

17 December 2009		ITEM 8
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE UPDATE		
Portfolio Holder: Cllr MacPherson, Portfolio Holder for children's Services		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Accountable Head of Service: Colin Stewart, Head of Business (Policy, Performance and Resources)		
Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, Director, Children Education and Families		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: To update the Committee on the development and progress of the Building Schools for the Future Programme in Thurrock.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the progress of Thurrock's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. The report includes a summary of the background to the programme in the Borough, identifies where we are now and highlights areas where additional work has been undertaken since the last update report.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny to consider and comment on progress made to date.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1** The Thurrock Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Expression of Interest (EoI) was submitted to Partnerships for Schools (Pfs) at the end of November 2008; this submission and the approach to BSF was agreed by Cabinet 14 January 2009, the process having been noted by Cabinet 12 November 2008.
- 2.2** We submitted our initial Readiness to Deliver document on 08 May 2009 (one of 23 authorities). We were then invited to an assessment panel in July 2009, at which Pfs

asked us to provide additional detail and strengthen some key areas of our Readiness to Deliver submission. We resubmitted our revised Readiness to Deliver document on 17th September 2009.

2.3 The key areas that have been revised are:

Pupil Place Projections – PfS requested that we provide further evidence to support our assessment of likely pupil numbers in secondary schools across the borough, and to provide detail of the methodology used to arrive at the projections.

ICT – this is a core element of the BSF investment, and PfS were keen to see that we were developing genuinely transformational proposals for the integration of ICT into learning and teaching through the BSF programme.

Communications and Consultation – PfS wanted assurance that a Communications Plan would be in place prior to Remit Meeting. A communications and Consultation Plan has been developed to support the BSF Programme

Risk Management – PfS requested assurance that a risk register would be in place prior to Remit Meeting. An initial risk register has been developed and scored by the cross-departmental BSF project team. This is a live document and will be regularly reviewed and updated as the programme progresses.

2.4 We are now awaiting feedback from PfS as to whether we will be entered into the BSF programme. Once we receive a positive response, a PfS Education Director and ICT specialist will then work with local authorities, through what is known as Pre-Engagement, to ensure they are effectively prepared prior to the Remit Meeting that marks the formal entry in to the BSF programme. Subject to funding, 6-8 authorities will enter the National BSF Programme at a time.

2.5 As part of our pre-engagement preparation, we have been invited to participate in a pilot pre-engagement preparation programme run by PfS and the Innovation Unit. We are one of only 2 local authorities invited to pilot the training. This training is aimed at Council officers and Members, and consists of 4 modules. Module 1 (an online survey) has been completed. Module 2 (a one-day workshop for senior management) is scheduled for January 7th 2010, with modules 3 and 4 to follow shortly after that. This is an opportunity for Thurrock to influence the development of the PfS training programme, and engage council staff from across the authority, building understanding of and involvement in the BSF programme.

2.6 In addition, we have invested in the National College for School Leadership's (NCSL) BSF Leadership Programme. This Programme is aimed at supporting school leaders in understanding and engaging in the BSF programme, and consists of 3 events, scheduled for January, March and June 2010. A preliminary Schools' Briefing event has been arranged for 26th November.

2.7 In addition, we are working to ensure that as soon as we are invited to enter the BSF programme, we are genuinely ready to deliver. Work towards this has included:

- Further development of SEN and Inclusion strategies in the context of school capital development
- Establishment of a Sports Strategy sub group, involving the School Sports Partnership, County Sports Partnership, local partners and council officers to ensure a strategic approach to sports development across the Borough, and to maximise the impact BSF investment can have on sport and leisure provision not just for schools but for the wider community.

- Working closely with the development of the 14-19 Diploma and vocational provision agenda to ensure integration and consistency between this and the development of the BSF and Academies programmes
- Working to build understanding and engagement with the BSF programme across Council departments, with all schools and with external stakeholders, so that we are incorporating the full range of views, utilising all available experience and expertise, and bringing related activities together into a coherent long-term project.

2.8 Thurrock's Children, Education and Families budget has allocated £500,000 In 2009-10 to support the further preparation required for entry into BSF.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

3.1 *Statutory Consultation*

Because growth in pupil numbers is projected for most schools, an extensive programme of statutory consultation will be planned and carried out. This will be done when the phasing of our BSF programme is confirmed.

3.2 *ICT Managed Service*

The vision is to unite schools and the Council in maximising the benefits from the operation and usage of ICT for teaching and learning, administration and communication, which is available anytime anywhere for life-long learning and to engage parents and support integrated working to safeguard children. To achieve this substantive capital funding is provided through BSF on condition that it is delivered through a 5 year managed services contract across all BSF schools.

Further funding, a revenue contribution from schools, will be required. We will prepare detailed briefing for schools and members about the benefits and implications of this approach.

3.3 *Environmental Sustainability*

The national BSF programme intends to achieve 60% reduction in carbon across school estates by both design and operational means. The Council is committed to energy saving by lowering consumption and by using low embedded-energy sustainable materials wherever reasonably possible.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

4.1 There has been ongoing consultation with secondary and special school headteachers during and since the development of the readiness to deliver submission. In addition, presentations have been given to Governors' Briefing meetings, and to meetings of local partnerships such as the 14 – 19 Strategic Partnership Board and the Thurrock Learning Partnership. Elected members from all parties have been updated with progress.

4.2 Overview and Scrutiny received and earlier update at their June meeting.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 5.1 The BSF Programme offers the opportunity to transform the delivery of education across the Borough, improving attainment, increasing aspiration, and expanding choice for all learners. The redevelopment/remodelling of school buildings offers the chance to develop wider community use of facilities and accommodation – such as performance spaces, sports and leisure facilities, and accommodation for adult and family learning – at the heart of local communities. The programme will also have a positive impact on the delivery of integrated services, providing on-site accommodation for multi-agency teams, and support services for children and families.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Yannick Stupples-Whyley**
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The main financial implication will be that if we are unsuccessful in our efforts to enter the BSF Programme, it will not be possible to deliver the new facilities and accommodation we would want to support transformation of education, greater provision of community facilities and integration of services on school sites.

If we are successful, there will be significant revenue implications in terms of resourcing the project team required to deliver the programme. This will include not only use of existing internal staff resources, but also the recruitment of external expertise to support the programme as it develops.

If we are successful, the Council will also need to identify resources for the procurement of a Local Education Partnership (LEP).

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Toohey**
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Due to the EU threshold relating to the value of this project, EU procurement requirements under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 will apply, and in accordance with the BSF and PfS national programme the procurement is likely to be undertaken using the competitive dialogue process, a complex form of procurement.

It may also be the case that TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) provisions might apply, and the Council will need to ensure compliance with these requirements.

In accordance with the national programme external legal advisers will be appointed to assist in this project, working alongside with the Council's internal Legal Services to ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2006 and, if relevant, TUPE provisions.

6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
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There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report as the Building Schools for the Future Update is for information purposes only.

6.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 At present we are awaiting the decision from Partnerships for School on whether Thurrock has been successful in its bid to enter the BSF programme. In the meantime, we are working with colleagues across the Council and with external stakeholders to build capacity to deliver the Programme, increase awareness and engagement with the strategic development of the Programme, and to establish key working groups to take the work forward.
- 7.2 Inevitably the pace of this development will depend on any decisions made by DCSF and PfS on our Readiness to Deliver submission. When we are clear about the timing for the next stage of the process – the Remit Meeting – then we will revise our project plans and adjust our development of capacity accordingly.

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