

EDUCATION BUILDING DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS GROUP

**West Sussex Conference May 12th - 13th 2005, Le Meridien
Hotel, Gatwick**

**Graham Olway, Education Capital Programme Manager – West
Sussex County Council**

Introduction

Graham 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.

Each delegate was given a conference pack containing a programme and various information leaflets from all involved with the conference.

Robert Back – Director of Education and the Arts, West Sussex LEA

Robert officially opened the conference and was delighted to welcome the delegates to West Sussex. He stressed the importance of the conference for all LEAs to attend. 2005 was an exciting year for West Sussex and Robert was pleased to report the successful experience of PFI within West Sussex. Central government initiatives such as Sure Start, Extended Schools, Special School developments and Children's Centres were allowing local education authorities to lead on an exciting development for education in the 21st century.

Anthony Bravo, Principal, Crossways Academy, Lewisham

Anthony outlined his experiences of establishing a new school.

The key points were:

- LEA staff can make a difference in delivering and driving forward building projects.
- The building took only 44 weeks to complete.
- The building is a "Smart Building" with ICT integration throughout.

- Need to involve the Headteacher at the earliest stage possible to ensure professional input and commitment to project.
- Involve a wide network of people affected by the project, ie public, other schools etc.
- Need to have a passionate Project Manager committed to the scheme.
- Get the maximum value out of the building, eg after school use, adult education, community use etc.
- Involve an ICT Working Group to develop the principles.
- Don't specify the equipment, specify what you want the pupils to do with the equipment.
- Develop a partnering arrangement with the contractor for mutual benefit.
- Appoint one organisation to do all the ICT work and be responsible for it in the first year of operation.

Richard Fielder, Commercial Director, BAM PPP

Richard's presentation was entitled 'PFI does deliver a good school'. The key points were:

- PFI providers had shared objectives such as improving educational attainment, facilitating teaching and learning, achieving inclusion, enabling lifelong learning and promoting community use.
- The PFI process is not only about LEAs selecting PFI providers but also about PFI providers selecting which LEAs would make ideal clients.
- Regular dialogue and teamwork is necessary throughout the scheme.
- PFI aims to deliver:
 - Quality buildings delivered on time and budget
 - Facilities that will be maintained to a preset level and constantly available throughout the lifetime of the concession
 - Guaranteed affordability
 - Enabling schools to concentrate on teaching and learning
 - Public and Private sectors combining together for the benefit of the community at large
 - Partnerships
- The PFI process had produced an extremely strong partnership with West Sussex County Council.

Sue Samson, Partnership Strategy Manager, West Sussex County Council

Sue's presentation was on 'Extended Schools – An Opportunity for Change'. The changing Children's Services agenda was providing many new opportunities for educational provision. The key points were:

- An extended school is one that provides a range of services and activities beyond the school day to meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.
- The national context includes dawn to dusk schools, childcare on school sites, Every Child Matters, neighbourhood renewal etc.
- The three policy drivers are:
 - school improvement
 - community development and lifelong learning
 - integrated children's services
- School Improvement involves:
 - shared facilities
 - shared staffing
 - shared buildings
 - co-located buildings
 - Federations
- Community Development involves:
 - Dual use premises, eg Children's Centres, Libraries, Colleges, Health Centres, Leisure Centres, Adult Education, Information Shops, Youth Service, Job Centres etc.
- Children's Services involves:
 - Children's Services Authority
 - Co-Located Services
 - Clinical Space
 - Parents Rooms
 - School/School Site

George Martin & Chris Scott – BRE – Presentation on 'Sustainable Construction'

The presentation looked at how the construction industry in the UK fitted into the drive for a more sustainable built environment. George suggested the sustainable built environment should help with people's health and their learning capabilities.

The key points were:

- Climate change was seen as the most significant issue facing the world today.
- Sustainable buildings need a sustainable infrastructure.
- Sustainable development is described as:
 - “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”
- The UK Construction Industry comprises 170,000 companies, produces 90m tonnes of waste, uses 260m tonnes of aggregate per annum and uses 60% of the UK total timber consumption.
- The central government approach to sustainability is seen as ‘fragmented’, however, significant capital investment over the next few years will provide many opportunities.

George gave further details on a wide range of initiatives and looked at how sustainability could be better integrated into our general working practices and future plans.

Chris Scott’s presentation looked at:

- Carbon reduction
- Spatial quality
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Indoor comfort
- Modern methods of construction
- BREEAM for schools
- Case studies

Case studies

Workshop Sessions

A range of workshops were offered to all delegates that included:

- Tour of new PFI school, Crawley
- Lessons learnt from special school design
- What makes a good client in PFI
- IT implications for the future
- Sustainable design – what does it mean for you

Shirley Turner – Chairman of EBD OG

Shirley’s presentation began with a review of the meetings of the Standing Group on 10th March and 11th May.

Membership of the Standing Group had been discussed. EBD OG is now recognised as “a major communication and consultation forum between

the DfES and local authorities". The Standing Group has been looking at developing a constitution and looking at ways of developing local authority representation and how the Standing Group can link to regional groups. Work to date has been published on the EBD OG website.

Shirley explained that feedback from EBD OG delegates on the future organisation and representation at EBD OG would be welcomed by the Standing Group.

Issues discussed at local level and at the Standing Group include:

- Building Schools for the Future (BSF) feedback/local authority strategy group meetings
- Children's Act/Integrated Children's Services
- Prudential borrowing
- VA Working Group
- Links with AMP Focus Group

The VA Working Group, with EBD OG representation, had discussed DfES concerns over Devolved Formula Capital for VA schools in terms of over commitment for 2006/07 and the difficulties it was causing for 2005/06. There is also some suggestion that BSF waves 1 – 3 that include VA schools will get 100% funding instead of the usual 90% funding. Another suggestion is that Devolved Formula Capital Grant (DFCG) may be managed by LEAs from April 2006 for the VA sector and that all capital for the VA sector will be managed by LEAs from April 2007.

DfES Guidance on Children's Centres to follow in June 2005.

The ODPM is likely to issue a consultation document about Section 106 agreements.

The latest information from the Schools' Capital Strategy Consultative Group will be posted on the EBD OG website.

The ODPM were expected to make an announcement in early summer about the proposals for 3-year revenue funding arrangements of local authorities.

Other key points were:

- The deadline for TCF submissions had been extended from 29th April to 27th May 2005.
- The Primary School Design Guide Steering Group had been established in 2005 to produce a design guide that complements existing guidance, eg Building Bulletin 99.
- The Schools Capital Design Team Stakeholders Workshop was set up to look at changes to the DfES team. LEAs had requested a core team be retained for guidance.

- The RIBA Schools Client Forum had met twice with mixed reviews. A new convenor was implementing various changes. Presentations had been received on access, acoustics, ventilation and natural daylight.
- The AMP Focus Group had met twice since the last conference to look at how the AMP Focus Groups, DfES and the EBD OG network worked together. Regional EBD OG groups were asked to suggest issues for future EBD OG conferences.
- The EBD OG website continued to develop and can be accessed via www.bgfl.org/services/ebdog

LEA staff could gain their unique user id and access to the documents pages by contacting Chris Gilbert at Birmingham LEA.

All LEAs were encouraged to use the discussion forum pages.

- Future EBD OG conferences:
 - November 2005 - Blackpool
 - May 2006 - Staffordshire
 - November 2006 - Milton Keynes

Sally Brooks – Head of Schools Capital Division – DfES

Sally outlined the new ministerial team at the DfES following the General Election.

Secretary of State	-	Ruth Kelly
Minister of State (Schools)	-	Jacqui Smith
Minister of State (Children)	-	Beverley Hughes
Minister of State (HE)	-	Bill Rammell

Sally gave more details on the new capital money announcements from the last budget. The biggest amount was for primary schools - £150m, 2008/09 to £500m, 2009/10 onwards. The DfES have yet to determine how LEAs will need to spend these amounts but will be consulting over the summer. The money was not Primary BSF and was merely referred to as BSF because of the need for transformational change. The government wants to radically transform the primary sector and expects this new money to be joined with Strategic Modernisation Funds and DFCG.

The FE Sector will receive £100m in 2008/09 and £250m in 2009/10.

The need to provide for ICT provision in disadvantaged homes was yet to be resolved.

The Government's Manifesto Commitments were:

- Good secondary schools for every child.

- Every secondary school will become a specialist school.
- Continue the BSF programme.
- School kitchens (more fresh food and cooking in schools). The Government's expectation is that new schools will be built with proper kitchens – more guidance expected.
- Small schools encouraged.
- Expansion of Sixth Forms and Colleges.
- 200 Academies by 2010.
- Fast track process for expansion of good schools.
- New science laboratory for every secondary school (not expected by DfES officials – DTi commitment and details still to be worked out).

The DfES expects lots of consultation over the next 6 – 9 months on these issues.

Dana Woodmansey – BSF Team Manager, DfES

Dana reported on her role to establish the BSF Team, following her secondment from a LEA and the management of 'live' BSF projects.

Her brief overview explained:

- Good progress made on Wave 1 and Pathfinders.
- First LEPs expected March 2006.
- New school (Bristol) opens early 2007.
- Meetings held with LEAs in Waves 2 and 3.
- 4Ps and PfS involved with Wave 3 LEAs.
- Waves 4/5 onwards expected to be announced late 2006 after Spending Review.
- Revised expressions of interest may be likely.

Lessons learnt from first waves:

- The 'Market' is interested.
- 6 – 8 bids for each project.
- High ICT interest.
- Corporate support and sponsorship essential.

- Director of Education needs to present each LEAs vision to the DfES.
- LEPs proving to be flexible.

Areas to develop: - What makes partnership work

Sally Brooks – Head of Schools Capital, DfES

Sally reported on the local authority support meetings. Nearly all non-BSF LEAs attended to discuss their strategic planning. The DfES is moving to more of a 'light touch' approach with more money delegated to LEAs.

Issues raised by LEAs included:

- More information needed on BSF prioritisation (information now on DfES website for all LEAs)
- The one school rebuild offer, eg LEAs not in BSF until Wave 10 onwards will get one new school through Targeted Capital Fund of an Academy.
- If LEAs propose an Academy that will be the one new school they are entitled to. If not an Academy, the DfES will use AMP data from each LEA to assess the worst 5 schools in each LEA with the highest condition and suitability needs. These will be put in a table and the DfES will work down the list and, for every 2-year bidding round, money will be allocated. More information is due in September.
- For LEAs at the very end of BSF there may also be another new school.
- Some LEAs had concerns over LEPs. The LEP is the preferred delivery vehicle, but in some situations it may not be appropriate.
- Prudential Borrowing and BSF – if a LEA is in Wave 10+ and has a strategic plan, can they finance redevelopment through Prudential Borrowing and then use future BSF allocations to repay? The DfES say this is very complex but will investigate it further.
- Best Practice over BSF needs to be shared across all LEAs.
- Medium and long term planning discussions needed with the DfES.
- Need to share good examples of extended schools.
- Advice needed from DfES on what the 14-19 agenda means.
- Rural issues, eg falling rolls. DfES to discuss with Ministers.
- More information needed on design issues/sustainability.

Sally accepted that the DfES does need to communicate with LEAs in a meaningful way and learn from each other.

The DfES is looking at its relationship with EBD OG and the AMP Focus Group. Further work is needed on whether 1:1 meetings or regional meetings will meet LEA demand. LEAs need to consider how best to proceed.

David Fewster, VA Team, DfES

David outlined some recent new developments.

- VA Schools funding in BSF programme. The DfES can pay grants above 90% in 'exceptional circumstances'. The Secretary of State regards BSF as an exceptional circumstance. As a result, £17m deducted from non-BSF VA Capital Programme 2006/07. However, the DfES will strengthen arrangements to recover that investment if a school closes.
- The DfES are still to resolve how VA Schools are funded through PFI.
- DfES wants to reduce bureaucracy over VA programme, eg reduced scrutiny of projects.
- From April 2006, DF CG is planned to be paid to VA Schools direct rather than by claims.
- The DfES are looking at proposals that LEAs will administer VA funding and will consult on the implications and transition arrangements.
- The VA Capital Working Group, set up in 2004, now includes 2 LEA representatives.
- The level of LCVAP for 2006/07 and 2007/08 has yet to be confirmed.

Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital Division, DfES

Sally then gave an update on design issues:

- The DfES is rethinking its whole design strategy and is working with 4Ps and PfS to see how best it can work.
- Building Bulletin 77 (Special Schools) is out for consultation and DfES is recommending increased areas. The results are expected in September and publication by the end of 2005. The DfES is also expecting to fund to the new standards.

- The Exemplar Designs Remodelling Guide (Bronze document) illustrates how existing schools can be remodelled.
- A new publication on Sports Provision (Playing Fields etc) is expected. BSF is expected to show more flexible sports provision.
- A new publication on Extended Schools is expected with case study examples.

Sally then spoke about the 'Joined Up Design for Schools' project sponsored by the Sorrell Foundation. It is aimed at educating children in the design process, eg inspiring learning and social spaces, more civilised dining halls and canteens and safer, more hygienic toilets. The DfES is hoping to take the exhibition on tour around 7/8 regions and get sponsorship by LEAs.

Tim Rookes – Head of Contracts, Schools Capital Division, DfES

Tim outlined the 2004 Spending Review led by Sir Peter Gershon and the 2.5% target per annum for efficiency across government. The DfES has to deliver £4.3bn of efficiencies and productivity improvements by 2007/08/

Local Government has a £6.45bn efficiency target by 2007/08 that requires 40% to be achieved through schools.

Gershon's procurement imperatives on departments and sectors needs to balance quality with price efficiencies.

The DfES Centre for Procurement Performance (CPP) has been established to release more resources to the front line through greater efficiencies. The programme is intended to create a culture of continuous improvement.

Martin Lipson, Director Schools and Leisure 4Ps

Martin's presentation was about 'Schools Investment – an overview'. The key points were:

- Schools capital can be seen as a patchwork quilt of funding opportunities.
- The most common issues hindering the success of Schools' PFI projects were:
 - Poor business planning
 - Poor Project Management
 - Unsuitable market conditions
 - Poor performance

- BSF Update: 39 LEAs involved, 4 pathfinders and 12 Wave 1 projects. Five already in procurement (2 out to tender). Waves 2 and 3 (10 projects in each) had been announced.
- Primary Schools Investment Programme:

To be allocated evenly across all LEAs, therefore an extra £500m per annum equates to one new build and one refurbished primary in each LEA. There is a need to consider what criteria is to be used; what is the formula based on; will the proportion of new build and refurbishment be to local discretion and how will the programme link to other policy areas, eg Children's Centres, Community Use etc.
- Some concerns – are we applying lessons learnt from earlier projects on design and construction; are schools getting the expert support they need; are schools having too much influence over LEAs on design decisions and who is watching the quality.

Panel Questions and Answers

1. Q With the drive to expand good schools, what will happen to grammar schools?

A Sally Brooks agreed to consider this further.
2. Q Will any balances from Seed Challenge Fund be clawed back?

A Tim Rookes advised that the Government's underlying principle is not to take away money but release it to the front line services.

Sally Brooks advised that the Government expects more from the same investment.
3. Q Will the expected guidance on extended schools bring new finance and will there be VAT implications?

A Sally Brooks advised that VAT is highly complicated! The DfES are trying to sort it out. The Sure Start and Extended Schools team will be announcing further capital allocations to support extended schools shortly. Most of the money will be focused on primary schools.
4. Q Are there any further moves being made to support LEAs with extended schools in view of Children's Services and the bringing together of funding?

A Sally Brooks advised that the DfES is trying to bring funding together, especially through the Single Capital Pot.

5. Q Could the DfES give some clarity over the VA 10% contribution outside of BSF?
- A David Fewster advised that the 10% contribution will be continuing as normal. There are only limited circumstances where exceptions would apply. LEAs submitting VA secondary TCF bids would be better advised to deliver through BSF as the funding would be 100%.
6. Q For those LEAs in late BSF waves, how should they continue the modernisation of secondary schools?
- A Sally Brooks advised that LEAs should be undertaking strategic planning and are not advised to undertake too much work on schools that LEAs hope to replace through BSF. If a new block is needed, design it so that it can be built around later through BSF.
7. Q How can LEAs persuade schools to buy into strategic master planning. They receive two fifths of capital direct and how do we ensure they don't waste it?
- A Sally Brooks advised that The Exemplar Remodelling brochure gives examples and LEAs need to continue working closely with schools.
8. Q What does the review of the positioning of LEAs in BSF mean? Will LEAs be able to be brought forward, and on what basis?
- A Sally Brooks advised that LEAs could be moved up and down depending on how ready they are. The funding will not be lost if the LEA is not ready yet. The DfES may be expecting LEAs to submit new expressions of interest, but little is expected to change.
- Martin Lipson advised that some of the first 39 LEAs are struggling and this flexibility may help them if they can slip without disadvantage.
9. Q The tightening legislation around Section 77 (land disposals) can make it difficult for LEAs to bridge the affordability gap. How can it be addressed?
- A Sally Brooks advised that the LGA is likely to raise this issue with Ministers.
10. Q Can the construction industry cope with the school building programme and the building programme for other sectors?
- A Sally Brooks advised that there are inconclusive findings. There is a need to try and mitigate the risks and manage the

risks as best we can. It is about managing the market and making school projects as desirable as possible to the construction industry.

11. Q The Government should put more finance into vocational skill development as it would reap reward in the future.

A Sally Brooks advised that we should be training more but there are market pressures, eg East European workers.

12. Q Can you explain how sustainability, eg BREEAM measure can be done without extra cost?

A Sally Brooks advised that whole life costing will illustrate how it can be achieved. New buildings are easier to incorporate sustainability than refurbishments.

Beech Williamson advised that there is a need to start projects with the intention to incorporate sustainability.

13. Q Can Children's Centre capital funding be added to NDS Modernisation funds rather than through Sure Start?

A Sally Brooks advised that Children's Centre money comes through the Single Capital Pot and it cannot be spent on other than Children's Centres.

14. Q Individual costs for a Children's Centre in one LEA were costing £1.5m. However, the DfES allocation of £4m needed 15 to be built – how? Also, will the new guidance be out by June to help LEAs? Finally, the move to Children's Services has added many new buildings that are in a worse state than schools. Will there be additional funding for them?

A Sally Brooks advised that LEAs could contact the Children's Centre team and seek advice early on in a project. The Single Capital Pot can be used to help Children's Centre costs.

Sally then agreed to consider further the point about how the funding is joined up and the impact of new Children's Services Departments 'inheriting' previous Social Services buildings.

Shirley Turner, Chairman of EBD OG

Shirley closed the conference by thanking Graham Olway and his West Sussex team for organising such a useful and informative conference. Rob Brophy and Digby Moulden from Blackpool LEA then gave a few details about the next EBD OG conference.