

Thursday 4 May, 2006

**John Giacomelli, Head of Joint Schools Property Division,
Children and Lifelong Learning Division, Staffordshire County Council**

John welcomed everyone to the Spring conference and to Staffordshire. Hope to offer an interesting and valued programme with the addition of the attendance of the DfES.

The conference centre facilities of Alton Towers were chosen as this was the only venue within Staffordshire that could host the numbers at the conference.

John thanked all the sponsors in particular JCB.

**Peter Traves, Director of Children and Lifelong Learning.
Staffordshire County Council**

Peter gave a brief overview of what Staffordshire is all about. It is the 7th largest County Council, has a 810,000 population, 130,000 school children, 8 districts/boroughs and is geographically and socially varied and fluid.

As a County Council we do very well in some areas, but others we are reasonable. Joint Schools Property Division in particular are very good. This unit was set up as a result of an Ofsted inspection where previous school property issues were centralised but poor. However over the last three years this has improved massively. It is well managed, monitored, has sharp customer focus. It is run with the view of what we can do for the children and young families, the function rather than the looks, not just rebuilding but suitability for the wider community.

We are down the list for BSfF, however this could be an advantage as we have some time to think and plan for this.

Peter outlined a particular project in Tamworth where a school is to be closed. It has dramatic falling rolls, is not performing well, despite committed staff and is in an area of significant social deprivation.

Staffordshire took the decision to close this particular school. MPs and Councillors were very supportive of this decision. Instead of selling off the land we put in a bid in which we were successful, to provide a Tamworth school and community centre to include:

- 14-19 education
- vocational centre
- special education/inclusion
- challenging aspirations of local community

The community see this project as improving the local area and thanks to the “can do” attitude of John Giacomelli’s team, offers at the core, basic provision, targeted provision, special education including mental health and social, multi agency working and co-location.

The wider implications of this are that, for over 140 years the social gap has not improved, and parent income is still an indicator for the education of children. Stronger more cohesive communities, not just education but society.

Focus on impact on people’s lives. Final strand of “closing the gap”, massive improvements to county of health, affluence etc. Some still excluded, part of our agenda is to make those in this area be part, be included.

Local Government Reviews expected. Education Service under constant programme change.

“Every Child Matters” and Children’s Act bring significant change of how we deal with these issues. ECM is also about services for Children.

Area Joint Reviews – how does it feel to be a child in Staffordshire using the 5 outcomes. How it is making a difference? Children who drop out of the system have a lower life expectancy. Self worth, economic well being.

Education Act 2006 us to drive up standards.

Standards/Achievements.

By 2013 every child will have the right to choose any 14-19 courses, through a network of facilities.

BSfF – Primary Capital Programme

The key words in this are Schools and Future

We are in a period of change, how do we empower the local community to be involved in education etc. Cultural and ethnic society has changed. Social changes and processes of learning. What do we need to think about as we move into the future. Make sure that this is based on model of lifelong learning, within fabric of the building, to serve the community. These need to include everyone, socially, physically, promote cultural diversity, partnership basis learning provision.

Schools of future need to provide children with safe environmental and an environment which promotes self worth, for children and parents. Improves behaviour, moral and therefore learning. Promote health and fitness. JCB good example of this, very involved in local schools.

Environmentally Friendly

Community needs to feel they “own” the school, it is part of their community resource for the whole.

Our job is to change and enhance lives. We have made a great deal of progress, standards in attendance and building higher.

Thank you for everything you do and wish you success in the future.

Councillor Carol Dean, Staffordshire County Council

We are very proud of the work we do in Staffordshire, we are a creative county. Important times, vision of giving every one a chance. Not producing like for like, we want to be more innovative.

BSfF bringing new projects in future, not just 9.00 am to 3.00pm school day, good facilities, but still have “old stock”. Grateful to DfES for attending both days.

Shirley Turner, Chair of EBD OG

Shirley opened with the question “what is this?” with a picture of a SILO. A SILO is an area to store where something can be kept warm, safe and dry.

She spoke of Every Child Matters which incorporates health, safety, achievement, contribution and well being. Children and Families are at the core of all these, not in isolation. Therefore no more SILOs more inclusion Real challenge for authorities is to bring about change but this is not just for authorities and DfES but also Government Departments joining up services, funding etc.

EBD OG Review

Standing Group Meetings

- 23 March 2006
- 3 May 2006
- 28 September 2006

Membership

- Regional Groups
- Relationship with DfES

Issues discussed

- Children Act/Integrated Children Services
- Capital for Children Centres
- VA Transitional Group
- Links and changes with Network Focus Group
- Primary Capital
- Science Innovation next steps – investment framework
- BSF update

A Constitution for the Standing Group had been agreed and this had been distributed to all delegates. Any comments on this document should be referred to Shirley or a member of the Standing Group.

A new magazine, Building Futures, had been produced and published by Doble Monk Butler, for which Shirley thanked them. The introduction was from Tony Palmer and any comments on this journal, positive or negative, would be appreciated.

Strategy/Focus/Task Groups

Schools Capital Strategy Consultative Group

Meetings

- 28 November 2005
- 27 February 2006
- 8 May 2006
- 5 June 2006
- 18 September 2006

Issues discussed

- DFC Guidance
- VA Transitional Group
- Capital to support the Education Bill
- DfES Sustainability Action Plan Update

RIBA Schools Client Forum

Meetings

- 22 November 2005
- 23 February 2006
- 25 April 2006
- 25th & 26th September - two day event @ Reading University

School Building Network Focus Group (previously AMP)

Meetings

- 7 December 2005
- 16 May 2006
- 10 October 2006

Children's Services Communication Group

Meetings

- 8 March 2006
- 5 July 2006

Issues discussed

- Future role of the Group is to plan future 9-12 months ahead to react to Government initiatives.

EBDOG Website

- Under constant review and being updated
- Proposal to have electronic booking forms for future Conferences
- www.bgfl.org/services/ebdog

Future Conferences

- 23 & 24 November 2006 - Milton Keynes
- May 2007 - Northamptonshire
- November 2007 - Yorkshire & Humberside
Regional Group
Hosts in Harrogate
- May 2008 - to be confirmed
- November 2008 - to be confirmed

Any authority wishing to host a conference, should contact Shirley.

Shirley concluded with thanks to the Staffordshire Team and for exciting and valuable times for all.

Philip Parker, Head of Capital Strategy (Primary Capital)

Building Primary Schools at the Heart of the Community

2005 New long term programme for primary schools. Department has been developing our proposals since last met which were published in March (distributed in conference pack). This document is out for consultation until 14 June. Looking for innovative ideas, want authorities to put in effort, networking with each other and would also like authorities to respond. Please contact DfES if you want more information. He highlighted aspirations of the programme, i.e. health, fitness etc.

Philip spoke briefly through his power point and explained that he had an exercise that he wished delegates to participate in. Each table were given 20 minutes for discussion about either

Topic A: What should our aspirations be?

Or

Topic B: How can we turn aspirations into reality?

Following discussion and feedback all were asked for the key thing their authority could learn from this pilot and what would you like to see?

Top Aspirations:

1. Norris Porter, Shropshire Topic A

Community buy in – ECM outcomes
Right location – mix of services in right place
Double the money – join to vfm
Vfm – whole life costing – sustainable

Real top out of the five outcomes is about the children and not buildings.

2. Doug Elliott, London Borough of Barnet Topic A

15 years on, confident school still delivery requirement
Future proof – spaces that improve
ICT

3. Nita Parshotam, London Borough of Brent Topic B

Right location
Local schools and community
Quality of life indicators – communities

4. Greg Durkin, Salford City

Topic B

Planning
AMP
Level playing field
Equal opportunities to standards
National model – use AMP
Staff impact
Identifies use of facilities

Philip posed the general question:

Would you have:

AMP free standing	Answer	NO
AMP + something else	Answer	YES majority
Scrap AMP, completely new	Answer	1 agreed

5. Chris Borderick, Northamptonshire

Visual primary estate – school, community, policies
Plans - look at every plan – therefore get out of the SILOS and use everything
Potential methods of procurement
Projects to start – ones with greatest impact on children/community
Targets set – not just education, longer term sustainability

6. Graham Olway, West Sussex

Finance available to deliver ECM
Agenda need to tie up with PCT and Local Borough Councils
Challenge rules and standing orders
Sustainability – revenue funding as well as capital funding
Needs to happen? Really go for big project to make impact not spread too thin
Aspirations – time line – are the communities benefiting? Attendance levels etc. monitor

In summary:

Learn about partnerships
Simplify join up fund
Sustainability, energy life cycle costs
Goods exam – affordable
Design future proofs

Philip summed up and stated that he was available if required later in the day.

Most popular question about bid was “not supported borrowing” – to which the answer was not sure yet.

Shirley Turner

Asked delegates to complete blue form for the DfES Q&A session for collection.

Day Two, 5 May 2006

Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital, DfES

Sally outlined what would be covered in her general update today.

- Local primary targets, primary school refurbishment
- Secondary school modernisation 15 years
- 2000 academies

Steve Avis, DfES

- Grant funding for all successful TCF bids
- A greater proportion of grant funding allocation than expected
- Successful resolution of the supported borrowing shortfall issue facing wave 1 BSF authorities
- Announced budget March 2006
- Goods new budget for capital investment 25% increase on 2007-08 baseline
- 2010-11 capital funding £1,110 above current estimate for private sector of £975
- Funding for intermediate years (08-09 and 09-10) yet to be determined

Sally then mentioned the primary programme which Philip had spoke about on Thursday, a lot of work done on this.

- Major focus on design for learning conference, key priority to keeping this up
- Ministerial speeches on design
- Set up design advisory forum and PfS design team
- Sustainable action plan

BSf, Academies, PFI – Dana Woodmansey spoke on this. Not quite there yet, has huge programme of build.

- Waves 1 – 3 education vision signed off
- First opening September 2007 BSF School
- Learning lessons through all this, improving plans and guidance, looking at ways we work with partners
- BSF Team – redefining role to support local authorities
- Wave 4 – Martin Lipson spoke about in Workshop. Broadly aware of where we are, should be announced Spring 2006
- Main aim to get it right in Wave 4, for next waves

PFI progress

- 99 signed contracts, about to sign 100th
- DfES are aware of problems experienced with PFI
- Working together with Treasury to secure future improvements in PFI contracts and delivery
- Still working on this and setting up dedicated support team to encourage networking

Academies

- Being delivered through BSF via PFS
- More integrated vision.
- Authorities to have more control.
- Better value for money
- Maximise market interest (will not be competition)

Role of PFS

- Build on BSF processes
- Bear with us still working on mechanics
- Only 2-3 weeks since announcement, so early days

White Paper – Sally Brooks

- Continue to drive up standards
- Help children achieve
- Learning from personalised learning

New Role for Local Authorities

- Enhanced powers in some areas and strategic role
- Diversity, choice
- Personalised learning
- 14-19 provision
- Extended Schools
- Better behaviour
- The White Paper supports this new role
- Bigger commissioning role if schools failing or underperforming
- Role of school adjudicator, owner of assets etc, it is important to be aware of this role to make decisions along those issues.

Capital Programme

- Funding increasingly supports strategic long term planning
- Funding largely channelled through local authorities
- DfES Capital Team focus on supporting strategic transformation

Challenges

- Concerns of local authorities recognised
- Need co-operative approach across whole school community
- Involve wide range of stakeholders
- Plan early, need everyone on board, time allowed for appeals
- Recognise what needs to be done
- DfES are keen to know problems

Diversity and Choice

Foundations (Trusts)

- Foundation with a foundation, commonly known as Trust schools!
- These are maintained by LA of intervention – part of strategic planning
- School that changes status have same legal entity as before
- More information, proposing to put out some Q&A about White Paper

New Promoters

- Range – faith, private schools, parent promoters.
- Wanting to set up school along with local authorities

Expansion of Popular Schools

- Required to consider this where parental demand
- Decisions to take into account impact on community

Partnership and Federations

- Encouraging what already happens
- Schools to work together in collaboration with community
- regeneration

What Next?

- Comprehensive spending review over summer, to include:
 - Agree funding for intermediate years
 - Agree type of funding
 - More grant
 - PFI credit
 - Less (if any) supported borrowing
- Primary Capital Programme
 - Formal consultation in May
 - Reporting in Autumn
 - A lot of work still to be done
- BSF
 - Waves 4 – 6 and further one school
 - Announce further Pathfinder projects in Spring
- Design
 - Major publication
 - Primary programme
 - School grounds guide
 - Extended services design guidance
- Sustainability
 - Publications
- School Building Network
 - Regional User Group meetings
 - 15 June South Gloucestershire
 - 22 June Leeds
 - 24 June London

DfES Question and Answer Session

Question 1 Graham Olway, West Sussex

Joined up Thinking

There is a dire need for joined up thinking at Government departmental level both within the DfES as well as between other departments such as the ODPM and Treasury in terms of

- Funding floor authorities and supported borrowing
- Competing priorities - Sport England etc.
- Planning legislation

Over the last 4 – 5 years this issue has been raised again and again. Has any progress been made to resolve the problem and is there anything we can do to help the DfES bring about change?

Answer: Martin Lipson/Sally Brook

A lot of questions in similar them. Accept problem is joining up with Govt Depts. LGA continue to make the point, support but slow process. Email about particular issue i.e. Sport England and Sally will look at this and be aware of the issue.

Supported Borrowing – would welcome receipt of examples of these, to include in discussion with Treasury.

Central local forum where LGA met with Govt Dept. – Martin Lipsom will mention at LGA to see if can take forward.

Question 2 Tony Blackman, East Sussex

Extended Schools

Is there any guidance or models available or being produced:

To assist in breaking down the barriers between governance and management?

To identify additional running costs, as well as third party and transfer of control agreements?

Answer:

Don't know, more about management of capital. Have extended school team and worked closely therefore will take the question back.

Question 3 Nigel Spears, Diocese of Westminster

Primary Capital Programme:

Why a differing stance for Primary Capital to BSF in relation to the 10% Governors liability for VA Schools? Will this lead to VA schools not being involved in the programme?

Answer:

Why is BSF different from rest of capital programmes - BSF exempt but others not. VA valued not having to take 10% from capital programme. BSF one-off national programme, spread over 15 years.

VA will not need to raise money. Money goes into maintenance and trying to get strategic.

Question 4 Peter Proudley, West Sussex

The Bill

There is conflict between the current capital regime and the outcomes of the Bill, e.g. school strategic organisation by the Local Authority versus parental promoters and trust school aspirations. How will the DfES help Local Authorities to resolve this? What is the role of Children's Trusts in all of this?

Answer:

Came under Challenges in Sally's slides. DfES are here to support all. LA s will have differing issues, some already have schools VA other not. Guidance will be issued.

As to whether DfES can do anything – like DfES to change Bill?! Unchartered territory.

Cannot help with the question on Children's Trusts.

Question 5 Clare Medland, South Gloucestershire

Net Capacity Calculations

Will the calculation of net capacities be amended to reflect current initiatives – Extended Schools/Children’ Centres. At present only 1 room can be designated as a community room. If there is no change it could indicate a school has a much larger surplus capacity than it actually has?

Answer: Beech Williamson

Reason for one room, surplus spaces and not resource areas. Children’s Centres not included.

Question 6 Chris Borderick, Northamptonshire

Science

The DTi announced funding for science laboratories in secondary schools. Is there any update on this funding?

Answer: Martin Lipson

No – perhaps LGS could take this up.

Question 7 Chris Gilbert, Birmingham

BSF

The underlying principle in relation to capital receipts appears to be that the programme and local authority should share in any rationalisation efficiencies such as capital receipt. Authorities can retain the first 500k, the balance thereafter is shared equally. Authorities have a major affordability issue with BSF programme and require retention of all efficiency savings to meet their liabilities. Are the DfES aware of this principle and would they support us in retaining 100%.

Answer: Sally Brook & Beech Williamson

Guidance published. DfES principles and policies – yes aware therefore their decision.

Affordability gap – DfES put money in, Las put theirs in too.
Not convinced need to move from 50/50.

BW – money per school per place, rationalising schools, therefore 500k initial receipt fair to split remainder of sale.

Question 10 **Paul Andrews, Lincolnshire**

BSF

What has the DfES learnt during the BSF pathfinders and early waves and how will this information be disseminated? Is the DfES proposing to change the way in which the priorities for later waves were determined? Does the DfES have cross party support for the BSF and the proposed primary programme?

Answer: Dana Woodmansey , Beech Williamson, Martin Lipson & Sally Brooks

D - Lots of lessons learnt, key message need to have right level of skills and resources to deliver, sponsorship, highest level of support, LEPs not always right for all – one size does not fit all. Guidance is improving all the time.

BW – prepare as much as can, survey information, easier to concentrate on design. Think about inclusion of special school..

ML – 4Ps – dissemination of lessons. Gateway Review Process – publication on website. Networking.

SB – not proposing to change Waves 4 – 6, it is likely that consulting with Wave 7+ to look and review, ability and speed of delivery.

ML – may be more one school BSF.

Massive slippage on BSF and need to become more focused on Waves 4 – 6. DfES must deliver it or lose support. Build credibility, key concern that able to delivery to programme .

Cross party in support – not a concern.

Shirley thanked everyone for their contributions and looks forward to seeing everyone again in Milton Keynes.

Close