

EDUCATION BUILDING DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS GROUP

BLACKPOOL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 3/4TH 2005, IMPERIAL HOTEL, BLACKPOOL

Robert Brophy, Assistant Director Children's Services, Blackpool

Robert opened the conference and welcomed everyone to the conference and thanked colleagues from the EBD OG Standing Group and his team who had assisted with the organisation of the conference.

David Lund – Director of Children's Services, Blackpool

David outlined the key points that he hoped delegates would take away from the Blackpool conference including a successful conference and that the delegates would learn a little about the challenges that Blackpool face, the progress that has been made in the last seven years and the huge ambitions that Blackpool has for the future.

David gave a background of Blackpool, experience of delivery of capital projects within education over the past five years, including the positive approach to schemes through the partnering process and provided photographic evidence of projects within Blackpool, which have been carried out in the last five years.

David concluded by highlighting the impact that a good environment has on learning behaviour, self esteem and stress levels, acknowledged the delight of schools taking possession of new projects and stressed the importance of being able to make a real difference to children's lives.

David wished delegates well for the conference, thanked delegates for coming and wished all an enjoyable time in Blackpool.

Reg Haslam – Director of Development, Re-Blackpool, Tourism and Regeneration, Blackpool

Reg delivered a presentation to the conference of the sustainable resort regeneration that is planned for Blackpool.

The key points for re-generation in Blackpool:

- The need to re-invent Blackpool
- The seasonal affect (create new reasons to visit the town all year round)
- The need for economic growth
- Culture Change
- Upgrade the infrastructure

The key areas for the master plan:

- Consider visitor and local resident
- Re-shape the resort physically and spiritually
- Re-discover pride
- Create a year round national entertainment destination
- Balanced healthy neighbourhoods
- Town centre to become the business civic and cultural centre for the whole Fylde coast

Children's Presentation

Sixteen children from Blackpool schools attended the conference to give a presentation on their vision of a 21st Century school.

The presentation reflected the children's concept on a 21st Century School and the following points were highlighted:

Internally

- Broader transit areas
- Curved corridors
- Wider areas of visibility
- Carpeting where appropriate
- Maximum use of natural light and brighter calming colour schemes

Externally

- Provision of outside seating creation of systematic leisure walkways
- Park style grounds
- Provision of trees and plants
- Opportunity to picnic on the school lawn as well as run around in the school yard and provision of sheltered passageways to enable them to keep dry on wet days

The children added that a school of the twenty first century creative design should facilitate:

- Conservation of energy
- Effective litter management
- Avoidance of noise distraction
- Effective heating systems with effective regulation
- Window material (effectively and frequently cleaned)

Offer a design which:

- Reflects the realities of teaching and learning in the 21st century
- Is fit for purpose
- Design must challenge the notion that one size fits all
- Challenged by the growing use of interactive technology, the growing range of curriculum diversity and major changes to teaching styles with an increasing amount of attention being paid to a variety of visual, audio and kinaesthetic modes of learning all of these developments which call into question the traditional assumptions of one size fits all classrooms
- Specialised learning areas of studios, workshops and facilities
- More specific functionality of use of space, such as presentation theatres, discussion rooms and areas for private study.

The children expressed that the classroom of future will reflect the widespread in teaching activity, from a rigid instructional format to a more interactive style.

The children added that recent surveys suggest that an ideal layout for a learning environment should be a u shaped seating plan to move away from a traditional classroom layout to a more imaginative distribution of accommodation. The classroom of the future will also have to accommodate facilities to allow students to access laptops, interactive whiteboards, dvd software and video conferencing equipment as well as furniture which promotes dialogue and discussion as well as independent study and also it should possible to design and produce seating which is both comfortable and conducive to sustain concentration. The children added that facilities should look the part, have fine lines and smooth surfaces and include generous storage space.

The children thanked the conference delegates for their kind attention

The conference delegates were given the opportunity of asking questions regarding the presentation.

Shirley Turner – Chairman of EBD OG

Shirley's presentation began with highlighting on a need to focus on the changing world of education, and the need to put children at the centre and a perception of what this will look like – Shirley highlighted the need to consider the Every Child Matters agenda and the achievement of the five outcomes.

Shirley highlighted that the way forward requires multi disciplinary working, integrating services, changing cultures, partner engagement and joining up funding streams (and the challenges that this brings).

The standing group have met several times and emphasis was highlighted on the membership. Discussions have included all the issues and challenges of integrating services, and children's centre capital.

Shirley explained that representation will continue on VA Capital funding and Sure Start. Shirley added that the VA transitional group have been meeting to have an input into the future management of VA Capital funding, and added that there is likely to be a consultation document out later on in the month. The issue of 16-19 Capital was raised.

A primary capital discussion was held at the consultation and the group highlighted the fact that the discussions reflected that the allocation should be distributed amongst authorities and reported that the standing group had a long discussion about the recent white paper. Shirley asked for comments on the white paper to be forwarded to the standing group.

Membership – constitution of the standing group, relationships between EBD OG, the standing group, the Dfes and the AMP focus group. The work that has been done has been documented and some of the information have been analysed. 82% of local authorities go to five regional groups and approx 68 local authorities do not access a regional group. There is support to set one up. Of the five regional groups the representation on the standing group is as follows:

- Midland – 4
- North East – 4
- South East – 2
- South West – 5
- Yorkshire – 2

(plus additional members on standing group that do not attend regional group)

Shirley added that a draft constitution is included in the pack for consultation, the DfES has indicated that they want to make EBD OG their main channel of communication with local authorities.

A chart was included in the pack that outlines the way in which the DfES want to work which was developed in conjunction with the EBD OG Standing Group, the DfES and the AMP Focus Group.

The programme setting group will consist of representatives of the schools capital and policy at the DfES and other divisions.

Shirley explained that the Programme Setting Group will meet and the DfES will take responsibility for it and will set the policy strategy for twelve months. This will inform part of the agenda for the EBD OG twice yearly conferences which can be discussed in the regional groups. EBD OG to keep independence still have large part of conference to address issues and the DfES will bring headline information to the conference. Regional events will unpick headline information and these will become more controlled and focused and will be directed from the programme setting group.

Shirley explained that the RIBA Schools Client Forum minutes are on the EBD OG website.

An event was held in Nottingham called Not Just Another Brick in the Wall.

AMP Focus Group have met twice and will meet again in December.

The EBD OG website is proving to be a success, all documents are password protected and passwords are available from Chris Gilbert in Birmingham (e-mail is on website).

Future EBD OG Conferences

May 2006	-	Staffordshire
November 2006	-	Milton Keynes
May 2007	-	Northamptonshire

Nick Flight – The Audit Commission

Nick's presentation was about School Place Planning and the Wider Improvement Agenda. The key points were:

- **The Audit Commissions involvement and key dates**
- **Highlighted two themes which underpin:**
 - Making the most of public assets
 - Integrating the work with other agendas
- **Integrating capital investment decisions with:**
 - School place planning, in particular, responding to falling rolls
 - The wider agenda of the council as a whole and the response to 'Every Child Matters'
- **The Extent of Falling Rolls** - highlighting the current and projected surplus places in primary and secondary.
- **The effects of Falling Rolls** including the educational impact, the efficiency argument and questions of choice.
- **Falling Rolls** – actions which will include targets at individual authority level and what is appropriate may vary from one place to another, the re-organisation of provision – though white Paper proposals significantly complicate an already formidable task and extended schools and community.
- **Linking to the bigger picture: drivers**
 - 'Every Child Matters'
 - The wider council agenda – local strategic partnerships and local area agreements
 - The education vision in 'Building Schools for the Future'
 - 'Higher Standards, Better Schools For All' – October 05 White Paper
- **The Bigger Picture - Consider the implications for the school building stock and the pattern of provision of key issues like:**
 - increasing diversity of provision
 - community engagement
 - extended schools and co-location of services
 - inclusion
 - new teaching and learning styles
- **Increasing Diversity of Provision**
 - White Paper intensifies existing trends:
 - LA's new role as commissioner rather than provider
 - New duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access
 - Competitions for all new schools – bring in new promoters and new Trust schools

Need at local level to:

Capture the strategic leadership role

Consider knock-on effects of proposals on other schools and system as a whole

Resolve inherent tensions, e.g. competition/collaboration, expanding popular schools/improving all schools, 'local schools for local people'/encouraging travel

- **Community Engagement**

What is the school's 'core business' in the light of 'Every Child Matters'?

What is the school community?

Links with regeneration

How central are schools to regeneration programmes? – gaps between rhetoric and reality

Links with housing

Often limited strategic engagement between education and housing services

- **Extended Schools and Co-location of Services**

Variable understanding of what the 'core offer' means in practice

Models of management and governance being developed – wide variety

Building Bulletin 98 – effect on use of building by community?

Evidence of some PFI arrangements inhibiting community use?

- **Inclusion**

Links to SEN strategy

Relocation of special provision

Approaches to managing behaviour

- **Considering Teaching and Learning Styles**

The future styles of teaching and learning

How buildings allow these to develop

The internal classroom - fitting and design

The Role of ICT

The Impact of workforce reform

Philip Parker, Head of Strategy, DfES

An update was provided on Schools Capital from Philip Parker, Head of Strategy from the DfES, the key points on the update were:

- **Design Agenda**

DfES role to set standards, produce guidelines and best practice

PfS role to ensure that the market provides high quality design

Both of us work together to ensure that schools know what good design looks like

Design Unit reorganised

Design Conference on 6 December

- **Targeted Capital Fund**

Larger pot, allocated earlier, with reduced bidding costs

£1.1 billion of allocations announced on 12 October

90 Local Authority Projects

45 Voluntary Aided Projects

3 New Faith Schools

10 Classroom of the Future Design Projects

12 School Rebuilds

Range of other projects

- **Progress of PFI**

Since Easter 10 pre BSF PFI projects signed.

These cover £607 million of PFI credits and 53 Schools

More to sign before the end of the year
PUK report showed some things working well and others needing action

- **Children and Young People**
Substantial resources for children and young people
£60 million of PFI credits between 2005-08 to support Every Child Matters
From April 2006 £40 million to develop a new approach to investment in youth facilities
£404 million capital for the second wave of Children's Centres from April 2006
Funding for Primary Extended Schools is £110 million in current year rising to £194 Million next year.
- **Changes to Administration of VA Capital**
Help harmonise capital and revenue payments and enhance LA role as commissioner
Not new in terms of admin but additional 4,500 schools
Implementation options and timelines April 2006 or April 2007?
Transition Group established – includes a range of LA reps.
Formal consultation in late November
- **Academies**
Reviewing the delivery of Academies programme to integrate more closely with BSF. This will:
Support delivery of 200 Academies open or in the pipeline by 2010;
Allow us to consider the separation of Academies governance and building processes;
Better support the long term role of the sponsor
Announcement later in the year

Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital, DfES

Sally reported on the Schools White Paper and the overall aims which were highlighted as excellence and equality for all, driving up standards, helping those not achieving especially in deprived communities and learning from examples of what has worked including personalised learning; freedoms and flexibilities, parental engagement and external partners.

The key points were:

- **New Role for Local Authorities and how this will affect them**
Championing parents and pupils
New duties and powers to make this possible
Stronger role in driving improvement of coasting schools
Set terms for new school competitions
Clear role in 14-19 provision
Supported by new Office of the Schools Commissioner
- **The Affect**
New LA role as commissioners, with duty to respond to the Choice Diversity and Access agenda
SOC abolished and powers transferred to local authority
Competitions for all new schools
Easier for independent schools to join state system
Parent Promoters
Expansion of successful and popular schools
Federating and Partnering
- **The Funding**
Presumption that capital needs will be met via existing programmes including:
Formulaic programmes to LAs and schools
Targeted Capital Fund – review for future rounds
BSF & Academies

New Primary Programme

Up to £150 million now available to support White Paper & establish demand – details to follow

▪ **New Providers**

Expectation that LAs will provide premises

Existing schools

Renting premises

Good quality temporary buildings

Investment needs included in AMPs (but not immediately)

No worthwhile proposals to fail for lack of funding

DfES will fund to stimulate demand & fund as a last resort.

Temporary relaxation of school buildings regulations for independent schools entry?

▪ **Building Schools for the Future**

Key driver for White Paper agenda

Education vision needs to support choice agenda

Role of Schools Commissioner

Competition - encouraging new providers within BSF

One School Pathfinder must support WP agenda

How to make this work

flexibility

longer lead-in times

▪ **Assets**

Transfer of school assets

Recognise that there are complex issues

Key role for local authority as commissioner and strategic thinker

Expectation that issues will be resolved locally

We will protect public assets for future use and local disputes about disposal of school land (apart from playing fields) to be resolved by schools adjudicators

Philip Parker then provided an update on the Primary Capital Programme which indicated:

- **New funding for Primary** - Chancellor announced in Spring 2005 an additional £150 million from 2008-09 rising to £500 million from 2009-2010 and half of the primary stock to be rebuilt or refurbished.
- **The objectives of Primary Capital Funding** – to include excellent 21st Century learning facilities, delivery of high standards, contribution to the Every Child Matters Agenda, provision of facilities for extended schools and ensuring first class ICT facilities.
- **The proposed timetable** was provided and issues were outlined including ensuring that investment supports education vision, flat funding, local planning, procurement mechanisms and design.

Steve Avis, Head of Finance, DfES

Steve provided a presentation entitled Making Investment Count.

Steve outlined the types of funding as conventional to include Capital Grant and Supported borrowing and Private Finance to include PFI credits. Steve explained the conventional method of funding as:

grant - capital funding to authorities, schools

Borrowing approvals - revenue funding to authorities

6 months interest costs in first year

Subsequent years, support for interest charges and debt repayment

Prudential Code

The associated issues were outlined as ODPM Factors, affordability gaps, floor authorities and ceiling authorities.

Q. How does the Department plan to manage the allocation of grant and borrowing (supported or unsupported) in the future, given that there is evidence that revenue budgets are in decline? (With particular reference to floor authorities)

Q. In relation to TCF in particular, matched funding and borrowing rather than grant means some TCFs are only 50% funded. This causes a disproportionate drain on local priorities – is there room for negotiation over grant or borrowing?

Q. DfES Sure Start Unit targets in terms of numbers of centres, related to pupil reach, are unrealistic given the levels of funding available:

- a) does the department plan to offer any Building Bulletin advice to assist with space planning (above and beyond the statutory levels for day care);
- b) Has any work been done of costing appropriate space standards and relating this to the allocations made?

Q. What will the schools capital team be doing about reducing the project scrutiny bureaucracy around Sure Start and Children's Centre projects. Can timescales for round 1 be extended?

Q. What is the expected impact on the way capital is managed as a result of the White Paper i.e. will LA's remain in strategic control or will money be available directly to schools? (DFC or other mechanism?)

Q. Given the encouragement of schools to become independent trusts, does this negate responsibility of the LA to strategically plan school places, admissions and building programmes?

Q. Has the DfES considered the impact of the White Paper on Local Authority assets and the loss or effect on prime development sites?

Q. From what we understand of the White Paper the future role of LEPs is unclear. In the light of the future "trust" status of schools, will the position of LA's be undermined within the LEP, as it will no longer be the primary owner of the assets?

Q. In the light of the move of schools to foundation status is it likely that local members will give education investment a lower priority, as they will have no stake in the asset?

Q. In the spirit of open and transparent government, will the DfES confirm the methodology they used to prioritise TCF bids?

Q. How were LA's awarded a BSF one-school pathfinder and what weighting was given to the "worst 5 schools" data? Will there be a second round and if so, will LA's get a reasonable planning lead-in time?

Q. The DfES has attempted to provide feedback on unsuccessful TCF bids, whilst welcome, the feedback is too bland and general to be of any use - much of it is obviously standard wording and not project specific. How can this be improved?

Q. Can LA's which have been successful in Waves 1 and 2 secondary, be reassured that this will not affect their chances of early BSF primary?

Q. Given that we know that the 1st and 2nd waves of BSF were politically influenced, how will the DfES ensure that this does not happen in future waves?

Q. In the forthcoming consultation paper on primary capital funding, could you indicate what options might be forthcoming?

Q. Does the transfer of basic need 16+ responsibility to the LSC make it more difficult to expand a popular and successful 11-18 school?

Q. Reference was made at the May EBD OG of the government's intention to support small schools. How does this fit in with the falling rolls position nationally?

Q. How do local, small to medium sized building contractors, who offer sustainable employment opportunities fit into the DfES school building strategy? Does the Department have a view of whether contractors should be CRB checked?

Q. Were pupils consulted on BB77 revision, 98 and 99 and will they be consulted on future bulletins?

Q. Draft BB 77 increases the floor area by 60% - will future funding levels be increased to reflect this, or will scheme approvals simply be reduced?

Q. Given that we understand consultation on the management of VA capital is imminent, could you outline your current thinking on this issue?

Q. Has the DfES assessed the financial cost of "Turning the Tables", school meal consultation paper and are additional funds likely to be forthcoming.

Q. When will an appropriate and realistic space allocation for school dining facilities be made by the DfES within guidance?

Q. As a result of the extended schools initiative is there any intention to provide any additional funding for access/provision, if so, when, if not, why not?

Q. Against a background of falling rolls, falling capital, falling developer contributions, not in BSF until 2015/16, no TCF and now none until 2008/09, some smaller authorities are facing serious difficulties where they have conscientiously raised schools' expectations and ambitions and no longer have the prospect of delivering. What should they do?

