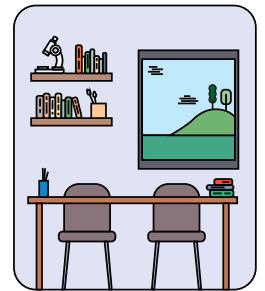


NLA Expert Panel Whitepaper:

Education



The Education Expert Panel has pursued three strands of investigation through its subgroups: Creative Curriculum, Access to Education and Retrofit. The policy ideas arising from these strands span all of the New London Agenda's six themes, but most closely align with Focus on People and Planet and Prioritise Partnership.

Strand 1 – Creative Curriculum

The creative curriculum in schools has been substantially reduced over the past decade. This has potentially enormous impact on the next generation of creative thinkers depriving them of the skills required to shape London's future built environment. Whilst undoubtedly a national issue, there are some London-centric policy ideas that would help address this evolving crisis.

- **NLA Connect** – there are an increasing number of excellent initiatives to make the built environment sector more accessible to young people, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds. The challenge is one of awareness, coordination and funding. Proposal for NLA to take a coordinating role, leveraging their network to connect initiatives with potential sources of ESG funding in the development and wider business community. Coordination would be through an online portal, managed on behalf of the GLA, to connect initiatives London-wide with schools, colleges, young people and the development community.
- **Co-design** – Developers should be required by the GLA to work specifically with schools and 6th form / FE colleges, alongside more general community engagement, to allow young people to co-design their own local environments. Aside from gaining valuable creative input, young people will be invested in the design of their own community and get exposure to the creative process in the built environment sector.
- **NLA Awards** – co-design, design apprenticeships and other initiatives should feature in the annual NLA Awards, providing both a platform and a celebration to raise profile and awareness.
- **National Curriculum** – All students must study creative subjects no matter their background, as a major subject area from an early age (year 8) and supported to develop their interests in subject choice for KS4. Without this there will not be the diversity of talent emerging to design the future of London. New national governments leading up to GE 2024 and beyond should be lobbied to promote the national interest of the retention and development of the creative curriculum in schools.

Strand 2 – Access to Education / Re-using space

The decline of traditional retail means high streets are having to adapt to attract a more diverse range of uses. Similarly, there is evidence of under-utilised commercial office space in both town centres and the periphery. This presents an opportunity for some of these spaces to be re-used for education, with the potential to make educational provision, particularly early years and adult education, more accessible. At the same time, there has been a sudden decline in school age population in Inner London, in 2020 and 2021 for every pupil who joined a London school, 1.67 left. This has resulted in the closure of some schools, and there is a challenge of what to do with these redundant assets already in education use.

- **Re-use of redundant retail/office spaces** – identify likely educational uses such as Further Education or spaces for vocational training. Specialist facilities such as media labs. Lack of outdoor space makes school use problematic. Identify exemplars of imaginative education

re-use (refer to endnotes).

- **Retention of existing school buildings** – once education assets are disposed out of public ownership they can never be recovered. Identify viable community uses for school buildings to allow them to be preserved for future educational use. Suggestion that many education providers are struggling with SEN space provision and that available education buildings could plug that gap. Another potential use is as ‘swing space’ to allow essential maintenance and deep retrofit of other nearby schools.

Strand 3 – Education Retrofit / Net Zero

One recurring theme on the panel has been how to deliver change within a difficult budgetary environment. This is especially true when considering the scale of the challenge required to retrofit and decarbonise thousands of schools and colleges across England. Two National Audit Office reports published in June 2023 were hard-hitting. Noting that the available budget for maintaining the school estate is less than half what the DfE believe is necessary, the NAO describe the 21,600-school estate as deteriorating. The reports also note that there is no plan in place for achieving the scale of decarbonisation across the education sector that is needed to make a proportionate contribution to government’s targets.

There is an urgent need to develop an affordable and deliverable retrofit package that can be rolled out at scale to schools. University and college estates are further ahead on this journey with committed plans to decarbonise by set dates, in some cases less than a decade.

- CIL / s106 funding for Education NetZero retrofit—Given funding constraints facing schools and the falling rolls of London schools, divert CIL / s106 monies, historically used to increase school place provision, towards retrofitting them to be more sustainable, resilient, and ultimately, net zero.
- Identify feasible measures—deep retrofit is often not feasible in operational schools, due to timescale and budgetary limitations. What is needed from DfE is an evidence-based approach to identifying which high-impact retrofit measures can work around school operations, and provide clear, simple, guidance on how to achieve them.
- Utilise available data - DfE and UCL have a big data model of all schools in England, their type and their environmental performance. Identifying more / better exemplar retrofit projects is a key step in getting better data, and a more focussed retrofit approaches to differing types / eras of education buildings: Victorian Board school, 60s system build, BSF etc. The database could be expanded to record retrofit and its performance—what was done, impact on DEC etc.
- Celebrating success - education organisations (and schools in particular) have a preference for ‘shiny new buildings’ and are sceptical about whether their existing estate can really be made fit for the future through retrofit. Inspire others by making exemplar retrofit projects and hard data easily accessible.
- Not only Net Zero—a singular focus on Net Zero is risky as it ignores other challenges, such as adaptation to climate change and coping with higher summertime temperatures, which are operationally and practically important in education. The template for a school retrofit project should include climate change adaptation as well as mitigation.
- Establish a London-wide Forum—the management of the schools estate is fragmented (between DfE MATs, Local Authorities and other organisations) and retrofit action is currently taking place in a siloed way. Establishing a London-wide forum for schools for this specific issue to lobby for action and share best practice between school estate managers and industry professionals through an annual London Schools Retrofit conference or similar forum.

1	Creative Curriculum	1 Plan for the long term	2 Think beyond boundaries	3 Embrace Diversity	4 Focus on Health People and Planet	5 Invest in Innovation	6 Prioritise Partnership
1.1	NLA Connect – idea for NLA to take coordinating role in fostering and developing partnerships, co-design and apprenticeship opportunities with schools. NLA leverages its network to provide a portal to connect initiatives across London , specifically interested potential funders from the development community to various initiatives.			•			•
1.2	NLA Awards – co-design, apprenticeships and other initiatives features in the NLA annual awards to augment visibility.			•			
1.3	NLA Strategy – 5 to 7 year strategy to encourage interest in the creative and construction professions.	•		•			
1.4	Lobbying National Government – Students should be encouraged into creative and manufacturing industries from an early age (year 8) and supported to develop their interests in subject choice for KS4. New national governments leading up to GE 2024 and beyond should be lobbied to promote the national interest of retention and development of the creative curriculum in schools.	•	•				
1.5	Encouraging Co-Design - All schools should be given co-design opportunities both for projects in their own schools but crucially be involved with local authorities, developers and architects to design their own local environments. This should be promoted by the NLA (see 2 - NLA Awards).				•		•
1.6	Embed Best Practice - Funding and running of initiatives is key. LA funding should be set aside to ensure that co-design ideas became reality and were sustainable from a revenue perspective. Developers are not necessarily champions of social justice so best practice with local authorities should be embedded across London.		•				•
1.7	University Partnerships – need to be fostered and developed with funding to developing connections with interest in design, architecture and the built environment.						•
1.8	Thinking Globally - Opportunities should be taken to encourage pupils to become truly global scholars and to use this as a context for their education. Modern foreign languages should feature in creative subjects, for example in food technology. Schools should be encouraged to build on links with schools in other countries to develop their understanding of other contexts and environments.				•		•

2	Re-using Space / Access to Education	1 Plan for the long term	2 Think beyond boundaries	3 Embrace Diversity	4 Focus on Health People and Planet	5 Invest in Innovation	6 Prioritise Partnership
2.1	Re-use of redundant retail spaces – identify likely educational uses such as Further Education or spaces for vocational training. Specialist facilities such as media labs. Lack of outdoor space makes school use problematic. Identify exemplars of imaginative education re-use.		*		*		*
2.2	Retention of existing school buildings – once education assets are disposed out of public ownership they can never be recovered. Identify viable community uses for school buildings to allow them to be preserved for future educational use. Suggestion that many education providers are struggling with SEN space provision.	*				*	*
2.3	Use the change in use as an opportunity to upgrade the facilities to align with sustainable targets – given the spaces are redundant and empty, use the refurbishment works to significantly enhance their environmental performance. Deep retrofit.				*		
2.4	Leverage London's extensive/world class cultural and scientific institutions - to ensure schools London-wide receive maximum benefit from proximity to this knowledge cluster.		*				*
2.5	Utilise social value frameworks – to provide shared education facilities provision (whether in schools with extra space or on the high street) local councils can leverage the social value act and including social value frameworks in their projects and procurement- eg. Hammersmith and Fulham have in place.			*			*

3	Education Retrofit / Net Zero	1 Plan for the long term	2 Think beyond boundaries	3 Embrace Diversity	4 Focus on Health People and Planet	5 Invest in Innovation	6 Prioritise Partnership
3.1	CIL / s106 funding for Education NetZero retrofit - Given funding constraints facing schools and the falling rolls of London schools, divert CIL / s106 monies, historically used to increase school place provision, towards retrofitting them to be more sustainable, resilient and ultimately net zero.		•		•	•	
3.2	Identify feasible measures - deep retrofit is often not feasible in operational schools, due to timescale and budgetary limitations. What is needed is an evidence-based approach to identifying which high-impact retrofit measures can work around school operations, and provide clear, simple, guidance on how to achieve them.				•		
3.3	Tailoring an approach using data - DfE and UCL have a big data model of all UK schools, their type and their environmental performance. Identifying more / better exemplar retrofit projects as a key step in getting better data, and a more focussed retrofit approaches to differing types / eras of education buildings: Victorian Board school, 60s system build, noughties BSF etc.		•		•		
3.4	Celebrating success - education organisations (and schools in particular) have a preference for 'shiny new buildings' and are sceptical about whether their existing estate can really be made fit for the future through retrofit. Inspire others by making exemplar retrofit projects and hard data easily accessible. NLA portal?				•		
3.5	Not only Net Zero – a singular focus on Net Zero is risky as it ignores other challenges, such as adaptation to climate change and coping with higher summertime temperatures, which are operationally and practically important in education.	•			•		
3.6	Long Term Funding – retrofitting education buildings is not a fad. There needs to be long-term visibility of how this is going to be organised and funded. Encourage <u>policy-makers</u> to put in place a long term, stable plan	•					
3.7	A London-wide Forum – the management of the <u>schools</u> estate is fragmented (between LEAs, MATs and other organisations) and retrofit action is currently taking place in a siloed way – the NLA together with GLA could foster a collaborative approach to lobbying for action and sharing best practice between school estate managers and industry professionals, through a London Schools Retrofit conference or forum		•				•
3.8	Reaching out to students – there is huge potential to engage students and their families in an organised schools retrofit process, and this could give families the knowledge they need to tackle energy use in their homes and <u>communities</u>						•
3.9	GLA Retrofit Fund – GLA establishes a cross-sector retrofit fund to which grant applications or loans may be applied for by <u>schools</u>				•		
3.10	Expertise – Establish accredited panel of experts to advise education <u>providers</u>				•		

About the Education Expert Panel

Focusing on the future needs of the education estates, schools, FE institutions and universities, the panel will explore how we make sure we plan and design sustainable, inclusive and accessible spaces for education, knowledge sharing and innovation.

Chair: *Ben Marston, Jestico + Whiles*

Tom Bentham, Max Fordham

Lorna Edwards, RSHP

Marta Galinanes-Garcia, AKT II

Bruce Glockling, Regeneration and Education Capital Development Specialist

Rhiannon Klein, Gerald Eve

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Neil Pinder, Wandsworth Borough Council

Quinton Pop, HOK

Julian Robinson, LSE

Dan Tassell, Haworth Tompkins

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