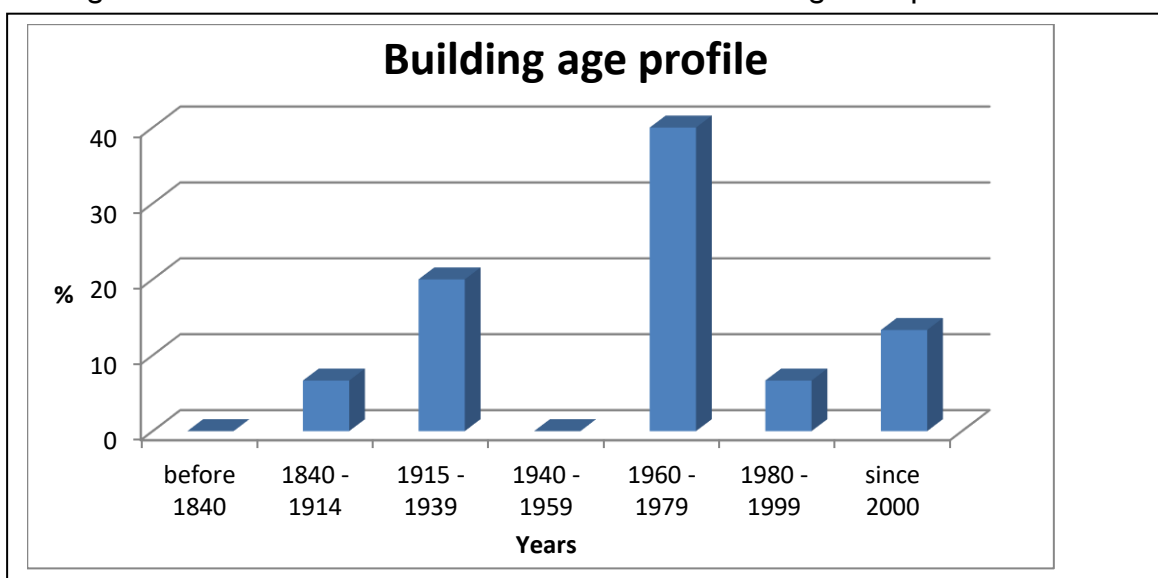
Appendix I – Understanding the Current Portfolio

DGAT has a diverse school estate, spread over a relatively small geographical area across Gloucestershire.

The estate is currently made up of primary schools, the number of which is growing each year. There may be an opportunity in the future for the Trust to incorporate secondary provision.

As at 31 August 2018, DGAT's property portfolio was valued at £36.7m. On average, the Trust has spent in the region of £400k per year maintaining the estate; this is in addition to the funding which has been given in the development of the new free school programme.

Although the recent capital spend has changed the profile of the age range of the building stock, there remains a considerable number of buildings built prior to 1999.



There remains a significant percentage of schools (60%) which have a number of buildings of a temporary nature and of varying condition and age.

The use of blue (crocidolite) and brown (amosite) asbestos was banned by legislation in 1985 with some white (chrysotile) asbestos products being banned in 1992. It is therefore essential that all schools have an asbestos management system in place. This includes a register, clearly identified amendments following any removal works, and a log for all contractors to complete before undertaking any works on the site, confirming they have read and understood the asbestos register. This is an immediate priority for the Trust.