

Annex 6: Cost standard benchmark

Cost Standard benchmarks for school or college projects under Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

1 Benchmark

Standardised cost benchmarks are to be applied to as many of the elements of the build as possible. This will result in a maximum value for a school that can be benchmarked to provide a maximum funding envelope.

There are several different elements to this:

- Construction price per m²
- New Build Primary
- New Build Secondary, All-through or College
- Various refurbishment rates
- Net Zero Carbon price per m²
- Furniture, fitting and equipment price per pupil/student
- ICT price per pupil/student

2 Cost

During the recent cost increases in the construction sector the differentiation in costs between types of buildings has been highlighted. Going forward Welsh Government will therefore provide two benchmark costs for primary schools and another for secondary, all through and colleges.

The base construction cost per m² for 2024 has been adjusted to £3,559 per m² for primary schools and £3,239 per m² for secondary, all through schools and colleges. This has been reconciled against BCIS cost per m² analysis, internal and external cost data and has been found to be line with the benchmarking data. These benchmarks will be predicted for future years applying BCIS Tender Price Indices.

Net Zero Carbon costs Furniture Fixings and Equipment, ICT have also been adjusted in line with BCIS Tender Price Indices going forward.

In practice, where a project exceeds this value, the Welsh Government grant would be capped at the threshold indicated (abnormal costs associated with gradient, contamination, flood etc. would be considered separately).

3 Refurbishment Rates

Below is a description of the different types of refurbishments applicable to the rates included at point 6.

Light Refurbishment - Investment focused on common areas and essential repairs only. Extension of economic life is approximately five years. Works include strip out of existing space, shell and core refurbishment including cosmetic upgrades. Assumes existing main plant, existing floors and ceilings are retained.

Medium Refurbishment - Investment involves full upgrade of the existing building services and finishes but stops short of major structural alterations. Extension of economic life is approximately 15 years. Works include strip out of existing space, shell and core refurbishment including cosmetic upgrades. No major structural or sub-structural alterations. Existing floors and ceilings are retained and minor repairs only to façade.

Heavy Refurbishment - Investment includes significant structural alterations and may also include the replacement of facades and roof finishes. The complete renewal of internal fittings, finishes, and Mechanical and Electrical systems. The building is typically unoccupied. Extension of economic life is approximately 15 - 30 years. Works include strip out of existing space, shell and core refurbishment including cosmetic upgrades. Replacement to raised floors, ceilings and new services.

4 Furniture, Fittings and Equipment / Information Technology

Furniture, fittings and equipment typically includes the following:

- Tables and chairs,
- Science lab fit out,
- Domestic science fit out,
- School kitchens / canteens.

It excludes portable equipment such as Bunsen burners, test tubes, saucepans etc. IT Equipment is expected to include fitting out the school beyond the sockets and could include some basic classroom equipment, such as an interactive white board.

5 Net Zero Carbon

Costs per m² should be applied to the increase in costs from BREEAM Excellent to Net Zero in Operation and achieving the relevant embodied carbon target for the period based on completion date.

Years	Embodied Carbon Target
2025 - 2029	Below 600 kgCO ₂ /m ²
2030 - 2035	Below 350 kgCO ₂ /m ²
2035 - onwards	To be confirmed

6 Benchmark Cost Table

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Primary	£3,559/m ²	£3,659/m ²	£3,768/m ²	£3,897/m ²	£4,025/m ²
Secondary All Through and Colleges	£3,239/m ²	£3,330/m ²	£3,430/m ²	£3,546/m ²	£3,663/m ²
Net Zero Carbon	£405/m ²	£416/m ²	£429/m ²	£443/m ²	£458/m ²
Fit out cost per pupil/student					
IT	£640/nr	£658/nr	£678/nr	£701/nr	£724/nr
FF&E	£1,407/nr	£1,446/nr	£1,490/nr	£1,540/nr	£1,591/nr
Total	£2,047/nr	£2,104/nr	£2,167/nr	£2,241/nr	£2,315/nr
Refurbishment Costs per m2					
Light	£1,406/m ²	£1,445/m ²	£1,489/m ²	£1,539/m ²	£1,590/m ²
Medium	£2,207/m ²	£2,269/m ²	£2,337/m ²	£2,416/m ²	£2,496/m ²
Heavy	£2,851/m ²	£2,931/m ²	£3,019/m ²	£3,121/m ²	£3,224/m ²