

EDUCATION BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS' GROUP

PLYMOUTH CONFERENCE 13 AND 14 MAY 2004

CONFERENCE NOTES

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME – LEADER OF PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL: COUNCILLOR TUDOR EVANS

Councillor Tudor Evans welcomed delegates to the Plymouth Conference and gave a brief background into the rebuild of the City following its devastation in the Second World War and subsequent restoration. Plymouth is once again going through a cycle of regeneration and renovation.

Councillor Evans went on to introduce the theme of the conference as the rebuilding of leisure and learning facilities with Inclusion a key factor in all schools. Part of the ongoing programme centres on educational provision and the Leader promoted the Whiteleigh Campus in Plymouth as an exemplar of how education could be provided in the future of the new-look City and how the extended provisions would be part of local communities.

Each delegate was given a pack which included the conference programme, a CD entitled "Realising Schools for the Future", information on Plymouth and various leaflets and booklets on consultancy and construction firms.

2. PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES: COUNCILLOR DENNIS CAMP

Councillor Camp highlighted the key message of the Plymouth conference "Education as a Key Factor in Regeneration" (later expanded upon by Robin Nicholson CBE); explaining that schools are to return to being a central feature in what could now be described as being urban villages. Part of the future plan for Plymouth is to recreate schools as being the heart of local communities by extending and improving both education and services that can be offered to the community as a whole.

Councillor Camp went on to welcome the speakers at the conference:

- Robin Nicholson CBE (Edward Cullinan Architects)
 - Graham Parker (Parker Associates)
 - Sally Brooks (DfES): BSF / Partnerships for Schools
 - Allen Jones (DfES): School Asset Management
 - Martin Lipson (4P's): Chairman
 - Shirley Turner (EBDOG): Review of Conference
 - David Goldstone (Partnerships for Schools)
 - Penny Pennington – Sheffield
 - Stephen Jones - Bradford
 - Gordon Clements – Bristol
 - Beech Williamson (DfES): BB98 New Area Guidelines
- } BSF Pathfinders

Workshop Leaders:

- Richard Daniels (DfES): Building Bulletin 93 – Getting Acoustics Right
- Gill Hawkins (DfES): Building Bulletin 77 – Designing Special Schools
- Alan Saunders (Cyril Sweett): Making Partnering Work in Schools
- Gareth Simmons (Plymouth City Council): School Master Plans in Plymouth

3. EDUCATION AS A KEY FACTOR IN REGENERATION: ROBIN NICHOLSON CBE

Robin began by highlighting changes that have occurred over the past 12 years in the provision of education and regeneration: location and situation of sites are as much a key to success as expansion/amalgamations of existing schools. He was able to model a variety of sites and buildings that had been adapted from existing buildings thereby revising and recycling existing features and the ability to overcome problems such as provision of natural light or ventilation, to achieve low energy targets.

Robin went on to describe how it would be more common place to accept larger sites particularly making use of height (multiple levels/floors) in adapting buildings enabling huge schools to amalgamate into existing areas. He highlighted significant points that have allowed such innovation in production of such structures:

- 1997 – Egan Report – forced construction industry to shape up
- CBE – understanding value good design can bring
- Office of Government Commerce
- Rogers Report (Renaissance)
- Continuance of striving for low energy criteria

Robin gave a brief resume of CBE and its role in transforming neighbourhoods; its aim is to create excellent buildings using exchanges/exploration of ideas for guidance and best practice. CBE recognises education in urban growth and the need for educational establishments: this is a basis of Enabling with importance of a high level design team working hand in hand with the DfES.

Robin concluded by reiterating that CBE “aims are high” in terms of providing a service; and recognise that schools are a key part of the neighbourhood and the need for Local Authorities to get good value from such provisions.

4. SCHOOL DESIGN – WHAT NEXT?: GRAHAM PARKER

Graham Parker presented a focus on future designs for making the most of school sites and classrooms area. He talked through examples of ‘live’ projects that have taken on radical construction/design describing them as regenerators for communities; he addressed the need to look at changes and style of schooling which will reflect on the way in which schools will be designed and work, for example grouping of compatible subjects to enable effective learning.

He further expanded that buildings need to be set up to enable a 'different' way of efficient teaching, perhaps the grouping together of 200 – 300 pupils working together half a day then moving around the school site.

Graham looked into existing standard sized classrooms pointing out that there is no flexibility in the traditional spaces and that changes to the sizes could affect larger areas of teaching and the ability to increase/decrease these zones to accommodate student numbers. With flexibility in classroom space, the variety of community users of the whole school site would increase thereby expanding 'value for money'. Graham suggested that redesigning planning within all age schools would provide continuity of schooling – foundation through primary to secondary (3 – 18 years). This would be a challenging concept requiring planning from one stage to the next in clusters with whole school social areas such as gardens between sections and library areas melding all age groups.

Graham stressed the importance of preliminary work and preparation of projects where all agencies involved would be part of the plan to develop the project providing enhanced vision, briefing and design. Graham concluded by stating that replication of the past is not the route for the future of design – a radical agenda to improve children's future in education is required.

5. UPDATE ON BSF / PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOLS: SALLY BROOKS

Sally Brooks introduced herself as a representative of the DfES with responsibility for School Capital and Buildings. She presented an update on Building Schools for the Future, highlighting the following points.

Achievements over the last six months:

- * Prime Ministerial launch February 2004
- * Partnerships for Schools set up
- * Positive reaction to exemplars
- * Pathfinders – draft OBC
- * Wave 1 – announced developing education visions and strategic business cases.

Significant challenges are:

- * Affordability
- * Voluntary aided 10%

Education Vision BSF will achieve:

- * Achieving excellences and raising standards
- * Developing schools in new ways to tackle deprivation
- * Working with communities on long term vision
- * Creating schools with unique characteristics
- * Adapting school organisation to meet local challenges
- * Bring new partners into education.

Addressing affordability Sally brought out the following points:

- * It is shared problem
- * There is an open approach with the Pathfinders
- * It needs to be sorted for all of us
- * The approach adopted includes:
 - validated business case
 - challenge sources of funding
 - develop solutions.

Sally remarked that the following would be required:

- * validated business cases
- * DfES contribution
- * Local Authority contribution
- * LA contribution and 'affordability gap' to ascertain funding. Validation of funds – presented to ministers for recommendations (June 2004) to clarify basis of funding.

Addressing the Voluntary Aided 10% contribution Sally remarked on the following:

- * Significant issue include:
 - balance of contributions and control
 - encouragement of contributions eg academies
- * However these must be resolved as VA schools must be part of BSF.

Sally moved on to address the joining up agenda and the assistance within DfES to support and help sort out 16 -19 Agenda for schools and Local Authorities.

Sally acknowledged there are outstanding Issues with BSF as follows:

- * Announcement of Waves 2 and 3 and where Local Authorities are in respect of BSF long term. This will be rolled out as soon as possible taking into consideration constraints on spending review. Funding is a key issue until DfES know how much can be spent – there is still debate within DfES on how much will be allocated although amount is known overall.
- * Strategic long term planning regarding budgets and allocations of funding is essential and will be advised as soon as possible to allow agencies to know when and to whom, funding will be allocated.

6. FUTURE OF ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN: ALAN JONES (DFES)

Alan Jones, BSF Wave 1 Team Leader, presented an overview of the Asset Management Plan. He referred to the DfES having recognised the need for annual appraisal via documentation from which a variety of information is gained and transferred to BSF. Outcomes of this documental appraisal showed that 98% of Local Authorities met DfES 2004 standards. Documents have been used more strategically to enable schools to use funding more effectively however the DfES is no longer asking authorities to provide this type of documentation. Further work with Local Authorities needing support can be allocated more effectively and the publication of examples of Best Practices initiated. The Condition Suitability data collected 2003 led to a decrease in comprehensive schooling assessment with an improvement in quality of data collected and provision of feedback on effectiveness of data collected. All Local Authorities have feedback and the opportunity to take further advice if required with external partners. Statistics resulted in:

- 30 Local Authorities – satisfactorily met standards
- 24 Local Authorities – further work required to meet standards
- 6 Local Authorities – standards not met

In 2006 the Single Education Plan will come into force creating a strategic statutory plan covering all areas of Local Authority planning containing key targets for improvement. Twelve pilot SEP reviewed early 2004 showing most had good plans for buildings but not breadth of vision expected – guidance for Wave 1 will be published; this will tighten up on vision and transformation guidance.

In withdrawing Local Authority need for compilation / appraisal of documentation some other form of performance indicator is required. The DfES is proposing to simplify the procedure by dropping some aspects of data and collecting only where changes have occurred. Some issues need to be further clarified with indicators on provision of voluntary information. Current projects will be amended on present system with a view to discontinuing to limit Local Authority input.

It is thought that the next data collection will not take place before Spring 2005.

Alan concluded by highlighting the DfES key message:

Good asset management is key to:

- * Raising educational standards and broadening community access to schools
- * Securing whole life best value from investment
- * The DfES will expect continuing improvement in asset management whilst aiming to minimise planning and data burdens’.

4P'S: MARTIN LIPSON (CHAIRMAN)

Martin Lipson introduced 4P's and his role within the organisation and went on to expand on his presentation emphasising the following points:

The 4P's is:

Public
Private
Partnerships
Programme

- * Local Government central body
- * Support for Local Government procurement of partnerships and projects
- * Work with Local Government and private sector
- * Project support, skills development and gateways.

4P's Input and Local Government involvement in BSF:

- * 4P's nominated by Local Government Association
- * Local Government Association members meet with Minister.
- * CEO as non-Executive Director of PfS
- * 4P's Executive Director on PfS board
- * 4P's on DfES Programme Board
- * LEA Forum
- * Network Groups
- * DfES / PfS / 4P's regularly meets
- * DfES funding 4P's BSF Team

Martin gave a brief overview of the 4P's work in the programme and indicated the level of response from LA that he had received which consists of:

- * Strongly supported programme but concerned at focus on secondary only
- * Deprivation criteria problematical for large / rural LEA's
- * Affordability issues are of considerable concern
- * Incompatibility of different procurement routes
- * Entry in the programme – when?
- * Academies?

Martin continued his presentation with an in depth explanation of the feed back he had received from Local Authorities as follows:

Local Education Partnerships

- * Unconvincing arguments for LEP
- * Complexity
- * Openness to other models
- * Exclusivity issues
- * Potential scope of LEP's threatening
- * School and other local stake holders may be distanced
- * Equity and conflict of interest issues.

In conclusion Martin finished by explaining the role of 4P's and ways in which they will work to help the programme reach success:

- * Support to LEA members, managers and school governors
- * Current and future projects
- * Training role
- * Standardisation
- * Gateway reviews.

7. CONFERENCE DISCUSSION GROUPS – ISSUES RAISED BY DFES PRESENTATIONS

Gareth Simmons invited delegates to participate in group discussions – questions arising from DfES presentations were noted and passed for answer to DfES contributor panel.

8. PANEL DISCUSSION – QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

See Appendix One – a summary of questions asked – further questions will be posted on the EBD OG website.

10. CHAIR OF EBD OG: SHIRLEY TURNER

Shirley began with a review of meetings of the Standing Groups held in March and May 2004.

Modernisation Funding

Still ongoing concerns regarding funding with the quote of “consider 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 as a bonus; the normal level was more likely to be 2002/2003” from DfES colleagues as still being applicable”. Details of funds to be made available are still awaited.

BSF

Queries concerning schools not being included in the first set of Waves and the need to undertake urgent modernisation projects were raised – do schools wait until their turn for BSF funding? In short, schools will have to spend the money on existing buildings as it could be that they will be waiting many years for BSF funding.

Schools Capital Strategy Consultative Group

Shirley confirmed that this group would be re-established later this year.

AMP Network Focus Group

Shirley didn't elaborate as this was detailed by Alan Jones' presentation earlier in conference.

Building Bulletins

BB93 – Getting Acoustics Right – details to be expanded at Workshop, Day 2 of conference.

BB77 – Designing for Special Schools – details to be expanded at Workshop, Day 2 of conference.

BB74 – amendments / revisions – updates suggested.

BSF Seminars / Conferences

Updates detailed by Sally Brooks earlier in conference.

RIBA School Client Forums

Informative presentation by Association for Science Education – CDRom ‘How to Design Science Space in Secondary Schools’ has been forwarded to every secondary school in the country on behalf of the Association - but does not take into account feasibility studies, funding etc.

Annual Conference SENJEC

Content of BB77 revised – Accessibility to Curriculum, Design and Environments for the Future – details available on both EBD OG and RIBA websites.

Farewells

Stuart Barber (Suffolk) – a colleague and friend renowned for his humour and honesty. Family, friends and colleagues will sadly miss Stuart.

John Proctor – best wishes were extended to John for a healthy, relaxing and enjoyable retirement.

Future Conferences

2 and 3 December 2004 - Sunderland

12 and 13 May 2005 - West Sussex

November 2005

May 2006

November 2006

} host LA's requested

Shirley finished with thanks to DfES colleagues and a special thank you to the Plymouth Capital and Asset Management Planning Team hosting this year's conference at very short notice after Manchester in November 2003: Barbara Booth (Head of Service, School Organisation and Services), Gareth Simmons, (Senior Education Officer) and team leader and indeed the team members, for a successful conference.

11. BSF PATHFINDERS: INTRODUCTION BY DAVID GLADSTONE (PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOLS)

Overview and Update

David began by explaining the rationale behind the BSF Pathfinders and its aims through an in-depth presentation. This is a national, long-term investment in secondary schools with a view to updating and regenerating education over a period of 10 – 15 years. There are four pathfinders in progress with a further ten (plus two reserves) announced in February 2004.

PFI is working so why fix it?

David explained that whilst PFI worked, procedures could be made even more effective, streamlined and better managed through BSF funding. The structure is now in place and is a working body with government backing via the DfES which will *'establish a national body to support local authorities in ensuring that new schools are well designed, built on time and at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer, and are properly maintained over their lives'*.

Local Education Partnership (LEP) Model:

Progress

- * extensive informal consultation ongoing
- * comprehensive consultation document on core LEP model generally available
- * includes rigorous analysis of underlying legal, financial, procurement and commercial issues
- * includes detail on LEP model mechanics and key commercial issues.

The Local Challenge

- * Strategic investment programme based on educational vision and strategy
- * Challenge existing school provision
 - demographics
 - number of schools
 - types of schools
 - location of schools
- * integration of ICT investment with school buildings
- * wider community use, extended schools
- * integration of full range of policy objectives into strategy
 - 14 – 19
 - specialist schools
 - SEN
 - Inclusion etc

Project Process

- * Prioritisation
- * Local education strategy
- * Strategic business case
- * Outline (projects) business case
- * Local and national approvals
- * Procurement

Project Progress

- * 4 Pathfinder OBC's
- * 12 Wave 1, SBC's
- * Wave 2, Autumn 2004

Gordon Clements, Senior Education Officer, Bristol City Council

Gordon gave a brief insight into Bristol and the tremendous pressure on secondary schools to do well leading to an initial bid in December 2000. He described a diverse city with inner city / significant disadvantaged schools, 25% of which are in special measures; poor buildings and low pupil attendance numbers.

Bristol's bid was commercially closed on 31 March 2004 with allocation for eight secondary schools of differing categories. Bristol was selected as a Pathfinder, with a partnership team established September 2003 to enable detailed proposals to be created. There is no separate provision for primary schooling at this stage therefore Bristol pushing boundaries by providing an all through school.

Stephen Jones, Head of Procurement, City of Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council

Stephen described Bradford's Borough Council as being the fourth largest metropolitan district council with a huge geographical area, with both rural and urban deprivation although regeneration and financial initiative input are increasing. Major reorganisation of education within the Borough (£200m); BSF will enable issues to be addressed.

The key issues for BSF programme were detailed:

- * LEP Model
- * Affordability / Investment Gap
- * BB98 / Exemplar designs
- * Schools engagement in BSF
- * Scope of BSF – which could include:

- Design and build
- Operate and maintain
- Finance
- Programme / project management
- ICT supply, install, train and refresh
- Educational support services
- BSF could be just a design and building programme, Bradford hopes it is a Building Schools for the Future and a genuine once in a lifetime opportunity for educational transformation
- THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

Penny Pennington Acting Head of Planning and Premises, Sheffield City Council

Penny described BSF as having strengthened the relationship between the 27 secondary schools, teachers and Local Authority leading to an effective partnership with the overall vision of transforming Sheffield. She detailed the procurement of funds and structures in place, with key groups meeting every two weeks, working on individual and groups tasks. The importance of good protocol and agreements with contractors is both necessary and imperative to ensure longer term success with unseen costs eg damage/repairs to school, utilities costings, management contracts etc a hidden source of expenditure.

Penny concluded by stating '*a great deal of work has been done and is being done by the DfES, Pfs, PUK and Pathfinders on BSF*' and that '*DfES / Pfs perhaps underestimated the amount of work needed*'.

12. CLOSE AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR EVENING AND FRIDAY SESSION: GARETH SIMMONS

Gareth closed the first day of the conference with an explanation of the evening arrangements and proposed agenda for Day 2.

13. INTRODUCTION TO DAY 2 SESSION: GARETH SIMMONS

Gareth welcomed delegates to the second day of the conference and advised attendees of location of chosen Workshop sessions.

14. BUILDING BULLETIN 98 – NEW AREA GUIDELINES: BEECH WILLIAMSON (DfES)

Beech pointed out that there were two separate bulletins; one primary (draft to be available on DfES website soon) and one secondary (currently available online). Beech expanded on his presentation explaining that the new bulletins had four parts to each:

Part A: process of creating a brief

- How any project should fit within a strategic masterplan

Part B: design criteria to be included in the brief

- To ensure facilities are appropriate and usable for future

Part C: minimum building area requirements

- For six categories of space in net area and non-net

Part D: minimum site area requirements

- For various categories of outdoor spaces

In summary:

- All schools should have minimum recommended area for each category
- 'Float' should be used to suit individual preference of school
- gross should be at least 140% of net
- budget and specifications are constraints not the gross area.

A question and answer session followed the presentation:

1. What is the timetable for delivering the net capacity formula?

End of May allowing two months for net capacity to be calculated and returned. This also presents opportunities to notify of any changes (roll numbers changed etc). No changes to National Curriculum system as such.

2. In some of the exemplar designs they have hard play areas – how are these areas defined?

Playgrounds have to provide multi function uses for games, play etc. Other areas could be roof terraces or similar.

3. What influence does curriculum analysis have to produce model?

There are no real changes apart from size of individual space; the overall number and classroom sizes have not changed. Non net (staff accommodation, resource areas etc) will be added on to basic timetable spaces.

4. Will vocational courses/6th form areas included in net capacity?

There is no significant increase to include such areas unless Local Authority is providing such spaces in lieu of further education facilities.

15. WORKSHOP: SESSION ONE

Delegates were invited to join workshop of their choice. Two workshops detailed below.

Building Bulletin 77: Gill Hawkins (DfES)

Gill gave a very brief overview of the building bulletin explaining that the full version was available on the DfES website. Gill was then able to concentrate on showing pictures of both model exemplars and examples of areas requiring change; talking through areas of concern for co-locating special school requirements within mainstream education and improvement of stand alone facilities. The photos helped to illustrate the children's experience of unloading/dropping off and their whole school day. The following points were highlighted:

- Floor plans – double classrooms separated by folding doors worked well
- Storage essential to effective teaching spaces
- Arrival areas/drop off
- Welcome areas/reception – parents feel positive presence and good image
- Location and access routes with large car parks
- Staggered time starts for practical and health and safety reasons
- Accessibility issues with mainstream school – misuse of routes specific to children with special needs
- Arrival and drop off areas – covered areas, access to building via doors with hold backs / access to social or locker areas
- Split level sites with internal ramps and lifts for ease into learning environment
- Aesthetics of building materials used – aim to be positive and friendly
- Pioneering/development of sites with budget or funding constrains taken into consideration
- Doors – automatic sliding doors for ease of mobility of wheelchair users, mobility in corridors. Consideration of carers lifting over thresholds or holding heavy doors
- Corridors – essential visual contrasts with spaces for passing perhaps using interesting brick work/plaster/lighting for and uplifting effect
- Use of finger traps/kick plates/wheelchair protectors/audio alarms
- Acoustic ceilings – design of school could affect hearing which causes pain
- Natural light / ventilation / space / colour / ambiance / height or pitch of ceilings / use of materials / equipment and storage / toilets and hygiene areas / hoists and equipment / dining and kitchen / social areas / assembly and sports halls / external areas / hydro, physio, sensory, music therapy sessions / ICT / staff accommodation and preparation areas

In conclusion Designing for Special Schools focuses on providing pupils with an educational environment which prepares them for the outside world but also maximises their learning and inclusion within age appropriate schools.

School Master Planning in Plymouth: Gareth Simmons and Martyn Cox

Gareth began his presentation with a brief background to Plymouth's history specifically during the Blitz stating that the City was close to collapse with a devastated infra structure. Leading town planner, Professor Abercrombie presented a master plan to rebuild Plymouth post war, with this architecture very much in existence today, basing the rebuild of the schools on BB1 (1952) as a result Plymouth has not seen much alteration over the past 50 years primarily due to a high standard of rebuild at this time. Existing schools are therefore of such a high standard that the challenge is now to surpass the design benchmark set in the 1950's.

Secondary schools were not the priority at the time. Plymouth's secondary schools were rebuilt in the late 70's and early 80's and are not such a problem as the Primary sector. Plymouth has the fastest falling primary roll numbers and recognises that the City needs to reorganise accommodation which are too big / inappropriate and will do this by building new schools.

Gareth described how the LEA has adopted a partnership and consultative approach with schools, using Master Plans to allow schools to be involved and to take the lead in the development of the asset. The LEA then adopts an approval and supportive role.

The Master Plan :

- Professional educational consultants
- Enablers through the constrictions
- Objective based analysis
- Option appraised with in-depth school knowledge
- Not a feasibility study
- Tool for development
- Brief exemplars
- School development frameworks
- Inform LEA strategic plans
- Demonstrates suitability costs
- Base framework for BSF

The Master Plan creates better relationships with schools – schools are in charge but the LEA can guide process. It is a partnership – delivering capital in partnership with schools as a framework. It is a valuable exercise providing not only for sufficiency but, improved accessibility, mobility, increase in flexibility, security, clear entrance/exits but ultimately an exciting environment for future learning including the extended school agenda etc.

Gareth introduced Martyn Cox, Business Manager, Stoke Damerel Community College to talk briefly on a Plymouth's schools experience of Master Planning.

Martyn explained that initial thoughts were that the exercise would be a bureaucratic exercise but in fact found it to be an exciting learning curve. Stoke Damerel Community College was able to tailor and clarify their needs taking on advice to make better use of space within the school by, for example, grouping together of subjects

into suites, creating better usage of outlying/external teaching areas by using covered walkways, improving security of school by redesigning access/reception areas. Martyn described plans for addressing existing dining areas and a circulation area (atrium) within the school which will become a central hub to the school helping to rationalise student movement, centralisation of the library and incorporation of resource areas as well as improvement of social areas for pupils (vending machines, lockers etc) which is referred to as The Street. There are plans for the redesigning of unused external (courtyards) areas into quiet gardens for pupils to enjoy.

1. How does the brief get done – is it an exercise between LEA and the school?

Gareth: there is a model brief which serves as the basis of the planning – the school interjects ideas whilst the LEA ensures all the basics have been covered. The school's brief is to deliver their requirements then the work is tendered to consultants with final choice resting with the school. This ensures the school has the vital good working relationship with the consultant. The ball is set rolling by the LEA and is completed by the school with the help of the consultant guiding the school through the process.

2. Grass play and hard play areas seem to be depleting to make way for more building space – is this the case?

Martyn: in the case of Stoke Damerel, we are attempting to make use of areas which are more or less redundant such as court yards and corridors (by changing flow of school). There are also plans to re-use existing playgrounds around the school by linking them to subjects eg an Arts garden. The plans for Stoke Damerel have in fact increased the possibility of green / play areas not reduced them.

3. Have you involved the pupils in the planning of their school?

Martyn: focus groups were set up to encourage students to raise any issues of concern and to provide feedback from them. We have actively encouraged their involvement suggesting formal letters and a proposed visit to a model school in Torquay. There are examples of the final master plan incorporating suggestions made by the children.

4. Are you implementing the Master Plan as a whole or in stages?

Martyn: funding limits the project as a whole so we are phasing in the design by prioritising areas that will then unlock further spaces, for example the atrium area will unlock dining space and 6th form centre. The priorities are teaching spaces and circulation/accessibility (The Street).

Gareth: BSF funding would be an ideal, enabling the whole project to go ahead immediately, however with out BSF there is still development that can be undertaken through LEA modernisation and the Schools Devolved capital, and both the LEA and the school know in what direction funding will be directed in the future.

5. The Master Plan must make some financial constraints?

Martyn: yes, the phased works will cost in the region of £3½m – the first phase will go ahead on existing funding of £1m awaiting BSF!

6. Are there any compromises in this approach – did you consider building a brand new school rather than updating existing buildings?

Gareth: the LEA looks at whether schools are viable or not and consider whether school sites are untenable. The LEA will undertake strategic plans and look at alternative sites. Generally for secondary in Plymouth there is no strategic plans for this, however the LEA is currently undertaking a radical restructure of primary and in this case asset viability is considered very carefully

7. Would you be willing to allow documentation, papers and model to be available to other LEAs?

Gareth invited any interested parties to leave details and he would ensure information would be forwarded.

The workshop concluded with congratulatory comments on the proactive approach by Plymouth's Capital Asset and Management Planning Team.

17. Closing of Plymouth Conference: Barbara Booth, Head of Service, School Organisation and Services

Barbara closed the conference with offers of thanks to sponsors, technical support and members of Plymouth's Capital Asset and Management Planning Team.

Barbara thanked Janice Beck, Conference Organiser for her tireless efforts and support in arranging such a successful convention.

SUBJECT	QUESTION	RESPONSE
VA Issues	Recent and further reductions in LCVAP allocations have forced the cancellation of projects – high priority condition works have been put on hold. Can an indication be given of future funding levels?	
	Exactly what has happened in the development of Partnerships for Church Schools?	
BSF prioritisation/strategy	What other factors and weightings, in addition to deprivation, will be considered by the DfES in the identification of Wave 2 and 3 priorities?	
	LEA vision – difficult to sustain a single vision for 20 years – shouldn't we be designing for change – how can we achieve this?	
	Will an LEA be included in a particular wave based on its picture against criteria as an LEA as a whole, or on the basis of its highest priority areas?	
	In the interest of openness and transparency, can the DfES share with LEAs the details of the methodology used to select an LEA for inclusion within the early waves?	
	What confidence can LEAs have over the longevity of the BSF programme?	
	How can LEA's local vision be squared with demands of DfES criteria – e.g. not wanting academies? Will DfES be taking similar approaches in future in relation to other sectors – VA, single sex, grammar schools????	
	Are any of the BSF Wave 1 LEAs using exemplar designs?	
	Does the ODPM have any role in relation to BSF and if so, what?	
	If the DfES going to give advice to LEAs in the later	

	phases of BSF as to how they manage short term needs in the interim? (Planning blight?)	
	Can the DfES expand on BSF programme requirement (at OBC) to link the vision with build – and is there a set of success criteria against which this can be measured?	
	How is DfES/Government ensuring that initiatives such as BSF do not result in overheating of the construction industry, in turn leading to increased costs/ affordability gaps and/or reduced quality?	
BSF funding	LEP is expensive – can LEAs recycle “saved” procurement costs if a pre-existing local procurement arrangement is used?	
	How can small LEAs, who cannot afford to engage teams of consultants to develop BSF (and other) funding strategies, ensure that they are able to access resources?	
	Can the DfES confirm that the funding for curriculum requirements for sports halls will be funded under BSF?	
	Is there an expectation that each LEA programme will include some PFI schemes?	
	IS there an assumption that FM will be incorporate into BSF programmes for all schools?	
LEP issues	DfES has indicated that non-LEP solutions to BSF delivery are acceptable – will these alternative models be shared as they emerge?	
	Can LEAs be reassured that the final guidance on LEPs will provide enough flexibility for LEAs who have the capacity to use non-LEP procurement routes to proceed?	
	What is the rationale for the 80%, 10%, 10% split? What is the role of PfS and do they need an equity share? Where	

	does the LEA get its equity share from?	
	What are the interim arrangements for the £250m identified for 2005/06, whilst the LEP models are being finalised?	
	How do we avoid domination of LEPs by national players and ensure the involvement of local partners? Specifically, how do we safeguard local stakeholder interests when directors appointed by the PSP dominate the board by 3:2 in the proposed model?	
	How can timescales for procurement (PFI and conventional) and LEPs be synchronised to allow sufficient input from stakeholders on design etc.?	
	What happens to the LEP post build project implementation – does it has any ongoing liabilities or does everything revert back to the LEA?	
General funding issues	It would be useful to clarify the position of the LSC in relation to capital funding for post 16 in schools – BSF vision must cater for this.	
	Too many initiatives before lessons from PFI truly learnt – if there were fewer initiatives would we be making better progress towards addressing the real needs?	
	What importance is being given to sustainability as a criterion for future development when DfES cost multipliers limit expenditure?	
	How can the various funding streams best be used to deal with campus schools?	
	What will the DfES do if it transpires that, through the Single Capital Pot mechanisms, Councils are not spending full DfES allocations on schools?	

	Should the levels of schools' DFC be reduced to allow better strategic use of increased modernisation resources?	
	What analysis has the DfES done about improvements made nationally through the allocation of schools' DFC?	
	What advice does the dfES have about how swimming pools should be secured?	
Extended schools issues	Are there examples of LEAs having managed to deliver full service extended schools, given the problems of aligning funding stream timetables for non-education sources?	
	Viability may depend on income generating potential, and hence the socio-economic nature of the community. How can we locate these services where they are most needed if this is the case?	
	Can the DfES cite the best example of which they are aware of a management strategy for facilitating extended/community use of schools which avoids conflicts of interest?	
AMP Issues	Assesing suitability – can the DfES give clear guidance on what we should be reporting, as different LEAs are being given different advice by DfES assessors about what needs to be recorded.	
	How can we improve suitability data given the impossibility of costing individual needs in isolation, the variety of perspectives from users on priority etc.?	
	As the emphasis nationally moves away from AMP driven investment, what can the DfES do to help LEAs ensure that resources to maintain good AMP practice are available?	

	Convergence between corporate and schools AMP is difficult – can anything be done by government to make them more compatible?	
	What is DfES doing about modifying capacity assessments to align with new BB98 and 99 standards?	
Investment in primary schools	Patching up poor condition with the resources available does not make schools suitable – how can we deal with both issues with the level of resources now available?	
	How does the DfES expect LEAs to define priorities based on AMP, when priorities in primary schools remain urgent and unfundable and blighted whilst LEAs await decisions on BSF phasing?	
	Is it realistic to believe that primary school issues can be resolved by targeted capital and formula funding?	
	Is there an initiative in the pipeline to meet investment needs in primary schools?	
	Future or primary school funding, particularly SEN and pre-school is unclear – can DfES offer any further guidance?	
	Allocating ring-fenced monies to primary schools through the modernisation [programme, although welcome, has not repaired the “damage” To that sector arising out of the reallocation of funds to the BSF programme. What additional funds/measures can the DfES put in place to help?	
Design issues	On tight urban sites, will the DfES accept the play deck as contributing to playing field?	
	Exemplar designs related to refurbishment and FM are	

	needed – any chance?	
	Are exemplar designs still affordable?	
	What is current thinking on school design issues related to the inclusion of pupils with behavioural difficulties. Are there examples of campus working which support this?	
Affordability	Funding re PPG17/Sport England can't be brought in within required timescales – any advice?	
	BSF follows the DfES model to assess affordability. What about using a local cost model based on historical data to give a more realistic picture?	
	Has any consideration been given to affordability issues arising out of the impact of BSF borrowing?	