

DRAFT BUILDING SCHOOL FOR THE FUTURE (BSF) SUBMISSION**1.0 Background**

1.1 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) was launched in February 2003 following wide consultation which was strongly supportive of the need for and aims of the programme. BSF aims at educational transformation, through providing all secondary school pupils and teachers in England with 21st century buildings and facilities which support innovative teaching and learning and the aims of the Children's Plan.

1.2 Alongside this, Ministers expect local authorities to use BSF to deliver a step change in attainment levels by increasing school diversity and enhancing parental choice in their areas. For the IWC, BSF investment will not only deliver improved learning spaces and environments but will also enable schools to be better maintained thus reducing the call on annual resources for repairs and maintenance.

1.3 Through Building Schools for the Future, it is proposed to have school buildings that:

- drive reform of the secondary system and improvements in educational standards;
- are world class places for teachers to teach and pupils to learn, supported fully by ICT;
- are 21st century schools which support the aims of the Children's Plan; which increase choice and diversity; are well used by the community; offer extended services and collocation of other services where appropriate;
- are well and sustainably designed, built on time and at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer, and are properly maintained over their lives.

1.4 In 2003, the DfES, now known as the DCSF invited all authorities to submit expressions of interest for inclusion in the programme, and also those authorities who felt ready to proceed with a project, to propose it for an early wave.

Expressions of interest included:

- a short statement of educational strategy in their area
- the grouping of schools into geographically coherent projects, with certain details about the schools.

For authorities proposing an early project they also required additional information relating to their 'readiness to deliver'.

1.5 The BSF programme was prioritised on the average social and educational need of the groupings of schools proposed by authorities. Eligibility for free school meals was used as proxy for social need, and GCSE results for educational need. In 2004 the first authorities to start in the programme were announced. In early 2005, all authorities were given an indication of where all their projects were

prioritised in the national programme. The IWC was identified in waves 13/14 of the programme, i.e. 20013/14. Further waves were subsequently launched, most recently in June 2008, when 8 authorities joined the programme in an interim wave 6a, selected on readiness to deliver criteria from those prioritised in waves 7 to 9. There are now 80 authorities in the programme, and by April 2009, it is expected the number of new BSF schools opened will have risen to 46, with another 115 opening in 2009-10 and 165 opening in 2010-11.

1.6 Projects must therefore have educational transformation at their heart, and should ensure that they consider the following criteria in prioritising their schools:

- social and educational need, including:
- National Challenge schools;
- less well performing schools;
- areas of deprivation;
- building need, (suitability and/or condition);
- contributing to local or regional regeneration, including opportunities for co-location with other public services;
- school reorganisation;
- sustainable communities, and new housing and population growth.

2.0 Summary of invitation to revise expressions of interest

2.1 The IWC has now been invited to revise its Expression of Interest for entry into the BSF programme and to propose an initial priority project with a capital value of up to £80 million. The current One School Pathfinder at Cowes High School does not count as 'starting' in the BSF programme as it only applies to those authorities who have full projects in waves 1 to 6a.

2.2 The IWC will prepare a bid for BSF waves 7+ and endeavour to achieve an early draw-down of the significant capital funding that will broadly align with school re-organisation proposals and the implementation phases. As the revised BSF guidance indicates that future waves per LA are unlikely to include more than five schools, the current proposals are acceptable to gain support for inclusion in the national programme.

2.3 The IWC may choose to propose larger projects where they wish to contribute additional funding from other sources. Once invited to join the programme, the IWC will need to describe, through its Strategy for Change process, how this sits within an authority-wide strategic approach to pupil place planning.

2.4 Criteria for this initial project include:

- the project must aim for educational transformation and be an integral part of an overarching strategy for change for all the secondary schools (mainstream and special) in the authority;

- local prioritisation of the initial project can be on one or more of the criteria set out above, and we will be required to give their reasons for choosing the schools against these priorities;
- standard BSF procurement criteria will apply.

2.5 The IWC will be asked to propose follow-on projects together with authorities already started in BSF in waves 1 to 6a (except where their BSF programme is completed in these waves). The follow-on projects which the IWC will propose must:

- be coherent with the authority's earlier project and complement the authority-wide drive for transformation;
- be of a capital value of from £80 to £100 million. There is some flexibility around this range, to ensure a sensible flow of work for the LEP.
- be for geographically coherent groups of schools;
- when taken with any previous project, in total, include all the secondary schools in the authority which are eligible for BSF investment.

Where there is more than one follow-on project, the IWC will show the order in which they wish these projects to be started. The prioritisation will reflect the priorities set out above, and will explain the rationale for their prioritisation. The closing date for both these proposals is 30 November 2008.

3.0 Prioritisation of the national programme.

3.1 When authorities return their expressions of interest, the Department will have two lists for:

- initial projects from authorities not yet in the programme;
- follow-on projects from all authorities which have not yet completed their programme.

3.2 Initial projects

Ministers aim to start off all projects in this list as soon as is practicable. This will of course be subject to affordability. To this end, the list will be prioritised on the average social and educational need of the schools in the groups proposed by each authority. To be assessed as ready to deliver, proposals will need to show, amongst the Local Authority's readiness, that projects address the relevant prioritisation criteria.

3.3 This prioritisation will be announced in early 2009. PfS will then invite a number of authorities with highest prioritisation to demonstrate they are ready to deliver. The information that will be requested will be much the same as that requested from authorities for wave 6a, and will include reassurance that the priorities claimed for the project are being addressed, and that its delivery is part of a robust strategy for change for all the schools in the authority.

The number of authorities invited to provide this information will be determined by:

- prudent expectations on the allocation to BSF investment in the next spending review period from 2011-12, when the first new projects can start to spend;
- the balance of follow on projects which may be started in order to ensure continuity of work for established LEPs and to ensure a manageable flow of work for larger authorities.

3.4 However, no project will formally start until Partnership for Schools (PfS) is content that the authority is ready to deliver it and that its project meets the aims and priorities that are claimed for it. This could mean that where an authority cannot provide satisfactory readiness evidence, it may lose its opportunity to enter the programme until a subsequent funding opportunity. PfS will manage this process rigorously to ensure timely delivery of the programme.

4.0 Prioritisation on educational and social need

4.1 The BSF consultation, during spring 2008, included a number of additional prioritisation criteria, and responses to the consultation supported all of them to different degrees and also suggested further ones. Clearly, there is a large range of local needs, some of which are of high importance to some authorities but not to all. There was, for instance, high support for building need as a criterion. However, collecting, validating and moderating reliable building data for fair prioritisation on comparative need would impose a heavy burden. To use other priorities in a transparent and fair manner could mean similar verification and evaluation difficulties. There would be further complications in determining fair relative weightings for needs that are not general. Whilst recognising these local needs, Ministers wish the focus of prioritisation to remain on social and educational need. There was positive support in the consultation for continued use of these needs for prioritisation, including as tiebreakers where projects were otherwise evenly balanced. These factors underlie several of the other criteria, including National Challenge and regeneration areas.

4.2 Therefore, the proposals support authorities using local needs in how they model projects and propose their prioritisation. The criteria which Ministers have agreed are appropriate to reflect local need are set out above. This additional flexibility for authorities will enable projects to be prioritised in specific areas of need rather than the authority-wide approach of the 2004 prioritisation. However, where the Department prioritises which authorities will be asked to provide evidence of readiness to deliver, we will use the average social and educational need of the schools within each project. Data to do this is already available, and is statistically reliable.

4.3 Authorities with initial projects will be invited to demonstrate readiness to deliver in the order of the ranking on average social and educational need of the schools in the project. This may mean that an initial project for, say, a group of schools with high building need but with high attainment and low social need will be towards the end of this queue, but it will:

- reflect local need and prioritisation (including making non-geographically coherent groups eligible);
- be more tightly targeted than previously; and
- enter BSF earlier than it would under the current prioritisation.

4.4 For educational need, it is proposed to use as proxy the most recent data on the percentage of pupils in each school receiving 5A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics. For social need, we will now use the Tax Credit Indicator (TCI) rating for the school. This responds to several comments that the previous proxy, eligibility for Free School Meals, often does not, for local and cultural reasons, fully reflect social deprivation. TCI was not available at the previous prioritisation, but has now been used for other programmes, including allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant and in the Primary Capital Programme.

4.5 It is anticipated that a successful Expression of Interest by the authority will lead to an invitation to be considered for entry into the revised waves (waves 7+) and the IWC must be able to demonstrate that they will be in a position to demonstrate that the authority will be in a position to make prompt progress with our BSF project when entering the programme by a specified date. Therefore, the IWC in putting itself forward, needs to demonstrate that they meet all of the following requirements:

- commitment to the BSF model, the LEP, standard procurement route and individual schools' commitment in principle to an ICT Managed Service;
- agreement with the Office of the Schools Commissioner on plans to address diversity, choice and access;
- a clear and cohesive strategy for Educational Transformation within the geographical area identified;
- school organisation and pupil place planning to be well advanced;
- clear plans for consultation in place, including a timeline for completion, including statutory school organisation consultations prior to submission of the OBC;
- Project Director, BSF Team and Advisers able to be in place for a specified date post June 2009, prior to the start of the project; and
- a clear commitment in writing from the Chief Executive to support revenue funding for the delivery of the project at a rate at least equivalent to 3% of the estimated project value.