

Standing Group of Education Building Development Officers

Notes of the Twenty-second Meeting held  
at County Hall, Leicestershire  
On 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2003

**Chairman: Shirley Turner, Hampshire**

Present: Keith Armstead, Ray Baker, Geoff Black, Janice Beck, Tony Blackman, Chris Borderick, Gregg Durkin, Bob Dutton, Doug Elliott, Chris Gilbert, Jo Humphreys, Ged Mitchell, John Proctor, Shirley Turner, Tim Wear.

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p><b>1. <u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Clare Medland, Penny Pennington, Jeff Fletcher, Peter Foale, Clare Townend.</p>	
<p><b>2. <u>Notes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Birmingham Conference: ST gave a formal thank you to CG and team regarding the excellent standard of the Birmingham Conference.</p>	
<p><b>3. <u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>LSC: KA stated that Regulations on Post 16 Provision have appeared from LSC.</p>	
<p><b>4. <u>Schools Capital Strategy Consultative Group – Update ST.</u></b></p> <p>Meeting took place on 22.01.03.</p> <p>Noted following items.</p> <p>i) <u>“Buildings for the Future”</u> (see Agenda item 5).</p>	

<p>ii) <u>New DfES Personnel</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ken Beeton – acting replacement Is Peter Stanton-Ife. Richard Wilkinson – replaced by Philip Parker.</p> <p>i) <u>Capital Strategy and funding levels</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Capital allocations to LEAs 03/04 £3.86b. 04/05 £4.5 b. 05/06 £5.1 b.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Allocation for 03/04 <b>may</b> be the base allocation to LEAs for 04/05, 05/06 with balance dedicated to embryonic capital strategy for TSE.</p> <p>ii) <u>TCF</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">RB indicated that Cheshire’s contact with DfES suggested PFI credits never really an option.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DE identified substantial technical difficulties with TCF bid proforma. Agreed ST to raise with SCSG.</p> <p>iii) <u>Seed Challenge</u> - 04/05 will be the last year of this initiative and guidance will be unchanged from 03/04.</p> <p>iv) <u>DFES</u> - looking at how funding for Condition and Modernisation can be aggregated in terms of funding source (i.e. single allocation formula by SCA or grant).</p> <p>v) <u>Secondary School Cost Study</u> has identified average cost per m<sup>2</sup>. As £1,025 (exc. Fees and abnormal) but the benchmark for a new secondary school would be £1050/m<sup>2</sup>. Primary to be calculated. Cost Study yet to be circulated to LEAs and unclear as to how this will be used by DfES. ST to urge DfES to release.</p> <p>vi) <u>AMP Appraisal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 03/04 75% Satisfactory, but few good/excellent.</li> <li>- 04/05 Apraisal – relationship with CPA unclear in context of move to a SCP.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">ST</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ST</p>

- Position for those LEAs graded as Excellent on CPA unclear.
- AMP Appraisal 04/05 may slip to November '03?
- Concern re SCP and potential implications for 'corporate raiding' in possible absence of AMP in future.

vii) Basic Need Methodology - \_\_\_\_\_  
outcomes of consultation.

Majority of LEAs favoured model 3 or 4.  
 DfES giving further thought to following issues:

- source data for pupil projections.
- weightings.
- abatement factors.
- VA allocations.
- operation of safety valve mechanism.

All to be discussed at next SCSG meeting.

viii) Capital Spending Profiles

DfES aware that LEAs experiencing problems in this, hence proposals for new methods of procurement for new capital strategy.

Deprivation factor not likely to be of any import in future allocations of Condition and Modernisation funding but may inform priorities in new capital strategy.

No DfES proposal to operate 'claw back' of unspent DFC except for VA sector. DfES may look to unspent DFC rather than LCVAP in context of VA projects – implications for expenditure of LCVAP!

<p>xi) <u>Phase I of DfES Capital Strategy for replacing Secondary Schools.</u></p> <p>DfES have received 140 expressions of interest regarding the preparation of exemplar designs. Designs should be produced by November 2003. Cost parameter c.£900m<sup>2</sup> which may inform DfES allocations but cf Cost Study above. DfES appear to understand the need to avoid repetition of system buildings (e.g. SCOLA). Update likely for May Conference.</p> <p><b>5. “Buildings for the Future”</b></p> <p>- <u>possible response from Standing Group/ Procurement Routes.</u></p> <p>Agreed that a response should come from this Group and that it could focus on the following themes. ST to compile draft response and circulate for comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfES must indicate to all LEAs if there are to be focus priorities that will exclude some LEAs (e.g. deprivation, poor condition, low standards all likely to result in a certain geographic focus).</li> <li>• What are the implications for capital investment in those LEAs that are ineligible?</li> <li>• Scope may be limited even within £2.1b?</li> <li>• What are the implications of off-site prefabrication for quality of design?</li> <li>• What about the need to rebuild primary schools?</li> <li>• Need to balance procurement methodology with project delivery (i.e. avoid complex front end to deliver simple outcome).</li> <li>• Implication of procurement methodology for ‘Extended Schools’ agenda? (PFI may constrain rather than enable?).</li> <li>• Will exemplars/good practice be identified on the basis of curriculum visioning? – noted good deal of uncertainty on 14-19 curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p>ST</p>
--	-----------

- Will preference for PFI for at least half of additional funds necessarily be based on one national Joint Venture Company? What about the benefits that may be obtained from local/regional initiatives?
- Would not wish for a standard procurement strategy and as a consequence a single national style/design of building.
- What are the implications for the local priorities of LEAs , of national priorities focusing on replacing secondary schools?

## **6. Asset Management Planning**

- Next round of appraisals  
See agenda item 4 viii) above.
- Future of Asset Management Planning  
JP indicated that he was trying to get Alan Jones of DfES to convene a group of LEAs to brainstorm this, but no response received. Some possible ideas include premises data we need to keep and update, guidance for smaller/less experienced LEAs on AMPs appraisal, vision for next 5 years.
- Update of Condition/Suitability data  
  
TW indicated the resource implications of Condition and Suitability surveys, perhaps a particular issue for smaller LEAs.  
  
Noted the need for a transparent agenda and the full involvement of schools in the process of joint assessment. JP indicated this approach had worked well in Herts. CG was pleased with Birmingham's approach to Condition and was willing to share this, but would welcome any good practice on Suitability. Noted that increase in the rigour of Condition Surveys may serve to increase the maintenance backlog.

### Net Capacity

Noted that the Admissions process to schools necessitates an annual review of Net Capacity, and that this will inform admissions 18 months ahead (e.g. 04/03 Net Capacity figures will inform admissions in 09/04).

### **7. Insurance of School buildings (JP)**

Context or system built schools. Noted that Zurich Municipal have increased excess to 20% of the total cost of replacement in the case of fire. In some cases there has been a refusal to insure unless a sprinkler system/fire voids have been installed. CG indicated that in Birmingham insurers are responding to a perceived terrorism threat by clarifying school post-codes accordingly – may be a prelude to increased premiums.

### **8. Audit Commission Report “Improving School Buildings”**

CB summarised some key issues in response to the report.

- response from DfES?
- whether the promised DfES School Estate Management Guide?
- Implications for increased Ofsted understanding of issues.
- useful reference to the importance of school constrained resources to maintenance.
- issues for LEAs in trying to monitor school's maintenance programmes.

ST indicated that she would be discussing these issues with DfES at the next SCCG meeting. Also indicated that DfES may have had an input to Report, and she considered it positive and challenging. Nevertheless, regretted lack of understanding that school c/fd of funds may be a strategy for affording larger projects. Briefly noted variety of practice on managing DFC, the degree to which effectiveness was contingent on good working relationships with Heads and the inadequacy of an allocation premised on formula not actual condition.

**9. Guidance on S106 Funding**

ST indicated DfES request for LEA contacts as part of process of producing advice/guidance.

Noted Hampshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Gloucestershire and Dorset are prepared to be contact LEAs.

**10. EBDOG Web Site**

CG stated that there had been changes since the Birmingham Conference. 2 new pages added, of which one is a page for a wider use than Birmingham – effectively a post box with potential for “can you help?”, “Do you know?” questions for other colleagues to advise.

Noted potential complementarity with EMIE data base and CG agreed to liaise with EMIE in context of whatever DfES/Pillar may offer.

Noted potential of a web site for a publications list. Any other suggestions for web site inclusions to ST.

Agreed EBD OG web site a useful development.

**11. IBA Schools Client Forum**

- Debrief of last meeting (ST) which included:
- New Capital Strategy/Exemplar Designs.
- 14-19 agenda (still under development).
- “Classrooms of the Future” published.
- Building Reg. Update – see Teacher Not on DfES website.
- Guide to Governors on premises development relaunched.
- 4P’s looking at PFI again.

- RIBA/SENJIT Conference Feedback (ST)  
focus on education of architects, included:
- inclusive school design.
- Exemplars of SEN by inclusion.
- Inclusive sustainable environments.
- Acoustics in schools (documentation and legislation expected on this).
- Buildings and behavioural patterns.
- Bb82 – noted draft status of current revision – likely to retain that status.

Next meeting 07/05/03. Noted shortage of LEA representatives.

## **12. Right of Way” - new legislation (ST)**

Noted all aware of this but that detailed regulations still awaited. Press releases had suggested that footpath diversion would be easy but unlikely to be the case.

## **13. VA Board (JB).**

- Update

Noted survey of 900 excepted buildings completed by DfES agency. Remedial works to exceptional buildings less than DfES expected. DfES satisfied with agent’s consistency of approach but not reciprocated by all LEAs.

Minutes to be forwarded to this Group and posted on the EBD OG website when available.

VAT : Noted Customs and Excise advice on when VAT removable/not recoverable. Anything financed through Governors funding/LEA liability is VAT recoverable. Position gradually becoming clearer.



Insurance

DfES expectations:

all buildings insured by LEAs.

contents are governors' responsibility in excess of £2,000, and LEA responsibility for items less than £200.

JB to continue to advise this Group, as and when further information received.

**14. May 2003 Conference (RB)**

Noted

- venue - 2 miles o/s of Chester.  
(Ramala Jarvis).

Assumed participants of 100-150 in full conference.

Full Conference likely to follow pattern of:

a.m. Business meeting with guest speakers from DfES.

p.m. workshops.

Themes for a.m. to include some/all of following:

DDA/SENDA

Audit Commission Report (update).

DfES re AMPs (MP alerted).

(Buildings for the Future, Capital Strategy, Basic Need).

p.m.- workshop on the link between Capital Strategy and pupil learning.

**15. November 2003 Conference GM.**

Confirmation that the conference dates are 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2003 at the The Radison SAS Hotel, Manchester Airport.

**16. Date of the Next Meeting**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2003 at the Ramal Jarvis Hotel, Chester.