

# **Minutes of AMP Network Focus Group Meeting held on Wednesday 15th December 2004 at Abbey Community Centre, Great Smith Street, London.**

## **Present:**

Gerald Snaith	Lincolnshire
Helen Rowlay	Swindon
Tony Palmer	Leeds
Kirry Frewin	Pillar Consultancy
Vesna Godwin	Northamptonshire
Alan Jones	DfES
Mark Redman	Wokingham
Richard Vaughan	Hampshire
Beech Williamson	DfES
Shaw Warnock	DfES
Nick Mayer	DfES

## **Not present:**

Nicola Van Hoen	Worcestershire
Paula McCree	Devon
Lindsey Taylor	Stockport
Keith Rowley	Waltham Forest
Peter McIntosh	Gateshead
Trevor Cooper	Cornwall
Peter Cotterill	Peterborough
Graham Dalton	Cardiff
Penny Pennington	Sheffield
Ian Cook	Pillar Consultancy
Barry Watts	Dorset
Ged Mitchell	Manchester
Mark Dolling	Milton Keynes
John Feely	Westminster
Ray Baker	Cheshire
Ian Patterson	Camden
Shirley Turner	Hampshire
Brian McKay	Wokingham
Mike Moore	Derby
Martin Wood	Sheffield

A letter dated 9th December 2004, received from Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital, was tabled. This concerned the reorganization of the DfES, the development of Building Schools for the Future and the growing role of Partnership for Schools and welcomed a meeting with selected members of the Focus Group to review the relationship between the DfES and the Asset Management Information Network to see how they can best work together.

Shaw Warnock suggested that selected Focus Group members to meet prior to the meeting with the DfES to advise on what they thought the network's role should be!

From the members present Vesna Godwin and Gerald Snaith stated that they would like to attend the meeting with the DfES. It was agreed that about 5 or 6 interested members of the Focus Group would be assembled to meet the DfES and that Shirley Turner (EBDOG) be invited to attend. Alan Jones suggested that Pillar contact Sally Brooks' secretary to arrange a meeting in January.

## **1. Previous Minutes**

1.1 The minutes of the meeting 28<sup>th</sup> June 2004 were taken as approved

1.2 The minutes of the meeting 10th September 2004 were accepted. Under AOB it was decided that a visit be made to Kingsdale School, London in the afternoon after the next Focus Group Meeting.

## **2. DfES AMP general update**

### **Schools Capital Update (Alan Jones)**

Sally Brooks has written to all Authorities explaining the Divisional Restructuring. DfES are still recruiting for the new structure and are losing some existing members. The Design Team is being slimmed down and the territorial function is being phased out. The Division will in future have a

more strategic focus, with programme delivery being managed much more through external partners e.g. PFS. Approval activities are under review; for example, subject to Diocesan agreement it is proposed that the threshold for VA project scrutiny work is increased from £50,000 up to £250,000. This could reduce the amount of scrutiny work by up to 50%.

Alan Jones agreed to furnish Pillar with an electronic version of the revised DfES structure for distribution to the Focus Group members.

**Alan Jones**

November spending review announced substantial increase to £6.3bn for the 07/08 programme and further prioritisation for waves 2 and 3 of BSF.

Mark Redman wanted to know if further information on priorities for projects in waves 4 onwards could be given. DfES have already given indications that they will before 2011 or 2016 and they will be prioritized on needs that may take account of AMP data. Prioritization and forward-planning issues will be discussed in a programme of meetings to be arranged with authorities in the New Year.

John Feely stated that funding sources depend upon knowing when these projects in waves 4 onwards are programmed for.

### **BSF/PFS Update (Beech Williamson)**

Beech announced that there was a revised version of BB81 *Design & Technology Accommodation in Secondary Schools*. Also, Transforming Schools BSF, which is a follow up to the silver books on exemplars and highlights issues on refurbishments and advises that other funds exist for refurbishment apart from BSF. There are no costs included but there is a schedule of the cost implications of various refurbishment options

The latest BREEM information is available on the DfES website.

Beech asked for volunteers to look at BB99 formulae, overall areas and zones will not change. DfES appreciate that it is more difficult to achieve overall areas in Primary Schools (particularly the smaller ones) than in Secondary, therefore they are looking at increasing the float from 3% to 10% in Primary to match that in Secondary, although there would be no more money allocated.

The first three waves have now been announced for BSF and there will be CABE enablers on each project.

### **3. ODPM / Corporate AMP Update**

In the absence of Barry Watts (our representative on the ODPM meetings) there was nothing to report. (see attached e-mail from Barry Watts received after the meeting)

### **4 AMP September Regional meetings**

Kirry Frewin referred to the tabled Agenda and reported that all dates and venues have been finalised. Healthy attendances are expected and most speakers have been confirmed.

Delegate numbers as at 14<sup>th</sup> Dec were: -

Shrewsbury	40
Leeds	44
London	31
Exeter	18

As the meetings do not start until 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005 more bookings are expected before the actual events take place.

A great deal of discussion took place concerning the format of these Regional Meetings. DfES representatives thought that in future the workshops might include Surgeries to which LEA's delegates would bring their questions and problems along to be answered by a DfES or by best practice authority representatives.

It was considered too late to change the agenda for the Feb/Mar 2005 meetings although it was agreed that the two DfES slots at 11.00 & 11.40 be combined into a single slot covering AMP, BSF, design issues etc.

Beech Williamson stated that if he was to report on the BSF position it would be the same as he delivered to EBDOG and was there a need for both forums? Vesna Godwin, one of the few focus group members who attended EBDOG, stated that no mention was made at EBDOG of AMP's at all. It was also pointed out that the personnel tended to be different, Chief Executives and Education Officers etc were more likely to attend EBDOG and AMP officers, surveyors, architects etc more likely to attend the AMP Regional Meetings. EBDOG was also a two day meeting which a significant number of potential attendees find it difficult to make, whereas they can manage the one day AMP Regional Meetings.

Beech proposed, at the meeting, that if the DfES/PFS update started at 11.00 and Achieving Excellence was at 12.00, lunch could be taken at 12.40 and he would then report on Refurbishment Designs at 1.40pm to the whole assembly. Workshop C could be about Partnering possibly by Hampshire at 2.10pm. However it was decided that it was possibly too late to change the agenda for the February/March meetings.

It was thought that the workshops/surgeries could be more relevant to the individual regions and possibly on the next feedback forms a section could be included asking delegates what they would like included in the workshops/surgeries at the next regional meeting for their area.

It was considered that this network should get down to the nitty gritty detail and help to identify good practice and that EBDOG should be about strategic matters.

## **5 Proposed BSF Conference in London on Tuesday January 25<sup>th</sup> 2005**

As the first three waves have now been announced and all that the other Authorities wished to know was exactly in which year their projects would be included, it was considered that there was no requirement for a conference on this subject in January and that it should be cancelled.

## **6 AMP web site**

Vesna Godwin stated that it would be a good idea to try and resurrect the Discussion Forum but in a more user-friendly form than before.

**Pillar**

## **7 Membership of the AMP Focus Group**

Details are published at:-

[www.pillarconsultancy.com/focusmember.htm](http://www.pillarconsultancy.com/focusmember.htm)

Please notify any changes or errors to Pillar Consultancy.

**All**

## **7. Any Other Business**

Mike Moore although not at the meeting had recommended that at a future AMP Regional Meeting Professor Steven Higgins of Newcastle University could be invited to speak on "Aspects of School Designs that affect Standards"

Kirry Frewin referred to the web site:- [www.pillarconsultancy.com/wineclub/wine.htm](http://www.pillarconsultancy.com/wineclub/wine.htm)

Which allows LEAs the opportunity to publicize the wine club to education establishments and parents with a discount of 2.5% of all sales going back to the school of LEA dept.

**8. Next Meeting**

Suggested as February but after the date of the meeting to be arranged with Sally Brooks.

**Pillar**