



FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet

16th February 2009

Sustainability within the BSF Programme
CYPS Department response to the Task Group Report

Report of the Interim Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The attached Joint Task Group report by the Children and Young People's and Environment and Sustainability Joint Task Group highlights key sustainability issues within the Building Schools for the Future programme.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Department welcomes the Joint Report and has considered the recommendations made by the Task Groups. This report advises on the current position and proposed action. Many of the recommendations have already been acted upon in preparing for Phase 2 of the BSF Programme.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the Department's response to the Task Groups' report, and to consider the Department's specific recommendations in paragraph 4.4 relating to zero carbon buildings.

4 Report

4.1 General Comments

The Department welcomes the report of the Task Groups. The Task Group has provided an appropriate level of support and challenge and fully engaged officers from the Department in the work of the Group.

4.2 Phase 1 Schools

It was noted that Phase 1 schools met the requirements at the time for new schools to be BREEAM 'Excellent' and refurbished schools to be BREEAM 'Very Good'. Onsite renewable energy is 24% compared to the target of 10%.

4.3 Input to Strategy for Change

The Task Group influenced and endorsed the wording in the Council's Primary Strategy for Change, which has subsequently been approved by DCSF and the BSF Strategy for Change Part 1, the sustainability section of which has also been approved.

4.4 Significant Issues in the Report

4.4.1 There are two issues within the report that the Department would wish to comment on.

4.4.2 Executive Summary

The report states "We conclude, however, that the Council's BSF Team, and its partners, have a great deal to do to win the hearts and minds of decision makers, and of the schools themselves."

4.4.3 Whilst recognising the challenges ahead it is noteworthy that over half of our schools are EMAS accredited thus demonstrating a high level of commitment to sustainability, given the range of other competing priorities that they are managing. The Department is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders commit to delivering the most sustainable BSF designs and solutions that the Council can afford.

4.4.4 Recommendations

The report states "That Phase 2 and beyond should aim beyond BREEAM Excellent, which we consider to be largely obsolete, and move towards being zero carbon as quickly as possible..."

It is noteworthy that, as the boundaries of new technology are pushed further to make buildings zero carbon, the cost of carbon reduction becomes more expensive. There remain some school buildings that require basic investment to improve insulation, sensorised lighting, etc, which would give a high rate of return on investment in terms of carbon reduction.

The Department recommends that the requirements for Phase 2 Schools are set within the Council's standards for sustainable construction, but that these standards are revisited to confirm that zero carbon buildings represent the most effective return on investment.

4.5 Significant Developments since the Task Groups were established

4.5.1 The Department wishes to highlight the project referred to in Paragraph 26 of the Task Groups' report. This project, which was developed jointly between the Department and De Montfort University, has secured approximately £300,000 external funding to "enable pupils to engage with building designers and researchers on the science and engineering of their new school." This project will enable the Department to make significant improvements to the way in which students and staff are engaged in the process of the design of their new schools, with particular emphasis on making them more sustainable.

4.5.2 The Department was invited to bid for a share of a £10m national funding opportunity to make schools more sustainable. The Department took the view that it would be best to bid for funding to enhance the sustainability of a building project already planned. A proposal was submitted to enhance the sustainability of one of the proposed Phase 2 Schools, Rushey Mead School, and this proposal has been shortlisted for £1m funding with an expectation that this funding will be made available. Rushey Mead has a strong reputation for promoting sustainable development and its international links, together with the additional funding will enable the school to actively promote sustainability.

4.6 The Department's Proposed Approach to Making BSF Schools more sustainable

4.6.1 Student, Staff and Community Engagement in Design

The DMU project will significantly improve the engagement of stakeholders in the design of new schools.

4.6.2 Student, Staff and Community engagement in Operation

The Department is considering a promotional campaign to encourage more schools to seek EMAS accreditation. This will improve awareness of energy use and other aspects of sustainable lifestyle in schools.

4.6.3 Improved building specification for Sustainable Schools

Funding for schools provided by PfS should be enough to meet the baseline target of BREEAM 'Excellent' for new schools with 'Very Good' for refurbishments. Performance beyond this is likely to require additional capital funding. The Department's proposed approach is to set 3 different levels of performance in the specification, the lower level based on existing standards, an intermediate level and an upper level, based on carbon neutral. The LEP will then be asked to investigate the feasibility of alternative proposals for each school to reach each level and the cost implications of each proposal, which the Council would then need to respond to on a school by school basis.

4.6.4 In conjunction with the LEP's option appraisal described above, the Department will investigate options for additional funding, including prudential borrowing and additional grants. The application for additional funds, referred to in Paragraph 4.5.2, is an example of possible additional funding that may be available.

4.7 Proposed response to the Task Group's Recommendations

4.7.1 The Department's proposed response to the Task Group's recommendations is set out in Appendix A.

5 Legal and Financial Implications

5.1 Legal Implications

5.2 Financial Implications

As set out in the report, sustainable buildings usually cost more to build, and diminishing on-going returns (for example from energy cost savings) can be expected as buildings achieve progressively higher levels of sustainability. A number of approaches can therefore be taken, ranging from a strictly financial approach whereby capital investment in sustainability has to be paid back by revenue savings over a defined period, to an approach where high sustainability / carbon neutral is considered to be a worthwhile investment in its own right even where there is not a full future payback.

It is not possible at this stage to quantify the capital costs involved in future BSF schemes; as set out in the report, the LEP will be asked to respond on a school-by-school basis to the costs of providing different levels of sustainability.

Potential funding sources includes external capital grants and funding; prudential borrowing to repaid from lower energy costs and other lower facilities management costs; support from the Council's capital programme (which has an opportunity cost in that other schemes would then not progress); and support from schools (e.g. from Devolved Formula Capital).

Sustainability will be important in minimising the Council's exposure to Carbon Credit charges; which will in turn make sustainability more financially attractive, as lower capital investment in sustainable buildings could lead to additional future revenue costs under the Carbon Credits scheme.

In summary, therefore, a view will need to be taken at each stage of the BSF programme in the light of the Council's strategy and aspirations; technological developments and capital costs; anticipated revenue savings; availability of external funding; and the impact of the Carbon Credits scheme.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance and Efficiency, CYPS, ext. 29 7750.

6 Report author

John Garratt
Head of Service TLE
Extn 39 1654

Helen Ryan
Service Director TLE
Ext. 39 1633

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

Appendix A – Response to Task Groups’ Recommendations

	Summary of Recommendations	Summary Response
a	Involvement of pupils in process	DMU project should address this
b	Eco-champion	Staff training & EMAS
c	Open day Shared use of facilities	Good idea This is proposed through extended schools agenda. FM contracts designed to keep schools open
d	Learning Opportunities	Agreed – to be included in requirements
e	Curriculum advisor	Possibly, or increase EMAS take up
f	Pupil Engagement	DMU project should address this
g	Support DMU Project	Accepted
h	DMU project to be embedded	Agreed, to inform future policy on sustainable buildings
I	Move to zero carbon	See Para 4.4.4
J	Corporate policy	Refer to Environment Team
K	Leicester a beacon for sustainable School	Agreed, subject to funding and competing priorities e.g. standards
L	School priorities	Further consideration required
m,n,o,p	Whole life costs	Agreed see 4.6
Q	Collaboration with Schools	Agreed – part of DMU project
R	Incorporate leading edge technology	Agreed – subject to funding (see para 4.6.3, 4.6.4)
S	KPIs	BREEAM already included. FM contracts written to incentivise LEP to save energy.
T	Officer to secure 3 rd party funding	Agreed and included in TLE structure
U	School transport plans	Every development requires planning consent. Consent requires school travel plan. Also covered by EMAS.
V	Bio-mass boilers	Suggest national research would be sufficient to inform future use.
W	Waterways	Further clarification required