



House of Commons
Education and Skills Committee

Sustainable Schools: Are we building schools for the future?

Seventh Report of Session 2006–07

Volume II

Oral and written evidence

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The Education and Skills Committee

The Education and Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and Skills and its associated public bodies.

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Edunova Ltd

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Oral evidence

Taken before the Education and Skills Committee on Wednesday 24 May 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods	Paul Holmes
Mr Douglas Carswell	Helen Jones
Mr David Chaytor	Stephen Williams
Jeff Ennis	

Memorandum submitted by Lancashire County Council

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Wave 1 Building Schools for the Future Project in Lancashire comprises the replacement of eight secondary schools in Burnley and three secondary schools in Pendle. The Wave 1 Project provides for replacement secondary school provision by construction of seven new 11–16 (mixed) secondary schools (five in Burnley and two in Pendle) and a new 16–19 Centre in Burnley.

In addition, the County Council wishes to provide for inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and the establishment of Generic Learning Difficulty provision co-located with two of the proposed secondary schools (one in Burnley and one in Pendle). Separate secondary Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulty provision will also be developed.

On the 16–19 Centre site in Burnley, the local authority wishes to establish a campus which will include Children’s Centre provision, replacement of separate infant and junior schools, a multi-faith worship facility and public library. Additional funding will support these elements of the Wave 1 Project.

It is anticipated that the Wave 1 Project will be delivered in the following three phases:

	<i>Start on site</i>	<i>Operational</i>
The Initial Project	Autumn 2006	September 2008
The Phase 2 Project	Autumn 2007	September 2009
The Phase 3 Project	Autumn 2008	September 2010

The County Council appointed Catalyst Education as Preferred Bidder in February 2006. The County Council anticipates reaching Financial Close Summer 2006. Through BSF the County Council is seeking a long-term strategic partner to help it deliver transformational change in East Lancashire. It will establish a Local Education Partnership with Catalyst and Partnerships for Schools upon reaching financial close.

2. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES IN BURNLEY AND PENDLE

The County Council developed a “Vision for Education in Burnley” and a “Vision for Education in Pendle” with existing schools and communities. The visions have informed the development of the projects included within Phase 1. The driver behind the schools’ and the County Council’s ambitions is that the new schools provide a learning environment fit for the 21st century which in turn will address current local challenges and wider County Council priorities. The County Council held a Design Festival in Spring 2005 for students, staff and governors from all schools involved in Wave 1 BSF. The keynote speaker was Professor Stephen Heppell and the focus was to engage the school community in the design process.

Through the ITN process the County Council sought exciting, innovative, flexible designs and service delivery solutions that will encourage community pride and ownership and help deliver educational transformation. We also wish to contribute to regenerating communities within East Lancashire by providing employment and training opportunities.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Underpinning the County Council's BSF vision and strategies are three key aims:

- to raise pupil attainment and achievement;
- to enhance learning opportunities; and
- to promote and support inclusion and thereby encourage community cohesion.

The design solutions, KPIs and Continuous Improvement Plan developed for Phase 1 of investment will help secure the following outcomes:

- a better match of pupils and places available;
- parity of esteem and collaborative working between schools;
- "ownership" of schools by the local community;
- enhanced learning opportunities and clear pathways for 14–19-year-olds;
- increased opportunities for inclusion for pupils with additional learning needs;
- enhanced services for children, young people and families;
- more cost-effective school provision;
- buildings which inspire and motivate learners of all ages; and
- a skills legacy to benefit young people and the local community.

4. KEY BENEFITS OF THE BSF PROJECT IN EAST LANCASHIRE

Raising standards of achievement & attainment

The County Council and its partner's (Catalyst) approach to architecture, design and technology will create an inspiring, efficient environment to enable learners and their teachers to achieve. We will provide:

- Well-equipped, well-lit classrooms that can adapt to the demands of differing teaching styles and subject areas.
- Engaging streets, hubs and cafés that give the schools an attractive, "grown-up" feel.
- Versatile spaces where learning can break free of traditional confines and the community can make extended use of the schools' amenities and ICT.
- A mix of "staff only" and public areas for planning, marking and interaction that motivate teachers and support choices in the way they work.
- A rich network of educational resources and wider curriculum options shared among the schools.
- Teaching space for young people with learning difficulties at the heart of school life, not the fringe.

Bringing the community together

Segregated communities that live separate and parallel lives have very few ways of learning about each other's cultures and beliefs.

To foster greater community cohesion Lancashire County Council and Catalyst will be agents of change, providing the right environment for bringing groups together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

Building Schools for the Future presents us with an opportunity to create a network of safe, welcoming and well-equipped spaces towards which the wider community feels a sense of belonging and ownership. With this in mind, we have designed the schools with:

- Separate access points for community users and young learners.
- Areas that can be opened and secured as required.
- Flexible spaces that can be easily rearranged for a variety of uses.
- Clear, intuitive wayfinding for new and regular visitors.

We will manage these facilities through a single Help Desk—one number, website and office to arrange the use of:

- Breakfast clubs, after school and holiday activities for young learners.
- Family learning, adult education and childcare facilities.
- All-weather and indoor sports.
- Public library.
- Faith Centre and space for community celebrations and exhibitions.

Witnesses: **Mr Michael Buchanan**, Education Director, Place Group, **Mr David Lloyd Jones**, Director, Studio E Architects, **Ms Angela Rawson**, Education Adviser, BSF Project Team, and **Ms Janet Newton**, Project Director, BSF Project Team, Lancashire County Council, and **Mr Allan Jarvis**, Deputy Head teacher, Buttershaw High School, Bradford and BSF Phase 2 Consultant, gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: Can I welcome Michael Buchanan, David Lloyd Jones, Allan Jarvis, Angela Rawson and Janet Newton to our proceedings. We do not usually have five witnesses, so I have to warn you that you will not get the chance to answer all the questions each of you, and I warn my colleagues that, when they ask a question, they should not expect five answers or we will not get through all the important business of the day. You will know that we are embarking on a major inquiry into the sustainable school. We did think, until we had one of our seminars to decide whether this was an area where we could add value, about looking at the build and design of schools, but we were persuaded that to look much more holistically at the sustainable school was a more interesting and value-added proposition, so that is what we are about. We are not experts in this field. Indeed when we start the first of our hearings, you can say that we are rather innocent babes in the wood, but we hope to get dangerous as we go on, but we need your help. We have asked you because you represent a whole range of expertise both in terms of one particular region and local authority area which is very early on in Building Schools for the Future. I have to say in passing that, when £45 billion of taxpayers' money is going to be spent on this programme over a number of years, that is an awful lot of expenditure, so we want to make sure, as far as we can, that the spending is a wise spend. I will really quickly ask you to whip round, and I do not want your CVs again, but if you want to say anything just to get us started, you can.

Mr Buchanan: Thank you for the opportunity. My name is Michael Buchanan. I am Education Director of a private sector company, Place Group, working predominantly in the field of Building Schools for the Future, but also on the Academies programme of integrated children's services, mostly working with local authorities and schools. My background is as a secondary head teacher formerly, I worked for two local education authorities and also a university, so I have a broad range of education background. What we believe we do is add capacity and ambition to the work that is going on, particularly in the early stages of the Building Schools for the Future Programme where the education vision for 21st century learning is established and from which the implications both for the design and the future organisation of schools are set out.

Mr Lloyd Jones: My name is David Lloyd Jones. I am a Director of an architectural practice called Studio E Architects. We are based in London and we have been established for approaching 12 years. About 50% of our work is in the educational field and the rest is in a wide range of work from commercial buildings through cultural buildings and so on. We set up the practice very much with sustainability in mind. I have been promoting it for the last 20 years in various forms and in previous practices. Studio E Architects was the vehicle for pursuing this, particularly applying it to the educational public sectors, and we are working on a wide range of schools at the moment.

Mr Jarvis: My name is Allan Jarvis. I am working currently on Phase 2 of the BSF Project in Bradford, helping the schools to develop their output specs and helping them to develop their designs. Up until very recently, I was also project leader of one of the Phase 1 schools where I am still technically Deputy Head when I am not on secondment. The schools in Bradford are very, very keen indeed on sustainability issues. We sense, however, that there is more commitment to building sustainable schools in the schools themselves than there sometimes is from some of the bidders and some of the contractors, so I am very interested in seeing whether we can drive those issues forward. It is very interesting in Bradford that our four mainstream schools that are the subject of our Phase 2 proposals will all be refurbishments rather than rebuilds and making sure that those are sustainable over time and that they contribute to environmental issues and concerns is going to be a major challenge for us.

Ms Rawson: I am Angela Rawson and I am principal adviser on Building Schools for the Future for Lancashire County Council. One of the key aspects of the work that we have been doing in Lancashire which actually predated Building Schools for the Future was bringing about education transformation and, therefore, my role through the education, schools, curriculum teaching and learning side has been closely knit with the work that Janet and her team have been doing, looking at the buildings development and procurement side. Right the way through from the start of our project, it has been a key aspect of what we are doing that this is actually about the teaching and learning curriculum, opportunities for young people, and a lot of the work I am doing now is supporting head teachers-designate whom we have seconded for a full year to work on the Wave 1 programme in Lancashire.

Ms Newton: My name is Janet Newton. I am the Project Director for Lancashire County Council for Building Schools for the Future. As Angela outlined, we have been considering a programme of works in Burnley and Pendle, which is our first wave, as early as 2002. There are some significant structural issues in Burnley and Pendle which we wish to address through the Building Schools for the Future Programme. My role as Project Director covers the legal and commercial negotiations and I am actually responsible for driving the whole project forward. We have looked at the reorganisation of schools and setting up the Local Education Partnership. I think I would mention that in Lancashire we actually have six waves of Building Schools for the Future and we are possibly the only authority in the country that is in the first wave and the last wave in 2017.

Q2 Chairman: It puts a whole new interpretation on "waving". Can I start by asking you, does it really matter? Is it worth spending £45 billion on? Is not any old room with a whiteboard or a blackboard and a teacher and 20 or 30 students—does it really

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matter whether it is a wonderful architecturally designed building or whether it is a 15th century sort of pile of beautiful stone? Does it matter?

Mr Jarvis: It matters terrifically. As you walk round almost any of the schools in Bradford at the moment, you have got major circulation problems, you have got sprawling buildings which, because of two successive reorganisations of schools in Bradford, are frequently of a range of ages, a range of suitabilities and a range of conditions. You can walk along 220 metres of corridor at Buttershaw High School in order to get from music room 2 to graphics room 76. It takes students eight or 10 minutes to move between lessons and, as they do so, they move along corridors which are far too narrow, far too long and in conditions which mean, when they reach their supposedly fit-for-the-21st-century learning environment inside that graphics room, they are already so hassled that they cannot concentrate for 10 minutes. We would not tolerate working environments like that as adults and I do not believe that youngsters should be asked to tolerate working environments like that because this is not just their learning environment, it is their working environment which is where they spend these formative years becoming what they are going to be for the rest of their lives, and we are getting in the way of that if we provide them with unfit-for-purpose buildings. I would say it is not so much what happens once you close the classroom door that is absolutely key, and I have seen some splendid classrooms dating from the 1900s in schools that we have visited recently, but it is what happens between those classrooms and what happens between lessons that gets in the way of students learning, and that is almost always the consequence of poorly designed and poorly planned and often grown-like-topsy school buildings that have not been properly planned to provide a worthwhile working environment and existing environment for our youngsters.

Q3 Chairman: The Unity City Academy was not old, but it was a brand-new architecturally innovative design. Two Ofsted inquiries suggest that it is not fit for purpose, that there are galleries that are absolutely made for bullying and students will not go near them. Here you have a lot of taxpayers' money, a brilliant architectural design, exactly as you have suggested, not fit for purpose.

Mr Jarvis: I have got even worse news for you in fact. As part of our project in Bradford, the Phase 1 project leads had the opportunity to visit no fewer than 30 newly built or refurbished schools, none of which, whether a refurbished or new building, is older than 10 years. I have visited 25 of them myself and we have seen three that we are generally satisfied with and several which should never have been built. We are still getting our school environments wrong in the recent past and BSF has got to get this right.

Q4 Chairman: So architects, planners, education authorities have managed to muck up 21 schools?

Mr Jarvis: I am afraid that is the view we take in Bradford, yes.

Q5 Chairman: What about the architects, David? What do you say about that? Is that pretty damning?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Well, I think the architect profession is similar to any other profession; there are good architects and not so good architects and you have to be very careful when you select architects in the first place. You have to make sure that it is not just the architect, but it is the whole team which are selected and brought together and that they have a proper working relationship with the school and the community. I think if you get those ingredients in place at the outset, the chances are that you will get a good end product and that has certainly been our experience.

Q6 Chairman: One of the things we want to look at in this series of meetings is that, if we have done something which is not quite as good as we hoped it would be, we learn the lessons quickly before we make any more mistakes.

Mr Lloyd Jones: Absolutely.

Chairman: My constituency of Huddersfield is just down the road from Bradford and I should be very anxious if I thought that a new generation of flat roofs was being built in Yorkshire, for example. You cannot go to a school in Yorkshire without seeing the regulation buckets everywhere to catch the drips, and I think we are all familiar with that.

Q7 Helen Jones: I want to take a balanced point really because, I have to say, there are sometimes schools I walk round which might look like beautiful buildings and I walk round them and think, "I can see the teaching problems in here. There is nowhere for the kids to keep their stuff", all those sorts of things about hidden corners where people can be bullied, all those kind of things. How do we bring together properly the architects and the planners in education and the people who actually use the buildings? It sounds a minor thing, but one of the greatest worries for children is having somewhere secure to store their bags, for instance, in school and you very seldom find that in schools. How do we bring those two together, the people who have the expertise in design and the people who actually use the building?

Ms Rawson: One of the key respects of the work that we have been involved in has been the challenge of bringing together the stakeholders, the young people, the parents, members of the community, because, linking back to that original question, this investment is not just about the schools, it is about having places within communities that people see as a beacon for learning. In the particular communities I think we are all working in at the moment, the Wave 1 schools were chosen because of significant deprivation and need and we needed actually to raise aspirations, raise self-esteem. What has happened in the process of bringing architects together with staff from schools, with head teachers, with governors, with parents and with young people is that we have

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been able to have actually a very clear picture about what helps young people learn, what sorts of environments the community is looking for to actually help them regenerate and to bring about some sustainability within their locality. It is actually investing a lot of time and energy in bringing those young people together with the architects, so, for example, we have had design festivals where children have had the opportunity to talk to architects, to talk to the planners who have been working from our side about the things that they would appreciate within their new schools. What we are hoping to do with our programme is design out the bullying areas and ensure that we have a clear picture of how it is for a child arriving at a school at half past eight in the morning and them being able to walk through that new building and know how the place works and what the opportunities are within it, but it takes a lot of time and investment for that to happen.

Q8 Helen Jones: What about the actual teaching too because it is very difficult, is it not, to design a building for new teaching styles when we do not quite know what those new teaching styles are going to be? I hear a lot about places designed for the future, but it is very hard and I see again beautiful buildings and I think, “Yes, but when you’ve got a class up here and a class down there and two teachers trying to work, the noise level is going to be astronomical”, and yet we have got to look forward at the same time to when people are doing more personalised learning, to when teaching styles change and so on, so how do we do that? How do we cater for that so that the designs last?

Ms Newton: What we have tried to do is future-proof our buildings. Again coming back to what Angela said, we have ensured that the teaching staff have been engaged in the process. At our Design Festival we were privileged to have Stephen Heppell there who really challenged the teachers’ thinking in terms of “prepare to be bold”. Clearly the curriculum does have to be delivered, we do have to meet those curriculum needs and we have to meet the needs of students with special educational needs, but it is future-proofing the building and, therefore, having the flexibility within the building to change the layout of the classrooms, to change the configuration of the classrooms, to have flexible walls, so it is a loose fit we have been seeking to achieve.

Helen Jones: I used to have one of those, but we called it a “partition”!

Q9 Chairman: We are drilling down a bit on some areas that we are going to focus on, but let me just ask you one question before we keep going on that journey. Is not one of the things that we need the location of schools? Sir Peter Newsam has said to this Committee on many occasions that, if you keep building a school in the wrong place, it is like any other location, location, location story in that you will get it wrong. He feels always that, if you put a school in the middle of a large local authority estate,

you are asking for problems because only the children, and this is his view, from that estate will attend. If you locate it on the edge of the estate so that it is in a rather different position in terms of the willingness of the people off the estate to go to that school, you have a much better, though it is not a silver bullet, but you have a much better chance of making a success of this new school. How far are you all stuck on the fact that you have got a site and people are going to say, “We don’t want to lose this site, so build on that site”? Are you stuck on that journey?

Ms Newton: I would welcome the opportunity to answer that one. As we started our negotiations and consultations back in 2003, we had 11 existing secondary schools in Burnley and Pendle. We have undergone a statutory reorganisation, so we are going to provide seven 11–16 co-educational schools and one 16–19 centre for 600 students. As part of the consultation exercise, we sent out 44,000 consultation leaflets to every parent in Burnley and Pendle in having formal consultations. The results of that very much picked up on some of the issues and one of the key questions we were asking was where the schools should be located because, in terms of building sustainable communities, we needed the community to have ownership of the school and to want to send their children there. It is easy to start with a blank sheet of paper if you are living in a new town, but you are actually looking at an industrial town in the country which has got limited land for development. Clearly the local authority is, by and large, having to look at the sites it already owns. However, we were prepared to be bold in Lancashire and we are actually now facing compulsory purchase orders for two sites outside our ownership and we are facing a potential planning inquiry all to achieve this vision to place the educational facilities in the heart of the community, so yes, in theory, it is great to say that we will move about the location of the schools, but doing that is not without challenges. You need to have a local authority that is committed to delivering that vision, that is prepared to put in the resources and that is prepared to exercise leadership to make sure that acquiring sites will go through.

Mr Buchanan: I am not going to disagree with that at all, but I think that the starting point for much of the work we do and the reason why many of the authorities which are now engaged in Building Schools for the Future were selected in the first place is that theirs were communities with particular kinds of needs, particularly marked needs. The philosophical position that has been taken, I think, is a defensible one and one that rather goes against what Sir Peter Newsam was saying in that schools have a role, a core purpose at the heart of those communities, and I could illustrate that in two ways really. One is in supporting children and families in terms of the *Every Child Matters* agenda and the associated benefits for learning and support for those children, healthy, safe children who enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution and so on, and that suggests that that provision is made very locally

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and not somewhere on the periphery. Secondly, schools have a role in those kinds of communities particularly for adult and community learning, adult skills, employability, in other words, social and economic regeneration and community cohesion, and again that suggests very strongly to me that those schools need to be located very close to those needs and not at some distance from them.

Q10 Chairman: No one is suggesting that they are not close. The argument is that this Committee has taken sufficient evidence over many years to suggest that a school with one social class entering that school has a much lower chance of thriving, developing and improving than a school that can attract a mix of people from a range of backgrounds. Basically you are saying to me that Sir Peter Newsam, with all his experience as an educationalist, is wrong and that you are going to continue building schools in the middle of large estates that no families outside those estates will attend. I have to say to you, Michael, that, if that is the way you are starting, you are doomed to disappointment because whatever new school you put there will not achieve what we aspire to have for those children.

Mr Buchanan: The point I was making was not directly contradictory, but simply to say that there are ways of ensuring a balanced mix of children and families within a school other than relocating the school. I do not think they are the same argument.

Q11 Chairman: That sounds like bussing people into an estate.

Mr Buchanan: There are some authorities that operate banding principles, for example, to ensure that schools have a balanced intake in terms of prior attainment.

Q12 Chairman: That is one answer. What do you think, David Lloyd Jones?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Well, unfortunately we usually come on the scene once the site has been determined and indeed we may be in a position where the sort of basics of the school have already been set out. However, I certainly agree that any school needs to have as wide a mix of pupils as possible and as multi-cultural as possible.

Q13 Chairman: Allan, you have got a lot of experience in this field. What do you say?

Mr Jarvis: Indeed I teach in a school which sits on the fringe of a large council estate, one of the largest council estates in the north of England when it was created back in the mid 1950s. It has been an under-achieving and under-performing school for a very long time until very recently and I think there was effectively a conspiracy between an under-aspiring community and a school that was prepared to accept that under-aspiration and its location which together produced precisely the kinds of outcomes that you are describing. Interestingly enough, we are beginning to turn the school around. It has come out of special measures, it has got by far the best GCSE

results the school has ever had and A level results the school has ever had last summer and that is with the same community that it is still serving. I think there is an alternative way of looking at it. I think Professor Newsam has described a situation in the past which I recognise all too well, but I think also that our school, rather than accepting the under-aspirations of the community that it serves, should have done something over the past and is now demonstrating that it can do something in the present and will do something in the future to transform that. I think providing a new school on its current site will be the lever that will drive forward the aspirations of that community.

Q14 Chairman: So location is important, Angela, but not that important?

Ms Rawson: I think it is about the vision for education in the area. One of the key aspects of our vision for transformation is actually that there is one school in Burnley and all the buildings are part of one education system. That one school will collaborate and we have staff who have been appointed to work in more than one school. We have set up a joint staffing commission of governors of all the schools who are working together, the notion being that the whole town owns all the children and that there will be opportunities through the school specialisms—

Q15 Chairman: That sounds like the Pied Piper of Burnley!

Ms Rawson: There will be opportunities for youngsters, following their particular interests and aptitudes, actually to study in the different settings where different specialist areas are being developed. This is a key aspect of what we want to do to transform education in the borough. One of the key issues in Burnley was a definite pecking order of schools and that has an impact on parental perceptions about admission and so the whole way of working, and this is why we took the very radical decision to close all schools.

Chairman: Jeff Ennis is always top of the pecking order here!

Q16 Jeff Ennis: I would just like to tease out a bit more about the location of schools because what Janet has done in Burnley, we are doing something similar in Barnsley. We are closing all 14 secondary schools and opening up eight advanced learning centres, many of which are actually changing location. I am just wondering if we have a handle on, or a guesstimate of, how many schools we feel are in the wrong location given the changing population and what-have-you further to the point that Barry has made. Are there a lot of schools that are in the wrong location which would be better being rebuilt on a new site?

Ms Newton: Yes, I would say clearly there have been shifts in population and a great proportion of the country is actually facing falling demographic rolls and we are actually facing quite a significant number of surplus places which again was one of the

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outcomes we wanted to address. We did not need 11 schools, we only needed eight. I think Building Schools for the Future with the funding it provides gives an opportunity for bold authorities to deliver an educational vision. We are in the fortunate position that we are actually getting eight new-build facilities largely to reflect the need, not only the estate need, but the needs of the community, and this is an opportunity to get that ownership from the community, but it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and there is not going to be another chance in Burnley and Pendle to provide eight brand-new secondary schools, so to put them back in locations which were unpopular, that were not right in the first place, if you are going to do this, then I think it is worth taking the time, developing the vision and putting in the resources to ensure that you put the schools in the right location where they are going to have that buy-in from the community and serve the population.

Q17 Jeff Ennis: Many of the future new schools are based on the principle of the extended school day, which I fully support, and that gives more ownership to local communities. What challenge does that give to designing schools for the future, and I am thinking in terms of security and all those sorts of other issues that you have to think about where you are having an extended school day?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Security is a major issue in schools obviously, however long the school is occupied during the day. Depending on its location and depending on the culture within the school and so on, it is important to get it right. Along with many of the things which have been raised so far, it is my view that all these items have to be reviewed right at the outset of the project, and security is crucial. It is not something you just bolt on at the end, but you need to understand how people move around the school, where they are coming from, by what mode they are coming and the sort of activities that are going to take place, the outreach of the school and whether the community is coming in at certain times, and all these things need to be pinned down, as far as possible, at the outset. The same applies to sustainability issues, when we come on to those, and these need to be pinned down right at the beginning, and the problem is that so little time is very often left to do this.

Q18 Jeff Ennis: Perhaps I could ask a supplementary to the response that Allan Jarvis gave earlier in the questions. When you talked about refurbishment as opposed to rebuild, does refurbishment cause more of a challenge than a brand-new rebuild on a site, in your opinion, or has it got different challenges?

Mr Jarvis: Different challenges certainly and more challenges, I think, if you want to create the kind of learning environment which I was describing earlier on where children have some space to themselves and feel that they are in control of their lives and that they belong in the school rather than being allowed in there on sufferance by the teachers. If you are looking at the existing teaching block, for example,

which retains narrow corridors, if architects cannot find a way of opening those out in order to create some worthwhile spaces in the centre of that for breakout for small group work, for personalised learners, for giving learners some independence within their curriculum, then, yes, you may well have some major challenges in terms of turning round that existing teaching block. However, the architects we are working with on Phase 2 in Bradford are rising to that challenge and they are finding ways of adapting those buildings to try and make sure that they capture the same outcomes as some designed-and-built-from-scratch buildings. Whether we will achieve it as fully as is possible with a new build, I am not yet certain, but we have certainly set that challenge to our architects and they are rising to it.

Q19 Jeff Ennis: I can just about remember when I was at school, it was in the days of Sir Alec Clegg and West Riding County Council, and every school that was built in that 1960s/1970s period was of the same design and spec basically, no matter which community it served. Now, obviously we are looking for diversity in provision here, but are there any common elements within the learning environment that must be incorporated into the new design of a school?

Mr Jarvis: I think there are probably three. First of all, you do need a space that is flexible rather than a space that is a classroom with a closed door and in which you can only do one set of activities, so that drives some considerations around classroom size if you do have a traditional classroom so that it will lend itself to a range of different kinds of learning activities rather than driving a single set of learning activities which is all too often the case with under-sized classrooms. You need space beyond classrooms which is usable for a range of purposes and you need space in which children can learn and in which the social curriculum can be delivered by children's interaction with each other rather than having to be delivered by a series of imposed rules by teachers which create artificial responses from children rather than their learning to behave and to interact with each other and become adults, encouraged by an appropriate environment. I think that the imperatives for me are to make sure that we do not simply regard schools as spaces in which teachers work with their classes and that we regard schools as places in which young people become adults and in which they, therefore, need to interact with the built environment in ways which encourage them to learn and to discover for themselves how to be adults rather than having to have adulthood imposed on them by rules.

Q20 Jeff Ennis: That is a very good answer, but I am wondering if any of the other witnesses have got any other common elements that a new school build should have other than those already mentioned.

Mr Buchanan: Perhaps I could offer four simple suggestions. One is that we are committed not just in education, but more broadly, to an issue of personalisation and this suggests that individual

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learners will have particular needs and plans associated with them and different kinds of spaces, often smaller spaces, where groups can work in quiet environments, either gifted and talented children or perhaps children with special educational needs requiring particular support. The second area, I think, which is common to all is that we need to make a very serious response to the 14–19 agenda and the breadth of the curriculum in order to give many more opportunities to youngsters of that age to progress and succeed, and the kinds of courses associated with the new vocational diplomas again require different kinds of spaces, although I do recognise that each individual school will not be able to offer them all. Thirdly, in terms of inclusion, special educational needs, social inclusion, the whole breadth of inclusion, we need to get used to the concept that, within schools, a range of adults drawn from a number of different agencies will be working with young children and families and will require different, again semi-confidential spaces for those targeted interventions to take place. The fourth area, which is something that is very significant, is that we need to up our game in relation to ICT and the use of new technologies which clearly offer a significant future for youngsters to be able to operate in a global society in the 21st century and, if we get it wrong, we will definitely fall behind other areas of the world.

Q21 Jeff Ennis: That was a very good answer. Is the guidance from the DfES on the sorts of schools expected from Building Schools for the Future clear enough or should the guidance be more specific?

Ms Rawson: I think we have enough guidance. I think the joining up of guidance with different policy strands and with local needs is actually the trick. We can actually drown in guidance and we have had enough guidance, I think, from the various agencies. The key challenge, as I say, is how you match that with policy strands around extended schools, inclusion, looking at health and safety, travel to schools, green issues, how you also match the particular curriculum and learning needs of youngsters on an individual personalised basis, and I think that is where the ongoing discussion and the work that we have been doing with teachers and with communities is crucial because we have to find a way through that because the only sustainable solution is one where you get local buy-in.

Mr Lloyd Jones: Just following up the question about guidance, particularly on the design side, there is an enormous amount of guidance in educational design now which actually we welcome very much because clearly a lot of work has been put into it, but it is purely guidance. Actually it is a very good way of testing one's own approach and testing the group approach to a design of a school and that is how we use it and we use it very productively in that way.

Q22 Chairman: But you said just a moment ago that architects get on the site too late to make any difference.

Mr Lloyd Jones: Often they do, but sometimes they get on earlier. Once we do get on site, we make our presence felt. We get teams together and we revisit some of the decisions which have already been made.

Q23 Dr Blackman-Woods: I am a governor at a school which is starting the process of rebuilding, so I am very much at the receiving end of a lot of these policies and guidance, but my question is really about the lead-in time for a design and what ideally you think that should be?

Ms Newton: I think certainly in terms of a brand-new build, if it is a brand-new build you are indeed having, scoping the project if it is going to be involved in a reorganisation can take 12 months, so it is identifying the funding because clearly you need to know the funding envelope that you have. If it is a Building Schools for the Future project, the lead-in time is quite significant. We actually found that we were a short-listed authority, a reserve authority in February 2004. We started the design process with our schools in March 2005 in terms of developing the brief, a very detailed brief, and the vision that the schools wanted to deliver. We had significant meetings with the architects throughout the spring and summer and those meetings are still going on in terms of finalising the detailed design, so from start to finish it will have been over 12 months and there is a significant commitment on the part of the head teachers, the senior staff and the governors because, the more you put into the process, the more you will get out of the process. I think it is a case of making the time at the beginning, recognising the commitment and making sure that you get it right, and I would say up to 12 months as a minimum before you even get on site.

Q24 Dr Blackman-Woods: I have to say, what we are struggling with a bit is the “visioning” as a governing body, not that we do not have ideas about what we would like to see in the future, but I think all governing bodies need assistance with how that then translates into buildings and indeed what the design solutions are, so my question is really what needs to happen to ensure that the key stakeholders, in terms of putting a new building together, know what is possible in design terms?

Mr Lloyd Jones: I think the key to this is developing a brief and this can come about in a number of ways. It can be generated by the governing body or it can be generated by the school itself, by the local authority and so on, but it needs to be a document or a file that gradually builds up and takes on board all the sorts of ideas and concepts that different people have which is then honed and developed to a point where it becomes something that a designer can work to and pin down the actual aspirations of the school, the achievements and the goals.

Q25 Dr Blackman-Woods: But with the process which exists at the moment, if you get one architect coming in to a governing body, you are not necessarily, as the governing body, going to know the whole range of solutions that are available or the

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possible designs, so what needs to happen so that the governing bodies and other people involved in the decision are aware of a wider range of possibilities? How do we share good practice and indeed how do we avoid the pitfalls?

Ms Rawson: One of the things that we established early on, and this again was in 2004, was a visioning group across the whole of the BSF Wave 1 schools and we got governors, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and put them on a coach and we took them round recent new builds. The way we organised it was that we did a visit in the morning and then I followed it up with a workshop for them to talk about their experience of being in that different place, the things they liked and the things that they felt would be barriers either for the community, because you want the community to come into the school, or for young people, about the sorts of spaces that were available for them, the sizes of the classrooms, the light, the environment, all of those things. It was a very practical exercise, but at least people started to build up, if you like, their own internal criteria for what they felt their school of the future should have.

Q26 Chairman: What did your people think of the new builds? Was it similar to Allan's?

Ms Rawson: Well, we did not sort of dismiss anything outright because, in each of the schools that we went to visit, people saw some of the features where they thought, "Yes, that would work for us".

Q27 Chairman: So different from Allan's scoring.

Mr Jarvis: I support Angela's remarks. I think you need quite consciously to create a research phase in procuring your new schools in which, not acting school by school, but acting collaboratively because in that way you capture a lot of good thinking that would otherwise escape you, so working collaboratively between schools and with architects and advisers and, with the benefit of support from CABE, for example, or from Toby over there in the corner and his team at the Design Council, you drill down into some of the possibilities, see some examples and yes, you do exactly what Angela has said. You go to school after school after school, you see a feature in one school which delivers one outcome that you like, but you see other things that do not deliver all the range of outcomes that you require, so you go to another school and see one of the other outcomes delivered and then you can have an iterative process with architects in which you discuss how you can capture both those outcomes rather than having to surrender one in order to achieve the other. That can only be done if you have quite a detailed and quite a consciously designed research phase which brings together the full range of stakeholders rather than simply, for example, to quote one example I know which I shall leave nameless, where it is all being done by a local authority asset manager and the schools are not involved in the process at all.

Q28 Dr Blackman-Woods: Could the Building Schools for the Future team at the DfES do more, do you think, to inform governing bodies and others about what is available and what seems to have worked, get some evaluation, some feedback? Would that be an important thing to do?

Ms Newton: I think there is certainly a role for the DfES to share and disseminate good practice because there is very much a mixed bag of provision in terms of the good design and I think, where design has worked well, there is an opportunity to share that with the school community, so I think, yes, the DfES could effectively signpost good design. I think in terms of local authority, there is a strong role in having a client team and that client team does effectively liaise through groups, such as the Education Building and Development Officers' Group, which the DfES attend, so there are networks in place where good design could be signposted, promoted and shared.

Dr Blackman-Woods: We have been talking about the difficulties that people in education might have in getting to grips with design solutions. Is there an issue the other way round about architects not sufficiently understanding education and can you tell us what is happening and what should happen to ensure that architects do keep up to date with what is happening in education and indeed so that they are able to vision it for the future?

Q29 Chairman: I hope you watch *Teachers' TV* every night!

Mr Lloyd Jones: We keep up to date as far as we can with developments of educational research. We are particularly interested in any feedback which comes out of the DfES on sustainable issues in particular because this is an area that is relatively new in schools. I am particularly thinking of environmental sustainability and just how buildings perform because one has to determine how the value and the cost of the building, which we have not touched on before, is distributed through the building and to get feedback on how the building performs in relation to the money spent in particular areas is absolutely vital to us as architects. Education is our field and we are absolutely enthusiastic about it, so we absorb what is going on and take on board as much as we can and try to present these issues to our clients.

Ms Rawson: The other aspect is how you prepare the companies, including architects, who are proposing to be your private sector partner and, again, investing time to ensure that they understand the education vision that you want to achieve as they are putting in their bids. One of the things we did was to have a bidder's day. We spent time explaining the vision, but also we had the feedback from the pupils from the design festival displayed, and what was very interesting when we came to evaluate bids was to what extent the proposals for designs had actually picked up on what the youngsters were saying and what had come out as part of the vision. I think, again, it is that early preparation, investing time in

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making sure that, whoever you choose (and the architects are part of that package), they are very clear about what it is that you are seeking to achieve.

Q30 Chairman: Is anyone brave enough, the students, the architects or anyone ever to the say, and my team are going to groan at this, that small is beautiful—the Schumacher doctrine—that some of these schools are too darn big for human scale? Does anyone ever say that? The stock answer we get is, “Well, if it is well designed and big, it is all right”, but there is a bit of me still when I go to primary schools that thinks this is the right size. Children understand this size of a building and environment, and then they go to the big school and they get lost. Is there no word out there that schools can be too big?

Mr Jarvis: When we engaged the pupils in the design process in Bradford that is precisely one of the points they brought out. So, when we wrote our output specs in the schools, we wrote them with a view to getting the architects to find methods of capturing the feeling of a small school in what is actually quite a big school, and that is the one of the reasons why we have gone for a series of teaching blocks with break-out spaces in the centre of them with a sense of space, we have gone for a school within a school for Key Stage 3, in two other schools in Phase 1 in Bradford, so that the youngest children will spend most of their time in their own block, in their own accommodation, learning the skills of being in a mainstream secondary school of a very large size rather than being tossed in at the deep end, as tends to happen in many schools at the moment. That is part of feedback, again, from the children, and this is something I care very much about. I have been terrifically impressed with the knowledgeability of the architects, although, to be fair, the architects in Bradford engaged with the processes all have a specialism in architecture for educational purposes, but we have also been terrifically impressed with the wisdom and the understanding of the children, and what we have neglected in the past in providing schools is the children’s perspective—we have looked at it purely from the teacher’s perspective—and when you listen to the children, they will tell you how to design a school that delivers on those outcomes and addresses those concerns you have raised.

Mr Lloyd Jones: I would say almost word for word what Allan has just said. I think the engagement of children, pupils, is vital in the process, and, again, if you can get in early that helps. If you can develop a school where the pupils understand what is going on, can do programmes that relate to the construction process, to engaging with different areas of design, particularly sustainability, of course, by the time they move into it they feel it is their building, they gain ownership of it, and the same is true, of course, with the staff. If you can get that feeling and also are able to break down the schools in the way that Angela was talking about so it is not this great big megalith, that helps as well.

Q31 Mr Chaytor: Chairman, can I pursue the question of sustainability and ask Janet and David specifically what it means. As the representatives of the surveyors and the architects, what is your definition of a sustainable building, specifically a sustainable school?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Sustainability has developed into a very all-embracing category, but, from my point of view, it arises from three areas to do with social benefit, social engagement, it is to do with local economy and how the economy develops in relation to an intervention and it is to do with the environment and ensuring that climate change is halted. There are these three spans that interconnect, and it is very difficult to deal with one to the exclusion of the other. As architects we tend to get more involved with the environmental side. There is an enormous amount of work that has been done in developing environmental measures in order to reduce the impact that buildings have on the environment. The buildings in developed countries are responsible for 50%, as you probably know, of carbon-dioxide pollution in the world, and that is why it is so important to design sustainability in terms of using materials that are sympathetic with environmental issues and minimising energy.

Q32 Chairman: Michael, you have been quiet for a while. Do you want to give us your definition of sustainability?

Mr Buchanan: Yes. I would describe it in a slightly different way. There are issues which David has spoken about which are absolutely right about sustainable buildings—the materials that they use and environmental factors, energy conservation and generation, waste water, lifecycle costs, all the kinds of things associated with buildings—but I think within the education sector there is a broader understanding of sustainability in relation to schools which are sustainable as organisations, where the leadership is sustainable. There is a great book recently written on that subject by Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, for example, talking about endurance and succession and distributed leadership, and so on.

Q33 Mr Chaytor: How can the design of a building influence the permanence of the leadership?

Mr Buchanan: This goes back very much to the first question that Mr Sheerman asked. Does it matter? My view is possibly slightly different from my colleagues in that I think that buildings are not the answer to transformation in education. They can assist and they can assist particularly in removing obstacles to a more flexible curriculum and so on, but they form part of an education vision which is also very much to do with leadership and curriculum and working practices, and so on, so the building can support a lot of changes within education other than physical changes, cultural and working changes, and I think they are very significant in terms of schools as organisations. Because schools, of course, are not factories, they are not conveyor belts, they are places where human interactions take place, and therefore

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all the factors which affect the quality of human interactions are important. Some of those can be influenced very heavily by buildings, others much more likely so, but, nonetheless, they are all important.

Q34 Mr Chaytor: Janet, from your perspective, what is sustainability and how can those concepts be implemented in the design of the buildings in Lancashire, for example?

Ms Newton: Certainly sustainability is one of the key priorities for the county council and obviously is a central plank to the education vision that we have developed. I would pick up the issues around the community, the economy and the environment. These are in perspective. We have been very keen to follow the BREEAM ratings to try to secure a very good rating through BREEAM, we have tried to maximise the opportunities for curriculum learning; so we are putting small wind turbines on each of the schools, we are introducing photovoltaic cells, we are having biomass boilers, we are actually looking to achieve very sustainable schools from an environmental perspective. In terms of contributing to the local economy, Burnley and Pendle are very deprived poor areas, there is a skills shortage, many of the jobs are low-paid, low-skilled, and we are very keen to use the Building Schools for the Future programme to contribute to a long-term regeneration of that area.

Q35 Mr Chaytor: For example, does that include using local labour or local companies as part of the contracts? How do you deal with the issue of preference for local firms?

Ms Newton: In a way I am just coming to that. There is a housing market renewal strategy running through the ODPM at the same time, so there is a significant programme of building. Certainly within Building Schools for the Future it is PFI. It is looking to establish a long-term strategic partnership. The exclusivity will turn on performance. We have key performance indicators and, within our key performance indicators, we have agreed targets with our preferred bidder about the percentage of local labour that would be used in construction, the local labour that would be used through facilities management. We have negotiated 24 craft apprenticeships year on year for local students. We have negotiated mentoring opportunities. As part of our package in terms of the community, we are looking at having the facilities open from 6.30 in the morning until 6.30 at night exclusively for the schools. That is 600 hours of additional community use. We are embracing the Extended Schools Agenda, but we are actually looking at the full service Extended Schools so that the schools become a focal point for the community. We are actually encouraging the schools to feel as if they are owned by the community. We are co-locating public libraries, hydrotherapy facilities; we are putting in additional big lottery funds in terms of

the sports provision, so we are looking to create as sustainable schools as we possibly can within the community.

Q36 Mr Chaytor: Given that PFI is involved here, how sustainable are the economics of this and what are the taxpayers of Burnley and Pendle going to be paying in 20 or 30 years' time? What is your judgment about the economic sustainability of PFI verses other schemes or the impact on individual school budgets as time goes by?

Ms Newton: We have had to go through a very robust financial assessment at each stage of the project; so we had an outlined business case that was assessed by the Treasury, by the Project Review Group, by Partnership UK, which actually secured the funding envelope for the projects in Burnley and Pendle. We are now preparing a final business case, which will go before the Treasury hopefully in June, July. Within that we have to have guaranteed the sustainability in terms of future pupil numbers, that the county council and the schools can meet the funding gap, the affordability gap, that we have got the legal agreements from the governing bodies over a 25-year period they will contribute part of their school budget towards the on-going unitary charge. I would say, from a financial perspective we have gone through a very rigorous process and are comfortable that we have been scrutinised at a national level and also locally that these schools and the PFI process will represent value for money.

Q37 Mr Chaytor: Would it have been economically more sustainable not to have gone down the PFI route?

Ms Newton: I think the attractions for the PFI route are in terms of the contributions to the lifecycle cost. Having built these brand new state-of-the-art schools, there will be a commitment on the part of the county council and the school community and working with the contractor that the school buildings will be maintained throughout that 25-year period, and so PFI does represent value for money for us and we will get an asset at the end of 25 years that is still in exceedingly good condition.

Q38 Paul Holmes: You said you have got the agreement of governors for 25 years ahead to contribute in, but what happens if in five years' time under the Education Bill that is just going through they become a trust or they become an Academy; they are independent outside the system, the governors have completely changed, they are appointed by the new trust or the Academy owner. Are they still bound by this agreement?

Ms Newton: Yes, because the governors' agreement actually reflects change of law, and so it will be a 25-year agreement and the money that the governors are contributing is the money that the governors receive through the formula allocations, delegations to schools, that specifically covers the premises aspects of their schools. They already get that funding within their budget, but, yes, it is a 25-year

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agreement, and we have been at pains to make sure that governors are fully aware of the implications of what they are signing.

Q39 Paul Holmes: What happens if over the next 10, 15 years with falling rolls and with competition between schools and popular schools being allowed to expand as they like, and so on, one of these brand new schools has to close? What happens then?

Ms Newton: Clearly, in terms of satisfying the local authority that it is value for money and satisfying the Treasury that it is value for money, we have had to look at the pupil numbers. It does tend to get into crystal ball gazing; I will be perfectly honest with you. We can look at children who have already been born and we can project forward the number of students over the life of their school. What we cannot do is anticipate the children who have not been born, but we also take into account inward and outward migration. We have a lot of years' experience in terms of predicting future student numbers and we are satisfied in the authority that the schools are sustainable over the next 25 years. In the programme in Burnley and Pendle we are taking out several thousand surplus places to ensure that the schools will be sustainable.

Q40 Paul Holmes: But if you have, say, four schools that all, on your careful planning, seem sustainable over 20-odd years but three of them flourish and prosper and expand and one of them, for whatever reason, does not, what happens if in 10 years the fourth one has to close because some of the pupils have moved to the other three?

Ms Newton: If we get into that Armageddon situation, which hopefully we will not—

Q41 Paul Holmes: That is what the Education Bill is all about, surely?

Ms Newton: I think there are different aspects of the Education Bill in terms of the White Paper where, as an authority, we do not yet have clarity over some of the implications around the ownership, the trust status, and, obviously, it is an emerging Bill with emerging consequences. We have had to work to the information that was available at the time and satisfy ourselves that we had a robust case.

Q42 Chairman: I am conscious of you stealing David's questions. Angela, do you want to come back on that one?

Ms Rawson: Yes. I think one of the key aspects as well is that we have lived for a number of years with the, "This is the popular school and this is not." The whole *raison d'être* for our vision for education in this part of East Lancashire is now about collaboration, and, as I said, it is that notion of there being one school. The head teachers have actually got a protocol for working together, we have got joint Chairs of the School Governing Bodies Forum that meets twice a term, we have got joint staffing committees. We are putting in the structures now, which are not just, "Yes, we talk about collaboration because we need to do a joint bid that gets us some

money and then we will all go away and pretend it never happened." We are actually tying systems, structures, ways of working that are actually sealing that notion of collaboration, and we have left some documentation for you, an A4 illustration, about what that collaboration is about, and it is reflecting, yes, the uniqueness and diversity of each school, because you need that anyway, but also the underpinning feel that this is about a whole one-town approach and the sharing of responsibility for all the youngsters. Yes, opportunities might come up, and we will have to look at how over time that partnership is tested, but at the moment there is not anybody who is saying this is a road we think we would go down.

Q43 Mr Chaytor: Chairman, I think we have touched on the social dimension and the economics; I really want to come back to the environmental dimension now and ask David about environmental standards. Your practice is responsible for the first zero-emission building, I understand. What are the prospects for zero-emission school buildings and what is your feeling about the BREEAM standards that new school buildings are expected to aspire to?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Taking the latter part of your question, the BREEAM standards that schools are expected to comply with are not radical in any way. They are standards that can be relatively easily achieved without any major financial outlay. They are more to do with assessing the situation, looking at the various measures that are available to you in terms of designing the building in an energy-efficient and environmentally conscious way, and that might involve a whole range of things depending on where the building is located, how it is oriented, how many storeys it is and a whole range of things like that. What we do as a practice is sit down with all stakeholders right at the outset and we have a matrix and we go through all the issues, including transport (how you get to the school, and so on), and, against that, there are various benchmarks so that you can set at an early stage what you are actually trying to achieve by the time you have reached the end of the project in terms of output, in terms of a quantifiable result, and against that you can put a cost. Obviously, the more you do this, the more accurately you can do it. It is just a question of deciding how far you want to be innovated, for example, how far you want to do best practice, how far you want to fulfil the BREEAM guidelines and then go for it. There is absolutely no reason why any school should not achieve excellence in terms of BREEAM standards.

Q44 Mr Chaytor: But excellence is not zero emissions?

Mr Lloyd Jones: It is not zero emissions. If one was to go for zero emissions, that is a different ball park really. You would have to think very seriously of integrating renewable energy into the building, and so you are looking at photovoltaics, or wind turbines, or other forms of generating electricity on

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site or locally, it does not necessarily have to be on site, but with a dedicated supply. It is only then that you can achieve zero emissions.

Mr Jarvis: One of the things we are a little disappointed about in Bradford is that we are learning from our preferred bidder that the photovoltaics and the wind turbines that were specified for our new schools are not actually going to be very cost-effective, and, because money often drives these things, we are not getting as much renewability and sustainability in our Bradford schools as we had hoped for. We are having wind turbines and photovoltaics in all the schools in different mixes to where they are in the city and what the environmental concerns are, but it is very disappointing to find that, for example, the absolute maximum energy contribution in the best of the three schools is only 15% of the total consumption. I think, if we want to address environmental and sustainability issues in terms of making net carbon emissions, being a net zero drawer on the National Grid for electricity, and so on and so forth, then we are going to have to spend some money to achieve that over and beyond what is necessary simply to design and build the school.

Q45 Mr Chaytor: You are talking about generation of energy. What about the reduction of energy and demand management within the school? Is not part of the design brief that the consumption of energy can be reduced, indeed, can be far cheaper than actually installing renewable energy regeneration?

Mr Lloyd Jones: You can design a school to the best standards in terms of environmental performance as you can, but once you have handed over the school, the school has got to be run in accordance with the objectives of that particular route, and it is part of our job to make that as easy as possible, to make it as intuitive as possible, but you do need a period at the end of the project—we talked a lot about the beginning, but the end is also absolutely vital—to get on board a building manager and the various people who are going to run the building, make sure that they are conversant with the processes, make sure that lights are not left on the whole time and institute procedures, and so on. It is only then, and that is why this monitoring is so important, can you judge how well the building is performing, but there is no reason why schools could not do it in the same way as any other building.

Mr Chaytor: Is the guidance from the Department sufficiently specific in terms of the environmental sustainability aspects or not? What does the guidance say about the environmental performance of buildings under BSF? Does it specify particular BREEAM levels? I do not know what this guidance says.

Q46 Chairman: You are nodding, Angela.

Ms Rawson: Yes, that has been part of the output specifications that we developed and which the bidders bid back to us on.

Q47 Mr Chaytor: What does it say?

Ms Newton: As a minimum we have to achieve a very good BREEAM rating.

Q48 Mr Chaytor: The minimum is BREEAM very good, but BREEAM very good is not very demanding, is it? Anybody can still stick a bit of polystyrene between their cavity walls and achieve BREEAM very good, can they not?

Ms Newton: No, we would seek to achieve more than BREEAM very good, but the schools are funded by PFI. Clearly it is output-led rather than input-led. So, as part of the output, the minimum achievement is a BREEAM very good.

Q49 Mr Chaytor: But it is not output-led in terms of net emissions over the 25-year period whether or not at that scale of specificity?

Ms Newton: It is not. It is very much at the local discretion in terms of the emissions that can be achieved.

Q50 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the planning process, what were the key factors in Lancashire and Bradford that drove the designs you adopted and the programme that you developed?

Mr Jarvis: Could you repeat the question?

Q51 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the whole planning process, what are the key factors in terms of sustainability that you established in developing your BSF programme?

Mr Jarvis: I was not personally involved in what the council decided to write, I was only involved at the school level, but we did have a discretion at school level to decide whether we thought the council should be asking for a very good BREEAM rating or an excellent BREEAM rating, and we decided that we wanted it to be an excellent BREEAM rating, and we decided that there needed to be a very clear link between what the buildings did, in terms of their performance, in terms of sustainability, and the evidence that the children themselves could see of that, and so there was a link into the curriculum. One of the key inputs that we asked for from the schools in developing the output specification was that there should be, for example, grey water use in schools for the flushing of lavatories and urinals and that there should be some metering in the school to demonstrate to the students that grey water was being used in this way, so that we were educating the students in their buildings about the way in which their buildings were delivering and, indeed, failing to deliver on sustainability issues.

Q52 Mr Chaytor: There is no Smart Metering for energy consumption, for example?

Mr Jarvis: Yes. Let me cite the case of Tong School. They are one of the three in Phase 1 in Bradford which is expected to have a wind turbine. That will have a wind turbine and a meter in one of the principal circulation areas inside the school. It will

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show what contribution that wind turbine is making at any given moment to the total energy being consumed by the school.

Q53 Mr Chaytor: The question is: if this can be done in one school in one local authority without enormous excess cost, why should it not be standard practice in all schools?

Mr Jarvis: I would like to see it become standard practice in all schools certainly.

Q54 Mr Chaytor: Bradford itself has not specified that all schools should have this kind of approach.

Mr Jarvis: No, it was left to the individual school. We did specify it slightly differently from school to school. At the school that I am connected with, Buttershaw, we opted for photovoltaics, but, again, we asked that these should be metered in such a way that the children walking past could see what at any given point in time the contribution those photovoltaics were making to the school's energy consumption, and so on and so forth. There are other examples that we asked for, but they are probably less expressive in terms of what the children can see and learn directly, but we asked that the sustainability issues addressed through the output specification be ones from which the children themselves can learn. We take the view, I do not know whether Janet feels the same, that the next generation will be the ones who really have to combat these issues and will really be in a position to make policy on this. At the moment, as I think I said in my introductory remarks at very beginning, we are finding that our contractor, our construction company, is reluctant to drive through some of the outcomes we would like to see through sustainability because they are costly.

Q55 Mr Chaytor: In terms of future proofing and flexibility of the design, how important is it to allow for the future internal rearrangements of the building or adaptation to new technical possibilities in the future?

Mr Jarvis: Absolutely vital. The solution that our architects have adopted, even though they have met the challenging outputs required from Building Bulletin 93 in terms of acoustic performance, have provided us with walls that can be demounted or repositioned, they have adopted a grid and they have adopted a strategy for the mechanical and electrical fit-out of the buildings that means that there are very few service ducts, the service ducts have been very sensitively sited so that they are unlikely to obstruct future adaptation, the various teaching wings in the block have been designed so that they can be added to or extended linearly to create additional accommodation if it is required. All those issues have been addressed through the design and were specified in the output specification.

Q56 Chairman: Michael, how do you measure up? You are in this business. You are here because your place is good; you have good credentials in the

environmental sector. What if I nipped round to your place and checked on your carbon footprint? Would you know what it was as a company?

Mr Buchanan: What, our office's?

Q57 Chairman: Yes.

Mr Buchanan: No, I would not know that.

Q58 Chairman: Why not?

Mr Buchanan: Because we operate out of other people's offices in practice and it is not something that we have modelled as a company.

Q59 Chairman: Could you not do that? In terms of a good supply chain these guys ought to be asking you, "We are asking you to design a school with a low footprint. Is it not about time you put your house in order and measured what your footprint on this planet is"?

Mr Buchanan: Yes, that is a very good observation. We try to model the practice that we are encouraging in all sorts of other ways, but you are quite right in observing not in that particular way.

Q60 Chairman: What about David's company?

Mr Lloyd Jones: In the last two years we have been trying for the Queen's Award for the environment and each time they have come back and found some reason why we should not get it, but this third time round we are going to get there.

Q61 Chairman: That includes the evaluation of your own footprint?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Absolutely.

Q62 Chairman: Allan, you have been talking about the future. What about the schools you have been in. Have they attempted within the parameters that they are set to measure their footprint on this planet?

Mr Jarvis: I think I can recall two cases where they have done so. We certainly aim to do so in the Bradford schools.

Q63 Chairman: Did you do it in the schools in which you have worked in the past?

Mr Jarvis: No.

Q64 Chairman: Angela, you work for an organisation. Do you measure your footprint in terms of the building you are in, the company, the organisation you work in?

Ms Rawson: Within the county?

Q65 Chairman: Yes.

Ms Rawson: I think we operate from a range of sites, some which are—

Q66 Chairman: You are being a bit shifty here. These days people are saying, "What is your personal footprint on this planet? What is your corporate footprint? What is your family's footprint?" It is about time we started thinking like that in relation to sustainability, surely?

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Ms Rawson: Yes, but I think some of the issues that have been raised about the costs of some of this and where you decide to invest—

Q67 Chairman: We are not talking about how expensive it is, whether you measure it. You cannot improve unless you as a local authority measure what it is. If you do not know what it is you cannot begin to improve it, can you?

Ms Rawson: True.

Q68 Chairman: Janet.

Ms Newton: Personally I do not, but I suspect there is a little man in County Hall who would know all that information, because meeting Agenda 21 is one of the corporate priorities for the county council.

Q69 Chairman: This is holistic, is it not? We cannot sit here now saying nice things about sustainable schools without talking about your procurement. You ought to be checking on Michael and David for their BREEAM credentials before you hire them, surely, if sustainable buildings is going to work? Many companies are at the leading edge in this.

Ms Newton: They are indeed. Certainly the preferred bidder that we have has made a significant commitment to produce the most sustainable schools in the country. In terms of the county council's approach, when I get back to County Hall this afternoon, I shall enquire who has got the answer.

Q70 Chairman: It would be nice when the Committee comes to your place, as we might do, to see outside what is your carbon footprint. We would be very impressed by that. Allan, one of the things we found on a very good school visit on Thursday, a very good school—I will name it. It was the Education Village in Darlington. The people there said, "We started off with high aspirations for sustainability but a lot of it was cut out because of cost." Is that going to happen time and time again?

Mr Jarvis: It will happen if we allow it to. It will happen if Partnerships for Schools adopts a funding allocation model or continue to use a funding allocation model for BSF that does not allow for addressing sustainability issues where there is some upfront cost. If it is that important, then it needs to be addressed through the funding allocation model, DfES have to buy into it, Partnership for Schools have to buy into it, local authorities have to be prepared to buy into it. You need to get all those people on board and find the extra £500,000, or whatever it might be, in upfront costs to make these solutions affordable at the start of the project and, for example, under a PFI scheme, allow for your return only coming towards the end of the 25-year contract. Another thing you need to do, where you are doing conventional design and build in BSF, and this comes back to a question that was asked earlier on, you have got to make sure that the same quality of outputs is achieved there: so the same degree of sustainability in terms of design, in terms of building performance, and that applies also to where you are

refurbishing rather than replacing buildings—the same imperatives should be applied—but they will cost money in cases where you are restoring and refurbishing existing buildings, they will cost money anyway in terms of the upfront costs to put wind turbines of worthwhile size on the roofs of buildings and in order to generate a significant amount of the building's energy requirements.

Chairman: I want to move on now. Do not feel affronted by the questions. If you are all game after this meeting, we could go round to what I call the Eden Project, the Department for Education and Skills, to see what their carbon footprint is.

Q71 Stephen Williams: I want to ask some questions about financing, perhaps starting off with Ms Newton, as a surveyor. The Chairman mentioned at the start there was £45 billion of taxpayers' money going into this over a period of time. If that was in one year, it is about 15p on the rate of income tax, so it is a politically sensitive amount of money. I spent a six months' sentence on the Public Accounts Committee in my first period as an MP. How confident are we that this scheme is not going to be the subject of a future investigation by the National Audit Office or the PAC? Are we really getting value for money?

Ms Newton: Are you speaking of the scheme nationally or the scheme in Lancashire?

Q72 Stephen Williams: Speaking from your local experience.

Ms Newton: Certainly in terms of the scheme in Lancashire, as I mentioned earlier, we have had to go through very vigorous assessments to prove that the scheme that we are putting forward represents value for money. We have had to satisfy our own internal audit, we have had to satisfy the leadership of the county council and, indeed, the buy-in from governing bodies that what we are doing is value for money, given that they are going to make a contribution over 25 years. We have had to satisfy Partnership UK, the ODPM, the Project Review Group from the Treasury, Partnerships for Schools and DfES that the project in Lancashire is value for money. We have looked at the lifecycle costs, we have looked at the CAPEX costs, we have had to put together a very comprehensive outline business case and final business case and I believe that there are good processes in place to provide checks and balances to ensure that what local authorities are doing does represent value for money for the taxpayer.

Q73 Stephen Williams: To most of your professional peer groups, Lancashire is a model of good practice. As far as you are aware, is that model followed by every other LA?

Ms Newton: I could not possibly comment on whether it is followed by every other LA. Certainly, within Lancashire, as the Project Director, we are rigorous in ensuring that we go through the proper checks and balances. We are in the fortunate position that we have got very good in-house, legal

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and financial expertise, we draw in external advice as we need it, but at the end of the day we are a member-led authority and our members need to be satisfied at a local level that what we are doing represents value for money and, obviously, we then have the national agenda to meet it. I could not comment on what anybody else does, but we certainly run a very tight ship in Lancashire.

Q74 Stephen Williams: Perhaps we can look a bit further afield than Lancashire. Other countries, perhaps in Europe, that are going through a similar programme, are there examples from abroad that we could learn from?

Ms Newton: I personally do not know. I understand there are schemes in Scandinavia and I think, in terms of some of the sustainability agenda, there have been various trips to look at some of these schemes within Scandinavia. Unfortunately, my horizons have been very much focused within Great Britain and what has been happening there and looking at some of the national examples, the village in Darlington. On an international level I could not say.

Q75 Stephen Williams: I come back to some of the questions that Paul Holmes and David Chaytor asked earlier about the funding mechanism, PFI and so on. If during the 25-year period a school were to fail, for whatever reason, your Armageddon syndrome that you mentioned earlier, who picks up the liabilities to the private sector provider?

Ms Newton: Ultimately the county council stands covenant guarantor. We have procured this project, legally the contracts are between the county council, PFI with the SPB, and so it would be the county council, which is why we are very rigorous in ensuring it is value for money locally as well as nationally, because it is a very big commitment for us and the last thing we want is for this project to fall over after the huge amount of time, effort and money that we have put into it.

Q76 Stephen Williams: Can I ask Mr Jarvis a question based on an earlier answer. It is about human methods. I think you mentioned there were 21 schools that Bradford visited as part of your tour to look at what was good elsewhere, and you said that some of them were better than others. Was there a pattern in the procurement method? Were PFI schools better than other schools or LA funded schools?

Mr Jarvis: I had better keep this answer very anonymous. No, there was no pattern like that. In fact, in one case we visited two schools, both procured in the same local authority, on the same day and opened on the same day, both procured through PFI. In one case PFI seemed to be working extremely well and in the other case PFI seemed to be working extremely badly. I think the lessons will have been learnt by the local authority going forward into future work with BSF. There has not seemed to us to be a pattern. What there has seemed to be, and it comes back to another sustainability

issue that was touched on earlier, we have noticed some idiosyncratic ideas where the design was driven by one particular school leader, the head teacher at the time, and where we felt that it would be very difficult for a future head teacher to run those schools. In other words, we have got unsustainable design issues there in terms of the interaction between school design and school leadership, and that is a snare and one to be avoided if at all possible. In terms of how a local authority is pretty good in schools, we have seen good design and build schemes procured through conventional capital routes, we have seen good PFI designs. The only thing I would say about PFI is that I am strongly convinced, and I have said this to Partnerships for Schools, that school design is not an activity to be pursued in the competitive environment if you can possibly avoid doing so. I believe that with local education partnerships driving BSF forward, the right thing to do about school design is to procure your LEP first and then design the school once you have got an established supply chain rather, than designing schools in competition with the artificial scenario that that leads to and the fact that it is impossible, because you are in competition and in a confidential environment, to make sure that the best features of one design can be incorporated into another.

Q77 Chairman: In relation to local education partnerships, what is the best model you saw? It seems to be very worrying when you said two schools, the same local authority, one much better than the other, and you hinted that is down to an idiosyncratic intervention by the head.

Mr Jarvis: Not in that particular instance, no, that was another local authority, but in this particular case—

Q78 Chairman: You said in the same local authority.

Mr Jarvis: I was referring in that answer to three different schools, one in one authority and two in another, but where the two schools in the same authority were concerned, yes, I think the problem there was that the school was being procured at a time when there was not a head teacher in post and the head teacher coming in came in to a design which had not been sufficiently rigorously worked through.

Q79 Chairman: What is the dream-team to design the scheme, to make sure that there is not a head that loves Mussolini architecture or there is some mess-up because there is no head? What is the dream partnership that seems to work?

Mr Jarvis: The dream partnership for me is where you have a strongly engaged local authority with a very strong asset-management base and lots of local in-house expertise, working with a very good architectural practice, working with a strong committed school leadership with some ideas of underpinning its educational vision rather than pragmatism ruling all the time, supported by the children, the pupils in the school, who are, after all, going to be the users of the environment you are building. If you put all of those ingredients together,

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I think you can achieve, and I have seen some examples of the achievements, a very good school design. If you leave any one of those ingredients out, if you do not have the full support of the local authority, the full support of school managers and leaders, the full support of the technical experts, the full support of organisations like CABE and other experts who can draw your attention to best practice that you might otherwise be overlooking, the full support of the students who will be the users of the environment and who can validate it or criticise it in ways that perhaps adults would be ill-placed to do, if you lack any one of those ingredients, you could miss a trick.

Q80 Chairman: Your dream-team, the rest of you?

Ms Newton: From a personal perspective, I think having a very strong, experienced local authority team that is there to guide, support the head teachers, the school governors, is important. Ultimately, the local authority team will supply the cheques and balances, it is their guiding role. Ultimately, finance is always important and the dream-team has to have the appropriate skills to make sure that value for money is achieved and that the budget is achieved: because it is very easy to run off with your dream-team and do wonderful, creative designs but somebody has to have an eye on the balance sheet because somebody has to pay for this. So the dream-team needs a range of different skills that make sure, yes, we get the inspirational building—

Chairman: We take it for granted, but the dream-team without some financial expertise would be heading for disaster.

Q81 Stephen Williams: I am turning to Mr Lloyd Jones and some questions about design. I understand your practice is involved in Classrooms for the Future, and the example we have been given is of your snail-shaped observatory in North Kensington. From this or any other projects, what sort of feedback does your practice and profession get from the teaching profession about your design influence on a classroom?

Mr Lloyd Jones: We get some very wide-ranging feedback from the teaching profession, from visitors and from the pupils themselves. The particular project that you identified, obviously, clearly is to some extent an experimental project and has been extremely helpful in providing information on how young children respond to an innovative environment with a whole lot of technology that they may not be used to. It is based on the idea of an integrated observatory into a building, and that observatory is linked throughout the world to other observatories, and so it opens up a whole range of things. We are continuing talking to the school, despite the fact that we completed the project two years ago now, and it looks as though there might be a follow-on project. So, we try to keep in touch with the schools, we try to raise funds to help analyse how schools are performing, and we have been successful in raising funds from the DTI, for example, to do

specific exercises to see how specific aspects of our buildings perform and getting the data and making it available. I think another outlet and a way of disseminating information is the website. All schools have a website. They can use that to record and deliver the outcome of how the school is performing, what is working, what is not, and I think this should be open to everybody. We as a practice obviously try and keep in as close touch to the schools that we are involved in as possible.

Q82 Stephen Williams: You as an architect would stay in touch with your client and get feedback which would go quickly back to Ms Newton as a procurer. Is that something you would expect each school to do, to give feedback to the designer and, if necessary, to have some remedies to any problems?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Yes, very much. Reflecting on how the project has gone, the lessons to be learnt is very important and we will continue, and we do analyse the results of our designs. One of our PFI projects was actually recognised as being a model of good practice in terms of procurement, design and on-going maintenance, and we do collect evidence which we use locally to benchmark against and also contribute to national benchmarking.

Q83 Stephen Williams: Back to the architecture, Chairman. How innovative does the Government or DfES encourage your profession to be? I have seen several new schools in Bristol as well as the Select Committee visit the Chairman alluded to earlier. There is a huge variation in design. Are you encouraged to go for cutting-edge design? Is there a budgetary constraint on that necessarily?

Mr Lloyd Jones: I think there are particular programmes where part of their brief is to look at the innovative aspects that the DfES likes, the Classroom Future Programme, for example, where it is very clearly stated that there is an innovatory aspect to it. In terms of Building Schools for the Future, for every bid that we complete there is always a section on innovation and how far your practice has been innovatory. When it comes down to the actual project, and we are looking at how far it should be innovatory, then that is another question and that is to do with identifying the sorts of risks that the school is prepared to take because obviously every innovation involves brings some degree of risk, and we can help analyse that and advise on that and the financial advisers can do so as well. At the end of the day, as I said earlier, it is a question of deciding where you are going to go, what sort of risk you are prepared to take on board, if you are prepared to take any risks or any substantial risks on, and setting out your school accordingly and going for it, and then hopefully get the feedback.

Q84 Stephen Williams: Is it your experience that each school at the end of the day is a unique project and has a design to fit the needs of the client?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Every school is a unique product, but the ingredients that go into it do not necessarily have to be unique. As a case in point, in Sustainable

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School Buildings the facade becomes very important because there is so much going on there, you want to get air in, you want to get light in, you want the views out, you are wanting to do it at different times, you want to keep the sun out at times, and so on and so forth, and so it is quite a sophisticated package, and to do that from scratch for each new school is counter-productive. If we can develop something that works under most conditions and we can apply it to a variety of schools, then obviously there is mileage to be made out of that.

Q85 Stephen Williams: So there are some templates that will apply everywhere, but not an overall building template like a traditional Victorian school?

Mr Lloyd Jones: I would think so.

Q86 Stephen Williams: A general question maybe for Ms Rawson and Mr Jarvis. What sort of difference is BSF going to make to the lives of pupils and teachers?

Ms Rawson: I think one of the key aspects, and I mentioned it earlier, is actually about the aspirations of the young people who will be using the schools and their families. We recently had a launch event soon after approaching and appointing our preferred bidder, and we invited back some of the youngsters who had been involved in visits in the design festival, and they were stunned, saying things like, "Are you really going to build these things for us?", and, "You did listen to us because I said it would be really good if we could have it", and they could see it coming out through the designs, and I think that is a key aspect for many of the communities that we are working with at the minute. The fact that you are actually investing in them and in their families is going to be a key driver. The other things are around what we hope to get out of the BSF programme that Janet alluded to around skills legacy, around opportunities for young people to have role models through mentoring systems. We have also got offers of work experience opportunities from our private sector partner to enhance the 14–19 curriculum and for them to be part of inputs into different diploma lines as they develop. It is the added value over and above just the building programme, but we do, as was mentioned earlier, want to make sure that the building and the environment becomes part of the curriculum. We are going to have open areas where youngsters can see the energy consumption, for example; and what our private sector partner has decided they will do is set up competitions between the schools to look at who is actually getting the best energy saving, for example. We could do similar things as well through all the smart card technology link to healthy eating, because we will be able to see, in any week, what year seven youngsters across Burnley and Pendle were eating and, again, look at a degree of involvement and encouragement of young people and their families through that. The educational transformation will not come over night, and I think if there is one thing I would say, it is that the

investment that has been alluded to right from the start today is investment in the buildings and the procurement. The schools above that budget that they normally have are not being enabled to do some of the things that we ideally need to do, and we know that we are going to have to do a lot of work on changed management with the new schools as they become PFI schools: because my classroom will not be my classroom any more if another group is going to be using it in the evening. The different ways of working by teachers currently, maybe setting up their classroom this evening for tomorrow morning's lesson, if another group is coming in using that—

Q87 Chairman: Teachers will have to learn new ways of working, as most of us have to.

Ms Rawson: Yes, but they need some help, they need some support, and it is those sorts of programmes which are supporting the broader transformation and the broader sustainability, for that matter, but the investment is not there yet for some of those things and it is crucial. We are getting to a tipping point now where there could be some falling back from the opportunities we have on transformation, simply because we know there are certain needs out there but, as yet, we do not know where we are going to be able to draw the funding from to take that forward.

Q88 Chairman: The development of the human capital as opposed to the physical capital?

Ms Rawson: Yes, and I think that would be one of the key messages that I would like to leave with you about investment and what is happening. Yes, there is superb investment in the schools, which we really welcome, but in order for the real transformation to happen, an awful lot of other stuff needs to happen as far as the people who are going to be working in those buildings and the people who will be using them.

Q89 Stephen Williams: Chairman, you have just mentioned human capital. How much of this programme relies on the success of a wonderful building and how much of it in terms of transforming standards and outcomes relies on innovations in teaching?

Ms Rawson: We only need to look at other places abroad, maybe in some under-developed countries where they have just a space, maybe it might have a roof on. They still manage to educate children. It is actually saying, what is it that we want to achieve? The buildings can support that and they do and they will give a wonderful, rich environment for learning, but we need to have the stimulus there from the quality of the curriculum, the teaching and learning opportunities and all the support from multi-agencies to take forward the *Every Child Matters* agenda, and those sorts of things are where you take a lot more time. The buildings, all right, the first ones for us are there in 2008, but we have not been able to recruit whole new staff. We have actually got to work with the people we have to help them move

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forward, and that is the other challenge, and that is why we want as much as we can from the partnerships we are getting to ensure that it is enhancing the curriculum and teaching and learning as well.

Q90 Stephen Williams: Future proofing has been mentioned a couple of times in this session. I have got NESTA Future Lab based in my constituency in Bristol. I have spent some time recently with projects all over the country on innovative ways of teaching. How much have you thought about how teaching might change into the future goes into the design of these buildings?

Mr Lloyd Jones: A lot of thought goes into it. Part of the briefing process is to determine the extent of change that any school anticipates. Clearly, there are guidelines from DfES, and so on, but, as has been mentioned before by the panel here, designing for allowing spaces to change, combine, to become formal or less formal, to introduce more ICT, and so on, is absolutely the bread and butter of how we set about designing schools?

Mr Jarvis: May I add that, if we look at it from the teaching end, we might miss a trick, and we should be looking at it from the learning end: because what happens in a great many secondary schools at the moment is that there is too much teacher direction and too little learner autonomy. What our new school designs should be doing is to teach youngsters, to encourage youngsters, to provide opportunities for youngsters to organise their own learning so that the teacher becomes a facilitator rather than a didact. In that way you are educating the whole adult as you grow them into adults rather than constraining them.

Q91 Chairman: We are coming to the end of a major inquiry into special educational needs. How adept are you at understanding the changes that are going on in a different part of education that are going to influence the design of buildings? The reason we went to this very interesting Education Village in Darlington is because they have put a special school in the heart of the school. A special school in the heart, a secondary school an infant and junior, and we were very impressed with it because it allowed special needs children to opt into different parts of the activity of the school when appropriate. It does seem to us that there was something that was the thing of the future; that was going to happen. How much notice did you take of it and how much of that did you see, Allan, when you went to your 25 schools?

Mr Jarvis: I have not seen it anywhere else, but I will tell you where you will see it 2008 and it is in Bradford. That is exactly what we are doing in Bradford, both special schools for those with PMLD and SLD and also for the hearing-impaired and visually-impaired students. So, all their experiences will now be delivered on a campus basis where they will be co-located with mainstream schools to which

those students will have whatever amount of access is appropriate for them to the mainstream education and to their peers, rather than being segregated.

Q92 Chairman: Is that happening in your case?

Ms Rawson: Yes, within Wave 1 we have two co-located secondary special schools and a co-located primary special school, and the policy of the county council, wherever we are building new schools, is to seek to co-locate special educational needs provision within the same building. We have seen examples where people say it is a co-located school, but actually the special school is at the bottom of the garden. We are actually talking about, as you say, shared buildings and some shared classrooms; so we are enabling, for example, youngsters from the special school to share some of the science facilities, some of the technology facilities by ensuring that the furniture and the access is actually planned in as part and parcel of the design.

Q93 Chairman: Are you finding that is happening, David, as an architect?

Mr Lloyd Jones: Yes. Interestingly, we were having this conversation in the practice yesterday. I can see an enormous advantage in co-locating special needs schools and secondary schools. The debate that we were having is whether it is a good idea to incorporate primary schools within the same set-up as well, and whether there needs to be a sense of moving from one school to another or whether it should all be part of the same big umbrella and pupils move with it.

Q94 Stephen Williams: An antepenultimate question to the surveyor and the architect. We have been advised that the average spend on the BSF project is £1,450 per square metre as compared to £2,000 per square metre in a commercial office environment. Does this mean the public sector has been short-changed by the Government or the public sector is better at getting value for money than the contractors, or are the figures wrong perhaps?

Ms Newton: I shall start with that. Certainly the funding that we have in Lancashire has been formulaically driven on a square metreage per pupil basis, and in putting forward our first bid we indicated in capital terms what we thought we required to deliver the Building Schools for the Future programme. We did not get everything that we asked for. As I say, it is very much driven on a cost per pupil allowance that is made. In terms of what we are doing in Lancashire, the funding envelope we have is providing the schools. The county council is having to contribute a significant amount of funding to address the highways issues and pick up some of the abnormal costs that have arisen that are not being funded by Partnerships for Schools or DfES. So, we have a tension between government policies around transport, sustainability and, when we submit a planning application, the highways engineers are very

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vigorous in terms of transport assessments, walking routes, highways improvement. All of that is funded by the county council.

Q95 Chairman: What about yellow buses?

Ms Newton: We have looked at yellow buses. We have actually looked at a policy for bus transportation for children. We also, in terms of closing schools, addressed the admissions criteria for each of our schools, and we have got a policy where children who live over three miles away get an allowance for their transportation, but we are having to look at it in the context, on a county council basis, of a very tight budget and Transport for Schools is one of the issues that is under consideration at the moment. So, we are having to look at cycle routes, improvements to the highways, with a view to encouraging as many children to access school on foot as possible. The funding we get, yes, and I think the competitive edge in terms of having a bidding process can help drive out better value for money and the art is keeping your preferred bidder within the funding envelope that they bid and then making sure that going forward we achieve value for money.

Q96 Stephen Williams: Routes to school has been a key issue in one of the new schools that has just opened in my constituency as well, so thank you for that. A final question, Chairman, a general question maybe for Ms Rawson. How keen are head teachers to have an input into completely re-organising the design, layout and operation of their schools?

Ms Rawson: Pivotal, and, in order to enable head teachers to do that, one of the things that the county council invested in, last year we released the head teacher's designate for a day a week to plan together and work with all the different agencies they need to work with and this year, from August 2005, they have been totally off timetable. We have set them up in a base together so that they have a shared working area. We have constant work together to look at how they take forward the collaborative vision, and they have then been available to work with architects, with our own colleagues, to take forward the Building Schools for the Future opportunity, because, again, we know we are not going to pass this way again with the same amount of money and, therefore, investing in those head teachers has been a crucial aspect of the county council's commitment to making this work.

Chairman: We have now got to look at Academies in the last few minutes.

Q97 Paul Holmes: Allan Jarvis was saying a while back about examples of idiosyncratic heads who have taken the design of their new school off in perhaps not the best of directions. Academies, it would seem, are even more prone to this because they are the private project of whichever millionaire happens to throw £2 million in to buy them, and whichever architect gets to design has got £25–30 million of taxpayers' money to spend to their heart's content. We have had lots of press stories about

disastrous Academy projects with glass classrooms that are too hot or too cold to work in and huge open-plan design suites which the teachers do not want, and so forth. Is this criticism justified?

Mr Lloyd Jones: I do not pretend to visit all the Academies. All I can do is to say that we have recently designed an Academy in Bermondsey and the Committee is welcome to visit it at any time and inspect it for themselves. We feel it works very well, and so do the head teacher and the staff, and the pupils really enjoy it. You are welcome to see it.

Q98 Chairman: Which one is that?

Mr Lloyd Jones: It is called City of London Academy. The sponsor is the City of London and it is in Bermondsey.

Chairman: We know it.

Q99 Paul Holmes: Michael, have you any comment?

Mr Buchanan: I think it is an interesting question. It depends to a degree on the sponsor, I think. We are working with one of the project managers of the Bridge Academy in Hackney, the sponsor of which is the United Bank of Switzerland, whose interest in it is not for any personal gratification, very much in a local social responsibility building on other work that they have done in East London and bringing to it very clear approaches to business practice, financial management and ICT management, and so on, I think, in a very refreshing way which will add enormously to the fitness for purpose of the building. I do not think it is necessarily the case for every other Academy where, in some cases, there were grand ambitions that were not perhaps as well grounded as they might have been.

Mr Jarvis: You asked me earlier on what my dream-team is for procuring, designing and developing and building and opening a new school. If you think about the Academies model, no single element of that dream-team is present, necessarily, in the development of a new Academy, and what I think is a worry with the programme is it is not just open to idiosyncrasy, it is also the fact that you do not have an established constituency to which you can appeal in terms of either students who are moving from the existing learning environment to a new one or a head teacher already in post who can advise on the process, and so there is a risk there that some mistakes may be made.

Paul Holmes: Given that the average cost of the Academies so far has been about £25 million, compared to an average of about £14 million for a standard new state school, is the extra money worth it? Is the taxpayer getting value for money from the examples that you have seen?

Q100 Chairman: I have to put in terms that we have had a statement from the Secretary of State very recently that Academy costs are on a par with other school costs, but Paul has every right to suggest that it is otherwise.

Mr Jarvis: I have only visited one Academy. I was impressed with it, but I think it is one of the ones that was anonymously criticised by Mr Holmes' remarks.

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I know there is a difference of views about that building, but I think it represents value for money in the long-term, certainly, because it has the capability of being a wonderful learning environment for the indefinite future.

Q101 Paul Holmes: So you would like to see the same level of funding for all the BSFs?

Mr Jarvis: I would very much like to see that, yes, because we have had to be, shall I say, a little bit pragmatic with our aspirations on the Bradford programme and there are some things we would like to have captured in the new school design which we have not been able to.

Q102 Chairman: We have had these two views: views where we all thought that Academies were much more expensive than traditionally built schools, and now the statement from the Department that they are all on a par. What is your experience on this?

Mr Lloyd Jones: I think the Bermondsey school that I have just mentioned came out to just under £25 million. I notice that BSF schools that we are bidding for are very much in the same sort of ball park now. Recently we have bid for schools in Gloucester County Council which have a price tag of about that amount for a similar size of school, so there is some evidence to support that, I think.

Q103 Paul Holmes: What about the costs in Lancashire, Janet?

Ms Newton: I would say that the costs in Lancashire are on a par with what is happening in Bradford. I do not have any direct experience, other than hearsay, of what the costs of an Academy are. We certainly do not have an Academy in Lancashire.

Chairman: We will be having the Academies in.

Q104 Paul Holmes: What are the average costs of the programme that you are doing in Lancashire?

Ms Newton: The average costs in CAPEX terms for a 1,050-place high school are around about £90 million.

Q105 Paul Holmes: Again, the point you have just made, you have not got an Academy in Lancashire. It is frequently said inside and outside Parliament that any local authority who wants the money for a BSF scheme has got to include an Academy or they do not get the cash. I have been told that by the Cabinet Member in Newcastle, for example. It has happened in Derbyshire, in Southwark. How have you got away with not having one?

Ms Newton: I do not think it is necessarily a case of having got away with not having one. We started in 2002 looking at the circumstances in Burnley and Pendle, and we developed with our schools a vision for education in the school community, we had a series of conferences with the educational community, the wider stakeholder groups, and we invited the DfES to be present at our conferences. It was in the early stages of the Building Schools for the Future, before the bid went in in October 2003, and we were exploring collaboration, collaborative

working, federations, how many schools we should have, the location of the schools and should we have an Academy, and one of the objectives that we have in Burnley is parity of esteem. You will hear my colleagues say there had been a pecking order. Parity of esteem was one of the clear objectives that we wanted to achieve, and there was overwhelming support from the entire education community and stakeholders not to have an Academy in Lancashire, or in Burnley and Pendle.

Q106 Chairman: But were you pressured to have one in your bid by the Department?

Ms Newton: We had to robustly indicate why an Academy would not be appropriate in Burnley and Pendle. Lancashire is a very large authority, and what is necessary in Burnley and Pendle as a solution may not fit elsewhere in Lancashire, but it was not appropriate for what we were doing in East Lancashire.

Q107 Paul Holmes: So there may be an Academy elsewhere in the county further down the line?

Ms Newton: In the fullness of time, yes, that may well happen.

Q108 Paul Holmes: Moving away slightly from that one, looking at Michael Buchanan's biographical notes, there is about 15 different authorities that you have worked with, on the notes we have got there, so you have seen an awful lot of practice from authorities doing all sorts of different things. We have heard lots of good examples from Bradford and from Lancashire today. How typical do you think the two authorities we have heard from today are compared to the wide-range you have worked with all over the country?

Mr Buchanan: The answer is self-evident really.

Q109 Chairman: If you say they are bloody awful, we will have you escorted off the premises with guards!

Mr Buchanan: I am not saying that at all. I am saying, like any other group, they are a mixed ability group. Some have far more capacity, imagination and drive, much more joined-up policy on the ground than others do, some need more support than others, and I think that may indicate why some have been slower to bring their plans to realisation than Lancashire or Bradford and one or two others.

Q110 Chairman: Are Lancashire and Bradford above average, or average, or something else?

Mr Buchanan: The fact that they have brought their projects to the state of development they have in the space of time that they have must suggest that they are above average, but there are a number of others. I could use one example that we work with closely, the authority Thames-side, who are a relatively small authority but they have got some very ambitious plans, really energised staff thinking about this, the authority as a whole as a single campus, embracing, despite political opposition to the idea, the idea of Academies by taking control of

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them back into the community, finding a local sponsor which is, what, a former housing association, trying to make sense of policy on the ground in very imaginative ways. Rather than seeing some of the policy requirements as hurdles that could be obstacles, actually seeing them as opportunities. There are quite a number.

Q111 Paul Holmes: Some time ago there was a problem with Sheffield LA, talking about problems with PFI build for schools, and they were suggesting that where the authority used its negotiating clout across the board to do a number of projects, then PFI could be reasonable, but where lots of individual schools were thrown in to do it on their own, then they floundered and you got quite bad contracts. Would that, again, fit with different people's experience?

Mr Buchanan: Yes, different people have different experiences of PFI. One of the obstacles (and this may not be a direct answer to your question and I apologise if it is not) that schools feel PFI presents is some withdrawal of ownership of the school in terms of being able to dictate how spaces are used, when, by whom and so on. The PFI approach is rather different, which is to say that, for example, the core business of a school may well be significantly enhanced if the distractions of facilities management, letting, ground maintenance and school building maintenance, and so on, are removed and dealt with separately so that the heads, the teachers, the parents and the children can get on with the business of the school, but there are significant operational concerns. Angela has touched on the use of classrooms, for example. Going back to a previous question, we did some post-occupancy evaluation trialling for the DfES a couple of years back and looked at PFI procured and traditional design and build procured schools, recently built schools, and there was no pattern in terms of the PFI route or the other procurement route as to whether the schools were fit for purpose. The difference appeared to lie more in the brief that the architects had received than the way in which the building was procured. To give you an example, the schools that were least successful, the people in them that were using them—the teachers, heads, governors, children—were saying, “This does not work as a school. If only we had been asked the question but we were not asked that question.”

Q112 Chairman: That goes across the different types of build. One big difference is that we were told in Darlington that PFI meant they got it built faster rather than slower. They could not have built it without a PFI in that timescale.

Mr Buchanan: Yes, that is true, but it is a matter of balance. It is going back to Roberta's question about the timescale, the lead-in time. It is very important that Building Schools for the Future is seen as an education-led programme, and you need to invest some time early on to make sure that the right questions have been asked of the right people and the right voices are feeding into this process, the

vision is very clear and achievable and that that gives rise to some specific design challenges which form a very good brief to architects. If you organise a thing in a very logical and sequential process, it may take a little longer, but it is likely that David and colleagues of his are more likely to respond to the set of design challenges in a way that generates schools fit for purpose than if you try to short-cut that process. You may get interesting buildings but they will not necessarily work as schools.

Q113 Chairman: We are running out of time. I am going to ask all of you, quickly, what single thing do you think could improve the Building Schools for the Future programme and make it more sustainable and more successful? Janet, what single thing would you draw out which could be improved?

Ms Newton: I think the procurement process. I think Partnerships for Schools have been effective in terms of developing the standardised documents. Sometimes that has actually led to some frustrations, because it is looking to be a standardised model and, obviously, individual local authorities have individual needs. The local education partnership is a new venture and I think both the local authorities and the bidders are having to go through quite considerable thought-processes to see how they are going to deliver to Building Schools for the Future. I think local authorities should go into the process with their eyes wide open in terms of the resources required. There is a significant financial requirement or commitment from local authorities to deliver Building Schools for the Future, and it is not something that a local authority can bolt on to existing day jobs.

Ms Rawson: I reiterate the point I made earlier: if this is about education transformation, to recognise that as far as the funding available to support the education transformation beyond just the production of buildings.

Mr Jarvis: Absolutely, the programme needs to be needs-led, not funding led. At the moment it is too formulaic. It needs to be focused on what the local individual need is both at school level and at local authority level, not driven by funding that is derived from a central formula.

Mr Lloyd Jones: My point would be getting together early enough in the project and getting all the key players round the table and developing a brief together, getting it right at the outset. If you do that, the project will be successful. If you get it wrong and you are having to backtrack downstream, then you are only going to come up with problems. To touch on procurement, we have been working on a couple of partnering contracts which we have found quite productive where you get the contractor in on day one with the consultants, with the school and with the sponsors, and that has worked pretty well so far.

Mr Buchanan: I would like to see one development that seems to me to be notably absent, particularly in terms of such a significant amount of public money, and that is some rigorous longitudinal study based on the impact of that investment. You talk about value for money. I think if it is a

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Mr Allan Jarvis

transformational programme, then it is reasonable to expect, first of all, there to be a common understanding of what transformation and education means, secondly, to be able to define it in terms of some indicators, and thirdly, to be rigorous and systematic about how it is measured to see whether in fact, over time, over 10 or 15 years, that government money has been well spent and has brought about the transformation that it was intended to.

Chairman: Thank you. I hope you have seen this session as the very best kind of BSF: early consultation with the experts. We hope to build on that an excellent Report. That will only work if you remain in contact with us. If you feel that we have not explored areas that you could have told us about, do email us or contact us. We would be very grateful for a relationship that lasts through to a higher added value Report out of this Committee. Thank you for your time.

Monday 3 July 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor
Paul Holmes
Helen Jones

Mr Gordon Marsden
Stephen Williams
Mr Rob Wilson

Memorandum submitted by The Sorrell Foundation

The aim of the Sorrell Foundation is to inspire creativity in young people and to improve the quality of life through good design. It creates and prototypes new initiatives to explore their potential before development, and seeks new ways to join up public sectors such as education and health with the UK's world-class design community. The fast-track nature of the Foundation's work aims to deliver immediate benefits whilst creating models with long-term value.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The Sorrell Foundation has two main recommendations for action:

1. To make it mandatory to form a pupil client team in every school undertaking a Building Schools for the Future or Primary Capital development in order to engage the primary stakeholder in the consultation process.
2. To ensure that all of the 12 common issues identified by pupils during the joinedupdesignforschools programme become part of the conversation for every school planning design improvements.

MAJOR BENEFITS WOULD ENSUE FROM ADOPTING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe the benefits that would ensue from implementing these recommendations would be as follows: the pupils will develop valuable life skills; the stakeholder engagement will point towards a different way of learning; teachers and school staff will gain professional development; early sample schools will generate innovative, practical and scaleable designs for schools across the UK; architectural and design practices will gain first-hand experience of school needs.

1. GIVING PUPILS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING CLIENTS

The Sorrell Foundation was set up by Frances and John Sorrell in 1999 to inspire creativity in young people and to improve the quality of life through good design. Joinedupdesignforschools started as a pilot working with six schools in 2000. After six years of development with over 100 schools, the programme has become a model showing how to give young people a say in the way their schools are designed. Joinedupdesignforschools gives pupils the role of clients. They work as a client team to create a brief for a design project that will improve quality of life in their school. A designer or architect is appointed to work for them, and together they engage in a carefully tested process that leads to innovative design concepts for schools. The process develops the pupils' life skills and has generated a list of common issues that pupils want to address, from improving unhygienic toilet blocks to creating inspiring learning spaces. The Foundation is producing a guide to using the process, and a pilot for a possible further model, with higher education students in the role of designers, is under way.

Joinedupdesignforschools listens to the main consumers of education—the pupils themselves. By giving them the responsibility of being the clients, of being their school's representatives and decision-makers, they experience a situation that teaches them skills such as communication, teamwork, negotiation and problem-solving. The key to this learning is the development of the pupils' relationship with their consultants, the designers and architects.

In the joinedupdesignforschools programme, pupils worked with some of the UK's leading names in design and architecture, including the Richard Rogers Partnership, Paul Smith, Thomas Heatherwick, Alsop Architects, Priestman Goode, Wolff Olins and Conran & Partners. More than 50 such firms were involved, and they all responded seriously to the briefs set by their pupil client teams. They have created concepts for better learning and social spaces, more civilised eating places, uniforms that pupils want to wear, toilets that are clean and safe, schools that are brighter and more colourful, and that have new identities of which the pupils can be proud. In short, the designers and architects created places where 21st-century pupils want to be.

Some of the concepts have been implemented and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is providing match-funding to enable several more to become a reality. Over five years, the Sorrell Foundation ran projects and workshops in 100 schools, working closely with 700 pupils in client teams, often involving the entire population in each school, which means that a total of more than 10,000 pupils have been involved in

joinedupdesignforschools. The Foundation also organised a national touring exhibition, which involved more schools and pupils. The 2005–06 touring exhibition traveled the country to regions in the first wave of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) delivery. At each of eight venues, it hosted receptions and forums to ask the question, what are the benefits, and what are the obstacles, to involving pupils, the primary stakeholders, in the BSF process.

2. COMMON ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY PUPILS

During the joinedupdesignforschools process the Sorrell Foundation set up workshops across the UK, and around 700 pupils came to discuss what they would like to improve in their schools. The pupils identified over 100 issues. They were concerned about the social areas of their school, the learning spaces, the school's impact on the environment, the role and reputation of the school in the community, disability access, and the school facilities. Their attitude was public-spirited and community-minded. After much debate, 12 key issues emerged. These common issues have been made available in a series of publications and on the web as a guide for schools, architects, designers, local authorities, consortiums and contractors involved in rebuilding Britain's schools. Throughout the discussions, the pupils made it clear that they wanted to be proud of their schools and they wanted to be directly involved in helping to improve their schools. They did not want improvements "done" to them—they wanted to help do them, to be a part of building their school for the future.

COMMON ISSUES

Colour: They want to brighten up their schools and use colour to enhance atmosphere and mood.

Communication: They want to tell pupils, teachers, parents and the community what is going on.

Dinner halls and canteens: They want a civilised lunch time with less chaos; and more time to relax.

Learning spaces: They want modern, inspiring places to learn.

Reception areas: They want parents, new pupils, the local community and visitors to feel welcome.

Reputation and identity: They want to be proud of their school and sure of what it stands for.

Sixth form spaces: They want rooms where they can socialise and work on their own.

Social spaces: They want sheltered spaces to "chat and chill" during break.

Storage: They want secure places to put their books, stationery, equipment, bags and coats.

Toilets: They want toilets to be clean, hygienic and safe.

Uniform: They want comfortable, smart, "cool-looking" clothes that they will be proud to wear.

Whole school plan: They want to contribute to a vision for a new school.

3. LINKING EDUCATION AND DESIGN

The UK design industry is a world leader in terms of talent, creativity, quality, size and breadth of design disciplines. However, the majority of the work it carries out is for the private sector. One of the aims of joinedupdesignforschools was to explore how the expertise of UK designers could also benefit schools. Over 50 design consultancies and 150 architects and designers have worked on the programme, bringing skills from design disciplines such as architecture, product, new media, communication, fashion and clothing, reputation and identity, interior, landscape and graphics. Their contribution demonstrates the benefits of engaging the UK's design industry properly with schools, to make a difference to the lives of pupils and staff and create a better learning environment for the future. If we can use this wealth of design talent and join it up with the primary consumers of education, the pupils themselves, we stand a better chance of giving our children some of the best schools in the world.

4. USING THE JOINEDUPDESIGNFORSCHOOLS PROCESS

The joinedupdesignforschools process can be used for any type of school design project, whether it is part of Building Schools for the Future, the Primary Capital programme, or building a new Academy. It can also be used when planning a smaller intervention, such as designing new locker and storage systems, a new school uniform, better school signage or a new identity for the school. The process can equally be used to teach life skills in a classroom learning project. For the joinedupdesignforschools process to give the best results, it should be used in its full form and started at the beginning of the design development as part of the overall vision and brief, before any design decisions are made. It will work best if the pupils are completely involved at all stages in a genuine, extended dialogue with the designers and architects. The Sorrell Foundation is producing a guide called *How to use joinedupdesignforschools*, which will be available in printed form and online in September 2006. Six 10 minute case studies are being shown on Teachers' TV and are downloadable for teachers to use.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOLS REBUILDING AND REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMMES

Between now and 2025, the Government is planning to rebuild or refurbish all secondary schools and half the primary schools in the UK, through the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital programmes. The aim is to ensure that every child is educated in a 21st-century environment. It is the biggest and most strategic capital investment in school buildings in over 50 years.

As any major school design project gets underway, teachers have to be consulted, as do governors, parents, the local community and the local authority. Pupils are just one voice in the client jigsaw puzzle. But theirs is perhaps the most important voice, and it is vital that it is sufficiently heard. The pupils are the primary consumers of education; they know a tremendous amount about the school environment, and they both want and need to be involved. If fully consulted, they can provide extremely valuable knowledge to architects, designers and contractors. The joinedupdesignforschools process can help ensure the pupil voice is properly heard.

Schools benefit from this engagement in the following ways. They gain: *Fresh thinking*: Head teachers and governors encounter a fresh way of thinking about how to tackle school design. *Excellent design*: The unique combination of young minds with first-hand knowledge working with creative professionals, generates excellent design solutions. *Life skills*: Pupils in the client teams become more self-confident and develop a range of new skills. *Professional development*: Many teachers say they discovered new approaches and different methods for helping pupils learn by working with design professionals. *Common Issues*: Issues identified by pupils are helping schools, architects, designers, local authorities, consortiums and contractors in their design decisions. *A new model*: Joinedupdesignforschools has created a pupil-focused model that all schools can use in building/refurbishment programmes, or simply as a tool to help pupils learn life skills. *Implemented designs*: A number of schools have had their joinedupdesigns implemented, these act as representative models for BSF delivery.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the impacts and benefits identified by the joinedupdesignforschools model, demonstrating the positive outcomes of engaging pupils in the delivery process, we believe it should be mandatory to form a pupil client team in every school undertaking a Building Schools for the Future or Primary Capital development. The client team should be properly involved throughout the process, following the joinedupdesignforschools model. We also believe it is imperative that all of the 12 common issues identified by pupils during the joinedupdesignforschools programme become part of the conversation for every school planning design improvements.

The benefits that would ensue from implementing these recommendations would be as follows: the pupils will develop valuable life skills; the stakeholder engagement will point towards a different way of learning; teachers and school staff will gain professional development; early sample schools will generate innovative, practical and scaleable designs for schools across the UK; architectural and design practices will gain first-hand experience of school needs.

June 2006

Witnesses: Mr David Kester, Chief Executive, The Design Council, and *Ms Hilary Cottam*, Head of RED team, The Design Council and *Mr John Sorrell*, The Sorrell Foundation, gave evidence.

Q114 Chairman: May I welcome John Sorrell, Hilary Cottam and David Kester to our proceedings? We are very pleased that such an expert and distinguished group of witnesses has been able to come at relatively short notice. I am afraid I have to admit, as Chairman of the Committee, that I know all three of them very well indeed; we have been interested in design together in certain projects for a long time. That does not mean to say my questioning will be anything less robust. Would any of you like to say a few words to open up this evidence session? We usually give witnesses a chance to say a few words to open up. This is an important inquiry for us: £45 billion of taxpayers' money. It is more money than has ever been spent on schools, on their construction and reconstruction and if we do not get this right, the legacy is going to be with us a very long time. We still have the legacy of schools that were beautifully designed to leak and we still have water features in many of those schools in the winter months with buckets that you have to walk around. That is the truth of it: we have to get this

design right. In a new era we want not only wonderfully designed buildings, but we want them fit for the kind of teaching which will go into them in the 21st century. Given this stark warning we have had about global warming we also want them to be schools which have a smaller, not a larger, carbon footprint. We are after a lot of things in terms of this inquiry. How do you think we can best add value to this inquiry?

Mr Sorrell: First of all may I agree with you entirely: this is a once in a lifetime opportunity and none of us will ever see it again, absolutely none of us. We have to grasp it and we have to grasp it now. The key things which you will probably hear me talking about today are the need to involve pupils in everything that is happening because they are the consumers of education and, like all consumers everywhere, they are very interested in the product that is provided to them and they have very strong views about it; they also have the kinds of insights that absolutely nobody else has because nobody else is sitting where they are sitting. That is an absolutely

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central and vital point. I know you want to get on with questions, so perhaps I should allow you to do that.

Q115 Chairman: Hilary, I was very rude. You helped us with the prison education inquiry and I forgot to mention that, but in terms of today's perspective, where do you think we can add value?

Ms Cottam: I also welcome what you said as an opening statement. For me the question is whether this is a capital programme or a learning-led programme. It is a really big question about what the learning vision is, whether it is in place at a macro national level and whether it is in place at a school level and what we can do to make sure that we are not still refurbishing schools in a learning vacuum? Given how much has changed in the wider society and what we understand now about learning, how can we really begin to make sure that this capital programme is meshed in and delivers quality for learning?

Mr Kester: I should also like to thank you for inviting us and agree with both of my colleagues here; we come with very similar perspectives on this. I should simply like to add that this building schools programme is a huge opportunity. The likelihood is that we are likely to get right a lot of hygiene factors around refurbishment and buildings. We are good at big capital projects in the UK. The only question really is whether it will actually satisfy a vision for learning or whether we just end up with beautiful buildings up and down the country or whether we end up with great schools that will see us well into the future. Probably the answer is that there may be some things that we could do now. There are some real opportunities coming out of the work that we are seeing from Design for Schools, from CABE, from the Design Council as well, particularly around some of the early interventions which can be made within schools to secure the sort of vision, both of the school at a local community level, perhaps of the region locally and also nationally so that we all have a very clear understanding of what it is that we are trying to achieve for education.

Q116 Chairman: Why are we bothering to do this? Why do we not just spend the money on the top six or seven things that children you talk to, students that you talk to prioritise? I have a list here but they always talk about the quality of the refectory, the quality of the lavatories and so on. Why do we not just spend a little bit of money refurbishing those essentials that the students prioritise and spend the rest of the money on IT equipment or fold-away buildings, Legoland buildings? Why bother having permanent structures which are built at all in a conventional sense?

Mr Sorrell: As I understand it, what will happen is that there will be many new schools but quite a large part of the money will go on refurbishment as the programme develops. It will be a mixture of the two things. The reason why we have to address the school building stock is that so much of it really is in such terrible disrepair. In most cases it would be like putting an Elastoplast on a major wound and it will

last for a little while but it will not last long enough. It is absolutely the right time to address the big issue, to grasp the metal and to build some significant new schools as well as refurbish where it is appropriate to do so. It is the appropriateness that is important. Some of the schools that I see around the country do need to be knocked down and we need to start again. Others can be refurbished sensitively and with great expertise. The issues that you mentioned—there are 12 and we call them common issues—are the issues that we find again and again and again in working with over 100 schools and are the 12 common issues that the kids identify as being important to them. We can give the list to you in writing, but they are things like toilets, which the children want to be hygienic and not places where they can be bullied, they want a civilised lunchtime, they do not want to be herded like cattle, 1,400 children from one side of the room to the other in an hour, they want to be able to talk to their friends just like we all do at lunchtime. When they go outside, as they have to do as we all know, they do not want to be rained on, so they want covered outdoor space, which is incredibly important to them. They want reception areas so that when their parents come along or their carers, they feel they are being welcomed properly into the school. They want their school to have a good reputation and identity. The children we speak to again and again are very proud of their schools and they do want the school to be seen as a good school in the community and they do want differentiation. They do not want to have the same as the school down the road or the school round the corner; they want their school to be special and different for them and their peers.

Q117 Chairman: We hear about the history of Nobel laureates. It does not matter much whether they work in a leaky building. A lot of people want their children to go to some of the highest-profiles and research-rich universities in the country and you know they are 14th century buildings which are mouldering away with ivy growing all over them. They are not going for the modern Legoland or even the kind of 1960s design of the new generation of universities. Why are you saying that there is a relationship between the quality of design of a building and the quality of education?

Mr Sorrell: Because great design inspires you. If we create school buildings which are brilliantly functional, of course they have to serve their purpose and they have to be fit for purpose. If they are built well so they are going to last a long time and be easy to maintain, we shall obviously save money in the long term. That is absolutely great, but for me that is just a ticket to the game. We have to build buildings which are inspirational and create the kind of learning environments which our children can grow up in and yes, I know that hardship is something that we can accept, but I do not see why they should not have the same kind of toilets that you have down the corridor here, which are very good quality indeed and which are very much better than the ones that MPs have to use in the House of Commons. It is

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absolutely crystal clear that if you give children brilliantly inspirational learning environments, they will develop much better.

Q118 Chairman: Hilary, we are very used to people coming in here and trying to sell us a product. Sometimes it is because they run a small business and are selling synthetic phonics or whatever, sometimes other products. However, the three of you are in the design sector, are you not? You are selling us design so you would tell us design was worth £45 billion of new taxpayers' money would you not? Is there really a relationship between good design and the outcomes?

Ms Cottam: I should say that learning is worth £45 billion of taxpayers' money because, to go back to your previous question, it might be that a Nobel prize winner will always surface at any school but what is really important socially and economically for this country is that learning is very wide and that every child is stimulated to learn, that we do not have problems with truancy, which we have seen in our work is directly related to the quality of the loos, that we do have environments which are really inspirational and fantastic to learn in. That is what you are trying to buy with your £45 billion and, if you like, design is the problem-solving process that will ensure that that investment that you are making delivers learning for this country. What we are arguing for is not in some industry way that our mates could have a job and do this, but really for a wider process, which does not have to be facilitated by designers all the time, but is a kind of very simple problem-solving process which can establish a learning vision in every school, get all the pupils harnessed around it, the teachers, the wider community and can actually make sure that that investment delivers for that community and for the nation. That is what is important.

Q119 Chairman: Would you agree with that David? You are the Design Council; your job depends on persuading people that design is critical.

Mr Kester: One way to look at it is from the positive, the other way to look at it is from the negative which is what the impact is of having poor learning environments, leaky roofs, poor light, poor acoustics and so forth. Actually a lot of academic evidence has been collected and will be submitted to you later in the year which really demonstrates that learning is impacted severely if you do not have a reasonably good environment. To put it back on the positive, absolutely, if we have a very coherent vision for what we are looking for, if a teacher actually knows how to get the most out of the design process, knows the problem that they are trying to solve, then they will get a good solution at the end. Half the problem here that we have when working on a £45 billion programme is that this is the first big capital project that most of the clients have ever run and it may be the only one they are going to run at this level. They are going to oversee perhaps a £20 million new school build and are they a design savvy client? Are they going to get the most out of that process? Are they going to understand the art of the

possible? That is a big question. It is very difficult to do that and what you really need to do is make sure that all of those people involved at the decision-making end of the tree know how to manage that process very smartly and know what is possible, get the most out of it and know the questions to ask.

Q120 Chairman: Can we hit all the buttons in terms of good design? Can we have good design that is aesthetically pleasing, good design which stimulates good learning and sustainable design which cuts down the carbon footprint on the planet? Are they compatible?

Mr Sorrell: Yes, absolutely. If it is going to be good design, it needs to address all those things. I really do think it is important to make the point that good design is design that performs its function brilliantly, but in this case means well-built buildings which also are going to inspire not just the children but also the teachers, the local community who may well use the school. In many cases now we are going to find schools which are going to be available for community use, much longer hours of use for the building. Good design in the end is about form and function; it has to be all those things if it is going to be good. In fact I would go further than that: good is not good enough. It should be excellent because this is for our children, it is for the future of the country. Mediocre is not good enough. Even good is not good enough, it has to be absolutely excellent and there is no reason why it should not be because we have the designers in this country, some of the best architects in the world, we have the best designers of products and schools need things like storage systems designed brilliantly, clothing designed, uniforms and so on. There is absolutely no reason why this should not be very, very good indeed.

Chairman: Let us draw down a bit more on pupil involvement and transformation.

Q121 Mr Wilson: Mr Sorrell, when the Chairman asked you whether buildings mattered, your reply was that great design inspires you. Where is the evidence for that? Where is your evidence base for making that assertion?

Mr Sorrell: Forty years' experience of working in the world of design and seeing how it affects companies, people in the public sector, individuals and talking to literally thousands of children over the last six years. They know how much design influences them. For example, they will talk about how colour in their school affects their mood; if you get the colours wrong, you can actually affect their mood in school. They know absolutely how a building, which when you approach it has something exciting about it and which is visually pleasing, is going to make them feel better about going inside it. There is evidence in other areas as well, but in terms of schools, if you talk to the children you will find out how inspirational design is to them.

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Q122 Mr Wilson: With the greatest of respect, that is very anecdotal and we are talking about spending £45 billion of public money. Where is the evidence on which you can base the spending of that sum of money?

Mr Sorrell: I cannot put any hard facts or statistical evidence on the table in front of you, but a very, very tiny amount of money is spent on design out of the programme; 1% of the life costs, absolutely tiny, miniscule. If I put it another way, we could all get up in the morning and say we are going to go out and design these schools really badly, we are going to design schools which are basically not going to function very well, the design is not going to work for the build, so they will fall down fairly quickly and when people walk towards them they feel gloom and despair because they will look so absolutely appalling. We are not going to do that. What we are actually going to do is our very best to make them inspirational because we absolutely know, even though I cannot put statistical evidence in front of you, that they will inspire and they will bring much better results.

Q123 Mr Wilson: You mentioned some companies which had been inspired by the buildings they were in. Can you just give me one or two examples?

Mr Sorrell: If you look at companies like Apple, you do not have to go too far from here to see Apple spending money on design and designing things well. Everything is designed anyway. Someone decides what it is going to be like; that is design. The question is whether you want good design or whether you want mediocre or poor design because in the end someone makes the decisions. Every single thing in this room is designed by somebody. Somebody has made those decisions and the same applies to schools or office blocks or houses or anything else. With someone like Apple, if you go and look at the Apple store in the middle of London or look at the one in New York, you will see that they use design not just for their products, because they believe that by designing their products better they will obviously make more money, they also do exactly the same with their buildings because they want those buildings not just to function well, but to inspire their consumers. There is no difference if the consumer happens to be a child and it is public money being spent rather than the companies, because the profit which we shall make is in the future of this country through those children being much better citizens, knowing more and being able to help the country more in the future.

Mr Kester: I should like to come in with two points there. One is the actual impact evidence around design and the value of design and there is a mass of very good impact evidence on the value of design.

Q124 Chairman: In schools?

Mr Kester: Just generally right across public and private sector and schools are no different from hospitals, they are no different from businesses. If you apply design effectively to a problem, you can get good results. You can look at a tracking survey, which was done on FTSE 100 companies in fact,

which shows that over a 10-year period companies which used design effectively and strategically performed 200% above the market average. However, the point I want to make is that actually design is not a panacea. I should go back to the issue of what the problem is that you want to solve. Actually it is not about throwing design at it, this is not a £45 billion design project, this is a £45 billion refurbishment and build programme of schools. The question is what you want out of it and what you are asking of design. If you know what you are asking, you might get some good solutions. If I may give an example, there is a very, very good example in one of the schools that we cite, in San Diego, where the local community was looking to foster a sense of self-determination amongst its pupils, it was looking to maximise pupil involvement and it was also looking at the issue of sustainability in schools. What was their answer? Their answer was to convert a Navy warehouse, not a new-build school. They focused totally on the internal environment of that school and when they looked to the best in office design, the best practices in terms of hot-desking, all sorts of new techniques that we all know and we share in our daily world if we walk around business, they took that in to that school environment and they have had phenomenal results and attainment. It is really about what you are trying to achieve and then you can ask the designers to come in and work to that brief.

Ms Cottam: I just want to say that we have had a relatively short start on this programme so there are not a lot of results yet. School Works have developed quite a good ex-post evaluation which I imagine they will talk about, but I started School Works in the first school we did, Kingsdale, five years ago and that has been evaluated by PricewaterhouseCoopers. They have looked at what has been the educational benefit, not just of the design spend on the school but really critically to the design process that got them to that good design. They have shown that that has added educational value; Kingsdale was officially a failing school and is now one of Britain's top 20 most improved schools still with a very difficult catchment. So there is some concrete evidence, but we are only just beginning to get it out because we are only just beginning to measure this relatively new programme.

Q125 Mr Wilson: Did you involve children in the design of that school?

Ms Cottam: Yes. What we did was to have a programme where we worked with the children who were at the school, their parents, the staff, the senior management team and the dinner ladies, everybody in the school, the surrounding community who did not have their children at the school were looking at that as well. We redesigned—this is critical—the school building, the management system, the system of pastoral care and the curriculum because what is critical is that the design process makes sure that all those things are working together and out of that has been a very strong educational outcome which you cannot ever say was just because of the design spend; though obviously it is in part related to that. There

was an independent PriceWaterhouseCoopers' evaluation which showed learning benefit to that investment.

Q126 Mr Wilson: John, you talked earlier about common issues children got involved in, in particular you said they did not like being herded like cattle into the dinner queues and they wanted covered space when they went out so that is something you would like to see designed into schools. Where do we stop this pandering to young people in schools? Where do we draw the line? Do we start offering them manicures when they ask for them?

Mr Sorrell: It is a thought, is it not? I do not think so.

Q127 Mr Wilson: How far are you prepared to go?

Mr Sorrell: I should just ask the children. What you will find, if you do ask them, is that they are incredibly pragmatic and people who talk to us about joinedupdesignforschools say "Surely when you ask kids what they would like to improve in their schools they all talk about putting in coca-cola machines?" They do not. What they talk about are really pragmatic things like toilets which are hygienic and where they do not get bullied, a civilised lunchtime, things like social spaces which are not in the corridor in the corner or on the steps at the backdoor but which are actually designed as part of the school life. My answer really is the answer the children would give you, which is that they are pragmatic about what they want. They actually do not ask for that much and they certainly do not ask for any more than anyone in this room would expect in their working environment. You do not have to go as far as manicures, but you do have to think about what school life is like for children and listen very hard to what they say about it because their perspective is completely different. I shall give you an example. Whereas an architect will look at open plan and worry about things like acoustic separation and perhaps noise being a problem, a child might look at open plan and see it as a way they are not going to get bullied because the teacher can see lots of people and they are not going to get beaten up. Looking at it from the children's point of view is very important and they will not ask you for those kinds of things.

Q128 Mr Wilson: Does it matter what age the child is? If it is a new school, it could be a five-year-old as much as a 16-year-old?

Mr Sorrell: Yes. We work with children from the age of four to 18 and we really have not found any difference in their approach except of course the young ones cannot write briefs, so they do displays or they put on a play and perform it, which is very unusual for an architect. In 30 years in business, no-one ever wrote a play and performed a brief for me, but the children do this and they really can get their points across. Even the youngest ones have very strong feelings about the environment they are in and they know how much it affects them.

Q129 Mr Wilson: How likely is it that a school, in a sense built by five- to 18-year-olds, is going to stand the test of time? What children think is the thing to do today, in 10 or 20 years' time may be completely different. How will these schools stand the test of time?

Mr Sorrell: They are not designing it. What they are is a part of the client stakeholder group and on the Building Schools for the Future programme there are lots of people on the client side.

Q130 Mr Wilson: But you are saying they are influential in the decisions and the design.

Mr Sorrell: They should be; I am not saying they are at the moment. That is one of the things I am asking for because they are not, at the moment, as properly involved as I believe they should be and the problem comes when people only pay lip service to consulting the pupils. Very often what happens is the school is designed basically and then the kids are brought together for an hour, they are shown the designs of the focus group and at the end of it boxes are ticked. What I am calling for is a much, much deeper involvement of pupils in the overall client stakeholder group, and it is a big group because you have head teachers, teachers, parents, governors, local community, the LAs. It is a very, very big stakeholder group on the client side. The ones I plead for are the children because they are the ones who are likely to be left out of the discussion. It is making a big mistake if we do not involve them properly. Of course they are not designing the schools, what they are doing is helping to inform the people who are designing them and that is the whole point. If you create a great vision, a great brief and you have a great designer working with that great brief then you have a good chance of getting a good result.

Mr Kester: I just want to build on what John was saying because it is so right and so important and in design this is often referred to as the user insight. Every single major business that uses design in the world is looking to understand its user, so that it can actually deliver to the real deep needs that the user has. In this context obviously the pupils are not the only customer and stakeholder; teachers are, the local community is, we as a society are because we are actually looking to have high-attaining young people coming through our schools. Design has all sorts of good and clever techniques to get those insights out. You are not necessarily asking what children want and just giving it to them: you are trying to find out what we need. Designers are very, very good at that and a lot of the sort of work that Hilary has been running, through our work not only with schools but also in areas of health and other areas, has actually been to bring some of those insights to the fore as early as possible, so that those can shape your idea of what a school can be and bring those possibilities to the table.

Q131 Mr Wilson: I think you would agree that most businesses do not design the buildings that they work from and there is probably not one employee

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that I could identify or you could identify that had any involvement in designing their place of work, yet they still do a fantastic job.

Mr Kester: Actually I dispute that strongly. I might say that of the external fascia of a building, and of course this place is a very good example of a building in which a lot of people had a say both externally and internally, but certainly in a well-run organisation you would be involving and consulting and understanding the needs that you have of your internal workforce when you are constantly revising and redesigning your internal environment to maximise productivity. You would be looking at the adjacencies of different work teams. You would be looking at light, you would be looking at the sort of workspaces that you need, the number of meeting rooms you need, a whole array of different issues are brought to bear and any sensible business is consulting and working with its internal team on a regular basis, particularly at times when it is actually refurbishing or changing or moving and when it does not, we all see the terrible things we complain about when we work in places which did not consult, did not understand and it all goes terribly pear-shaped.

Q132 Paul Holmes: The last great wave of school building was the 1960s and to save cost and to spread the money around at that time a lot of them were built on the clasp system where you have prefabricated panels bolted together, some of the new universities like York at the time, and they sat there for the next 40 years as fairly brutalist examples of 1960s architecture, but they got more bang for their buck by doing it that way. Are we getting the right balance, if we spend money in this second wave of school building on design rather than on building more new schools for example?

Ms Cottam: May I answer that question? There is a fallacy that good design somehow costs more. If we take architecture, architects take a percentage of the costs. Whether you have a good architect or a bad architect, it is going to cost you the same amount of money so the question is: is your process delivering good architecture? Similarly with the kind of process that we have been working with at the Design Council, the design process is about trying to link what is a learning vision, trying to make sure that that investment that you are going to make anywhere in a building delivers learning outcomes. What we have seen internationally is that if you spend the time and the money upfront getting that brief right and getting that learning vision right, then the actual school building itself is cheaper. Then the whole procurement, like any project, goes very smoothly because everybody knows what is wanted and what they are signed up to at the beginning and you deliver something better for learning and a cheaper process at the final end. It is not like an add-on, it is in there anyway: it is just whether it is being well done or not.

Mr Sorrell: You are asking a really important question because there is an attitude in this country about design which always queries and for my entire

career of 40 years in the world of design I have spent a lot of time trying to justify why good design is important. I know that the man behind me, Richard Simmons, will talk when he gives evidence about a publication CABA have just produced and a campaign they are running which is called The Cost of Bad Design. What I should like to do is talk about the cost of bad design and I do not just mean cost in terms of money, because if you design something badly then you will probably end up paying a great deal more in the long run to look after it and maintain it, than you would if you designed it well, but also the cost on people's lives and the impact on them. If you really design things badly, then you can really mess people's lives up. If you think about houses, hospitals, schools, all the things in the public sector which are so important, if they are designed badly, they can really impact on people's welfare. I agree entirely with what Hilary said, but we ought to turn the question round sometimes and say "Just how much does bad design cost us in this country?". We certainly cannot afford to have bad designs in our schools' programme.

Mr Kester: The corollary to that is that there is a real risk that good design and good design process will not get integrated into the Building Schools for the Future programme. That is really the risk: will we actually be able to integrate the best that we know of design? In the end this building programme is happening, it is rolling out, it has a timetable against it, there are some risks in the system and everybody is going to watch out that those risks do not end up messing the whole system up. There is a real possibility that we shall not get the innovation and creativity that we really want. If we want to have great schools that are fit not just for the next 10 years, but 50 or 100 years—and of course our Victorian schools have lasted over 100 years—then what are we actually going to do now that is going to ensure that the sort of schools that we creating are going to endure and support us in the long term? That means some really smart, clever thinking upfront and once the ball is rolling and the procurement exercise has started, it is going to be too late, which is where we have been advocating early design processes.

Q133 Paul Holmes: I agree with much of what you have said, but just to play devil's advocate again, I can think of schools across Derbyshire that I worked in as a teacher and visited and I can think of a wave of 1920s schools that were built to the same blueprint by the same architect in Ilkeston and in Buxton and in Chesterfield, all over Derbyshire. You just walk in and it is absolutely identical to the ones you have been in before. Then you have the 1960s wave, which are much more badly designed but again were absolutely identical. Surely if you build 500 schools over the next few years, all with different design teams and architects, that has to use up more money less efficiently than if you have a team of architects who come up with one good design and all schools are built to the same blueprint.

Mr Sorrell: The first point to make is that different parts of the country, as we all know, have their own special characteristics and it would be an absolute tragedy if we rolled out the blueprint of one standard design which everybody uses.

Chairman: Tesco's do it, why should we not?

Q134 Paul Holmes: That is why we should not.

Mr Sorrell: Absolutely. Perhaps I should not go any further on that one. First of all, there is absolutely no point in doing it because we do not have to do it that way and if we can get individuality in different schools in different places, then not only would it be appropriate for the environment, but it would also be appropriate for the children and the teachers who are there. However, where we learn lessons and we get good practice and best practice, then obviously we can take that and copy it in other places, but we shall still need to adjust it for size, location, numbers and all the rest of it. For example, I hope what we shall start to see, and I think we are starting to see it already, is that if you find a school which has really cracked the problem of 1,400 students at lunchtime by creating an absolutely wonderful lunchtime civilised experience, brilliantly done environmentally and, by the way, the food as well, then I should like everyone to look at that and see how you can replicate the thinking, even though the physical design will almost certainly need to be different in different places because we do have different numbers in places, we do have different locations. It would be very inappropriate to have a thatched mediaeval cottage-type school sitting just round the corner here in Westminster; you would not expect to do that. There are all kinds of reasons why it would not be appropriate to standardise all schools, but we can learn a great deal from best practice and that is an important part of the programme over the next year or two. We cannot wait too long to learn, but as good examples come up and that is why we need, good examples very, very fast.

Q135 Chairman: Do we not already have them with the Academies?

Mr Sorrell: We have some examples, but we need a lot more.

Mr Kester: We need to see examples from around the world and not just think little UK in that sense. There are fantastic examples of where new learning environments have been created abroad and we need to be able to share best practice wherever it is, so that we can disseminate that. It needs to be easy to get hold of and at the moment it is not. We held a conference last year for head teachers and showed them some of the possibilities that are being created around the world at the moment, new schools. We also took them through one or two exercises which were all about how you kick off the design process, all of them were saying "Oh, my God", but the ones who were going through it were saying "If only I had known this a year ago". So knowledge sharing is so important in this and we need light touch simple tools which can really ensure that any head teacher in any school that is going through a major

programme like this has really good examples at their fingertips. In answer to your question, there are three distinct visions which need to coalesce when we are building a school: a national vision for education, a local and regional vision for education. Often the regional issues are so different in the North East from London and there might be issues of social exclusion or rural against city and those issues then translate and there is a whole different set of design problems. Then there will be individual school issues which really depend on the catchment area of the school and what that school is trying to achieve. Is this school going to be a music school? What sort of school is it? How is it going to define itself? There are three different visions and they need to come together in different ways then around the country.

Q136 Paul Holmes: Some people have suggested that this opportunity of a whole wave of brand new schools gives us the chance to build exciting new learning environments which are 21st century, which are modern, which are go-ahead. Is there not a danger of fossilising whatever the fad of the moment is into a building that is going to be there for 40 years? For example, one Academy which has been praised in the press for its design innovation has got open-plan classrooms and yet that is exactly the sort of trendy 1960s teaching that everybody was condemning a few years ago as being at the root of everything that is wrong in society.

Mr Kester: I should agree. There are real risks in setting everything in stone. We do need to be looking at what a sustainable school is and a sustainable school does need to be a school that looks to the long term and perhaps therefore looks at its own mutability and builds that in. Steven Heppell, a renowned expert on this, sometimes does actually refer to the Lego school. We perhaps do need to look at schools which will react and can change according to changes in technology, our own understanding of the way that people learn, which also shifts over time, and what we are trying to achieve out of our education system.

Q137 Paul Holmes: In the earlier answers there was a suggestion that not enough was being spent on design. The figure given was 1% of the cost over the entire life of the school. We have had it suggested to us that, first of all on the timescale involved in the procurement process, when designers are making a pitch to a consortium they might only have 13 weeks to get across what they want and to try to win the bid. Is 13 weeks long enough to have serious input on design?

Ms Cottam: No, definitely not from the point of view of working with the wider school community and, to go back to the learning vision, there is a massive amount of change coming in in what is needed from nought to 19 and if you are going to work out how that really relates to the capital investment, a lot longer is needed. We recommend a design process starts up to a year before any kind of capital programme starts to roll forward.

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Mr Kester: It is quite possible that that sort of design intervention that happens early may not involve the architect who is ultimately commissioned to build the school.

Ms Cottam: It probably would not.

Mr Kester: It probably does not. In cases where we have been working with schools, this is about building and understanding what is possible, what we could have, what we are trying to create here and really building a common vision locally of what that is so that then, when you do brief an architect, you are really able to communicate that very, very clearly as a damn good brief.

Ms Cottam: If you have 13 weeks, what you are going to get is a secondary school, nought to 16, that is open from 9am to 3.30pm 192 days a year and that is it. That is where you are spending a lot of money for not very much in terms of the limitations as to what you are going to get out of that building.

Q138 Paul Holmes: It was also suggested, in relation to that question, that in making the pitch you not only have only 13 weeks but also that the money for the design part of the concept was perhaps 10% of the total cost with most of the emphasis being on the best value, the cheapest options available, the construction costs and so forth. Is that true? John talked about 1% on the whole-life cost but is a 10% figure true for the actual design and build part?

Ms Cottam: I am not sure what the percentage is, but I know that there are all sorts of things. One of the things about this being a sustainable schools inquiry is that there is also quite a lot of work which can be done on the capital investment versus the recurrent expenditure and where you say that by having some sort of investment now it could be more expensive but save the footprint overprint. Those things also have to be worked out far too fast and there are many structural issues which make it impossible to make those gains.

Mr Sorrell: I come back to the point about attitude again. There is an enormous concentration on things to do with time and cost which is just a ticket to the game. Of course things have to be done on time and for the money, but to do things brilliantly and deliver the kind of excellence which we have to have does take time. It is a combination of creating the right vision and brief but then working together with the architects, the designers, in what we call the conversation to make sure that that conversation reaches the conclusion which we can all be very proud of. Yes, you have to create enough time to do the job properly; it is ridiculous not to do so.

Q139 Paul Holmes: What percentage should it be, 10%, 15%, 5%?

Mr Sorrell: It is actually very difficult to answer that question. I should be happy to give you a paper about it afterwards, if that is okay?

Q140 Paul Holmes: Hilary, you just said something about the trade-off on different issues such as spending a bit more now but saving money over 10, 20, 30 years of the life of the school, but not being able to build that in because of the timescale of

arguing the case. One school we visited was an excellent design and the staff and pupils liked it. However, the school council, the pupils, said to us that they were actually quite disappointed because they were told it was about sustainable schools but they had no solar power, for example, solar panels on the roof, because it would cost too much upfront, even though the experience is that 10 years down the line, it starts to save money for the building. Is that a common experience?

Ms Cottam: Yes. I hope that the Committee will be asking for evidence from Jonathan Porritt, who will be able to talk much more about what we are building and what those difficulties are. Actually the issues go deeper, not only that we cannot save in terms of the footprint, but we could also generate power into local communities from schools; it could be a cost recovery system. We are able to look at none of that at the moment in the frameworks in which schools are operating.

Q141 Paul Holmes: Whose fault is that? Is that the procurement system as dictated by the Government who are providing money? Is it the fact that the construction firms have too much influence and the Local Education Partnerships? Where is the fault on that?

Ms Cottam: Again it is a very complex web of institutional arrangements. Our evidence, which we shall submit to the Committee, can speak to that, which probably would be best because to unpick that now is very complicated.¹

Q142 Helen Jones: Education is going to change fairly rapidly in the coming years. We hear a lot about personalisation and we could see new methods of delivering learning. How can we ensure that our thoughts about what will happen in the future are actually built into the design process and how can we future-proof schools against the changes that will happen very rapidly in the education world in the future?

Mr Kester: Without wishing to sound like a cracked record, it is back to the same point really which is to learn from the specialists, the teachers, the educationalists that we have in this country about what we really are trying to create as a vision for learning, what sort of techniques, what sort of education we are going to create for our young people. Are we trying to foster self-reliance amongst our young people? Are we trying to encourage creativity and the generation of ideas in our schools? What sort of educational experience is it going to be like? We talk now about a 14–19-year-old agenda where people may be moving across different sorts of educational institutions. What is that going to feel like, how are you going to achieve it? Are you going to move from your beautifully built glass box into a crummy run-down FE college for some of your lessons? What is this really going to feel like as a totality? We must have that sense of a national vision, but we must have a sense at a local level of what that educational experience is going to be like

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for a young person. We can fashion that and that is part of the brief: if you know what you are trying to create, you can fashion that. As long as we do not lock it down—and that comes back to the previous point—and say that there is only one way to do it and that is to lay your school out like this and you teach it like that, but actually build flexibility into our schools, we shall be okay.

Q143 Helen Jones: If we are going to do that, it requires two things, does it not? It requires heads and local authorities and others involved in the design process to have a sense of what good design can deliver in educational terms. It also requires the designers to have some knowledge of what changes we expect in education in the future. Do you think both sides yet have that required sense of what good design can do and how it can work with education to deliver better outcomes?

Ms Cottam: All the work that we have done has been with inter-disciplinary teams to foster that. It is obviously critical that both sides learn and this also goes back to the previous question about 13 weeks, because there is a quite a lot of learning and then those teams can also share the learning. At the moment there is not good enough understanding on each side. Another thing that is underlying many questions that come up is that there is not a real investment in an evaluation tool for ex-post evaluation so that learning can be shared from both sides going forward. There is a huge amount of knowledge. When you are talking about future-proofing, if we just think about the way that learning has changed since the 1950s, even if we could build schools which encapsulate that and think about the whole way we understand cognitive behaviour and things like that very differently now to 50 years ago, if we could make schools address that, we would have moved forward, never mind what the future-proofing is going to be. A lot of those things are technologically based, they are about flexibility within systems, they would allow for further future-proofing into the years to come.

Mr Sorrell: We cannot be at all complacent about this and this is not easy. If we do not actually deliberately address the issue that you are raising, this will be a programme which is about delivering physical environments for kids to go to every day rather than the kind of flexible spaces with potential to change as we discover new things over the coming years. What I believe is very important is that over the next two to three years, a vital period, we need to be looking very, very, very hard at this and looking at and learning what is developing, as the visions are created, the briefs are created, the early schools are being done. This has to be a central question as we are doing it, because we shall learn as we go along what we need to do to create the kind of flexibility for those schools of the future, to do a future-proofing you are describing. We should not be at all sure at this moment that we have got it right, but we could over the next two to three years because in a way what we are into is a kind of phase of prototyping. We have a 10–15-year programme here. If we think about the next two or three years

as a period where we are going to learn an enormous amount from what we are doing, then we could benefit from that enormously. Your question is absolutely vital.

Q144 Helen Jones: But it is not just about what happens to the young people within school time. Somebody said earlier that if we get this wrong, it will just be a building where people go to. We are also looking at extended schools, we are looking through developments in the youth service to use a lot of the facilities in schools for community use, whether it is for young people or for adults outside time. It always seemed to me very bizarre that we have all these facilities that are locked up most of the time. That has to influence the design, does it not? How do you think it is best to involve the wider community in the design of schools? Do you have any examples of good practice on how that has been done and how we created buildings which can be used out of school hours with all the necessary security that that needs in place and so on? Can you tell the Committee about any good practice in that sphere?

Ms Cottam: May I answer that on three levels? One is rather like the 12 points that you were talking about, the colour for example. There are some very simple things about involving the community. For instance, if you build buildings where the outside walls are on the street, it is very easy to open them up to the communities after hours and you do not need huge amounts of staff time to police boundaries, really simple things which can be learned and can be transferred from school to school. That is one thing. The second thing is to fund a design process as we have been talking about, to make sure the community is involved so it does actually meet community needs. It sounds incredibly simple, but we have seen time and time again that this does not happen. The third thing is back to my opening point which was about a learning vision. The one thing that I have to keep coming back to is that it is my concern that this is still a schools rebuilding programme, that this does not mesh properly with the vision that is from nought to 19 and is about extended schools, is about community learning, lifelong learning, the *Every Child Matters* agenda. We have all these very good policy agendas, but it is still not clear how BSF is fitted into this wider learning agenda.

Q145 Chairman: What did you get out of Kingsdale? You referred to that research and you talked then about the management systems, curriculum issues alongside the design. What came out of that?

Ms Cottam: A couple of things came out of it. We have to remember this started seven years ago, so actually seven years ago, saying that you should not divorce capital spend from your learning objectives was completely radical. We have moved on a long way because actually people now think that those two should be joined together. It is just that the structures are not in place and the incentives are not in place yet within the BSF programme to join them together. The other thing is that when we started

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Kingsdale, the things that came out of the community practice were things like extended schools, community initiatives that were not then in the policy agenda. We were able to feed a lot of that into the policy agenda. It is now being reflected back but has not been re-integrated into the loop of the capital programme.

Q146 Paul Holmes: We have had figures given to us that, under the Building Schools for the Future programme, roughly £1,450 per square metre of school is allocated, whereas a typical office block would get £2,000 per square metre. Do those figure square from your experience? Does that mean we are valuing schools at only being 75% of the worth of an office block?

Mr Sorrell: Not far out.

Q147 Chairman: Is that good enough?

Mr Sorrell: I always say the same thing. Nothing but the best is good enough for our kids. There is an attitude again that because it is for children, then it does not have to be of the same quality as it would be for adults.

Q148 Mr Chaytor: I just sense that each of you started your answers arguing in one direction and then in response to Helen's questions, you have done a bit of U-turn. This afternoon you started out saying how important design was and almost arguing the case for using the BSF programme to build a series of iconic buildings and then you finish off by saying you have no idea what the future is going to bring so you have to have complete flexibility. I do not understand how you can argue both cases simultaneously. If I may come back to the Tesco point, the point about a supermarket is that not every supermarket looks the same from the outside, because they all vary to some degree and some are more beautiful than others. The point is surely that the inside is infinitely flexible. Is that not the point about schools? We do not want to design things fixed in stone, however beautiful they may be, when we do not know what the next 50 years are going to be. That is the legacy we have from 40 years ago, is it not? Things were fixed in stone for a set of circumstances that no longer apply. How do you reconcile your passion for beautiful iconic buildings with your recognition that there has to be infinite flexibility for the next half century?

Mr Kester: In a way I think I miscommunicated if I put across the view that I was trying to argue for lots of beautiful iconic buildings up and down the country. There can be a case for a beautiful building being a school. That can actually be very important. We have lots of examples in other areas, not just schools for a moment. If you think of Will Alsop's design for Peckham library, it is an iconic building, it is a great statement of civic pride and also a statement of what a library can be. In the same way, you can do the same with our schools. This is surely all about what goes on on the inside, not what it looks like on the outside and actually that is very much at the heart of what the Design Council has

been working on. We called our work learning-environments work, not building projects, because it is all about the flexibility, the style of learning and how, when we build or refurbish a school, we support the teaching and good learning, but that is not to say you cannot also have a beautiful building which can give people lots of pride in the place that they go to every day. That can be a wonderful thing but that should not be the objective.

Q149 Mr Chaytor: Is it not the case that the focus on the attractiveness of the building should largely be on the outside and the inside should just have maximum flexibility? Why not build a series of beautiful shapes?

Mr Kester: Indeed; that would be the example I gave earlier and we should be happy to provide the Committee with information on the San Diego school which is indeed a warehouse. It is an old Navy warehouse. As such it does not particularly make a brave architectural statement on the landscape because it was an old Navy warehouse which has been refurbished of course, but on the inside it is a fantastic and innovative learning space which is very flexible and brings to bear a lot of the best techniques for the teachers and supports them in doing what they want to do. That is actually very brave and we should be learning those sorts of lessons in Britain.

Mr Sorrell: It is not either/or; it has to be all of the things you are talking about. Of course, the way these buildings are going to function is absolutely vital and if they do not function well, then they are not going to work. The simple fact is that we have to do the very best we can now to get us as far as we can into the future, find what kind of flexibility is required and design that in. Of course we have to do that and we do not know all of the answers now, but if we work really hard and if we really focus on it over the next two or three years, we could get a lot of the answers that we are still searching for about the kind of flexibility that is required. Just to finish my point, I actually also believe that the buildings of course should look absolutely wonderful because then they are inspirational, they are the kind of buildings which make people say they are proud of their community. If you design an ugly, boring, dull, horrible school, what does that say about your community? Of course they should be beautiful, they should delight everybody who sees them and goes to them and uses them. For me it is not a question of either/or, we have to do all of it.

Chairman: I just must chip in that we have some of the worst domestic architecture that I have ever seen in this country and perhaps we just get what we deserve.

Q150 Mr Chaytor: That is my follow-on question really. It is not a great endorsement of British architecture that we still have not learned how to build a decent school. We have been building schools for 100-odd years and you are saying we still need to see how it goes over the next two or three years. Why is it we are so poor or why is it that we have not learned how to build a school that combines functionality and aesthetic value?

Mr Sorrell: As has been pointed out earlier, it is a long time since we have done anything like this. If you talk to the architects—and there are some older architects who worked on the schools in the 1960s—they will tell you about the criteria then. They were not designing schools to last more than 30 or 40 years. That was what they were told was needed. We are in a different situation now. We are not saying we only want these schools to last 30 or 40 years. We want them to last much longer than that so there are different criteria. Some good schools are emerging. If you drive up into north London past Chalk Farm and look to the right, you will see an extraordinary looking building which is a school. If you go inside it, you will find it functions well, build quality is not bad and it is a very interesting example of what can be done. You might ask how flexible it is going to be when new methods of learning are developed over the next 20 or 30 years and the answer is that it probably is not as flexible as it needs to be. We could go to look at other examples where we would probably come to the same conclusions.

Chairman: You must flag up any school you think we should visit.

Q151 Mr Chaytor: May I ask specifically about the building specifications, particularly the BREEAM standard. All the new schools are supposed to comply with the BREEAM “very good” standard. That is the case, is it not? Is that “very good” good enough? Is it the case that within the BREEAM standard, you can score very highly on one of the criteria at the expense of others? You can score highly on water management but be hopeless on energy use. Is that how it works?

Mr Sorrell: There is a real expert behind me on this. Richard Simmons really knows about this subject.

Mr Kester: I have to say I am not an expert on BREEAM, but the only point I would want to raise, because BREEAM quite clearly does focus on the narrower environmental issues of a school, waste, energy consumption et cetera, is that I am not sure whether it really goes far enough because I have not got that detailed analysis to hand. What it does not do is take a broad view of sustainability.

Q152 Mr Chaytor: What are the other criteria?

Mr Kester: If you take the environmental view—and it would be great to have someone like Jonathan here—if you take the broader view of sustainability, you would be looking at balancing the environmental issues alongside the social benefits and economic benefits and you only really pull off sustainability, a sustainable school, when you have those three in harmony. Ultimately of course, you could argue for the most fantastic environmentally-thought-through school but if it is far too expensive to afford, we are not going to be able to do it. On the other hand, if the environmental benefits are to the detriment of the local community or the teaching experience, that also would not be good. Somehow one always has to bring those three into balance.

Q153 Mr Chaytor: On the economic criterion, to what extent do you think that lifecycle costs should be a factor in the initial design brief?

Mr Kester: Completely.

Q154 Mr Chaytor: Do you think they have been in schools built so far, like the first Academies for example?

Mr Kester: I should probably have to come back to you on that to give a detailed answer on that, but we can do. We shall be providing you with our evidence and we shall be very happy to do that. We are providing evidence around BREEAM.²

Q155 Mr Chaytor: What is social sustainability? What is your understanding of that and how can that be measured and built into a design brief?

Mr Kester: We were talking earlier about the benefit to the wider community and that would be a very good example. If a school is actually going to integrate effectively into its community, maybe it is going to be a sustainable school, is a school which does not shut its doors at 3.30 but is making the best use of that building and maximising the opportunities pretty much around the clock, providing as many opportunities for the ageing population that we have in the UK, which we know is only going to expand, how is a school going to respond to those issues and could they be great places for that? We have an increasing chronic disease issue in the UK. What about health? Are they going to be a great space to do work-outs and healthy living? What sort of social benefits is the school going to provide?

Q156 Mr Chaytor: The logic of your argument therefore is that all schools under the BSF programme should be what the Government now calls extended schools.

Mr Kester: Yes; absolutely.

Q157 Mr Chaytor: So that is not the way it works. Being an extended school is not necessarily a requirement to attract BSF funding, is it? You are making an interesting point that, if the Government are committed to social sustainability, the school needs to have community links.

Mr Kester: I would come back to the point that each school should have its own local vision. It comes back to the point that was made earlier about whether the designers are going to solve those problems. No. The designers can only solve the problems if they are given the problems and that means that one needs to define those problems and say what you are seeking to achieve here. “For these situations, because we have social exclusion as an issue here, we believe that our school needs to provide really excellent opportunities for the youth in this area to become more engaged and involved and these are some of the possibilities and opportunities we are opening up for this school and therefore, because we are offering these sorts of services, this is the sort of brief that we should like

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to provide to our designers". The designers will react and provide the solutions to the problems that you give them.

Mr Sorrell: Just a quick point. We just have to be cautious about generalisation here. If you visit somewhere like the Jo Richardson School near Becton, a secondary school, a very, very urban environment indeed, a very, very large number of students in the school, it is an extended school, for example they have a gym which the local community uses, it looks like it is working very well indeed and very successful, very integrated with the local community but it is a different kind of physical environment to, let us say, a school down in St Just in Cornwall that I know, where there would not be the demand for that kind of extended environment for the community. It is again another reason why it is just wrong to say you can take one-size-fits-all and deliver it anywhere. It just does not work, because our schools around the country in different places are very, very, very different and what would be a school which delivers in a particular way socially in the community in one place will have very different needs in another, so you have to be quite careful.

Q158 Chairman: If design is so wonderful, what stops good design being used? There is a community out there with a view where educationalists will talk to designers and designers will talk to construction companies. What stops you guys being successful?

Ms Cottam: Two things: one is that design, as we are talking about it, is not commonly understood. Even this afternoon we have seen the difficulty of us trying to convey to you what we understand as the design process versus your understanding of design as being beautiful architecture, which is important but only part of the whole process.

Q159 Chairman: No, we are worried that that is what you think.

Ms Cottam: There has obviously been a communication mismatch. For us design is an important problem-solving process of which beautiful buildings are only one part. The second thing is the process itself. Of course it costs money to get the good design process, it costs time, there has to be a structured process and you have to pay somebody to do it. Our argument would be to make sure that that can be done up front, because you will recoup the costs fast down the line as you go into the actual building process. At the moment the structure is not set up to enable that to happen. There are schools which know about it and want it and they cannot get it and there are those which do not know about it yet and need to be informed about it and it needs to be afforded to them.

Mr Kester: I should say that there are two big obstacles: one is an experience deficit which is the point about first-time clients. In the end, take the best design projects that you have around the world and they usually had fantastic clients leading them. This is a really important issue which all points to the fact that you need to have your good early design processes, that you do not want design to start in

that 13-week period of procurement, you want design to start much, much earlier, all about getting really design savvy and design able early on. The other thing is the time, with particular reference here to schools, the time-poor environment of a school, where there are so many priorities on teachers and one is of course adding another one when one is saying the pupils and they have to be involved in a whole process here in defining what the future school is, when on the other hand there are GCSEs, A levels, 101 other pressures. What we have to do is forge the space to do this properly and also, and there are some real lessons in the work of joinedupdesignforschools, in making it fun too. If that process is enjoyable, that creative process in defining your vision and engaging everybody, then people just want to do it rather than be bullied into doing it.

Q160 Chairman: Is not John's whole process of joinedupdesignforschools, which he knows I support absolutely, a kind of a one-club effort in a sense? What I am getting from you is that the crucial thing you have to have is an informed client who knows that they want certain kinds of things to happen in the building, flexibility, new IT options, all of that, but you also want someone who knows what they want about sustainability. They want to seriously take on the issues of the carbon footprint and all that. You are liberating the student to say that, but are you really liberating other people in the school community, even the local authority and the teacher to have a real impact on that?

Mr Sorrell: The Sorrell Foundation joinedupdesignforschools programme focuses absolutely on pupils. They are the ones who are most excluded and are the least likely to be asked what they think. The whole client group is absolutely vital and it is a complex client group. You do not always have that many people involved as you do here, but it is a necessity, that is the way it is. What is absolutely important is for the client team to be a cohesive coherent unit and that includes head teachers, teachers, parents, governors, the LA and the pupils. If you can get the vision from them produced in a way that the people who are going to design the school can understand, then you have a conversation. You do not just do this in five minutes or in a focus group, this takes time as we keep saying and the conversation develops over a period of time and you will pretty much always get a good result. I should just like to answer the question about what stops good design, if I may. I am very pleased you asked the question what stops good design, because the point I made earlier was that design happens. Everything gets designed, not necessarily by the right people. Decisions are not necessarily made by people who really know how to make them and in this particular case with schools we have a client group, that big stakeholder group, who are not the world's leading experts on this subject. They do need all the help that they can be given and we do need to inform them so that they can be better clients. The thing that really stops good design in the end is attitude. It is the attitude that somehow or other

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design is a kind of add-on extra that you do not really need. It is absolutely fundamental to the success of the Building Schools for the Future programme and, if we can design these schools right, then they will be successful.

Chairman: Thank you very much. We have run out of time. That has been a really stimulating session. I hope you will remain in contact with us. We need your help in that we have only just started this inquiry. We want to know who else we should see and call in to give evidence. We also need to know what we should look at and if you can help in that process or if there is anything you did not say to the Committee in this session that you should have said, you know where to find us. Thank you very much.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Design Council

1. INTRODUCTION

The Design Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the House of Commons Select Committee's inquiry into Sustainable Schools.

The Design Council has been working to explore and explain the impact of effective design on learning environments since 2001. The recommendations in this submission result from this activity.

2. THE DESIGN COUNCIL'S WORK IN SCHOOLS

Our work with a number of secondary schools demonstrated that despite huge economic and social change and the rapid evolution of educational practice, the environments where learning takes place have remained largely unchanged from those in use at the turn of the century.

Despite the efforts of teachers to adapt their surroundings, the rigid classroom layouts, dingy, cramped corridors and uncomfortable, poor quality furniture presented substantial obstacles to successful learning. These problems were symptomatic of a failure to involve users in the design process and of seeing the physical environment in isolation from the broader educational process.

The Design Council's programme was structured to help schools create and test a way of defining the issues they faced and finding solutions that could be implemented relatively quickly and within existing budgets. The design process we evolved looked beyond the classroom itself to consider the school as a whole, including matters such as procurement, communication and the organisation of the school day. Most importantly, the design process required the participation of all the users of schools—teachers, pupils, support staff, parents, and the community—in an exploration of fundamental questions about what the schools stood for and how they functioned before looking at how they could change.

The learning from this work has been distilled into an online toolkit, designmyschool.com, which is described fully in appendix 1.

3. CONTEXT—BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme is an unprecedented opportunity to bring learning environments into the 21st century. It has the potential to enable important new educational practice such as personalised learning, thereby equipping young people with the skills they need, driving up attainment levels.

However, the programme risks failing to produce schools with the capacity to meet learning needs now and in the future if it does not have at its heart an educational vision articulated both at a national policy level and by each individual school. Such a vision must take account of the skills which the nation as a whole needs to develop in order to remain competitive in a fast-changing global economy. It must allow for the needs of individual communities and it must incorporate the needs of individual learners.

We believe that schools must have the opportunity to shape their own vision using a creative design process, which explores and defines their needs and creates a solid basis for the design and procurement of new buildings under BSF. It is equally vital that the school's vision is protected throughout the BSF process, so that it is fully reflected by the finished result.

In addition, BSF will benefit from being synchronised with a range of other important policy initiatives with a direct bearing on children's quality of life and education. These include *Every Child Matters*, Extended Schools and the 2006 Schools White Paper, as well as other areas of education policy such 14–19 provision.

If it is integrated with a co-ordinated policy agenda based on an educational vision, BSF can be an educational programme rather than being simply a capital building programme.

4. DEFINING DESIGN

Our recommendations are rooted in an approach to design that goes beyond a narrow view of it as a craft-based, primarily individual, activity confined to objects and aesthetics. Rather, it reflects current practice by exploiting design as a creative process for identifying and solving problems through techniques that enable lateral thinking and the iterative prototyping and testing of possible solutions. Moreover, it can be applied not just to the form and function of products or the look and feel of graphics, but to the development of strategy and process and the creation of services.

The methodology we used in our work with schools is based on the principle that the most effective design comes from involving end-users in a consultative and inclusive process.

This kind of design practice is used successfully across a diverse range of sectors in business. When Clarks Shoes decided to move into the growing market for outdoor activity footwear it carried out ethnographic research with customers that fed through to the design specification of its new Active Mover range. Nokia anticipates trends by working closely with phone users and Stannah Stairlifts preceded a substantial overhaul of its products by working with both their users and with the carers and relatives who might participate in their choice and commissioning.

There is ample evidence more generally that the use of design at a strategic level has marked benefits for businesses. The share prices of design-led businesses listed on the Stock Exchange out-performed the key FTSE indices by 200% over a 10-year period. Meanwhile, businesses which regard design as integral to their operations report positive impact across practically every measure of performance, including market share, sales, profits and competitiveness.

Failure to transfer user-centred, strategic design principles to BSF will bring with it the risk that we produce buildings which are efficiently procured and outwardly impressive but which do not meet today's learning needs or have the flexibility to meet tomorrow's.

5. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations relate directly to these issues:

- Role of design.
- BSF governance and process.
- Sharing best practice.

5.1 *Role of Design*

Recommendation: Use design process to engage stakeholders to create their vision at least 12 months ahead of formal procurement and well before the BSF Wave begins in their area.

A significant body of work, supported by DfES, has developed design thinking applied to learning environments. This work, by the Design Council and other organisations including CAFE, School Works and the Sorrell Foundation, was conceived and developed to investigate new ways of designing and procuring flexible learning environments that can contribute directly to better educational attainment. Chiefly, these initiatives attempted to make users central to creating environments capable of meeting their needs now and into the future.

International examples provide a glimpse of the results such an approach could yield. In San Diego, an ex-Navy warehouse has become a school designed around the principles of modern office environments. There are classrooms, but also flexible spaces for group interaction. Children spend half their time in classes and the other half on self-directed projects with one-to-one support. Highly motivated by this environment, they typically arrive up to 45 minutes early for school.

At Valby school in Copenhagen, pupils are co-creators rather than passive consumers of their learning experience. They even source, prepare and sell their own food as part of a strategy to foster self-reliance as well as entrepreneurial and inter-personal skills.

Moving towards schools like this means placing their users—teachers, pupils, parents, adult learners—at the heart of a creative design process, giving them the lead role in discovering and meeting their own needs.

The Design Council worked with 12 secondary schools to embed such a process, involving teachers, support staff, governors, parents and pupils. Each school took part in two days of workshops, run by a design-skilled facilitator provided by the Design Council. This included a series of exercises to encourage participants to think about their school in new ways through techniques such as brainstorming. Participants worked together to create a vision statement for the school and identify barriers to realising it. Later, emphasis shifted to bringing the vision to life and identifying broad themes and objectives. The workshops culminated in a vote on which issues to pursue. Generally, the Design Council led on one of the resulting projects, while the school managed others itself.

These sessions often delivered unexpected insights. At Alder Grange School in Lancashire, a discussion focusing on pupils' concentration revealed that they weren't drinking enough water, despite the school's attempts to persuade them to do so. The reason turned out to be that the toilets were so unpleasant that, to avoid using them, pupils preferred to go without water. The design process also led to a solution. The school had been committed to building a new technology block with money provided to help it adapt to its new technology college status. Instead, it converted a set of gym changing rooms into the technology centre and used the remaining money to create a new toilet block.

The Deputy Headteacher of Alder Grange, David Hampson, said: "This is something we would never have thought of ourselves". Commenting on the value of the project as a whole, Hampson added: "Probably the main benefit was the design process. It's opened the eyes of staff who work here and encouraged them to realise that they work in an environment they can control and have an impact on." He also says the design process has fostered ideas that will be fed in to the BSF process, which will remodel Alder Grange.

Significantly, Hampson and Alder Grange Head teacher Ian Hullah are so enthusiastic about the design process that they have taken it to seven local schools which are to be reconfigured and rationalised as part of BSF. Hampson says the process provides a framework allowing teams to "pull problems apart" and is especially valuable "when you've got a problem and you've no idea what the solution is".

Elsewhere in Lancashire, Great Sankey High School has embedded a design-led approach in all it does. Head teacher Alan Yates said: "The process has helped us in several ways. It's emphasised the importance of clearly defining what the Holy Grail is before you start looking for it. We've also learnt a way of involving the whole—school students, parents, everybody—and getting ownership."

"We're changing our school day and our curriculum as well. We couldn't have moved that quickly without this process. We've adopted it and internalised it—but these techniques are applicable anywhere."

These experiences demonstrate the centrality of a design process in helping schools define the vision that should underpin decisions with large-scale procurement implications.

This process increases school communities' understanding of what is possible, enables them to play a fuller role in the formal design process and helps to ensure that they are participants in change rather than the object of change.

Recommendation: Use a design process to create a Learning Principles document.

During the BSF process itself, an in-built design mechanism will enable stakeholders and end-users systematically to identify issues at key points.

Schools must be given the chance to challenge and correct unexpected circumstances, and then define, create, develop and deliver solutions. Engaging teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in a structured design process to clarify and regularly refine and redefine the vision for their school and what sorts of learning environments they need is crucial. If this engagement is missing, there is a high risk that the desired transformation will not be achieved.

DfES should require that a proportion of any capital expenditure over £1 million be spent on facilitating users' involvement, so they can participate in all stages of the process. A small amount of spending here will help to achieve better outcomes and protect the residual value of the new schools.

An early tangible outcome of this spend could be the compilation of a Learning Principles document in which all parties reach a consensus on their core values and agree their *modus operandi* for the coming years.

Recommendation: Prototype concepts before, throughout and after the build.

Opportunities must be created to share prototypes of the components of new learning environments resulting from BSF.

The knowledge and learning from such prototyping exercises should be captured and made available to all to share, adopt or modify to suit the delivery of their own local visions.

In a 2005 CABE/RIBA report, Professor Stephen Heppell suggested it would be better to use 3.7% of the total spend for prototyping components which can be configured to suit any individual school, than incur the later and heavier cost of fixing problems in a finished school that could have been avoided earlier.

Prototyping activities will need to be funded with research and development money. Therefore it will be necessary to ring-fence a proportion of the total capital budget to cover ongoing iteration and improvement once the building is in use and there is measurable data about the performance of the new learning environment.

5.2 *BSF governance and process*

Recommendation: Review the relationship between the bodies implementing BSF and their respective powers.

To deliver the best outcomes, the BSF process should bring together the stakeholders in a school project—planners, architects, designers, users, community, policy makers—to create and realise a shared educational vision. If it does not do this, it is a highly complex process with the potential for tension between competing interests, timelines and priorities.

Responsibility for all aspects of local education rests with local authorities, which are also handed a mandate as “strategic commissioners on an area-wide basis”. Yet operational control of BSF rests with Local Education Partnerships (LEPs), which are tasked with ensuring that local authorities deploy BSF funds efficiently and effectively. They act as the single point of contact for procuring all services needed to deliver the investment programme, they manage the sub-contractors and enable project delivery through a mix of procurement routes.

A further potential complicating factor is the relationship between LEPs and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), the vehicle for including communities in the governance and development of public services. Do they have distinctive, complementary or conflicting roles? And what will be the impact of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) between local authorities and LSPs on the priorities for delivery of local services, including education? Could these partnerships actually compete for the same resources?

Also, if the BSF process itself is taken to the letter, it is possible that the people who use schools—teachers, pupils, governors, support staff, the community—will be unable to participate after development of the Outline Business Case (Stage 2 in the BSF process). Two or three years could then pass between the creation of the school’s vision and its being realised, without any involvement from the school during this period.

There is a risk that the school’s vision may be lost or diluted during this period. This risk would be offset by Design Advisors, usually a firm of architects, who protect the initial vision through to the finished school. Appointed by the LA and independent of the LEP, their roles include getting the vision into the strategic business case, implementing Design Quality Indicators, briefing LEPs, advising stakeholders on emerging designs and monitoring design quality during construction.

Clarity is needed on how the respective interests and responsibilities can be defined to create a collective, effective strategy for educational transformation. Above all, the interests of the users of schools must be safeguarded throughout the BSF process.

5.3 *Sharing best practice*

Recommendation: Share best practice by developing Learning Environment Incubators.

It will be necessary to create and resource a mechanism for schools to share design insights and ideas. Currently, hard-won learning about effective school design, including ways to integrate school organisation with new design processes, is held only by single institutions and is thus effectively lost to the wider BSF programme.

The knowledge and learning from prototyping exercises must be captured and made available for all to share, adopt or modify to suit the delivery of their own local visions.

In addition, any other school should have the opportunity to “incubate” and nurture a new idea that its stakeholders believe will bring a solution to a local issue. This would tackle the very real issue of “experience deficit”—very few if any BSF participants will have direct experience of being a client in a major capital project.

Appendix 1

designmyschool.com

designmyschool.com is a password-protected website that provides a toolkit to enable school communities better to understand their needs and gauge opinion. The website began as an online metric centred on an interactive questionnaire.

It is simultaneously a knowledge management resource, a reference point for schools and pupils, and a tool for discovering what people actually think about their school environments. Even as a prototype on limited release, 300 organisations representing 1,000 schools have expressed an interest in using designmyschool.

At present the site is aimed at secondary schools, but it could be developed to encompass primary schools and provide resources for specific user groups such as parents and school governors. Ultimately, it could become a web-based portal for all school stakeholders as well as architects, contractors and other strategic bodies.

The site contains bright, informal and easy to understand explanations of the design process, case studies and video explanations, message boards and questionnaires. It presents users with simple questions which schools often find it difficult to ask themselves.

The seven broad areas of inquiry are:

- Your school.
- Decision making.
- Lunchtime.
- Learning styles.
- Canteen.
- Communications.
- Your classroom.

Each area is analysed by asking participants six to eight questions. The Lunchtime theme, for example, is broken down into the following questions:

- Have you ever been bullied during lunchtime?
- Do you often skip eating at lunch to do other activities during this period?
- Do you look forward to lunchtime?
- Do you think lunchtime is at the right time during the day?
- Do you think lunchtime is for the right length of time?
- Are you able to get everything you want to done during this period?

After completing the survey, participants can review their answers and see how their responses compare with those of the rest of their year group and their entire school. Also, results can be compared with all other participating schools. A good deal of the site, however, is dedicated to explanations of the design process, the idea of co-design and instructions on how to use tools such as brainstorming, speed dating and prototyping.

DfES is exploring with the Design Council how to promote wider use of and development of the site. This would ensure that designmyschool.com and the learning from the broader Design Council work could be integrated with the BSF programme.

Comments from users:

“Designmyschool is going to be used as one of the cornerstones of the Lancashire strategy. We are planning to use the site as a vehicle to engage and involve all of our students in the decision-making process as part of the *Every Child Matters* agenda.”

Ged Mitchell, Manchester LA

“We are running a design programme with 10 schools and plan to incorporate designmyschool into the programme of design activities.”

Sue Mulvenny, Director Lancashire LA

“We are a pilot BSF school for Sheffield and would like to use designmyschool to involve pupils in designing all areas of the school and to look at best practice in other schools.”

Ray Fellows, Barnsley Design Centre

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by School Works

School Works welcomes the Select Committee’s inquiry into Sustainable School Design.

In January we sent the Select Committee a letter (*not printed*) outlining some of the learning we have developed over the last five years. We would like to reiterate the points we made in our previous letter and highlight a number of other issues that we feel are important.

Since 1999 School Works has been at the cutting edge of developing effective stakeholder involvement in the design of school buildings. Our work has included:

- Our pilot project at Kingsdale School in Southwark.
- DfES funded demonstration sites in Building Schools For the Future LAs including; pathfinder LA Bradford, Sunderland LA and Northampton LA.
- Working on bids with two consortia in the early Bradford BSF pathfinder, including the winning bidder Integrated Bradford. This will involve continuing work with Integrated Bradford and Bradford schools as the project develops.
- Participatory design processes for BSF local authorities; Knowsley, Hackney, Islington, Manchester, North Lincolnshire, Milton Keynes, Southwark.

- Membership of the DfES School Design Advisory Council.
- Acting as Advisors to consortia on user involvement strategies during bids for work under Building Schools for the Future.
- Ongoing advice to teachers, staff and pupils on involvement strategies working on BSF and the Primary School Capital programme. We are currently advising Dorset LA on their stakeholder strategy and will run a design festival with them in May.
- We have also been involved in the public debate on the design and build of Academies.
- Our publications include: The School Works Toolkit, Learning Buildings, A-Z of School Build and Design, From the Inside Out-Early Years setting which involve and inspire, with the DfES Designing school for Extended Services.

Our key emphasis has been on the involvement of users in the design process of new schools. There is a strong case for the benefits of involving school users in the design of school buildings. School Works and other participatory projects have shown the wide ranging, tangible benefits to be gained by involving people in shaping their local surroundings. Educationally, being involved in a design and build projects can help motivate pupils to feel a sense of belonging and stimulate learning and development. Kingsdale School in Southwark saw its GCSE results improve from 11% A–C grades in 2001 to 47% in 2004 as a result of the work of its visionary head, who saw the benefits of user involvement in highlighting issues with the school building that were causing learning and behavioural problems. He worked with the school community, the architects and School Works to solve them. Financially it is essential too; money will be wasted if school buildings don't fully respond to the needs of users.

User involvement is key to ensuring the sustainability of school buildings. It will ensure that the technology of “green” buildings are used and understood effectively by their users and also that the built environment itself becomes a learning tool. In many cases sustainable design solutions for school buildings work better where the school has ownership over their building. If the users of a building do not understand or take ownership of expensive complex equipment it will be left unused because it is not understood.

In addition involving users in the design of a building will help to ensure that schools are fully inclusive environments and effectively support the needs of the community. This will help in the delivery of the Extended Schools agenda, but also support the move towards creating sustainable communities.

As a result of our work School Works have a number of issues which we would like to raise at the Education Select Committee inquiry:

- Over the past year we have become increasingly concerned that participation in school design is falling through the gaps in the BSF process.
- We suggest that there needs to be a more joined up approach to the work around citizenship, sustainable community development and the *Every Child Matters* agenda including the Extended Schools agenda. Well designed school buildings can support the implementation of these policies.
- On a strategic level we feel that the Government's message on participation is in danger of being misunderstood. For example, tools such as the Design Quality indicators are essential for benchmarking design quality; however used alone they will not encourage school communities to think in a transformational way about the design of their school building and will not go far enough in encouraging user participation. In our view, this message is not being delivered clearly enough.
- We've already seen some attempts to ensure participation in building projects, not least in the Bristol and Bradford BSF bids. The current bidding and procurement process is very short and doesn't allow enough time for serious design considerations. We are concerned that local authorities and, as a consequence, construction supply chains bidding to win projects will see participation as a luxury rather than a requirement in the procurement process. From our experience, we believe that this will inevitably lead to a waste of time, money, resources and loss of good ideas.
- We found during our work with BSF pathfinder authorities that the current bidding process creates some unnecessary duplication in terms of contractors discussions with schools on design. Ideally this process could be rationalised so that communication between wider school communities and contractors was conducted as “a single conversation”.
- User involvement strategies are not currently being addressed early enough in the design process by LAs, schools and contractors. Without this early preparation participation will be tokenistic at best.
- In authorities where participation does happen, quality varies greatly ranging from meaningless consultation to visionary best practice. There is a need for a national minimum standard for participation in procurement strategies if we are to ensure a meaningful dialogue.
- We are calling on government to place mandatory participation firmly at the centre of the school design and build programme, in the same way it does for a range of other publicly driven initiatives, from regeneration projects to social care programmes. It needs to be explicit.

Memorandum submitted by School Works on behalf of the British Council for School Environments (BCSE)

I am writing in response to the call for submissions for the Select Committee on sustainable schools. I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a new organisation—The British Council for School Environments (BCSE).

The BCSE arises out of discussion between a number of thought leaders in the school buildings sector including; School Works, RIBA, The Rayne Foundation and BRE.

From our extensive experience in the field of school design, construction and procurement we believe that Building Schools for the Future and the other capital school projects, such as the Academies and primary capital programme, present a momentous opportunity for everyone involved in both education and the construction and design of schools. However, there is a real chance that some of this investment will not be maximised and, worse, that significant opportunities will be lost.

For this vision to be realised in an effective and sustainable way there is a great need for genuine co-operation within industry, local authorities and schools on an unprecedented scale. Experience and best practice is not currently shared. This raises the issue of best value for the consumer and for the tax payer. Innovation cannot be imposed but must be owned and shared.

Following a period of extensive research and consultation with leading organisations, School Works and an interim board¹ have developed the British Council for School Environments to support and act as an advocate for this essential co-operation. BCSE is an umbrella body monitoring and promoting good practice in the design of learning environments, and feeding back to Government on behalf of those stakeholders involved in the design, construction and use of school buildings.

The BCSE will be a membership charity and already has 36 Founding Members who are committed to supporting the development of the organisation. These include:

Aedas Architects Ltd	Jo Richardson Community School
Amec Investments	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Association of Teachers and Lecturers	London Academy
Bovis Lend Lease	Milton Keynes Council
Buro Four	Mouchel Parkman Babcock
Buschow Henley Architects	NPS Property Consultants
Capita Symonds	Ryder HKS
Carillion	Stoke City Council
CM Parker Browne	Waring & Netts Architects
Davis Langdon	Wates
Devon County Council	Fenstanton Primary School
Dorset County Council	Carlton Hill Primary School
Ecophon	CITB Construction Skills
Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects	Skanska
Galliford Try Investments	BDP Architects
Hampshire County Council	Nightingale Associates
Hawksmoor Engineering	
Hertfordshire County Council	
HOK Architects	

The main aims of the British Council for School Environments are to:

- Support its members in developing quality learning environments.
- Bridge gaps between the world of design and construction and that of education and other providers.
- Provide the mechanisms for the sharing of experience so that good practice and innovation can be shared and so that mistakes are not repeated.
- Stimulate creativity and support best practice.

The British Council for School Environments feels that the issue of sustainable schools is extremely important and would be pleased to contribute to the inquiry. Following the Select Committee's call for submissions for the inquiry into sustainable schools we invited a number of our partners to participate in a discussion on the subject with a view to sharing the views of a slice of those involved in school design and build with you.

The BCSE will be launched on the 19 June at the joint School Works/BCSE Global Learning Environments summit to be held at the recently opened Jo Richardson Community School.

¹ Interim Board members currently include: Tim Joss, Rayne Foundation; Peter Clegg, Feliden Clegg Bradley; Mike Inman, Stoke County Council; Sally Hindle, Fenstanton Primary School; Andrew Buck, Jo Richardson Community College; Keith Snook, RIBA and Terry Wyatt, Hoare Lea.

BRITISH COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

The British Council for School Environments is a new umbrella body monitoring and promoting good practice in the design of learning environments, and feeding back to Government on behalf of those stakeholders involved in the design, construction and use of school buildings.

BACKGROUND

On the 16 May 2006 the British Council for School Environments gathered together a number of key partners all of whom are experts working within the field of school buildings to discuss issues around sustainable schools with a view to submitting our thoughts to the Education and Skills Select Committee on sustainable schools. Representatives included:

Chair— Ty Goddard—School Works/BCSE
 Roderic Bunn—BSRIA
 Ben Harrop—Carrillion
 James Roden—Catalyst Lend Lease
 Steven Jenkins—Buro 4
 Martin Mayfield—Arup
 Peter Smith—Education Advisor, Waring and Netts
 Brian Johnson—Aedas Architects
 Simon Henley—Bushow Henley Architects
 Paul Hyett—Ryder HKS Architects
 Kate Reynolds—Mouchel Parkman
 Mike Peters—Education Adviser
 Stefan Jakobek—HOK Architects

The BCSE seminar on Sustainable schools was intended to provide a forum for the sharing of experience and good practice between BCSE Members. It is not intended to reflect the official policy of the BCSE or the individual organisations involved but does raise some interesting points.

ISSUES

Roderic Bunn from BSRIA (a consultancy, test and research organisation working with construction and building services companies) was editor of the CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers) Journal during the 1990's and has since been researching a number of case studies of sustainable schools for the DfES. The findings that follow derive from analysis of those case studies, matched with guidance developed and issued by the Usable Buildings Trust (UBT), of which Roderic Bunn is a trustee.

Discussion was based around findings from these schools, the work that participants had themselves been involved in and the key points on sustainability:

- Energy—Water.
- Local regeneration and Wellbeing.
- Environmental and ecological.
- CO₂ emissions important.

1. BRIEFING AND PROCESS

The best sustainable schools design comes when the schools and LAs engage fully in the briefing process and are supported throughout by experts. The best schools spent a lot of time refining the brief and involving all designers in the developing the design concept.

Those schools that had dedicated involvement from the governing board, such as Riverhead Infants School in Sevenoaks which had construction experts on hand to help with the briefing process, tended to produce the best sustainable designs. This happened when there was clarity within the design process as to who the client was (ie the school rather than the LA).

There is currently no specific advice to schools or local authorities on the best way to procure a sustainable school. In addition there is no standard way to develop a brief for a school design and this leads to varied quality. The process of procuring a school differs however among local authorities and this can have an impact on the extent to which school communities are involved in briefing and design. In some authorities there are issues around a lack of capacity within the local authority in terms of sustainable expertise.

The level of sustainable expertise varies greatly from local authority to local authority.

One architect who worked at a sustainable school said:

“There is some basic stuff that is still being done wrong. For example, architects being asked to design a building three months before they ask any other profession to look at it. That should be a no-fundable process. I think the DfES should not fund unless you have a fully-appointed team. You can still find local authorities where the architects are on the top floor and the engineers (if

they've got any) are on different floors. And when I ask for the m&e guys to join the architects and structural engineers in discussion, the m&e guys say 'what do you want us for—the architects haven't designed it yet'. They don't realise they are just as much a part of the design team as the architect”.

Local authorities do things very differently from each other. In terms of good ones, we are working with Monmouth County Council on a primary school and they are a client like Cheshire County Council who understand partnering. With Cheshire we had four client liaison people covering education, property and building management, and those people did not change all the way through the project. On another local authority, we just saw one person and have never met anyone else, and she was new. But at Monmouth, we have four people again. And in Manchester, we are working with a local authority which has huge aspirations to get the framework in place [. . .]”

There was also concern amongst participants that the current competitive tendering process for work under Building School for the Future leaves little room for rigorous briefing in the early stages of contract. In addition there were issues around the high cost of bidding for consortia. It was felt that this process prices out smaller local architects firms and contractors who could contribute to the sustainability of the building in terms of local job creation and local sourcing of materials.

2. TECHNOLOGY

Technology is often baffling to the users of school buildings. It is also often difficult to manage. In some of the case studies, efforts had been made to include technologies in the design mix that are thought to automatically endow the school with sustainability credentials. This includes PVs, wind turbines, wood chip boilers, and rainwater and grey water recovery.

Some of these systems present a greater technical challenge and management burden than others. Rainwater recovery for example, has largely proved to be a “fit and forget” technology, which requires modest facilities management. It is largely successful in most of the schools studied. It also has an educational value.

By contrast, some schools have been given highly demanding “icons” of renewable technology. In some cases, the PVs and turbines are not working properly, owing to technical glitches or a lack of understanding by the school caretaker or local authority. In most cases the energy budget for the school has not been managed effectively, so even if the technology was contributing to reducing the school's fossil fuel demands, there was no evidence to support it.

There are cases where schools have been equipped with this type of feature and where staff were collating a lot of energy data. However, no energy targets for the school have been set, and no real assessment of energy use was being carried out. In the absence of proper energy monitoring and targeting, it has not been possible to understand the true energy performance of the so-called sustainable school and the data becomes irrelevant.

3. BUILDING OWNERSHIP

Sustainable school buildings appear to be more effective when the users have control and ownership of their own building.

This is particularly notable in schools which have “Icons of Sustainability” such as wind turbines and solar panels which were added to a building or built into a design without thinking about whether the users of the building know how to use, maintain and make full use of them. When they work these Icons can be used as a curriculum tool and can inspire local communities, however if the school community don't know how to maintain it they will fall into disrepair. A number of the case study schools had these “icons of sustainability” that did not necessarily work and were not the best way to create a sustainable building.

Occupants like buildings that can respond to them, usable controls and interfaces, buildings designed to be largely simply self-managing and discomfort alleviation systems: openable windows and vents for example. In some schools, control is done off-site by the local authority, and the school staff are unable to switch off heating systems when they need to. This policy tends to lead to a “default to on” mentality, which is not energy-efficient, but is easy to manage.

A particular concern for experts is that some school buildings have sustainable elements that were implemented by the local authority. If those schools were to become Trust Schools for educational reasons, ownership and management of the school and its assets will transfer to the school governing board. There is a risk that complex energy saving technology, procured and managed by the local authority (possibly remotely using electronic systems) will be inherited by the schools. Most schools lack the resources, willingness and time to manage non-educational equipment like wind turbines and photovoltaic panels, leading to the problems described above.

4. ENERGY

In most of the schools studied gas and electricity consumption is both higher than the designers expected, and higher than DfES benchmarks.

In general, gas consumption is higher because heating systems seem to run for longer. This is particularly true of extended schools where schools are used by the community during evenings and weekends.

Electricity consumption is often greater than the best practice target, and often higher. Again, without proper energy monitoring and targeting, it is difficult to identify where the power is going. Partly it is systems defaulting to on, such as lighting (particularly of out-of-hours use), but the profusion of ICT also contributes, with a lack of control over electronic whiteboards, projectors, computers, and catering equipment like fridge freezers which are left on during holiday times.

With the development of the use of ICT in schools and other electrical equipment it is not unusual for new schools to use much more electricity than historic good practice benchmarks—a problem that needs to be tackled vigorously in the next generation of school buildings if they are to be energy-efficient.

At present, high electricity consumption (which has a large impact on greenhouse gas emissions) and the use of gas for heating mean that one particular case study school comes out above the combined benchmark for CO₂. However, once electricity savings have been implemented and the biomass boiler is working reliably, emissions should fall below the good practice benchmark. This case study demonstrates the importance routine monitoring and fine-tuning in the year after occupancy of new buildings—even the very best ones—are to achieve their design potential.

In many cases, designers of sustainable schools have not set meaningful energy targets for the school, and even if they did, they did not take account of likely hours of occupation. Without that discipline in place from the outset, it's not surprising that the energy use is not being monitored correctly.

Where energy targets have been set, designers have been forced to use old or onerous energy targets, in the form of *Energy Consumption Guide 73* (last revised in 1998, using even older data) or *Building Bulletin 87*, which seems to demand an energy performance that is far too difficult to attain.

In addition to this many of the Building Bulletins create conflicts between sustainability benchmarks and regulations. For example there is a particular conflict between aims for—sustainable buildings and passive ventilation solutions and new acoustics regulations.

5. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

There are issues around the inherent conflict which sometimes arises with policies from different areas of government. For example, the DfES's drive for electronic whiteboards and the rise in the use of ICT may be at odds with the drive for energy sustainability.

6. CURRICULUM

Sustainable buildings can be very useful teaching tools for young people. Rainwater recovery systems for example are proving very useful for teaching children about climate change issues.

Architect-sustainable school:

“We don't say that sustainability is good because it is green, we say that in schools, sustainability is the means by which the school will get better results. So the rainwater harvesting should not be regarded as a piece of m&e kit. To value engineer out the rainwater harvesting system should be similar to value engineering out the textbooks.”

“What we say is that it should be linked into the curriculum cycle on water use: where does the water go, and how does it get back to rainwater that falls on our roofs? If I could get 11-year-olds coming out of primary school understanding kWh and kilograms of carbon dioxide, and energy impact through cause and effect—switch the light off and save carbon—we would do more by that than by employing the best environmental consultants.”

7. LIFE CYCLE COSTINGS

It was felt that DfES view schools in terms of capital and not in terms of life cycle costs. The area guidelines and building costings are not based on longer term life cycle considerations.

The development of Local Education Partnerships as part of Building Schools for the Future delivery strategies will mean that relationships between LAs, contractors and schools could last up to 25 years. This provides a great opportunity for thinking about life-cycle costs.

If new schools will be expected to achieve a BREEAM excellent rating The British Council for School Environments would be interested to find out whether this has been costed by the DfES. One particular concern of participants was that LAs, school and architects are currently saying that they are finding a funding gap in BSF and are often unable to fully deliver their sustainable vision. One particular authority has done a lot of work during the brief development phase in developing a sustainable vision with the school. However, they are now unsure whether they can afford to deliver it.

8. FEEDBACK

We need to make post-occupancy feedback routine, and champion the methodologies most appropriate to schools.

Teachers, parents and pupils expect designers of schools to be experts on the performance of schools they create. This is not normally the case, as people who produce buildings approach it as a project. These people are composed of clients, designers (architect, engineers of various specialisms), local authority representatives/experts, project managers, contractors and subcontractors. The people do not remain a team long enough after the project has completed to understand much about how the buildings they have produced actually work. There is a currently a lack of formal feedback loops.

As a result, users rarely make the most of a school's design potential, and there are large differences between expectations and outcomes. Designers also can continue to repeat flawed prescriptions. Conversely, they may not realise when they have a success on their hands that they could replicate.

In short, in wanting to improve the design of schools so that they are sustainable, we are largely expecting more from an industry that does not always understand what constitutes energy efficiency, and certainly does not take custody of building performance beyond the defects liability period.

We need to develop a culture of feedback analysis, and use the results of that analysis to improve subsequent designs.

Some form of relevant Post Occupancy Evaluation is essential if we are not to continue the mistakes made in the past.

REFURBISHMENT

There needs to be more thought put into creating sustainable schools where refurbishment is planned. How can staff, LAs, architects and contractors create effective and value for money refurbished environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussion highlighted a number of recommendations that we would like to share with the Select Committee:

— *Briefing and process*

1. Governing bodies and schools need more expert assistance and advice on developing briefs for “Sustainable schools”.
2. DfES or PFS should develop a standard framework for developing a brief. This should look to be flexible enough not to stifle innovation but should provide a structure around which discussion can happen.
3. There should be some scrutiny of the value for money of the procurement and tendering process.
4. Change the procurement process to take a broader view of design, involving all designers in partnering-type contracts and taking into consideration the life of the building.
5. Don't procure what can't be managed. Sustainable schools with icons of renewable energy (wind turbines, biomass boilers, photovoltaics) can demand more than their occupants and management are prepared—or able—to supply. If management is over-burdened, the symptoms of under-performance are very likely to come to the surface as occupant dissatisfaction and/or energy wastage.
6. Get the essentials right. In the urge to deliver a school design that is defined as being sustainable by the amount of visible renewable energy technology—wind turbines and PVs—clients and designers alike are not getting the basics right. As we've seen with IT, complex heating and lighting control systems are often out of control due to inefficient design, overly complex design or inadequate controls.
7. In moving to sustainability, school client and designers should be looking for:
 - Reductions in energy loads, through more efficient and better-controlled fabric and equipment.
 - Gentle engineering, with improvements in controls.
 - Closer matches between demand and supply, seeking where possible to use information and feedback rather than renewable energy technology to achieve the required conditions with minimal waste.
8. The occupier should define the level of management they regard as reasonable; and the designers should make clear the level of support the building is likely to demand.

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- *Ownership*
 1. Users should be provided with a “How the building works” handover document.
 2. Clear guidelines and easily accessible guidelines on the types of systems available.
 3. Clear management and agreement of expectation with regards to “Icons of sustainability”.
 4. Technology and systems should be kept simple and easy to use.
 5. There should be clear lines of responsibility in schools and LAs for sustainable strategies. Leadership should start with the client.
 - *Energy*
 1. Encourage a study to check energy consumption across a community to see whether there are savings in energy due to the fact that people are using extended schools services. Is energy used in school being balanced by savings in energy consumption in the local community?
 2. The next generation of sustainable schools must be based on a set of energy performance benchmarks that are meaningful and updated regularly. This should be a priority task for DfES and local authorities and the design institutions.
 3. Designers must be encouraged to set energy standards for the building during the design process.
 4. There should be encouragement for a voluntary code for energy reporting and labelling of schools. (A voluntary energy and CO₂ declaration system is being set up with Carbon Trust money by the Usable Buildings Trust (www.usablebuildings.co.uk) with the British Property Federation for offices, based on actual energy use. There was also a declaration system recently announced for housing.)
 - *ICT and communications technology*
 1. There has to be more consistent approach within the DfES for sustainable technologies.
 2. There has to be better guidance from the DfES on what constitutes acceptable energy consumption from electrical systems, that takes into account the consequences of the Extended Schools programme (out of hours occupation) and electronic technology like interactive whiteboards that are a must-have for educational reasons. That advice must follow-through to a new set of energy target.
 - *Feedback and Post Occupancy Evaluation*
 1. There is a need for Independent Trusts, local authorities, the DfES, school boards of governors and contractors to realise that follow through-and feedback are not an option, but an essential part of the process.
 2. Ensure that there will be an expectation of feedback and Post Occupancy Evaluation written into contracts at the beginning of procurement processes.
 3. Develop a sound platform of techniques and benchmarks.
 4. Apportion money in the budget for a soft-landing after initial occupancy, involving fine-tuning and optimisation for a sustained low energy performance. The normal default of school operation must meet the design expectation.
 5. It is a challenge when technology outpaces capacity and skills.
 - *Other recommendations:*
 1. Revisiting Building bulletins, particularly BB 98 and 99 area guidelines.
 2. There is a need for well researched exemplar case studies.

Overall: Keep it simple, do it well and only then get clever.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

This short paper sets out CABE’s response to the Committee’s Sustainable Schools Inquiry. Before addressing the specific questions asked by the Committee, we set out CABE’s role and experience in relation to school design.

1. CABE was set up by the first Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in 1999 with the mission to promote high quality architecture and design within the built environment in England. CABE’s vision is of a country that by 2010 will lead Europe in understanding and harnessing the ability of great buildings and spaces to transform neighbourhoods, to generate social value and to sustain economic growth.
2. CABE is now jointly funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The sponsorship arrangements are with the DCMS.

3. CABE's enabling programme provides hands-on expert advice to public sector bodies that are procuring new buildings or masterplans, giving strategic advice on how to help get better value from their projects through better design. The advice covers issues such as project vision, client resources, briefing and competitive selection of design and developer teams.

4. CABE is currently involved in supporting all 38 local authorities involved in the Building Schools for the Future programme up to wave 3. We are in discussions with DfES to define the best way to assist in future waves.

5. This involvement builds on our work with previous school building programmes, before BSF. Our network of advisers ("enablers") has provided client-side support to 27 PFI "clusters" between 2000 and 2003. These clusters will eventually build 110 secondary schools, the majority of which are yet to open.

WHAT WE KNOW

1. As a result of this direct involvement in the procurement and delivery of new school buildings, CABE has derived significant insight into what works and what doesn't. This was used to help inform the DfES in its development of the BSF programme, and to inform our own work in supporting local authority clients.

2. In addition, CABE has recently completed a comprehensive audit of recently completed (pre-BSF) secondary schools. This review, to be published in summer 2006, provides an:

- Objective and independent evaluation by design experts of the design quality of a representative sample of recently completed new-build secondary school buildings in England using a range of procurement routes across a broad spread of regions.
- Examination of what factors affect design quality most.
- Assessment of the effect of CABE's support on the quality of secondary schools built, or in the process of being built.

3. The audit reviewed 52 completed schools, including PFI schools and those procured through other routes, including City Academies. These were assessed against a standard set of design criteria. The schools reviewed were completed pre-BSF, but we also gathered evidence of emerging designs for wave one schools. The audit confirms the messages from our direct involvement:

- Most new schools are not yet realising the opportunity presented by the ambitious building programme for educational transformation, particularly in using inspirational design to support delivery of the curriculum.
- All of the schools rated good or better by our audit were completed in 2005, the last year studied, which suggests that things are getting better—although early indications of design quality in wave one schools are not consistently encouraging.
- Therefore, while BSF represents a potential step forward for school design, we believe that rapid and continuous improvement is still required to ensure that we provide schools fit for the 21st century, rather than the 20th.
- Schools reviewed in the audit that had been supported by CABE performed better, and CABE's support was greatly valued by the client side. CABE's continued and expanded contribution will be essential to realising the potential of the BSF programme.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS—ANSWERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustainability

1. *Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?*

It is too early to tell. But sustainability is not an explicit aim of the programme and there are few mechanisms within it to promote or incentivise sustainable design and construction (see comments on question three below regarding environmental sustainability). In terms of social and economic sustainability, it is CABE's view that good design is sustainable design. In particular, this means "future proofing" buildings by designing in flexible and adaptable spaces. With the demands of education and learning changing rapidly, this is nowhere more important than in schools. Designing schools that can meet the needs of new learning models means designing places that have the capacity to change.

2. *Will schools built under BSF satisfy the Government's definition of sustainable development as being that "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"?*

Whether or not a school can be considered to be sustainable will largely depend on strategic decisions made early on in the process. These will include where the school is placed, the orientation of the buildings, and the landscape design of school grounds. Local authorities are not well-versed in writing a brief to make the most of the opportunities

Encouragingly, a small number of schools visited as part of CABE's audit exhibited a range of flexible solutions that made steps towards meeting the Building Schools for the Future agenda for transformational, "future-proofed", 21st century environments.

However, most new schools are designed to tight spatial briefs limited by financial constraints. A loose fit design would clearly allow for more future flexibility, but this is often not possible within existing procurement rules. Classrooms designed to minimum floor areas present the single biggest barrier to being able to vary everyday teaching methods to suit changing needs.

Devices to generate power such as combined heat and power plants, wind turbines etc. could also supply energy to other local developments. A sustainable school provides obvious ways to augment and illustrate the curriculum, as evidenced by the St Francis of Assisi Academy in Liverpool.

3. How effective are the tools currently used in BSF to secure sustainable school design, including the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)?

Compliance with BREEAM "very good" is the only tool within BSF for securing environmentally sustainable school design. While the standard has strengths, many people have identified weaknesses. Within the sustainable design community, it is thought that "very good", the required rating for new BSF schools, is quite easy to achieve: for example, it is possible to achieve a "very good" rating by installing a hi-tech solution such as a wind turbine, and fail to deliver on more basic but essential elements. This makes a school expensive, and provides plenty of opportunities for technical failure, while not necessarily delivering good energy performance in use. DfES should investigate the robustness of the BREEAM for schools rating and raise the target to "excellent" for all new-build schools. A similar tool should be developed for use on all refurbished and remodelled schools.

Given that BREEAM is the only driver of environmental sustainability and that we are effectively replacing or renewing an entire class of buildings for upwards of 50 years, we believe that BREEAM "excellent" should be the required standard for schools built through BSF. Alternatively, as DfES publish energy usage and water consumption statistics for 2000 schools and analyses best and worst performing deciles (this was last published in 2003), a performance level that has a measure of continuous improvement against this data could be used.

Future learning needs

1. How effective is BSF at defining and responding to learners' current and future needs? What role can and do school users play in this process?

The goal of BSF is to deliver educational transformation; however, this is very ill-defined, particularly as it relates to the provision of buildings. Consequently, we believe the translation into built form of new models of learning is likely to be variable and dependent upon the clarity of vision of individual head teachers and LAs. That the involvement of educationalists is patchy, and severely time-constrained, means there are significant risks that BSF schools will not take full advantage of the opportunity to facilitate genuine educational transformation during the building's life cycle.

2. How effectively is BSF working with schools to develop educational and organisational change that complements the new buildings?

As noted above, the involvement of schools in the BSF programme is variable, and it is furthermore mediated through local authorities and within very tight time pressures. We believe that in many ways the development of the emerging educational model and the design of school buildings is out of sync, as local authorities focus on renewing on the building stock before they and head teachers are able to define new models of learning. If there is no educational vision, design will not add value to it.

3. How actively does BSF foster transformation in school learning and design?

Educational transformation is at the core of the BSF programme. However, translating the ambition into practice is constrained by the limited time available for defining the vision and developing the design implications of it. While BSF is rightly conceived of as an educational project first, in delivery priority is given to the capital programme, and the need to renew the stock. Greater emphasis, encouragement and support is needed for LAs and head teachers—many of whom have very limited experience of managing construction projects of any scale—to take advantage of the opportunity presented. This could include direct "one-stop shop" support, signposting resources that are available, explaining the details of the procurement process and linking up clients at similar stages of the building process.

4. *How successfully does BSF integrate with other policy and funding areas (such as Every Child Matters and Extended Schools) to deliver joined up solutions to educational and community needs?*

Our view is that the different policy strands remain discrete, characterised by funding silos and an absence of incentives for joining up the programmes. In particular, the emphasis in the early stages is on construction, while the extended schools agenda is essentially an organisational project; little has been put in place to marry the two, for example through the inclusion of BSF within wider local authority Community Plans, or early engagement with local planning authorities.

Examples of where this has been achieved include Bishops Park School, which contains a public library, and Jo Richardson School, which has community resources including a library too. They were able to spend some of the SRB money that funded the community areas on making the school more spacious.

5. *How are the strategic needs of local authorities balanced with the needs of schools communities and learners within BSF?*

The structure of the BSF programme focuses on local authorities constructing schools quickly, sometimes at the expense of effective dialogue with head teachers about their aspirations for new learning environments. In the short term, head teachers will often be grateful for any new capital investment, absent for so long. However, this is a missed opportunity for teachers and learners to define and meet their educational aspirations over the medium to long term. Creating greater space for this type of dialogue would be advantageous, and the availability of expert advice, such as that provided by CABE, will continue to be essential. Evidence from our independent audit shows that CABE's support is greatly valued and leads to better outcomes.

Delivery and Funding

1. *How well is the BSF delivery and procurement model working to deliver sustainable schools and best value, including through Partnerships for Schools and Local Education Partnerships?*

There is no one procurement model within BSF—although the preferred route is through Local Education Partnerships. Many local authorities are seeking alternative vehicles, and consequently there is limited scope for evaluating performance and measuring relative costs—even where the preferred route is followed, cost information is difficult to identify.

The environmental/energy use aspect of a school building tend to be performance specified. The Schools Audit showed that where this briefing is not specific, the results are likely to be poor.

2. *How successfully are Private Sector Providers working within the BSF framework to deliver sustainable schools and best value?*

The evidence pre-BSF is that success in engaging with private sector partners is variable. We expect that the BSF programme will lead to an improvement in school design compared with the standard PFI school builds. Experience of school construction within the industry has grown rapidly since the 1990s. The pool of experience will grow further as opportunities expand in an increased construction programme. However, the programme will be dependent on the capacity of designers and contractors to carry out the work. We are concerned that, unless effort is put into sharing learning as the BSF programme is rolled out, some LAs in the later phases will be selecting from a pool of relatively poor bidders.

3. *Are BSF funding levels sufficient to deliver sustainable transformation?*

One respondent in CABE's audit described the PFI process as the battle of "money versus loveliness" and affordability was a real constraint for many local authorities undertaking PFI projects. For example, the amount of space allocated for different areas within the school had to be balanced against the cost of incorporating them. BSF allows for greater funding to be made available. But given the limited information available on relative costs, there is a risk that the relationship between funding provided and outcomes expected is imprecise. More money could always be used; but the point is to cost effectively what can be achieved for the funding available and to prioritise within those constraints.

4. *Are all stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery process?*

As noted above, we have some concerns that the school community, including pupils, do not have adequate space to engage in the process and that this undermines the quality of the buildings produced. In addition, there is some evidence that facilities management is also not sufficiently engaged at an early stage to ensure that school buildings meet medium term management and maintenance requirements.

Importantly, for these stakeholders, there is limited opportunity early in the process for raising aspirations of what can be achieved. Effort must be focused on making schools that would otherwise be poorly designed good, rather than making the good excellent. That requires all stakeholders to share an understanding of, and an aspiration for, the best that is possible within the programme.

June 2006

Witnesses: Mr Ty Goddard, School Works and Mr Richard Simmons, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), gave evidence.

Chairman: May I welcome Richard Simmons and Ty Goddard to our deliberations? I am sorry you are getting a bit squeezed but there were more of them and they had first innings. There is going to be some emphasis on sharp questioning and succinct answers. Let us get through as much as we can and Stephen is going to lead us.

Q161 Stephen Williams: With sharp questioning, Chairman. May I start with Mr Goddard? In your written submission to the Committee you have expressed a worry that local authorities see people's involvement in consultation as a luxury rather than an essential part of this particular programme. What sort of consultation do you think local authorities should actually undertake? Can you give us some good examples of where local authorities have come up with some best practice that others could follow and where authorities perhaps have not been so good?

Mr Goddard: School Works is concerned with just that, the participation of stakeholders. We are different from joinedupdesignforschools in the sense that we put an emphasis on the full complex range of stakeholders both within the school and outside the school. A best practice example would be work with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. They have been particularly impressive in not paying lip service to young people's views. What they have actually done is mainstreamed young people's views, stakeholder views both within their business case for Building Schools for the Future, but also in the scoring process. A lot of what you were talking about earlier, about how important design is, is in reality how important a score it is actually given when you come to evaluate all of the different bids that you get for particular jobs in particular local areas? My worry about consultation is that it is very patchy at the moment. It depends on how a local authority feels about it. The general pre-conceived incorrect view is that stakeholder engagement is complicated, it raises people's expectations and it takes lots and lots of time and money. In fact what you heard today was an exposition about why it makes educational sense to have young people and others, all of the stakeholders, because where is transformation going to come from? What does transformation mean in this case? I have some difficulties in interpreting it myself because I hear lots of transformatory visions all around the country and there is no common language. The problem that we have, and it is one of the biggest challenges and that is where our expertise is, is that the involvement of stakeholders in Building Schools for the Future is not uniform. It is patchy and it is not accorded enough actual

exposition throughout the process. For us it also makes good business sense. You mentioned contractors earlier and the progressive contractors and others have for a long time seen the benefits of proper stakeholder engagement in terms of being able to prioritise their spend on particular buildings. There is no point actually prioritising a spend on something people do not want or which can become redundant in the future. So those are my worries: patchy, not uniform, little bits of good practice and the immediate one I quote is Knowsley who need to be congratulated. Other authorities have tried to do it, but they have met a number of challenges.

Mr Simmons: Firstly you have to understand who the client is around here and we do a lot of work through our enabling programme People Procuring Schools and principally that is with local authorities. There are some good examples of head teachers and teachers being involved. I should cite the Jo Richardson School in Barking as a good example where the head had a clear vision for pedagogy. We might come back to some of the issues around flexible design later on, but certainly he had a view about how he wanted teaching to happen and that is not really as common as it should be at the moment. If you are talking about PFI, then of course you have the relationship with the contractor and with local education partnerships which are developing now, you may well have a situation where there is an exemplar school where a contractor is picked and then the process by which we get down to individual school designs is still unclear. There is one other thing I should like to mention which is that the Office of Government Commerce, as you may know, produces guidance on design in procurement. There is a series of gateways, as the OGC calls them, which you have to go through for design. One of those is called post-occupancy evaluation. So we are not just talking about involving pupils, teachers and head teachers at the point of purchase, we also want to learn from what has happened. At the moment post-occupancy evaluation is a scarce commodity and we are certainly arguing very strongly, and the OGC have just acknowledged this, that you have to go back to find out from people what has worked and what has not worked so you can learn for future programmes.

Q162 Stephen Williams: Just to follow up on what you said about post-occupancy evaluation, are you confident that there is enough flexibility in the designs of schools for you to be able to amend the design? If a pupil comes forward and says "We are being bullied in this corridor that leads around a corner and want to get rid of it" can you actually alter the design thereafter?

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Mr Simmons: That will depend on the design of the school you are talking about. The point about flexibility is an interesting one. We should certainly argue that one way to achieve that is by increasing the amount of space available for classrooms and flexible areas for personal learning, for example. If you were to design a completely flexible interior environment, you still have the problem of what happens when you come to refurbish or change that school but, as you probably know, because we have tabled it as evidence, we have just conducted a survey of 52 of the 124 secondary schools built in the last five years, which CABE has done as part of its normal work, and we are pleased to say it arrived just at the point when this Committee was meeting. We are not confident at all that those kinds of issues of flexibility are being taken on board in a very large number of schools.

Q163 Stephen Williams: Mr Goddard mentioned Knowsley as a good LA example of consultation. Mr Simmons mentioned Barking School as a good example. Who should be the driver on consultation? Is it the school, the head and the governors, is it the LA or is it the contractors who are doing the building work?

Mr Goddard: Part of the issue is exactly what Richard said that there is sometimes a real difficulty about assessing who the client is. Sometimes, for instance, local authorities might actually feel that they are the client more than an individual school and perhaps sometimes an individual school will feel they are more of a client than a local authority. In a sense, the two examples, what you have in Jo Richardson in Barking and Dagenham LA is a supportive local authority which was prepared to look at pedagogy, teaching and learning, in a different way. Then it went through a process of early consultation and actually used a firm of architects to enable that early consultation work to take place. The actual school was then built by a completely different firm of architects using a lot of the findings from that early firm. So clearly Barking and Dagenham owned that, but clearly the constructor and a pioneering head teacher also owned that. You heard earlier about the complex set of relationships. This is a complex business and to get everybody speaking a common language is the actual challenge.

Q164 Chairman: How did it work in Knowsley? As I understand it, Knowsley actually decided to build the same school on eight locations. It was a sort of Tesco solution, so not much discussion with the other seven even if they did it in one.

Mr Goddard: Knowsley are in a Building Schools for the Future wave. What they decided was that with the scale of transformation that they wanted to see and the need within their local area, they were very, very serious about actually having proper stakeholder groups but also skilled stakeholders. What actually happened was that you got 150-odd people who represented a number of the interests in that particular locality and they themselves were the drivers of transformation.

Q165 Chairman: They said they all wanted the same school?

Mr Goddard: In a sense no; not that they all wanted the same school. What they wanted were common outcomes.

Q166 Chairman: What is the difference between that and wanting the same school?

Mr Goddard: In the sense that it is too early to say that they have got the same school, the bidding process is still underway, it is down to a short list, there are three supply chains at the moment, so we actually do not yet know the result of the Knowsley process and it would be too early to generalise. What is interesting is that they are not having a LEP, they are not having a Local Education Partnership; they have come up with their own scoring matrix and they have empowered people profoundly in the sense of taking people on school visits not only in the UK but outside of the UK. Absolutely key is the briefing process but also how good your client is. Is that client able to be the perfect magpie and take some of the attributes of Danish schools for instance and make them fit what Knowsley wants to do? Are they able to take ideas from the Jo Richardson Community School and inhabit them in Knowsley?

Q167 Stephen Williams: We were talking about the complexity of the client groups involved. Does the consultation need to be broken down, for instance on ICT or facilities management? Should the consultation be done by the specialists or the providers in that field and consultation with certain people?

Mr Goddard: What I know from one of the examples we are talking about at the moment is that subject heads were empowered quite considerably in the Jo Richardson school to think about what they needed in their particular subject area. Yes, in a sense you have to have some quite profound generalised stakeholder engagement, but then, as you have suggested, you do need to drill down in terms of particular subject areas.

Mr Simmons: I agree. We keep talking about Jo Richardson and there are other examples: St Francis of Assisi in Liverpool, which is the school that set environmental sustainability as part of its core curriculum. It is an Academy, so it is part of its specialist subject. They have tried to approach the issues differently from Jo Richardson and they have had the opportunity of being an Academy to try to be more specific about what they want to achieve. For example, their whole building reflects the ethos; it has green roofs and so on. It is important that people understand the ethos that the school is trying to create. There are clearly areas where standards and standardisation are useful because they save money. Things like toilet design: we do not need to go on re-inventing toilets, we know the kinds of toilets that work for schools and prevent bullying. We know that broad corridors with natural daylight in them are far better and again reduce bullying, although sadly they are not being built as much as we should like to see. We know that outside the school, a good variety of spaces, some hard, some soft, some places where you

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can go to sit down and so on, are valuable but there are also things which make a school right for its locality. Jo Richardson, for example, is right for its locality because it is a community school and there is a very clear demarcation line between the school and the community facilities there, for example they share a library. Those kinds of issues will only really emerge from very local engagement and, as you say, looking at those specialist areas and making sure they are fit for purpose.

Q168 Stephen Williams: Can we go on to participation by pupils and other groups? Do you think that an obligation should be placed on each new school that they actually set up a pupil/client group? As I understand it, that is not necessarily the case at the moment.

Mr Simmons: It is certainly not the case at the moment. I should like to start with teachers because teachers have not been talked about quite so much by the Committee so far.

Q169 Chairman: I tried, but John Sorrell knocked me back.

Mr Simmons: Involving pupils is obviously an important thing to do but teachers and head teachers in particular are very important. I also agree with what the Committee was saying about the fact that nobody can quite foresee what education will be like in 10, 15, 20 years' time. You have to think about flexibility and this is a tough challenge for teachers. What our enablers, the people who go out and advise clients, are finding at the moment and reporting back in our survey is that very often people are so glad to have a new non-leaking school and they have invested so much of their time and energy in it that they have not necessarily focused on how teaching and pedagogy might change or how they might use the new school to transform the curriculum. We have put in for you some evidence which the Scots have gathered—I hope it is okay to mention the Scottish Executive in this company. They have been looking very hard at setting standards for environmental sustainability and have been off and looked at good practice in Sweden and Germany. From that, they have looked at the whole way in which schools are designed, from the point of view of sustainability, starting with the people who will use them, starting with how the young people will be engaged and looking at how, for example, young people will go on monitoring how a school works into the future. If you are a pupil five years into a new school, you will not necessarily be involved in its design, but what you can be involved in is simple monitoring systems which allow you to work out how much energy it is using and how you might improve on that in the future. There are ways of actually involving people through the whole life of the school and into the curriculum which are being tried in continental Europe and which we could learn from.

Q170 Stephen Williams: If you think teachers should be involved and perhaps pupils, do you think there should be an obligation to involve pupils? That was the question I asked.

Mr Simmons: Yes. The way that the procurement processes work at the moment is becoming more complex because there is more plurality available moving away from just using PFI. In PFI projects the whole pace at which you have to work and the way in which the design process works mean it is quite hard to achieve that kind of engagement and often it is not clear who the client is. To answer your question, there certainly should be pupil engagement but it would be very demanding to ask for that immediately, without a fairly significant change in the procurement process, so it may be a journey we have to go on to achieve it.

Q171 Stephen Williams: So are you saying the current procurement does not allow adequate time for pupil involvement?

Mr Simmons: It does not allow for time and quite often the client, if it is a local authority, are not necessarily in the best position to involve pupils because the best people to do that are the parents, teachers and governors of the school. Ty has obviously greater expertise than I in this, but that would be our analysis.

Q172 Stephen Williams: You mentioned pupils, teachers, head teachers, governors and other people involved in schools. What about dinner ladies and cleaners? Is there a role for them in the design of the kitchens and the dining hall and corridors they have to clean?

Mr Simmons: We are certainly interested in some of the best housing schemes we have looked at procured by social housing landlords who have involved the management team in the design process, as well as the people who actually have to run the housing side of things. The results of that have been places that are much more pleasant to live in. I should say the same principle would apply here.

Q173 Stephen Williams: I suppose neighbours of the school would be another example, but they might be covered by the planning process, so I guess they would be consulted at a later stage. Do you think it would better if they were consulted early on before we get to a formal planning application?

Mr Simmons: There are certainly some interesting examples of schools which have been developed where, because the people who have developed the school have taken notice of what the neighbours have had to say about, for example what happens at lunchtime, they have provided different lunchtime arrangements. So if they provided cafeteria-type arrangements with a broader menu, they found fewer kids out on the streets at lunchtime and quite often getting over that first issue of the impact of being a neighbour of a school starts a dialogue that can go on, so there are certainly benefits in doing that. It does have to be a manageable process of course and the first point we should always make is that plan and procurement by a well-informed client is the best way forward. If you are going to engage communities, you have to plan that into the timetable.

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Q174 Stephen Williams: May I ask a couple of questions on procurement to Mr Goddard? School Works suggest in their written evidence to us that the current bidding process creates some unnecessary duplication in terms of contractors' discussions with schools on designs. Is the bidding process not essential to make sure you get the best contractor to come forward with the best design?

Mr Goddard: It was a worry that we wanted to share with you about our work. We have been involved in one of the early Building Schools for the Future project waves in Bradford and we had three individual supply chains and they were all talking to the schools involved in Bradford. I felt that there was a way that we could mutualise the approach. For instance, on Tuesday evening supply chain A was talking to that particular school and on Wednesday evening supply chain B and Thursday evening supply chain C.

Q175 Chairman: Could you call a spade a spade? What does "supply chain" mean?

Mr Goddard: I am sorry. I should love to call a spade a spade if it were called a spade. The supply chain is the people bidding to build schools.

Q176 Chairman: Can we have it in English? The great general public are going to read this Report and it is gobbledegook. Tell us, who the people are in there and which companies they represent.

Mr Goddard: I almost have to supply my own glossary of terms because that is not my own language. Those are various construction firms and their suppliers who have come together to bid to build a local authority's particular school under Building Schools for the Future, commonly known out there, and I agree it is not a word I would use in my local either, as supply chains. All the people who wanted to win the job in Bradford had got onto a short list.

Q177 Chairman: We understand the concept; it is just that other people have to understand it.

Mr Goddard: Good point; I apologise. In a sense though, the point still is that there was no single conversation with schools. I felt that the capacity—and we heard this earlier when somebody talked about "time poor" within schools—and the nature of what it takes to run and manage a school had not actually been fully appreciated. What I thought was worthy of comment and investigation was whether we could actually have a process that was mutual around stakeholder engagement at the shortlist stage.

Q178 Chairman: Are you saying that the consultation process is not thorough enough and does not reach far enough, but the bidding process is long drawn out and does not respond or tie up to the consultation?

Mr Goddard: What I am saying is that the participation with stakeholders, both under Building Schools for the Future and all sorts of other capital streams is patchy at the moment and at times the frenzied 12- or 13-week process does not actually

help to get views of stakeholders early enough and in fact could actually make it worse. What happens is that you duplicate processes of finding out what clients, what teachers, what pupils actually want.

Q179 Stephen Williams: How well do you think that the Local Education Partnership model is working in providing good schools?

Mr Goddard: What I hear is people who talk about—this is another glossary term you might need—fat LEPs, thin LEPs, all sorts of different shaped LEPs. From what I perceive when I travel around the country there is not universal acclamation for the concept of local education partnerships. Partly this is quite a complex process of different investors having different percentages, but also it has led to certain fears within local authorities about what the actual functions of those LEPs are. I understand that CABE's recent research that was published today also has findings on LEPs.

Mr Simmons: It is a bit early to say what LEPs will produce because none of them has built anything yet. What we have done is look at schools that have been built over the last five years and found that about half of them do not measure up; they are poor or mediocre against the design quality indicators which the DfES and ourselves use. So it is a relatively objective measure and this is not about icons, by the way: this is about whether there is natural daylight in classrooms and whether the corridors are wide enough and some of those basic things. We should like to see more beautiful buildings, but we should also like to see buildings that function well first and foremost. Not all local authorities are choosing LEPs of course, because they have a choice ranging from traditional procurement through to LEPs. What we are seeing at the moment in the early engagement we have with Building Schools for the Future generally is that there are some very good schemes out there actually, but there are quite a lot that our enablers, who are the people who have direct involvement—an enabler is an architect or a designer who works to advise a client for the first 10 to 15 weeks of a project in getting the best possible deal in terms of design and so on—are not seeing sufficient evidence that there really is good design. May I just pick up a point that you made earlier on? You said that the procurement process will produce good design if there is competition between three firms. I think that was implicit in what you said. Actually that is not the case and it certainly was not the case in PFI projects because it is possible to be selected for a PFI scheme if you have a good finance package and good maintenance and management package, but you do not have good design. We have put in some pictures. This is a PFI school which was value engineered and which has no external landscaping apart from tarmac and grass. That was value engineered out of the project after the contract had been accepted.

Q180 Chairman: Where is this?

Mr Simmons: My team has not told me because these are not name-and-shame-type photographs.

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Q181 Chairman: Is it not about time we started naming and shaming some of the people who build some of this awful stuff?

Mr Simmons: What we are trying to do is give you examples of good practice, but we also have to look at what has not worked.

Q182 Chairman: This Committee gets around a bit. We have seen in some of the places you expect to see wonderful practice some awful schools in Scandinavia; we have seen a terrible school, one of the worst I have ever seen, in the Republic of Ireland; we have seen a wonderful school in my time in Belfast.

Mr Simmons: Perhaps we may suggest to the Committee a range of schools they might go to see which illustrates various examples.

Q183 Chairman: What are we doing to stop the very process of the last five years, new schools being built, narrow corridors and no natural daylight? How can we stop this?

Mr Simmons: We believe that more support is being given to clients now. More people are assisting clients at the start of the process, but one of the most effective things we do is something called design review where we actually get experts, architects and so on, to provide peer review for the schemes. We think that there should be a lot more of that. We also think that Partnerships for Schools and the DfES should increase the weighting for good design that is provided when LEPs are selected. We also think there needs to be quite a lot of vigilance. It looks as though quite a lot of Local Education Partnerships make a selection based on some exemplar schemes and of course they will then be getting detailed design project by project and there needs to be vigilance throughout the process to make sure that we do not see the kind of value engineering—in the jargon. Value engineering is when you start to cut the cost of a project.

Q184 Chairman: Value engineering is a wonderful term. So you end up with a school surrounded by tarmac.

Mr Simmons: Yes. It depends how you see value. There is some research from the States, from California, to show that if you have good natural daylight in the classroom, people will learn faster, they will learn maths 20% faster and languages 26% faster and this is fairly well peer-reviewed research.

Q185 Chairman: Richard, I did not need a survey from California to suggest that natural daylight was good for education.

Mr Simmons: One of your colleagues was asking for the background research to all this, so we do have that available.

Q186 Helen Jones: I am interested in this survey that you have conducted. I wonder whether you could enlighten us as to where CAGE put in support, what kind of support you put into schools and how that fed through into improvements in your view?

Mr Simmons: We tried to tailor the support we provide depending on the needs of the client. Basically what we do is provide 10–15 days of free time from an architect or other designer who will advise the client about getting a good procurement process going. It is about how to select the best architect's designs but particularly how to get the brief as right as you can. The brief is the document you try to produce at the outset of the project to explain what it is you want. We found in the survey that where people have been clear about what they want, they quite often get it. The problem arises when people are perhaps less clear about what they want. Where the DfES, for example, have specified things like classroom sizes, you get that size of classroom. If you want something bigger, and Jo Richardson did, they had to provide extra funding from the single regeneration budget to get larger classrooms. They had one of our enablers working with them and they said that they wanted to teach the kids differently here, they wanted to sit them in a horseshoe rather like you are sitting and they wanted to have the teacher at the front of the class and they wanted to have things like the visualiser, which is a piece of hi-tech kit you use these days instead of an overhead projector, at the front and they wanted the kids all to be sitting where the teacher could see them, they could see the teacher and they could focus on the lessons. That is what they have done and that is really the kind of thing that our enablers assisted them with. They have helped them to work out how they could actually achieve that in the procurement process.

Q187 Helen Jones: I understand that, but I am presuming, maybe wrongly, that you do not have the resources to do that for every school so how can we replicate the lessons that have been learned there into the whole Building Schools for the Future programme?

Mr Simmons: Time permitting, we have made quite a lot of recommendations here. It is certainly possible, and in fact we have been talking to DfES and Partnership for Schools quite positively about this, to get a better review process going on so that the majority of schemes can be looked at at the right stage in the process. The key stages are the point when you have three bidders and you want to assess whether they are all going to produce good designs or not; then further into the process at the point when you are getting down to the design that will actually get built, those are the kind of key processes or key times. That is certainly achievable. If you think about the scale of this programme and the fairly modest resource it would require just to make those simple checks, it is not a huge percentage. I cannot tell you what the percentage is, although we can come back to you about that, but it is not a huge percentage of the cost of the programme to put in place the kinds of checks that will certainly reduce the risk and there are always going to be risks, there will always be some schools that slip through the net for one reason or another. However, we know enough now about the basic functional design of schools to deal with some of those issues. I do agree

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with the Committee that there is a challenge to say “How do we make sure the schools will be still fit for purpose 15–20 years down the track and how do we achieve flexible design and perhaps more research is needed on that. We do also know that schools like St Francis of Assisi have looked at that and decided that they want to provide some flexible spaces that can be used differently in different ways in the future. That is not rocket science: good schools have always done that in fact.

Q188 Helen Jones: That is fine, but you say you have to be clear about what you want. Earlier we heard a lot about Knowsley. Knowsley was actually reducing its number of secondary schools as well and in a number of authorities, my own included at the moment in a way which I heartedly disapprove of, dealing with falling rolls is getting mixed up with Building Schools for the Future. How in that case can you get the client group to focus on how they transform educational opportunities and use the building programme to do that when you actually have, you are going to have by the nature of things, people who are disaffected from the beginning if their school is closing. Do you have any experience to offer us on that?

Mr Goddard: No, not specifically from the School Works experience. My own personal experience in Lambeth was having to deal with massive numbers of surplus places. It is very, very difficult whilst you are trying to rebuild facilities that are going to be flexible and fit for a 21st century and beyond curriculum to deal with some of the structural issues within an education authority. There is a tension; you are absolutely right.

Q189 Helen Jones: I was not just pointing to tension. If the whole point about getting good design depends on getting engaged with your client group, how do you do that when two schools may be merging into one, when you have people who are already disaffected from the process? How has that been managed?

Mr Goddard: I am not here to tell you that the participation of stakeholders is a magic wand, is a complete panacea. What I do see, and it is around the word “ownership”, is that people, local population, local residents can own very, very challenging questions themselves. What is happening in that particular area of Knowsley is an attempt to skill people up, give them a knowledge base with which to work with various professionals who all, by the way, probably speak their own tribal language in terms of these issues. It is not top-down, it is about actually saying to that local community or communities “We are facing these issues as an area, as an administrative area, please come and help us sort these out”.

Mr Simmons: I shall have to speak from my previous experience as a local authority director which is that you have to deal with the conflict first, you are right; huge conflict arises when there are proposals for school mergers and rationalisations and reductions. This really applies to community engagement in a number of sectors and the first thing is to be honest

with people and to have a proper discussion about the facts of the situation. In schools, the other thing I have seen work well is when you actually focus on the young people and their education. It is very easy to become entangled in the histories of schools and so on, but if you think about the future of the young people and how they are going to get the best out of a new situation, then that is always a strong focus, it draws people together. We talked about how complex it is to identify the client. Very often the local authority is standing *in loco* head teacher in these kinds of situations because the head may not have been appointed and it is not easy. The way the Building Schools for the Future programme works of course does quite often drive you down the route. There are several places where this is going on and this may be an area where we need to look further at where there are examples of good practice that we can draw on.

Q190 Helen Jones: Can you identify for us any problems which are affecting the first wave of the BSF schools and are there lessons that we can learn for the future?

Mr Simmons: Because there are not actually any open in the first wave yet, there are some pathfinders coming on in spring—

Chairman: Roll that back. You have some of these awful schools which have been built over the last five years and Helen is asking you what we can learn from them?

Q191 Helen Jones: Before starting on the pathfinders we want to know what lessons we can learn before this massive amount of money is irrevocably committed to things which may not be fit for purpose in the future.

Mr Simmons: I can give you some specifics. If I may talk about the kind of schools that have been built over the last five years which were built under PFI, a small number of pathfinders and some Academies—and we looked at 52 of 124, so it was a sample survey—I can give you some specific examples from individual schools, which is probably rather easier than talking about the statistical survey. The school had to adopt a one-way system because the corridors had been designed to be too narrow because of value engineering, if I may use the term now we have an understanding of what it means. Another school had an atrium, a large glazed area at the centre of the school, where the ventilation to keep that atrium cool was actually fed into the neighbouring classrooms which meant that the noise passed from the atrium into the classrooms. Another atrium which had a glazed roof had no, there is a jargon term, I shall not use it, Venetian-blind-type things to keep the sun out which therefore overheats and there is not adequate ventilation. We are talking about the school I mentioned earlier where there is no landscaping apart from tarmac and some grass for the playing field and a school where they created an egg-shaped layout. There is some good guidance actually which DfES provides about layout of schools and there are some good models for layouts of schools. The idea of the street in a secondary

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school with areas off, halls, classrooms et cetera. This one was egg shaped with the hall in the middle, so that when people came to do exams in the hall in the middle they had the noise of the school passing around them all day. A school with L-shaped classrooms where the teachers had not been consulted about the pedagogy, the teaching methods they wanted to follow and they did not really want L-shaped classrooms but the supplier had supplied L-shaped classrooms based on a Canadian model. Those are some of the issues.

Q192 Chairman: These are very depressing examples.

Mr Simmons: There are some good examples. I was about to come on to those.

Q193 Chairman: I know you have good examples but what we try to do in this Committee and the point of this inquiry is to stop what has been going on and stop it before the BSF rolls out. This is very, very recent history; this is not what happened in the 1960s, it is what has happened in the last five years.

Mr Simmons: Yes, this is very recent.

Q194 Chairman: What we really want to get out of this evidence session is how we can stop it happening and that was the push of Helen's question to you.

Mr Simmons: To give you some idea of what has not worked. There are some schools where things are the opposite, where things have worked very well, like Bedminster down in Bristol where the attendance of pupils has risen because the school is attractive and well laid out. We have provided you with quite a lot of material showing examples from all over Europe which work well. So going on to our process—

Helen Jones: Why? Why does one work and the other not? That is what we are trying to find out. What makes things go pear-shaped in the way that you have described?

Q195 Chairman: We are politicians. We like to track down who did it. In other words, are there terrible builders out there who should never have been allowed to build another school? Are there rotten architects/designers out there who should never have been able to tender for a school again and so on? What went wrong? If you talk to other people—and I have to say that it is my whole life experience—you talk to an architect and you say “There is that awful building, what happened?” and it is never the designers or the architects, it is somebody else gov. How do we track down whose fault or what combination of faults went on in those bad examples and then eradicate them?

Mr Simmons: We have heard from Ty and it is complicated, but there are some key things we can do to improve matters. The first is the point about initial preparation, being clear about your brief and what it is you want and then sticking to your guns. Being confident as a client is important and you hit the nail on the head earlier on when you made the point about strong effective clients. I agree with David Kester, if you are a client for Building Schools for the Future programme, you have probably not

been a client for some time because there has not been this scale of building before and you need support and help in that process. Partnerships for Schools and DfES are working on providing that at the moment and it is also fair to say that in our survey in 2005 we did see a fairly significant improvement in school design so the message is getting through to some extent. Evaluating the bids is important. It is actually really important that in the evaluation process design is not sidelined or people do not think it is about icons or about having signature architects. It is certainly important to have good architects and establishing you have a good project team with good, experienced architects who have built large projects before; it may not necessarily always have been in the education sector but good client teams are important. We found some contractors whose performance was fairly consistent: contractors who were not building the best schools were not building the best schools consistently and good designers were consistently building good schools. So some good architects were building good schools and some not so good architects, I would certainly agree with you about that. Those were really the four key things. We have a whole series of other recommendations, but that is really at the heart of it.

Q196 Helen Jones: But when that happens no-one seems to be held to account. If a local authority is about to start on a building programme, should it not have access to a list of firms or architects or whoever that have made a mess of it in the past to ensure that they are not allowed to make a mess of it somewhere else? Is that information available?

Mr Simmons: There are some fairly serious legal constraints on doing that.

Q197 Chairman: Are there?

Mr Simmons: Yes, I should think so. We can certainly provide evidence. Things like awards programmes and exemplar projects tell you who the good people are.

Q198 Chairman: Under the privilege of the House you can tell us all the bad ones right now and there will be no legal problems.

Mr Simmons: Had I brought a list with me. If you look at our design review programme, which looks at projects like schools, you can certainly see who the good teams are because you can see consistently who is getting good results, you can also see who is not. There is quite a lot of information out there already.

Q199 Chairman: Give it to this Committee and I am sure you can do it under parliamentary privilege.

Mr Goddard: What a profound question. Why did it go pear-shaped? In a sense what typifies a project that goes pear-shaped is a lack of communication, a lack particularly around the school connecting the design and build with the vision of teaching and learning in that particular school and also, it is about the capacity of the clients. Often what we are asking people to do, and we heard this earlier, is to lead on a project which is probably the biggest project they

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have ever done, either as an individual or as a local authority or indeed as a head teacher. Despite the plethora of enablers, despite all the client design advisers, despite the DQIs, despite this, despite BREEAM, what we still have, and it is shown from the CABA survey, is a danger of creating schools which are not fit for purpose and that worries me. One lesson we have learned is that you have to create a forum where industry can talk to industry, schools can talk to industry, outside of the frenzy of a bidding process. We have heard about the 13 weeks and what cannot be done and what can be done. Often architects' practices are designing for instance three schools to put to a bidding process in 12 weeks and surely you cannot do your best job designing three schools in 12 weeks? You also cannot do your best job if you only have a matter of hours with particular clients from one week to the next. What happens is that there is a lack of relationship and a lack of the kind of magic that can happen between client and professional and for that very reason we are involved with others in setting up a new membership body called the British Council for School Environments. We have no organisation in this country that is dedicated to working with industry and local authorities to share good practice, to develop a common language which cuts across and cuts through all of the silos which actually happen and can dangerously happen in the building of public buildings including schools.

Q200 Chairman: Is that related to the British Council for School Design?

Mr Goddard: The British Council for School Environments, BCSE.

Q201 Mr Marsden: Just picking up this issue of how we can involve people in things that are going to work rather than disasters, I apologise I had to be on another instrument committee, so I was absent for about half an hour, but it is very striking to me that in everything I have heard so far the word "materials" has not passed anybody's lips as far as I am aware. Surely one of the issues as to why things went so badly wrong from the ideals of Corbusier and the modern movement when they were then translated into buildings in the 1950s and 1960s and the flat roofs is that actually nobody thought about the cheapskate materials that many builders at the time would actually use to realise these architectural gems. What I should like to ask is who, in this whole procurement process, is actually leading? Is there a materials tsar? Who is actually leading or consulting people on what materials work? Teachers have worked in classrooms with certain materials that have just not worked in terms of heating or the finish has been appalling or whatever. Where do materials come into all this?

Mr Simmons: It is a very important point. In a previous job, I was involved in the development of the Hackney Community College in Shoreditch and we had on the site two former board schools from the 19th century and a 1960s clasp school. The board schools could be refurbished and met very high environmental standards; the clasp school had to be

demolished because it was unfit for purpose and could not actually be made environmentally sustainable, in fact it could not be heated sensibly. It is a very good point and there is some evidence which we have put in from our colleagues in Scotland who are our partners, the Scottish CABA as it were, which addresses materials very specifically and there are several issues around materials. One is the extent to which materials provide you with a good sound environmental platform, so mass concrete, although not attractive unless treated, is a very good way to retain heat in a building and makes it much cheaper to heat and allows the use of passive ventilation; a jargon term which means not having air conditioning or fans moving air around.

Q202 Chairman: As in this building.

Mr Simmons: Yes. It is reasonably comfortable even on a very hot day like today I guess. We found in our survey that not enough schools, about 75%, had really taken those issues on board. There are also issues around the toxicity of materials on which I am not an expert but the BRE would be and many materials used in building are not necessarily tested to see whether, for example, they provoke asthma and so on. There are several dimensions to the materials' issue. I guess BRE would be more of an expert than I am on the subject.

Q203 Chairman: BRE?

Mr Simmons: Building Research Establishment as was; they are now called BRE. They actually developed BREEAM.

Q204 Mr Marsden: That is all very important and very helpful but the issue I was also trying to press out of you was that there was accumulated knowledge of teachers, classroom assistants of what works and what does not work in terms of materials in buildings. Maybe if some of them had been taken on board in the mid to late 1960s we would not have had some of the problems of flat roofs and everything that we know about. What are the processes that are going into building schools for the future that will allow those people and those groups and the user groups themselves, the children, to have a say and say they do not want one like the one that was built down the road five years ago because the materials were rubbish.

Mr Simmons: They are limited.

Mr Goddard: Limited in that sense; very, very patchy. We heard earlier as well, that the whole feedback loop is weak. When you asked Richard to name and shame, organisations like CABA and we have tried to focus on the good practice. That is a way in terms of materials, in terms of what we put out there in partnership with the DfES, but there is no one central place where you can go and actually ask what the best range of materials is, for instance for natural ventilation. I am not aware of it but it may be somewhere like the BRE and it may be other organisations as well. No, there is not one location to go for that information, as far as I know.

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Q205 Chairman: Is there sharing of information? Teachers' TV is taking great interest in the proceedings of this and trying to involve teachers. We went to one of the London Academies in Bermondsey and they do not have automatic lighting that cuts off as people leave the room "Because one of the senior staff had worked in schools which had it. Because the technology is not ready yet. If you want schools where the light comes on all night and the caretaker gets rung up and so on, you go for that technology". So they did not have it. We have been to other schools where we say "Why did you not have this sustainable element built in? "Because people said the technology was not ready or it would be 10% more expensive or we had to cut costs". That kind of feedback is very important in materials, is it not?

Mr Simmons: Yes, we certainly found that in some of the schools we looked at that there were problems where they have fitted that kind of equipment, then could not dim the lights in the classroom so their visualisers were not effective. My colleague, Marie Johnson, who is the architect who works on this project, has just reminded me of two things really. The first is that sustainability is not really well specified in briefs at the moment or in the building bulletins in the DfES and that is partly because a lot of the thinking on the subject is developing very rapidly. We found that quite a few people who had had environmental management systems built into their schools—and we found this by the way in all sorts of buildings, not just schools—did not really understand them and could not use them properly and they were too complex for them.

Chairman: David wants to ask you some questions on that but let us finish this session on sustainability.

Q206 Mr Chaytor: This is the area I should like to ask about and first of all come back to my earlier question to the previous witnesses about the BREEAM standards. Am I right in thinking that the BSF schools have to conform to the BREEAM rating of "very good"?

Mr Simmons: That is correct, yes.

Q207 Mr Chaytor: But to reach that standard, you do not have to score highly across all the criteria. Is this a weakness in the system and what would it take in terms of effort, imagination and cost to reach the BREEAM "excellent" standard, which is their highest standard?

Mr Simmons: To save the Committee's time, we have suggested that the DfES needs to look very hard at this but actually the Sustainable Development Commission have put in evidence on this subject which I would not really argue with and they have gone into quite a lot of depth on BREEAM, so it may be that you want to read that. I am not sure whether you have seen the SDC evidence yet.

Q208 Mr Chaytor: I have not read the SDC evidence.

Mr Simmons: They put in quite a lot of evidence on BREEAM and it is not something that we would particularly depart from. We certainly think a long hard look is needed because the other thing about BREEAM and one of the documents we put in for you is this Scottish document, Sustainability—Building our Future Scotland's School Estate, which is an attempt to develop a vision for sustainability and looks at a wide range of issues including things like how food is sourced for the school canteen. It looks at the broad local agenda 21-type definition of sustainability which BREEAM does not really do. We should certainly say there is a broader set of issues to be considered as well as those that BREEAM covers.

Q209 Mr Chaytor: From your response there and the previous set of responses, is it your feeling that environmental sustainability is not as high up the agenda in terms of the DfES's thinking on the BSF programme as it should be?

Mr Simmons: They have started to work on it. They have put a set of initial guidelines on TeacherNet on how to start thinking about sustainability in schools right the way from developing new schools through to the curriculum and teaching. They are not as far advanced yet as either the Scots or people in continental Europe. What we actually found in our survey was that the history of what has happened so far is not that promising and probably a lot more guidance is called for.

Q210 Mr Chaytor: This was of 54 schools.

Mr Simmons: Fifty-two schools. We have found that about three quarters of them have not really, for example, looked as closely as they should have done at things like passive ventilation, that they did have building control systems that were too complex for them, that they have not really taken a broad view of sustainability. To be fair, we did not have time or the resources to look into the actual energy costs, so I cannot speak about those.

Q211 Mr Chaytor: I am not arguing that that is one of the single biggest factors that should be taken into account in terms of the lifecycle cost of the building.

Mr Simmons: Absolutely, yes. We looked at the physical design of the buildings and whether or not we thought they would minimise it but, for example, you can meet the specification on lighting standards in the classroom entirely with artificial lighting. We did come across one school where the library has no windows at all, but it meets the lighting standards because it is fluorescent lit and yet there are ways of designing classrooms where you can get roof lighting and windows down one side which will give you good natural daylight across the whole classroom without creating too much heat gain and so on and there are good example of schools which have done that. The issue for CABE, as it is on many other things, is consistency. We should like to see consistent performance standards and consistent specifications.

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Q212 Mr Chaytor: Is that not the purpose of the BREEAM standards? Is it not the function of the Building Research Establishment to be the national centre for good practice in these areas and it is amazing that we are so way, way behind?

Mr Simmons: They provide some very good advice on the subject but the question is whether it is built into the briefs sufficiently and with enough force to ensure it gets delivered.

Q213 Mr Chaytor: What is holding it back? The Local Education Partnerships are the forum in which these issues should be discussed between the client and the contractor. Is it the natural conservatism amongst builders and construction companies that they do not want to grapple with these issues or is it the weakness of guidance from the DfES or weakness of the prioritisation from the DfES? What are you saying is the source of the trouble?

Mr Simmons: When I talked to the head teacher of the Jo Richardson school who had had the school built by Bouygues, they used a system of mass concrete, if I may use a piece of jargon; they built the school principally out of concrete and they have natural ventilation and so on. He said that they were first class and this is what they wanted to do, this is how they wanted to build a school, so I cannot say it is necessarily the contractors, but it may be falling between stools. The other thing is that there is an evolution going on at the moment. We started with a PFI process, which left the private sector to do most of the innovation and left them with a good deal of freedom and did not specify too much. We are now moving—

Q214 Mr Chaytor: It also left the school with the bill. If the original design brief had not built in energy efficiency, the school budget was landed with the bill of the higher energy costs.

Mr Simmons: Yes, because they had to pay the contractor to go on providing facilities, management and so on. I do not mean to sound completely negative here, because we are learning; certainly DfES and Partnerships for Schools are learning from this. They have broadened the procurement process but they do now have a working party looking at standards. Coming back to the point about materials that was made earlier, they are trying to learn and this working party which my colleague Marie Johnson sits on is looking at ways of specifying robust materials and ones that will be more sustainable in the future. There is a lot of learning going on at the moment.

Q215 Mr Chaytor: Would it be fair comment to say that the BSF programme had been launched without sufficient thought being given to the impact on the carbon footprint certainly or the wider environmental implications of rebuilding the nation's secondary schools?

Mr Simmons: That is quite a hard question to answer.

Q216 Mr Chaytor: Yes or no would do.

Mr Simmons: You could answer it yes or no. I was just thinking about the experience we have observed in continental Europe and there is certainly a lot of experience out there that we could learn from, but you do have to start somewhere. In a sense the reason we are having this hearing is because the BSF programme exists and that is causing everyone to look at the whole thing and it is by no means too late to make sure that these things get built into the process because we are still at the moment developing the Local Education Partnerships.

Chairman: This is why we need you, because we want to learn from this experience of the last five years that we have looked at. We also want to use the laboratory of the Academy Programme which has 24 or 25 schools built. This Committee want to learn how we can improve things by coming up with a Report that adds value. We need your help and cooperation on that.

Q217 Mr Chaytor: You have raised the problem of lack of capacity to measure the changes to energy usage. Should smart meters be compulsory in any BSF school? Is there an argument against not building in smart meters from day one?

Mr Simmons: I should look at a way in which everybody in the school can get some feedback on what is going on, whether it is smart meters or more holistic systems a look at the whole environment of the school. People ought to know what their school is consuming and, going back to the engagement of young people, they really care about this and they really want to know why their school is not having a positive effect on the planet. This is something which they care very deeply about and giving them opportunity to look at that. It could also be built into the curriculum, simple things which can be built into the maths curriculum now. We have seen a couple of schools where that kind of information is something which they can use in the maths curriculum. It is very directly relevant and kids can see the effect it is having.

Mr Goddard: To try to answer the question you have asked a couple of times, what worries us is whether current policy and practice allow us to build good sustainable schools. We welcomed your Select Committee inquiry because there were lots of noises from all over the country and from different sectional interests about what was happening around sustainability. For us, the Department for Education and Skills need to be praised for putting sustainability on the agenda. I have a batch of information here trying to define sustainability, trying to share good practice. For instance, going back to an earlier question, you talked about extended schools before and we have just written for the DfES Designing for Extended Services. There is a willingness within the Department for Education and Skills and indeed within Partnerships for Schools, but we do need to step back and partly what you are attempting to do is to cut through a mass of all sorts of details to see where the conflicts are. If you talk to industry, what they say is that it is very, very difficult within this bidding process to put what

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could be initially expensive sustainability themes within that building. No-one is prepared to take the risk because it is a commercial process, it is rather frenzied and people are bidding against one another, supply chain against supply chain for quite valuable, big prizes. There has to be an inducement for those people to use their great skills to innovate.

Q218 Chairman: Shall we slow the whole process down?

Mr Goddard: No.

Q219 Chairman: Why not? Most of us who have been around a reasonable amount of time know that if there is enormous activity in the construction world, then resources become very scarce, very scarce craftsmen, very scarce managers, very scarce construction companies with good records of building decent buildings. If you do all this in too much of a hurry, are we not creating a kind of boom where there is a greater scarcity than we need? We could take a more measured time to do all this.

Mr Goddard: I and a number of other more expert people have wrestled with the whole issue of slowing it down, but if you go to schools, as all of you will in your constituencies and elsewhere, there is a need to get on and replace those buildings. There is a worry that it is taking too long already and that worries people in terms of momentum that is needed.

Q220 Chairman: Can Richard tell me whether the industry has the capacity?

Mr Simmons: The most recent studies suggest it probably has, yes. There have been some studies recently which the Construction Industry Council has undertaken, which suggest they can actually manage the BSF construction.

Q221 Mr Marsden: Was that before or after we had won the Olympics?

Mr Simmons: The Olympics are actually a fairly minor blip on a much larger construction programme. What is going on in the private sector in terms of construction—

Q222 Chairman: The Olympics will be a construction blip?

Mr Simmons: Yes. At no point, as far as I know, do the Olympics employ the number of people on site that Terminal 5 at Heathrow is employing.

Q223 Chairman: That is the biggest construction site in Europe, is it not?

Mr Simmons: Yes. We can provide you with some data on this, if you like, which is supplied by others. “Blip” is the wrong word, because it is obviously a very important project and it has to be built on time and budget and so on. However, it is actually fairly small compared with the massive programme that we see in hospitals and schools and the private sector in particular at the moment. All the research suggests that the industry has the capacity to deliver it. In a sense the area of greatest concern is probably around the most skilled parts of the business, things like architects, landscape designers and so on, where

there are probably going to be scarcities. It may well be that the area we have been talking about, good designers, is where the biggest risks lie.

Q224 Chairman: This is so interesting that we are going past our usual time but we have to draw to a close. Ty, a quick response and then David is going to finish off.

Mr Goddard: In terms of what we have seen around the country, there has been no lack of people coming forward who want to build new schools.

Q225 Chairman: Yes, but that could include the man who used to be in *Fawlty Towers* whom Basil Fawlty used to employ. Do you remember him?

Mr Goddard: I remember him and I remember watching him when I was a young person and thinking that I never wanted to stay in that hotel. I have probably stayed in lots of them since then; so have you. Richard has probably slapped a CABE enforcement notice on one. What I have learned—and you know this already and I am sorry to reiterate it—is that schools move at different paces and so do local authorities. What we have is the beginnings of the sharings of good practice around what sustainability means. I have to echo what Richard said earlier, that we have to make sure that what we give schools is not bolted on but is owned. For us, the best way of owning innovation is not by being given a Powerpoint by your assistant director, or your director of children’s services with the next new revolution on the horizon that you have to follow as a stressed head teacher, as a stressed teacher, but to be involved in that process. It is a process of negotiation and what worries me—and I think this is where you wanted us to get to, cut the flim-flam, get to the lessons—is that there has to be a minimum standard of engagement of our workforce and of our future citizens, both in sustainability and in all of the other issues around schools. The big question—and it is a massive question—is whether BREEAM helps sustainability. Do the area guidelines help sustainability? Do building bulletins as they are currently written here and now actually help sustainability? If you hear the voices out there, there are differing views on whether there are indeed conflicts within building bulletins. Some of the building bulletins, if you listen to the real technical expertise out there, which we need in our schools, actually contradict your journey, my journey towards sustainability. That has to worry us all. What I shall say is let us have a good sharp look, a good quick review, if such is possible, of the building bulletins and indeed the area guidelines, but also, another voice we hear from local authorities or children’s services departments, is time and time again national government put new agendas on them: *Every Child Matters*, Extended Schools, Children’s Trusts, Sustainability could be one of those pressures they perceive. However, often there is a funding gap. Does the funding from central government actually take into account what could be short-term more expensive investment which actually may cut energy consumption by 30 to 50%

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over a whole life cycle of a building? I fear that short-term investment we so desperately need is not actually covered by the investment framework at this particular moment.

Q226 Mr Chaytor: There are certain things such as the thermal insulation value of concrete or the capacity to use natural daylight, which are well known and well understood and presumably cheaper than sticking on a photovoltaic roof. Why are these not used as a matter of course? That is my first question and my final question is: if the picture you have created for us in the industry is no shortage of builders but a looming shortage of designers and architects, is that a recipe for disaster? Is it not a case for using standardised models more frequently than having bespoke schools in every neighbourhood of the country?

Mr Simmons: Coming to the standardisation point first, standards and standardisation are not quite the same thing. Setting standards and providing standardised products have their place, but certainly CABE will always say that you should also try to have a school which is right for your locality and every site is different as well. You may be talking about a community school or one which has just been used for school purposes. Standards and standardisation have their place and certainly if you can get to a point where you standardise standards for a reasonable amount of things, that frees your designer time to look at things like innovation and sustainability. As to why it is not happening: firstly it is about specifications and what is in the building bulletins. Secondly, it is about how projects are appraised and assessed. The Treasury and the Office of Government Commerce have published the

common minimum standard and they require whole-life costing to be taken into account. That is an obligation. It is mandatory on all central government funding now, but it is not very widely known at the moment that that is the case. There is very clear guidance that whole-life costing should be used. The BRE have actually produced some guidance on how to do whole-life costing for schools but, as we argue in our report, that really needs to be looked at very hard and there needs to be a very sound assessment of the whole-life cost which allows you to look at the issues you were just talking about. In a sense we should like to start by following the Government's guidelines. It is great that the Government have actually taken that initiative. I have been in meetings with people from the Treasury and from government departments where the Treasury have said they insist on whole-life costing and that is how they want to see it done. Whether the budgets which are available then measure up to the whole-life costs is another matter entirely and that is something you have to ask DfES and the Treasury I guess.

Chairman: This has been a long session but an excellent session. We have really started to get some reasonable information. You have both been very useful in that and thank you very much for your time. As you go away, whether you go on public transport or however you get home—I am sure you are going to be cycling knowing the commitment to sustainability of both of you—could you think about what we did not ask you, what you should have told us and remain in communication with us, because we are going to need your help to make this an excellent inquiry? Some of the things you have told me today make me think we had better finish this and get it out as quickly as possible. Thank you.

Wednesday 5 July 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor

Paul Holmes

Memorandum submitted by BT Education and Local Government

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS UNDER BSF

This paper presents the response from BT Education and Local Government to the call for input issued by the Education and Skills Select Committee inquiry into sustainable schools.

The views expressed are those of BT as a potential ICT provider in the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. We have not commented on issues outside the scope of this capability but we have attempted to show how the role of ICT provider is affected, and in some cases compromised, by the interface with other BSF participants.

BSF provides the opportunity to achieve true transformation of teaching and learning, and by virtue of that, real sustainability. ICT services have a key role to play in facilitating this transformation, as acknowledged by the DfES harnessing technology strategy. BT has first hand experience of operational and service transformation within the local government arena and if this could be effectively provided within the BSF programme the following could certainly be achieved.

- Sustainability—The environmental economic and social aspects of schools would be enhanced by provision of accessible, modern ICT infrastructure, which is fit for purpose. This would facilitate the delivery of personalised learning, workforce reform, anywhere/anytime learning and enable learning to be an activity rather than something uniquely associated with institutions and fixed school hours.
- Future Learning Needs—Schools and individual learners would be equipped with facilities that evolve and develop with changing industry standards, social change and learner expectation.
- Delivery and Funding—BSF partnerships would deliver self financing infrastructure from the savings and efficiencies achieved by ICT driven transformation and innovation.

The first wave of BSF projects have failed to achieve any of these results and the programme is missing opportunities, and potentially substantial efficiencies, that could be gained from the development of shared services. This appears to be at odds with other government strategies where the development of shared services across multiple agencies and establishments is being positively encouraged.

There seems to be a variety of reasons for this. Some of them are associated with the punitive commercial and legal framework of BSF, others relate to the procurement process and to a lack of real commitment to transformation.

The attitude and approach we have seen in BSF is better described as merely securing new buildings and treating ICT as a commodity service.

Commercial Terms

These place unrealistic terms and risks on ICT providers and the effect has been to discourage participation in the programme. We know of several examples where significant ICT providers (including BT) have left BSF bids because of the unacceptable nature of the commercial terms. The result is that BSF projects are dominated by construction issues and much of the potential for transformation and delivery of genuinely sustainable learning environments is lost.

Procurement Method

The procurement method is overly time consuming, complex and expensive. Average bid costs for each project can be up to £350,000 for an ICT provider and significantly more for a construction or prime bidder. Also, resultant revenues are several years downstream. This creates a significant cash flow and risk issues which are often not justified by the resulting contract value.

Commitment to transformation

Whilst BSF loudly acclaimed the role of ICT the reality is that it consists of little more than a pre determined technical specification to be delivered at least cost. The most important element of ICT enabled transformation, change management, has only recently been brought within scope, and requirements are defined in terms of outputs rather than outcomes. In most cases it appears there is adequate funding for impressive new buildings but the percentage of cost associated with ICT is inadequate.

We believe sustainability in terms of energy efficiency and building methods probably is being achieved. This however only emphasises that BSF is emerging as a building programme, rather than a transformational one and that it likely to fall far short of delivering genuinely sustainable learning environments that are fit for purpose in the long term. The ICT agenda is focussed almost exclusively on the teaching and learning process. Little consideration has been given to the way that ICT could be used to influence school design and operation. Opportunities that would have a positive long-term impact on sustainability but which require a “spend to save” mentality in order to implement are being lost.

The role of ICT in BSF is being seen as that of a supplementary teaching and learning facility rather than a transformational tool. This actually adds unsustainable cost and little is being done to change the existing cost and environmental parameters. This means that BSF projects are likely to end up with the same number of schools, teachers, teaching assistants, the same curriculum, hours of operation and unproductive holiday periods. All of this, in our view, mitigates against sustainability.

ICT has not been established as a differentiator in BSF. The approach we have seen has been to procure ICT to satisfy a minimum standard at least cost. This has resulted in many of the opportunities for innovation, value-add and transformation that ICT can facilitate being lost.

ICT funding in BSF is inappropriate and inadequate. The BSF approach to ICT provides lump sum capital of £1,450 per student for ICT services, plus £200 per student for ICT infrastructure. This gives the clear impression that all ICT should be affordable within these limits and activity discourages innovation. The approach also ignores the fact that delivery of good and sustainable ICT service is dependant on a consistent revenue budget and an ongoing commitment to refresh expenditure. BSF has ignored both of these issues and passed the responsibility directly onto schools.

With a view to enabling delivery of sustainable ICT infrastructure we believe that BSF must be carefully interfaced with revenue budgets. Adequate revenue funding, to provide for items such as ongoing managed service, training and refresh of ICT, is in many ways more important than the initial capital investment and so coordination in this area will be vital for the delivery of effective, long-term ICT services.

The procurement process in BSF is unsustainable for the supplier industry in terms of cost, complexity, scale, risk, and value. Supposed managed services are being watered down to least price component purchase and the most important elements of delivering transformation with ICT as a key lever are missing. Experience of the procurement process also shows that opportunities for innovation are squeezed out by the focus on fixed funding levels.

Projects which have attempted to procure ICT separately from building and property aspects of BSF have been discouraged, but in our view this approach should be given further consideration. If a business model could be found that allows this approach it would encourage ICT innovation and value-add approaches, that would in turn support long term sustainability.

It is essential that BSF capital investment is conducted in a way that will integrate with other investment programmes. This applies to programmes in other public service agencies, such as health, as much as it does for other schools. It is also important that individual schools are recognised as part of an overall school community and that BSF investment is conducted with consideration to wider area issues. Only in this way will it be possible to enable technology and innovation, such as delivery of professional quality ICT managed services, which will be vital to the delivery of a sustainable service.

Particular ways in which BSF could provide sustainable schools, which play a role at the heart of the community would be:

- Delivering school ICT infrastructure that is fit for purpose, inspirational and equipped to deliver enhanced educational outcomes.
- Delivering school ICT infrastructure that will support development of new, more efficient ways of teaching.
- Providing safe and energy efficient schools that become a model for other community groups.
- Facilitating innovation, the development of personalised teaching and learning.
- Supporting workforce reform through the provision of technology enabled environments and modern ICT services such as wireless, mobile and Internet enabled technologies.
- Enabling the development and delivery of extended school concepts.
- Equipping schools to engage with and attract a variety of stakeholder groups in the community—parents, other schools, teachers and governors, voluntary groups, sports organisations, businesses and other public sector agencies.

- Enabling virtual working by people within and beyond the school (peripatetic employees, students/pupils, home/school, school/school, teacher/teacher and continuous professional development).
- Facilitating high levels of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and teaching assistants.
- Driving innovation and development of ICT systems that support building management, administration functions and utility management.

Current arrangements and particularly the partnership and legal framework of BSF make all of the above virtually impossible to achieve.

It is our belief that the transformation and sustainability ambitions of BSF could only be achieved if the programme was ICT rather than construction led. It would also require a genuine commitment to transformation of traditional processes, cultures and rules and a realisation that decisions about buildings and ICT are largely dependant upon an agreed model of change.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by Intellect

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This submission has been prepared by Intellect in response to the press notice issued by the Education and Skills Select Committee on 10 May 2006.

1.2 Intellect represents 1,000 companies in the Information Technology, Telecommunications and Electronics industries in the UK. Intellect is committed to improving the environment in which our members do business, promoting their interests and providing them with high value services. Our membership spans blue chip multi-nationals through to early stage technology enterprises. Intellect's website is located at www.intellectuk.org

1.3 This memorandum focuses primarily on the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) element of the BSF programme; this is the area where Intellect members have most expertise and are most engaged with the programme. It does not consider in depth the potential for ICT to contribute to improving teaching and learning (details of this can be provided separately if required).

1.4 We are enthusiastic about the educational potential of ICT, both as a tool for making learning more exciting and as a mechanism for improving "back-office" processes. This enthusiasm is shared by the DfES and many educationalists. We would note though that, whilst many schools offer compelling glimpses of the potential of ICT, technology is still far from being a transforming force in the generality of schools. The BSF programme can play a major role in helping education embrace technology. 21st century schools need 21st century technology.

2. FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS: BSF PROCUREMENT APPROACH HINDERS ICT CHOICE

2.1 The document *BSF Educational Vision*—November 2004 (published by Partnerships for Schools) states that the mission for ICT in schools is:

“To help all children achieve their full potential by supporting every school in England to become a centre of excellence in the use of ICT for teaching and learning and for whole-school development.”

We agree: ICT has as least as much scope to drive improvements in educational standards as does the provision of a high-quality built environment. It is not enough for schools of the future to provide compelling physical environments; they also need to offer compelling virtual environments, delivered through ICT.

2.2 In considering future learning needs, we believe it is necessary to consider how effective the BSF programme is likely to be in providing schools with ICT systems that are educationally effective as well as technically reliable. We are unconvinced that the structure of the BSF programme will allow schools to choose the ICT solutions they need; nor do we think it will encourage suppliers to invest in developing and delivering innovative, educationally-valuable ICT solutions.

2.3 The procurement approach being adopted for BSF projects means that, in many cases, schools will get the ICT service that happens to be supplied as part of the building programme, whether or not it meets their needs. This is because of the consortium nature of BSF projects, which brings together building, facilities management and ICT procurement into a single transaction, with ICT given relatively little weight (c 15%) in the decision making process.

2.4 With the procurement process placing relatively little emphasis on the provision of innovative, educationally-valuable ICT, there is little incentive for suppliers to invest in developing products and services that demonstrate these characteristics. Instead they will offer ICT solutions that are “just-good-enough” and will focus their attention on selecting the right consortium partner.

2.5 The standard documentation provided by Partnerships for Schools sets out a minimum “threshold” service level for ICT. This is a relatively low level of service though and is more a reflection of existing practice than an aspiration for future excellence. ICT is more sophisticated—and has significantly more educational impact—than straightforward utility services such as heating or plumbing, and schools deserve better than a “just-good-enough” standard of ICT.

2.6 We would like to see a procurement process that encourages ICT suppliers to take risks and offer genuinely innovative ICT products and services. This means that the choice of ICT supplier needs to be made on the basis of their educational vision, not which consortium they are part of.

There are a number of ways that this could be achieved:

- (a) The threshold level for ICT could be set much higher, with the aim of ensuring that all ICT suppliers offered innovative services.
- (b) The ICT element could be given a much higher weighting in the decision making process.
- (c) ICT and buildings could be procured separately as part of a multi-stage process.

We favour approach C—separation of ICT procurement.

2.7 The selection of the most appropriate ICT supplier is, of course, only the first stage of achieving transformation through technology. Delivering transformation will require a mechanism for measuring achievement against a well-understood set of goals to be in place. Our experience from other sectors shows that these goals are most likely to be achieved when the client and the supplier share, as far as possible, the same motivation. Clearly, it is easy to identify and measure physical outputs (like the number of computers); however, we would urge the DfES and PfS to strongly encourage projects to reward suppliers for delivering less tangible educational outcomes.

3. FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS: LINKAGE WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES

3.1 We would encourage government to actively consider how BSF ICT provision could be more effectively linked to other ICT programmes. In particular, we note that the DfES has provided strong guidance to schools about the adoption of “Learning Platforms”. These systems also form part of the ICT specification for some BSF programmes. We believe that there needs to be greater consistency here.

3.2 Schools receive advice about educational ICT from many different directions: numerous DfES programmes have ICT elements, whilst guidance comes from a number of national and regional public sector bodies. Whilst this advice is rarely contradictory, it is often difficult for schools to get a clear and coherent view of what they are expected to achieve. We believe schools would value unambiguous guidance about what level of ICT support and service they are expected to offer teachers, pupils and parents/carers.

4. FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS: TRANSFORMATION REQUIRES CHANGE MANAGEMENT

4.1 Intellect members have wide experience, in many different sectors, of introducing transformational technology. It is very clear from this experience that transformation requires more than simply installing an ICT-based system; it also requires a well-executed transformation—or change—process. This is not a novel observation; nonetheless it is an important one.

4.2 Partnerships for Schools (PfS) has recently provided guidance on change management to local authorities developing BSF projects. We view this as extremely helpful; improvement will not be achieved by re-housing the same educational processes in new buildings. We would note that the BSF programme does not provide funding for change management; we believe this needs to be addressed.

5. DELIVERY AND FUNDING: MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS SECURE EFFECTIVE ICT DELIVERY

5.1 Richard Bowker of PfS has spoken of schools needing “industry-strength managed ICT services”. We strongly endorse this view; if pupils and teachers are to place a high degree of reliance on technology, schools need reliable ICT infrastructure managed in a professional and sustainable way.

5.2 We view the procurement model proposed for BSF, with schools committing to multi-year service contracts, and the level of funding available as helpful in achieving this.

5.3 We would note though that, with ICT funding only provided for five years, there is an issue of sustainability beyond this initial period. Clearly, BSF is a capital programme and, as such, isn’t responsible for the provision of operational budgets for schools. If the schools delivered by the BSF programme are to be sustainable, the DfES needs to consider their longer-term operational funding requirements.

6. DELIVERY AND FUNDING: BSF PROCUREMENT MODEL UNLIKELY TO ENCOURAGE ICT SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT

6.1 As we have previously noted, the consortium nature of BSF procurement is unlikely to encourage ICT suppliers to invest in developing innovative, educationally-valuable ICT solutions. We also have concerns that the procurement model may discourage suppliers from participating at all.

6.2 We conservatively estimate that bidding the ICT element of a BSF contract will cost an Intellect member in excess of £200,000 over at least 12 months. The process of submitting a tender, even for a relatively straightforward bid (ie one without significant innovation) is likely to be expensive because of the complex nature of the procurement environment. Such a high level of investment is difficult for suppliers to justify when the factors which will determine a bid's success or otherwise are largely out of their hands, and the end result is determined by the supplier's choice of consortium partner rather than their bid's merits.

6.3 This is compounded by the terms and conditions imposed by the BSF procurement process. This is a complex area where we would be happy to provide more detail. In summary, we believe that the contractual terms and conditions—which in some situations could result in an ICT supplier having potential liabilities that exceed the value of the contract—may prove a significant disincentive.

6.4 We would note that, at the time of writing, we believe only one BSF delivery contract has reached financial close. This is an ICT-only contract and, as such, does not have the same complexity as a contract to provide ICT under a LEP framework. The experience of Intellect members suggests that legal and contractual issues are a real impediment to progress.

6.5 We are already seeing Intellect members choosing to de-emphasise BSF activity in favour of other work where the potential return on investment is higher. We believe that, unless changes are made, there is a significant risk that only a limited number of suppliers will participate in the programme and that schools will receive lowest common denominator ICT.

7. NEXT STEPS

Intellect is happy to give evidence to the Education and Skills Select Committee to explore the issues discussed in this submission in greater detail.

June 2006

Witnesses: **Mr Rob Shed**, Managing Director, Skanska Integrated Projects, and **Mr Barry White**, Director of Education, Skanska Infrastructure Development, **Mr Mike Blackburn**, BT Education and Local Government, **Mr Marcus Orlovsky**, Bryanston Square, and **Mr Nick Kalisperas**, Director, Markets, Intellect, gave evidence.

Q227 Chairman: Gentlemen, can I welcome you to our proceedings. You will know that the Committee has just started our inquiry into sustainable schools, and by that we do mean the full range of sustainability, both in terms of not just the design, but we started off thinking about look at the design and build of schools and then were convinced, talking to expert colleagues of yours, that that was not good enough, so it is design, build, the servicing, the transport too, what goes into that school, the kind of teaching that we would expect in a school of the 21st century—even how far the food comes if we get to it. So it is an ambitious project and we need your help because, in a sense, part of it is unknown territory for the Committee. We are looking at publishing our Committee's Report on *Special Educational Needs* and we learn a lot when we do an inquiry, but this really does spread across a great deal of expertise we do not usually get involved with, certainly in the construction world, but we are learning, and halfway through an inquiry we become dangerous because we do have some information, so it is your job to make us dangerous! So, Mike, let's start with you, you were invited to come to this Committee hearing on the sustainable school. Tell us a little bit about what you feel about what a sustainable school is going to look like in the 21st century.

Mr Blackburn: BT's main interest is in the ICT element of what happens in schools, but sustainable schools in the future for us are about radically looking at transforming the learning and teaching processes within a school rather than necessarily the building per se or the technology; starting off with what is the vision for our learning, what skills are we looking to achieve, what we are trying to get out of the schools at the end of the day, and how best do we go about making the teaching and learning the best and most comprehensive for both the pupils, the young people, when they come out, for industry when they take on board those young people as they leave school or go on to university. It is not just about the school itself but about the school being open for the community, for the wider access. If a community school, a school being an intrinsic part of the community, very much thrives then the community thrives and, therefore, to get a sustainable school for the future is about looking at the whole comprehensive vision, starting with that first. Once you start with the comprehensive vision and agree the vision for what is required for those kinds of schools, then you can looking at what is required to achieve that vision. So we start at the very former part, what is the vision for the 21st century, learning and teaching.

Q228 Chairman: So you would spend all the money on the inside, the technology. You do not care so much about the fabric of the buildings, is that right?

Mr Blackburn: No. We do care about the fabric because the ICT and the fabric of the school are intrinsic and need to be linked. To be silly about it, if you have a completely closed school where you cannot use technology in an open way then the two things are not mixed. You have to get the two things absolutely right, together, and in the BSF programme you have that capability to do that if you so desire.

Q229 Chairman: Do you know of people who have got it right?

Mr Blackburn: Doing it together? Not yet, no. I have seen some people doing the building programmes extremely well, and I have seen some people who have taken the ICT element away from the building programme and do that extremely well. I have not yet personally come across an area where they are doing both well, and then engaging with the wider community as well, and with the teaching profession and with location-based industry or the FE colleges in the location, so not comprehensively yet, no.

Q230 Chairman: Thank you. Mike, can we hold that, and Nick, would you like to tell us what your vision is? Can you take us somewhere and tell us: “Here is the future and it works?”

Mr Kalisperas: There is very little that Mike said that I would disagree with. In part obviously I would say that because BT are one of our members, but I think from my perspective the first thing I would do is actually ask the end users, the teachers, the teaching profession, pupils, what it is that they want from their schools in the future, and take from them their views of what needs to be delivered.

Q231 Chairman: Who would you talk to?

Mr Kalisperas: The teaching professions, the academics, pupils, because different schools have different requirements. In some ways the title of the programme, Building Schools for the Future, already sets us down the path that there is a concept here that we need to build schools, or we need to build schools according to a certain template, and I think we need to take one step back from that and say what is it that we want from our schools, what are the outputs we want and what do we want to deliver to pupils and teachers. If you look at other major programmes, such as the national programme for IT, one of the criticisms that has been levelled at that programme has been the lack of interaction with the clinicians, the doctors, the nurses, about the sorts of programmes they wanted, and this is one of those instances where we need to avoid a lack of consultation with the end-users—the teachers, and the students. I think we have to start from that point and work backwards, as Mike said, and then get to developing a set of requirements which reflects what people want on the ground.

Q232 Chairman: That is very thoughtful. We have enjoyed your submission. This Committee has always been very suspicious of trade associations but I must say that the information you gave us was most useful. Marcus, where do you come from in this? What is your interest in the sustainable school?

Mr Orlovsky: Our interest really is in trying to improve people’s life chances and it is so hard, because we are talking about schools so we are talking about an institution which has sort of grown up over the last 150 years as a place where we take youngsters and we hope to enable them to make that transition from being a child into being a contributing member of society, and we do various processes with them so they pop out at the other end as tremendously valuable, advancing citizens. What we then have is a raft of people who we employ to help do that, who we have currently called teachers, because I think maybe 50 or 60 years ago the only real source of knowledge which you could get came from someone who had that knowledge and who taught me, and I was divided into a room and put there with this great person—and that is what we all went through. But we can all remember probably being at school and not learning very much in some lessons, and also remember some things where we learned a lot, which is maybe not what we should have learnt. So where we are today is we have an enormous range of subjects available to be taught, and if you take section 96 which is sort of the list of accredited subjects there are 5,015 available to secondary schools, 379 GCSEs, for example, with five examining bodies, and that means we have a plethora of stuff. So if we want to be sustainable, given that our world is changing incredibly quickly, and the world today is very different from the world of 25–30 years ago, when we might have thought: “Well, I’ll get a job and keep it for five, 10, 20 years”, today I do not think young people are coming out with that. So how do we make whatever is that intervention sustainable? We can talk about building schools for the future and building a school building in which we will place 1,500 kids and 150 teachers and spend a lot of money on it, and go: “Aren’t we clever” and take photographs of it and it will look wonderful, but is it going to do the purpose of helping somebody transform from being 11-years-old coming from primary school into exiting at 16 or 18 as a contributing member of society. I do not know. And when we talk to the teaching professions a lot of people there do not know because they do what they do because that is what they have done, and if you talk to most heads and say: “What would you do differently?”, it opens up almost a Pandora’s box of getting to the very heart of what might I achieve, and I suppose the real nub of it is we can make a building which can pass a sustainability carbon footprint and all that, but not do what we as a society are looking for that whole institution to achieve. I suppose if I stand up in front of teachers I would be saying: I do not want to denigrate what my colleagues are doing because I think we are all doing the very best we can but at the end of the day you would not choose to reprofile British Airways, for example, by saying “Oh, we’ll

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build a new headquarters building.” You would probably say at the very heart of it: “What are we trying to achieve? What are the processes, the people and the spaces in which to achieve it?” and now let’s embark upon something which we can see could be a sustainable platform. The ICT is going to change immeasurably between now and 10, 15, 20, 30 years’ time; we are talking about creating buildings which can house this ever-changing ICT. Society will change. If you look at students today and the networks one can grow up on having friends in Australia and talking to people in New Zealand and be on your mobile. That was not available to most of the people sitting on this Committee designing schools for these people; it did not exist. So how are we going to create whatever is the base for that to be sustainable, and I think when we embark upon that we may find we get some quite surprising results. We may find that the institution of schools may change, if we allow it to, quite considerably. My colleagues to my right will probably be saying there is much more opportunity for virtual schools for people learning any time, anywhere; perhaps if I want to learn graphics I do not need to do it with a teacher in a graphic studio in a school, perhaps I will learn it through an equivalent of almost an apprenticeship, and I may not need a physical space in the school to do that and that is the direction from which we come. So as much as possible we, within the existing frameworks, try to do the very best we can and as much as possible we try to work at the front end, and I guess that is with teachers and students, to try and see are there some different requirements coming through which might change the process which we are embarking on, given that we all want the same outcome. We all want a successful country and all want to see people achieving their maximum life chances, and that is the direction from which we aim.

Q233 Chairman: I think the people on this Committee would share those aspirations. What we have been trying to do is learn how you get to that happy world where you can achieve it. Barry White?

Mr White: My role in building schools for the future is very much more at the delivery end. At Skanska we have just set up the first local education partnership in the country which was signed just this weekend, so we now have the first education partnership up and running, and we will deliver the first school under Building Schools for the Future in about 14 months’ time. Our role is very much one of responding towards what local authorities, schools and other stakeholders ask for in Building Schools for the Future, so we are there to respond to our customers’ needs and, therefore, we take a brief from a customer and interpret that and come up with a solution that will do two things: one is ideally allow us to win that competition in order to be able to deliver it, and, secondly, by interpreting our customer’s requirements, by delivering something that is sustainable in the long term. Certainly from where I sit in Building Schools for the Future I think if we can do one thing right it is to provide a platform for leadership in schools, because I think that is what will provide the real foundation for transformation,

leadership in schools, and that can be just by providing the facilities in the broader sense, including ICT, that allow different ways of teaching and learning to be delivered, but even at a more basic level I think the challenges that teachers face every day are also about things like administration and security, and in terms of what we are delivering that has to be sustainable, and it has to encompass those functions as well. A key approach we have is flexibility because undoubtedly what we are delivering today is going to have to be there for a long time and, therefore, what we are designing and delivering is incorporating the possibilities of having schools within schools, different types and ways of delivering the curriculum. In addition, what we are looking to do is make sure that what we are delivering during the construction and operation is environmentally sustainable as well, so we are looking at building in measures that allow ecologically friendly ways of delivery and in terms of operation as well. A key part of what we are doing, and this has been a major change under the BSF programme, is that we are now focusing on how we develop our solutions to facilitate educational outcomes, and the industry, because of BSF, has had a major shift in this focus in that for years we did focus on buildings, and that was understandable because that was very much what we were being asked to focus on, and really under BSF we are focusing on educational outcomes and how our role helps that and we are part of it, but we also acknowledge we are just part of it and we do need ICT partners and school leadership to allow that transformation to happen.

Q234 Chairman: Is there not a problem, though, in the sense that you are a very big player in the construction world, you are a pretty sophisticated global player, and you are going into schools where there is a head and a group of governors, and you must look at them like lambs to the slaughter, must you not? You have all that expertise, all that knowledge—they must be a dream client. They have hardly anybody that knows anything about it, they have never built anything before, they have never been a client before, and you can have your wicked way with them, can you not?

Mr White: Quite the reverse I would say. Our experience, for instance, with local authorities over a number of schools projects is that they are sophisticated clients that typically have procured complex projects before—

Q235 Chairman: What, the average head?

Mr White: Well, generally the procurement takes place where the local authority is the central procuring body, and we then work with many different head teachers.

Q236 Chairman: But heads play quite a large part in this?

Mr White: They play a very large part in terms of how the design is developed and how the solution is arrived at, which I think is absolutely right because they are the people who are going to use the school,

so typically in working for one local authority, the solutions we will come up with for each school will be very different because the head teachers will have a huge influence on the solutions we develop.

Q237 Chairman: But what would you say, Barry—and you have just heard what Marcus said about this inspirational vision of what education should be in the future—if you have gone in, you have talked to the head and people a little bit about where you are going to build the school, perhaps someone from the LA, and they came up with the sort of thing that he mentioned and you go back and talk to Rob and say, “They are a bunch of lunatics; they are dreamers; they want something that I do not understand, and I don’t know how to build it. Perhaps we can build them some tin shacks and take them down in five years’ time and put something else up”?

Mr White: I think if we ever stopped listening to what our customers wanted we would never be very successful, so I think we are looking to really listen, and part of being successful in industry is listening to what people want, and we know that only by listening and delivering what people want and are asking for, and adding value to that.

Q238 Chairman: What if they do not want what Marcus wants? What if they have a really conventional view of what school they want. They want a very familiar school, a school that is a kind of today’s version of the great Victorian schools that were built in the 1850s? What if that is what they want?

Mr White: Up to a point that is more an issue for the national programme and for the LA than for us, almost—

Q239 Chairman: But you are head of education. Would you say to a head or a group of people commissioning you, “Come and let me show you what we have done. Let’s inspire you by taking you to some innovative sustainable school.” Could you do that?

Mr White: Yes, and we do. What we do as well is we bring in examples of what we are doing in Finland, Sweden and America and we can show you—

Q240 Chairman: What about in England? Have you built anything good in England?

Mr White: We have built very good schools in England, yes.

Q241 Chairman: So you would take them round English schools as well? This Committee is pretty experienced, you know. We have been to terrible schools in Norway, and Finland, and the Republic of Ireland, and in England. We have also been to good schools. There is no stereotype for us. Members of this Committee went to a school in Norway where we were just astonished by the awfulness of it, and we sometimes have a stereotype of countries like that really building at the cutting edge, and this certainly was in some ways.

Mr White: There are examples of good and bad practice wherever you go really, but I think yes, part of our role is to challenge thinking and say “Have you thought of different options?”, and show people what is possible.

Q242 Chairman: So you and Marcus could have a conversation about a future school?

Mr White: Indeed, and we have worked with Marcus in terms of developing. Marcus was one of our advisers and development partners.

Q243 Chairman: Yes, I read that in the biog. So you are not terrified by his vision?

Mr White: Not at all. I think we do need people who are challenging convention but at the same time I think we also have to realise that we have to listen to what head teacher is saying as well.

Q244 Chairman: I do not know if you built the Darlington canvas educational village? It was a lovely school, I am not decrying it at all, and we went to it because it has a special school right at the heart of a complex comprehensive, but when we asked about the sustainability of the building they said “Oh well, we had aspirations but that was all ruled out because the costs would not allow it.” There were some sustainability aspects but a lot of them were not there. What happens? When you build, is the sustainability ruled out because there is not enough money in the budget?

Mr White: In our experience that is not the case. In the examples that we have where we incorporate rainwater recycling and biomass boilers, we believe these things can pay for themselves, so I think in terms of the sustainability and environmental issues quite often they are self-sustaining in that sense. I think there is a challenge in the overall programme that says sometimes is it worth spending a little bit more upfront to enhance long-term flexibility, and that is a challenge that is not just ours at the delivery end but also at the programme level, saying is that benefit worth having by spending a bit more now?

Q245 Chairman: Thanks for that, Barry. Sorry to push you a little bit on some of those matters but we are here to learn. Rob?

Mr Shed: Some of your questioning to Barry gives me an introduction as to my experience, my background, and why I am here and doing what I am doing. I have worked in construction all my life, UK construction, and there is this image of UK contractors as you have portrayed earlier on—that when the client is down you go for the jugular, shall we say—and I like to think that what we have done in PPP over the last few years is trying to change that image, and the challenge that we have is that we are delivering construction projects; they are projects that we feel passionate about, what we are delivering; they are hospitals, schools, prisons, all providing something back to the public, and the people that work on them are trying to disprove this cynical image of construction. I do believe in what we have managed to achieve in the last few years that we have managed to do something about that. If

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I go to some of the hospitals we have built, our construction teams on the hospitals get as excited about delivering the new hospitals, and commissioning them and seeing babies born in them as they do the earlier negotiations, so I think what this change in PPP and BSF has done has given us an opportunity to be more than just contractors, to be part of this development process whereby we do produce something that we are all proud of and something we can leave behind as a lasting testament, and hopefully in doing that we can change some of the image we have—

Q246 Chairman: This image is not helped, in my case, by being one of the first PFIs in Kirklees that was run by Jarvis, so you can take note that I am slightly cynical!

Mr Shed: You will be very pleased to know that we have obviously learned from some of the experiences of Jarvis, on precisely the way we run our business—

Q247 Chairman: But the theory is often better than the practice, is it not? This building was designed by Sir Michael Hopkins—beautiful construction, very expensive. When I was a student I was a snagging person on a building site, and I pointed out 12 things wrong with my room on the 5th floor here, and none of it was ever put right. Letters, phone calls—nothing from the contractor—and then it came out of the six month or whatever period, and I still look at the cracked marble, the flawed window, and the other dozen things that were never put right and I think: “Well, this cost all this money”, so there is a cynical bit about what you are telling us and what really is delivered, is there not? I am saying this because this is at a personal level but also this is what I hear from my head teachers, who then take me round a refurbished school and say: “That has still never been done, and that job was never completed, and this floor”—so in a sense that is, I suppose, why there is an image, and I am sure it does not apply to your firm because I know you have a high reputation in the field?

Mr Shed: One of the things that is often missed with PPP is that we obviously are there for 25-year maintenance of the facility as well, so if there are issues, as you suggest, we are there to put them right and we are under penalties if we do not. So I think the difference between the BSF programme and perhaps other education delivery programmes is that the contractor is not going to say, 12 months after completion: “It is not my problem any more”. It remains our responsibility for the life of that building, so we provide both the construction and the facility services as well, so we are there to maintain the facility.

Chairman: Right. You can see me as the “warm-up”; I have put you at your ease; you have seen the questions are very nice questions and now we can drill down on particular areas.

Q248 Paul Holmes: The Building Schools for the Future programme is £45 billion taxpayer funded over the next 15 years, so I assume it is self-evident to say that is welcome, it is a good idea, you would

not look a gift horse in the mouth. Have you been involved in consultation with the Government over how it is delivered, how contracts are negotiated, how you take part in it?

Mr White: Our view is that we have been extensively consulted during the set-up phase of Building Schools for the Future and that consultation is ongoing as the programme is developed, so I think there has been a very open consultation period with Building Schools for the Future and Partnership for Schools, yes.

Q249 Paul Holmes: Is there any key difference between building a school and any other big construction project like building a hospital, a factory, houses? Is there any difference?

Mr Shed: There is a skill; there is an expertise in delivering a school; some of the construction techniques are the same but you do need people that are adept at dealing with schools, not only in delivering the school itself but working with the community. One of the things we try to ensure is that in delivering a school you are often working in a very heavily populated area, where we need to have good community relationships, and there are lots of vehicles travelling around the area, so you need a certain expertise in the sorts of issues you need to address. So there is a specialism within something like delivering a school.

Q250 Paul Holmes: And from the Skanska point of view in particular, you are working on the first local partnership in Bristol that is up and running. What is significant about local partnerships? Do they work well? Why are they better than any other way of approaching this?

Mr White: I think one of the major benefits that we can foresee in local partnerships, because it still is early days, is that the way BSF is structured is that people will compete on sample schemes, perhaps three or four schools, and one of the criticisms of PFI in the past was that in that competition period there is relatively little time for consultation with stakeholders because you have three bidders all competing and, therefore, you have very short times allocated to consultation with stakeholders and very regulated, and one of the major potential wins in local partnerships is, once that initial competition is over, then there is the opportunity to have much more extended consultation on new projects being developed, and I think that will embrace stakeholder participation much more than having continually competing processes. To me that is one of the potential really big wins under the local partnerships.

Paul Holmes: Marcus, for example, in your biographical note you say you have worked on 13 Building Schools for the Future projects so far—

Q251 Chairman: You are looking puzzled, Marcus. You have or you have not?

Mr Orlovsky: We have worked on Bristol, Sheffield, Newcastle, Leeds and Lancashire, and we are working with authorities on—I do not know if it is 13.

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Q252 Paul Holmes: But quite a wide range of experience and, Rob, you say you bring extensive experience of PFI education schemes. Now the Audit Commission in 2003 said that the quality of schools built under PFI was significantly worse than that of traditionally funded schools, and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, who gave evidence on Monday afternoon here, brought out a report at about the same time in which they said that half of the schools built between 2000 and 2005 were poor, and that nine out of 10 of the worst designed new schools were built using PFI. What has gone wrong?

Mr Shed: It is probably fair to say that, when you think back to where the sector was at the time those schools were introduced, there was an urgent need for some education building to happen. That was the first wave of new schools that were brought out, and they were brought out under quite strict financial guidelines. There was a need to be affordable, it was an early wave of projects, and if you look at the DfES spending guidelines on education building, where we are now is extremely higher than where we were when that first wave would have been brought out, so essentially you have got schools that were delivered between that very tight cost constraint and you have essentially what has been paid for. That is not to say the schools are necessarily CABE's view about design; at the end of the day I guess those schools are 100 times better than the facilities that the teachers—

Chairman: Some of the classrooms had no natural daylight and corridors too narrow for two children to walk down.

Q253 Paul Holmes: And L-shaped classrooms that you could not teach in, and I speak as a former teacher.

Mr Shed: Some of the hospitals we pulled down and replaced with new hospitals, if the schools are of the same standard, then anything you build is better than what was there before.

Q254 Paul Holmes: So the fact that half of the schools were worse than previous examples and were poor is okay because they were replacing old clapped-out buildings?

Mr Shed: I do not think any of those were ours so I cannot comment on the precise nature of the schools.

Q255 Chairman: And CABE will not name and shame!

Mr Shed: I can speak from the knowledge of the schools we delivered under the early works of PFI, and we take people back to those schools as reference schools, so when we bid for schools currently we are proud to take people back to those schools. So my experience is that with the right teams working on the schools you get the right schools. I cannot comment on some of our competitors and what they have delivered; there have been lots of financial problems with some of those earlier schools; you mentioned a contractor

that is no longer in existence and there were some issues around their demise, so from my experience what we have delivered has been very good and we are bidding further schemes with those councils now and we are welcomed back by those councils. So it is difficult to comment precisely on that, but there is a recognition now that good design is not necessarily free, it is something you have to pay for, and I think there is a recognition that some of the BSF levels of pricing now are higher than they were under the original DfES guidelines.

Q256 Paul Holmes: But some of the problems that were quoted were that the design was allowed to run free and people were not looking at the education purpose of the building.

Mr Shed: I find it hard to understand that that can happen given the consultation process we go through. Every single drawing, every single building we erect, every room we draw, is signed off by the teachers, by the local authorities, so we have always gone through this very elaborate consultation process, so I find it hard to understand—I need to see some of the details of these other schools—why their schools were so poor, because the consultation process by its very nature does require the schools to be signed off by both the teachers and the local authorities.

Q257 Paul Holmes: So there are a lot of mistakes made in the first five years because it was rushed, et cetera, but in five years' time we will not be sat here saying that the next five years have been a disaster as well. You think people have learned enough to avoid that.

Mr Shed: I think one of the key strengths of the BSF programme is that it is a programme that is managing the supply chain, managing the projects across a wide spectrum of local authorities. Local authorities often need help and assistance; it is their biggest ever transaction; and the great benefit of BSF is that it does provide an overall umbrella for delivery of the new education frameworks. So that is one of the key benefits of BSF.

Q258 Paul Holmes: But as the programme expands will there be no experienced and competent companies or will the schools who come in later to the system find they have to take the pick of inferior bidders?

Mr Shed: I think what will happen is the better deliverers will do more. Certainly our strategy is to deliver more and more schools which is why it is important that we deliver Bristol to the very best standards, and the other schemes working we are working on, so that we raise the standards and by doing that we get more businesses, and it becomes a longer sustainable business.

Q259 Paul Holmes: I wonder if I could ask Nick to comment on something that Marcus said? Marcus was talking about the need to design and build schools that were flexible and could change in five, 10, 20 years to take account of new ICT development, and I was a bit puzzled by how far you

design a school to allow for students who are into the world of Beebo and MSN Messenger and all the rest of it, and quite what the relevance is of that to education. How does that affect the design of a brand new school?

Mr Kalisperas: As our submission makes clear, we think the first element in order to facilitate that change is separating out the procurement of the building from the procurement of the ICT, because when you procure the ICT as it is currently structured under the programme ICT is just one component of the overall consortia bid. That means essentially what will happen is the consortia, by and large, will put in the relatively conservative ICT solution, which by and large will conform to certain stereotypes. The idea that you should just have a laptop on the desk or an interactive white board will not take into account development in technology such as Scotland has spent, £37 million on a programme to develop an intranet—

Q260 Chairman: What have they spent £37 million on?

Mr Kalisperas: Developing an intranet for children and educators in Scotland. Similarly—

Q261 Chairman: Sorry, what have they spent it on? I can see white boards and laptops—

Mr Kalisperas: Development of an intranet, which does not necessarily mean you need an infrastructure within the school. You can actually use the world wide web or the Internet to take advantage of those technologies. We are effectively saying it is important to engage with the supplier community to understand how technologies, such as the use of mobile devices, the use of children perhaps working from home, accessing on-line assessment vehicles as well, could be utilised in this programme, and currently the way procurement is currently structured does not allow for that level of discussion to take place with teachers, head teachers, whoever the key decision-makers are. In the first instance it is important for the actual customers, the people who have the final say, to be aware of what their options are in the technology arena, and then to base their decisions according to their own specific needs, because we are not talking about technology as a utility just providing infrastructure; what we want to see is technology in this programme being used to effect real change, and that currently is not being reflected in the way procurements are being taken forward.

Q262 Paul Holmes: So you do not think the system at the moment is making that happen?

Mr Kalisperas: I do not think the way the procurement is going to be structured is going to get the best out of the ICT community. There is a lot of creativity, innovation, alternative approaches, that can be advance-promoted by different companies ranging from large companies such as BT right down to the very smallest companies who might provide innovative niche solutions, and I think it is important for the educators to be aware of those solutions and to be in the position where they are

able to talk to the supply community and say: “Well, this is what I want from my school, this is how I want to approach teachers, how can your technology help us to deliver that?” It is not just the development of a bog standard solution but very much viewing technology as a transformation vehicle. Too often technology is just seen as putting your laptop on a desk or your PC or just giving someone an e-mail account, and that is procurement for here and now but not for the future. One of the reasons why PFI or PPP for IT projects was scrapped was for the very reason that you cannot predict what the technology will do in 10 years’ time. ICT does not work in that way. So why should we basically go for a very standard solution within the consortia approach when the technology could do so much more?

Q263 Paul Holmes: So if the Audit Commission and CABE say that around half or more of the buildings in the last five years have been poorly designed, physically not fit for purpose and a bad deal, are you suggesting that nearly all of them are poor in terms of delivering ICT?

Mr Kalisperas: I would not go as far as that. I cannot comment on individual cases but I think we are looking at developing a programme for schools for the future, therefore the procurement has to be structured in such a way to take advantage of technological development. That is not how that procurement is currently structured at the moment. We are not making use of the potential of technology to change the way in which education is going to evolve in the next five or 10 years in order for us to take advantage of ICT to assist in the development of a better educated, better equipped school system that gives us the sort of workers that we want in order for us to remain globally competitive.

Q264 Paul Holmes: But you have kept saying, “Well, we do not really know where the technology will be in five or 10 years”, so how do we design the schools to allow for that?

Mr Kalisperas: What you do first is you put the suppliers in front of the educators, because a school in an inner city, for example, will have different requirements to a school in a rural location. It is more likely that the inner city schools will want to do things that are based around buildings and take advantage of using the school more as an interactive community hub, whereas a rural school may want more in terms of distance learning and provision of those sorts of infrastructures. What we want is basically the opportunity for members to be able to engage much more in that first instance, before tenders are written, so that customers, educators, have an accurate picture of the market’s capacity and capability to deliver any given solution. What we want is basically for the education communities to really challenge the suppliers and ask probing questions; to say: “This is what we want from our school in the future. Can you deliver it? If you cannot, what can you give us as a solution?” That dialogue is something a lot of our members have said they are not having at the moment because of the nature of the procurement structure.

Q265 Paul Holmes: Some of the design people we took evidence from on Monday, for example, said in quite a short way there is a 13-week period to bid for a school and it is not long enough to do the design, and it does not give you time to work with the teachers and all the rest of it. In one or two sentences, through the Select Committee and its future Report, what would you say to the Government? What have they to change in the contracting process to allow what you want to happen to go ahead?

Mr Kalisperas: Allow adequate time for consultation with the end users. Thirteen weeks is not long enough.

Q266 Paul Holmes: So the same argument as the design side?

Mr Kalisperas: Absolutely. Every school is different. It will have different requirements, particularly as it relates to the technology, and that needs to be reflected, and for that you need a period of sustained consultation. It is not just the time limit, it is an on-going period of consultation, so you establish a dialogue, a genuine partnership, that results in the sort of school that everyone can utilise and benefit from.

Q267 Chairman: Barry and Rob?

Mr White: I disagree with some of what has been said in that our view of ICT is much more advanced than what was judged there, and that to be successful we would not bid on a project unless we had the right ICT partner working with us, and we do view it much more as an inclusive solution that allows people access within a client application from homes, so people can use their home computers to access the school managed learning environment, and that mobile devices are very much part of that, and in designing our solutions we are including the requirement that the building can support a fully wireless solution so in years to come people can come into school with their advanced mobile phones, or whatever other device they have, and use those devices in the school, so we are thinking much more widely than simply white boards and laptops. One of the major successes of the BSF programme is that it has forced industry to look much more widely than it has in the past, so from that point of view we believe that the inclusion of ICT is forcing us to think differently as part of that process. In terms of the 13-week timeline I think that is probably understating the amount of time typically we have in that the whole process from starting to bid to selection of preferred bidder typically runs for eight or nine months and in that time there is a lot of clarification and on-going discussion. Certainly I think it is a challenged industry to remain flexible so we have taken our bid submission and then had further consultation and developed it further with the stakeholders to make sure that post that selection you get enhancements really from what was done during the bid stage to their benefit, so I think that has challenged industry in a way to have that flexibility and approach so that the intensity and the

bidding period is not the finish line, and there is still a willingness to develop jointly what was being offered.

Q268 Paul Holmes: Lastly, the Government are keen on the new range of schools, and, indeed, old schools, becoming extended schools open from eight in the morning till six or later, and of course there is a big argument about having them open at weekends and holidays for the community and so on. Now, there is an implication for the building and management side over 25 years because that inevitably means extra wear and tear, and there is an implication perhaps for the ICT side. Is that easy to accommodate or difficult from an ICT point of view to have extended schools with twice as much usage perhaps?

Mr Orlovsky: I think the concept of an extended school in terms of having a building where it can be open from early until late gives flexibility for teachers to start also looking at how they are going to flex their day in delivering learning. I know different teaching colleagues in other parts of the country are already experimenting with maybe moving towards a four session day which means they need less space, which is another way of allowing the budget to create them better overall facilities. The concept of having an extended school and allowing people to access those facilities when what we consider to be a secondary school or a primary school may otherwise be closed is laudable and should be happening and, I suppose, in most of the offerings which we are all creating the thinking about how all that happens be put in place. The practicalities of who pays for what, of what is the additional cost per usable hour outside of the costs which have been built into the unitary charge are quite often the areas which cause a bit of a sticking point, and we will see different authorities applying a PFI structure and saying: "We want our core hours to be very long so we do not have the problem of marginal pricing", and others who have a short core hour so they can get the maximum affordability then finding they may enter into a different negotiation on trying to open it outside. And I think that is probably the sticking point. The practicalities of creating a building which can do it I think we are all pretty okay on, and I think in terms of our responses we are all reasonably good at. Where the ICT fits in and how we access learning opportunities to people who may previously have been derailed in their lives or may want to pick up again is a question of, again, who actually does that, because quite often the schools budget and the way the schools are focused is on the learning participants who are within their charge. The FE college has an almost competitive element in trying to attract learners to come there, so you end up with quite a lot of providers vying for each other with perhaps the school having a new building but the FE college having the new infrastructure, so how do we resolve that? I think that is something which is probably too much to ask the private sector who are responding to a school

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building programme to try and come up with, and that is probably back with the local authority again in what you are trying to achieve.

Mr Kalisperas: From our perspective I would not see a significant ICT challenge as being posed by the extension of longer opening hours. I think that is the sort of thing we would welcome because it encourages ICT to be used to its full potential, using it in a variety of different ways.

Q269 Paul Holmes: What about the lifetime of the hardware, though? Is that being built into it, if it is going to be used for an extended range of hours?

Mr Kalisperas: In that regard it goes back to the procurement process to make sure that contracts are sufficiently lengthy and building things such as technology refreshers, so those are the sorts of questions that really should be asked pre-OJEU notice, so that is included in the tenders so suppliers are aware that the customer is looking for a solution which is fairly lengthy, encourages longer opening times and includes the appropriate technology refreshers as and when at the appropriate times.

Q270 Chairman: Mike, do you want to come in here? A bit of what Nick has been saying to Paul is a bit frightening, is it not, because we know what happened to IT contracts with government departments. We only have to look at Health and two of the inquiries we have looked at, Individual Learning Accounts and UK e-university. Is what Nick is saying not that you want an open-ended cheque for IT and everything else is subsidiary?

Mr Blackburn: Look at all the local partnerships that are going with local authorities now which are extremely valuable. The Audit Commission looks at those and says they are well run contracts, well run street partnerships by a number of providers and players. You have transport, revenues and benefits services, HR payroll services, IT, school catalogue services—there are a number, and the locality-based services are superb partnerships. The ones you quoted are not locality-based services, so there is a slight difference in there.

Q271 Chairman: Was there not a real problem with the IT contracts regarding housing benefit? They were local, were they not?

Mr Blackburn: There are some. That is certainly not my domain. I am thinking more about the local partnerships where you have places like Liverpool, Rotherham, Suffolk, Blackburn—real partnerships.

Q272 Chairman: But you are never going to be satisfied with the amount of money in a school that is IT, are you?

Mr Blackburn: One thing not built into the programme is the technology refresh. It is based on a per capita amount per pupil, and there was original consultation right at the very start of the BSF programme talking about having technology refresh and building it in.

Q273 Chairman: But we thought IT was going to get cheaper year on year.

Mr Blackburn: It does get cheaper year on year but the specification goes up, so the middle line goes up. It is like your television; it tends to stay the same! But PCs and other devices are not getting cheaper and cheaper. What is happening, though, is that newer devices tend to be at the top end of the range of prices and they will come down. Look at DVD recorders now compared with what they were two and a half years ago. Look at what PCs are now. I use a Blackberry but I bet Blackberries in a few years' time and those kinds of devices will be considerably cheaper than they are today. It is going to come down. But that is not the mainstream stuff that goes on within schools anyway; that is a peripheral part. In reply to Paul, I look at the extended school in three different areas. There is extending it for the current users, the pupils and teachers. How do they get access from home to material? Could they have a variety of days in a different way? Could the sixth form have maybe certain privileges? Could study leavers do certain things from home and get access to all their materials? My experience so far is that the vast majority of schools know they cannot get access very easily and tend to have to take things home on a memory stick. The second community I look at, then, are the parents, the governors, and those associated with the school, who also want to be able to get access. I would love to be able to get access to my schools where my children go, look at the curriculum, the school work, what is going on in the school, not having to wait for the note to come back in their bag which I never get. So getting access that way is another way of extending the school. Both of those have minimal, if any, nil, impact on the technology in terms of the on-going costs of those once you put it in. The third one, however, could have some impact, but I think, as Nick said, it is a minor impact, like extending those for other users, maybe for adult learners or for extra skill lessons that are going to go on. Then yes, you might need some different devices possibly, you certainly might need some different software, you might need different physical people helping and supporting in those environments as well. It probably has little or no impact on the core PC's life expectancy by having another user banging away on the keyboard for another couple of hours. All the devices are given the hardest grubbing by anybody compared with business, your organisations or our organisations. Kids beat these things up daily and they survive, they are robust. I think there will be minimal impact in those areas, but it might impact on areas like security.

Q274 Chairman: Can you direct us to schools that are the most advanced? Can you and Marcus take us to schools where you think, "That is where we are at the moment". They may be on the cusp but the best examples?

Mr Orlovsky: Yes, I cannot think off the top of my head, but, yes, I could. If we think back, it was only 10 years ago when the Superhighways projects were done and I am not sure how much we have really learned from those and embedded it back into what is going on today. That was all about distance

learning, it was all about changing the pedagogy, changing the teaching profession and how they go about doing things, and looking at sustainability. I am not sure how much those lessons have been learned. I have it very simple for you: 10% of schools at the front end, like any other organisation, are going to be go-getting, innovative, creative and advanced. 10% at the bottom end are probably going to need some kind of intervention of some sort and it is the 80% in the middle you need to move. It is the 80% where we have not taken those lessons from the Superhighways project and others and taken those really great schools and found out what makes them tick and can we apply them here.

Chairman: Members of the Committee really want to be shown the very best practice because if you work with us on this Report—a good select committee report works on picking up on the resonance of what is out there—and if we can add value, which is what we do—we only do it by listening to you, being guided by you and others, written evidence and visits and then coming up with something that can inspire other people but also make a fist at Government—so at this stage of the inquiry we do need for you to flag up, as far as you can this good practice. We went to a brand new City Academy recently and they showed us wonderful PCs and whiteboards, but if you are saying that is not enough we want to know what the rest is, do we not? I am looking at my colleagues. David?

Mr Chaytor: In fact, that is precisely my line of questioning, Chairman. Is not the root of the problem here the fact we have got on this side of the table representatives of the IT industry, which are at the forefront of innovation, and on this side of the table representatives of construction, which is historically the most conservative sector with a small “C”, in the whole of British industry and business? It is trying to reconcile these two, that seems to me the root cause of the problem. Is that a fair comment or am I completely off the wall?

Q275 Chairman: Maybe give a chance to Rob and Barry to say something.

Mr Shed: I guess the answer is that, as I mentioned earlier on, the challenge is to make it a capital “C” not a small “c”. If you look at the example of Bristol where we have integrated the ICT requirements into our project—and it is a consortium offering whereas we are sat here as Skanska construction, the consortium is a Skanska consortium—that includes an ICT provider and the consortium is rapping the delivery risk of that ICT.

Q276 Chairman: What does that mean, “rapping”?

Mr Shed: Taking the risk, responding on its performance.

Q277 Mr Chaytor: The ICT people’s big complaint is that they are being squeezed out of the LEPs and they feel that they are being steamrollered by the interests of construction.

Mr Blackburn: Similarly in the initial project where they have been together, there has been a threshold of what ICTs require. Bear in mind this programme

is very much an early model, we felt, in that mode. I think things have matured slightly since then in some respects, depending on who you are talking with, and certainly we had dealings with Skanska, just as Skanska are here with us today, and their people are very open; how do you combine the best of what is over here with the best of what is over there? There are compromises to be made when you take the best of two things and shove them together.

Q278 Mr Chaytor: Mike, you still stick by your submission, that the best way forward is to take out the ICT procurement or to have separate contracts?

Mr Blackburn: I think in the majority of cases, yes, not necessarily all though. There is a third way as well though, there are equally some great activities already going in local authorities today where, I mentioned before, some of the street parties going with the local authority, there are dozens around the country. The BSF programme is not engaging with those wider areas and using those procured methods, contracts or frameworks that are already out there which can get some of these things moving today. They are not being used at all. I think sometimes the local authority is caught between a rock and a hard place.

Q279 Chairman: What is not being used at all?

Mr Blackburn: The way party for schools operate at the moment you are using an LEP to deliver certain things which is a very prescriptive way of saying, “You must use this framework to procure certain services”. Is an LEP always required? I do not personally think it is, no.

Q280 Chairman: Not everyone is using an LEP?

Mr Blackburn: That is the standard way that DfES would like you to use an LEP. We would rather in some cases to not necessarily form an LEP.

Q281 Mr Chaytor: You do not have to form an LEP?

Mr Blackburn: No, you do not. There is a framework to be used where we prefer not to. Can I point out that when you are at the back end of a construction contract, you are a very small element of a construction contract and some of the terms and conditions of those contracts sometimes then mean that you can lose some of the innovation within the ICT framework. It is very difficult to get it to work. It does work in some cases, I absolutely agree with that, but not in all. I think the local providers, the local people, should be choosing which way is the most appropriate way to go. Is it an ICT only, is it a building only or is it a combination of both?

Mr Kalisperas: Just to follow up on that, we have done a lot of work in the last three to four years with organisations like the Office of Government Commerce and the E-Government Unit looking at why projects fail or the difficulties that projects encounter.

Q282 Chairman: IT projects?

Mr Kalisperas: IT projects. A lot of those examinations have focused very much on that initial phase before a tender is issued and the level of

interaction that takes place between the customer and the supplier over their requirements. One of the conclusions we have reached is that there has been insufficient dialogue and insufficient understanding of what your requirement is, so once you issue the tender, you do not have a tender that accurately reflects the supplies.

Q283 Chairman: I hope you read our Report on individual requirements because that is precisely what we found.

Mr Kalisperas: To this end we have also launched a service called “Concept Viability” which seeks to bring together public sector customers and suppliers in the forum before tenders are issued which basically asks, “Are their requirements suitable? Does it meet the needs of the market? What other options can they consider?” The service has been running for at least three years now and we have approached a cross-section of the public sector community. It has helped the procurement process because once you go at the tender phase and then you realise you have not got the right requirements, you start making changes to the tender and then to the contract, that adds to the cost and you do not get the solution you want. I think from our perspective what we want is precisely what Mike said, we want a dialogue with the customer where their ICT requirements are discussed fully and openly and they are aware of the solutions. We do not want a blank cheque, we just want to be able to use the money that is allocated towards IT effectively.

Q284 Mr Chaytor: We have certain technologies available, we can predict what is likely to become cheaper or more accessible over the next five or 10 years, and we can imagine what is likely to be available in 20 years, but to what extent are the ICT requirements going to vary school by school? I cannot get my head around every school having a different set of ICT requirements, given every school is working to broadly the same National Curriculum and every school will have broadly a similar range of community involvement.

Mr Kalisperas: There will be an element of standardisation, a baseline, to which every school should reach, but over and above that one size does not fit all, nor should it.

Q285 Mr Chaytor: Can you give me a specific example of where secondary schools in different parts of the country in different geographical circumstances might require a fundamentally different ICT provision that has to be built in at an early stage?

Mr Kalisperas: As I mentioned previously, where you have got, say, an inner city secondary school as opposed to a secondary school in a rural location, the inner city school is probably going to want something which is much more classroom-based because of the geographical location of its pupils, they will be much more within the classroom, whereas those within a more rural location will be more geographically spread. Therefore, you are looking at potentially offering people things such as

distance learning, greater distance learning and perhaps the use of mobile devices. I think that sort of difference needs to come to the fore and we need to be aware of it so companies, such as Mike’s, can develop solutions which are tailored to meet the needs of individual schools as opposed to developing, say, one standard solution which, ultimately, probably will not do what it is supposed to do.

Q286 Mr Chaytor: If you have got a school in the Outer Hebrides, I can see the point that there is an advantage of having broadband, what else do you need? I cannot see this is a big deal in the negotiation of the contract.

Mr Blackburn: There are some differences in some senses. It depends on what they have already got and what they used to do, how they have built their pedagogy, their teaching and learning around what kind of equipment they currently have. To use an extreme, if you take all of that away and give them a completely different set of devices and software, there is a massive amount of re-training to be done for teachers and for pupils as well. There are thousands of different software vendors out there in the educational arena.

Q287 Mr Chaytor: Here we are talking about hardware.

Mr Blackburn: I agree.

Q288 Mr Chaytor: The software and the training and professional development of teachers come later. We are talking about installing hardware and, while we are talking about this, how would the basic hardware and the basic infrastructure be different in secondary schools delivering broadly the same curriculum across the country?

Mr Blackburn: You go to some classrooms and they will have a lab of computers and that is how they are going to teach; others will have a completely integrated and open environment, that is how they teach. They are markedly different teaching environments and, therefore, you do not have the same solution for one versus the other. If you then try and impose a wireless environment on that, you have a completely different set of problems, changing one from the other into wireless and then into homeworking, how your security is run within the school. They are quite different in both hardware and software or could be quite different in both hardware and software terms. I would absolutely agree that there are not thousands of different options for this, but you have to be able to allow that innovation and use in the classroom to be taken forward by the teacher and the pupil as well in the way they want to take them forward rather than mandating, “You must use that little machine that is going to sit in the corner between 9.30 and a quarter to ten”.

Q289 Mr Chaytor: There are also issues of good practice here because schools that are locking themselves in now for the next 25 years with having

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a small number of computer rooms with fixed banks of computers, that cannot be good practice for the next quarter of a century, can it?

Mr Blackburn: I would agree with you.

Q290 Mr Chaytor: That is an option then that should not be subject to negotiation.

Mr Blackburn: I absolutely agree with you. If you look at the research that both BECTA and the NCSL have done in those areas, and then the SLICT (School Leadership in ICT) programme for head teachers and aspiring heads that NCSL have done, there is some really great practice going on there. My point before was how do you take that really great, innovative practice, and look at making it available for the 80%, so that at least they know about it and can use it.

Q291 Mr Chaytor: Can we just switch over to Barry and Rob again; how do you feel about this viewpoint that it would be far better if the whole project was ICT-led rather than construction-led, that the ICT people are being squeezed out on the LEPs?

Mr White: My view is that I do not believe they are being squeezed out. The evaluation criteria are set on most projects with ICT very high as part of the valuation criteria and out of all proportion to the actual value of ICT in terms of pounds money. It is actually saying as a consortium if you are not delivering strongly in ICT you will be unsuccessful, so from that point of view there is a very clear message. Coming back to a point I made earlier, as part of us actually deciding to bid a project, having the right ICT partner is an absolutely critical part of that selection process, to say can we actually deliver what the customer wants for this particular project. Where are we actually going with all this is a very big question and the danger of divorcing it and saying ICT is separate from the actual building is that where we are going is that we will start designing smaller schools, we will design schools that have more than planned spaces. That is already happening and it will happen more, but what is actually happening at the moment is that we are coming together and working together in a way that has never happened before, so out of all the design team meetings the ICT partner plays a key role in actually developing the physical design of the building. That is about two things, it is actually about how teaching and learning is delivered but it is also how the technology all works, will wireless work in that building, will different delivery methodologies work, will the CCTV system feed into the managed learning environment so that the head teacher can view CCTV through his computer? All these aspects, that actually are very important on the ground, are being achieved through actually that linkage that is there at the moment.

Mr Chaytor: Following that could I just ask Marcus, because you are squeezed in the middle between the ICT people and the construction and facilities management people, earlier you were talking about the radical changes in the delivery of education over the next generation and how the BSF programme contributes to that. The difficulty I have is that it is

easy to talk about this being transformational, which is the current buzzword, but it is more difficult to visualise what the typical secondary school might be like in 20 years time. How would you envisage that, what are the main differences going to be in the delivery of secondary education, for example, in 20 years time as of now? What will the impact of ICT be and what will need to be the impact of the design of schemes, how will the design of schools have to be different?

Chairman: Marcus, you can take that in bite-sized pieces if you like.

Q292 Mr Chaytor: Sorry, yes, there is a series of questions there.

Mr Orlovsky: At the heart of it—and that is probably why this group of people is coming out with some of the frustrations—the reason why some of the PFI schools have not been very good is because we have had a client—let us use the word loosely, a user—who has had some procurement done under him. It is difficult for anybody who is currently in an educational environment, dealing with the day to day issues of their own environment, to then face a group of professionals coming in, in whatever is that time frame, whether it is 13 weeks or 18 weeks, and asking “So what is it that you want to do so that we can then deliver the solution to you?” If I have not had a clear lead of thinking I am going to find it impossible to respond to such wide-ranging questions. The work which has been alluded to all over the place, from the National College of School Leadership, through to BECTA, through to Partnership for Schools, has been trying to see where our teachers on the ground and deputies are starting to see this as coming to them. There are some key components and one of the key components is if we want to encourage young people to pick up a raft of different skills in order to be able to participate in our wider society, then we are going to have to move ourselves, as at the stage of the intervention of the secondary school, into offering a much wider curriculum. That is a generally accepted desire, but it brings with it a bit of a change because that means I may not be able to be carving people up into groups of 30 and delivering such a wide curriculum in classrooms, which then leads on to how will I do that. That makes the move from the teacher being the passer of information and skills to the teacher being the facilitator of an independent learner picking up those skills. That is a big move for the teaching profession, and at what stage are learners ready to embrace that.

Q293 Mr Chaytor: Just pausing there, to what extent do you think that is understood by the LEPs that are currently progressing the building programme?

Mr Orlovsky: At different stages people probably know that, but at the end of the day if there is a procurement here, most organisations want to make a profit and want to deliver that which the users have asked for. If push comes to shove I think it would be a very brave bidder who says “I know what you have asked for, but I do not think it is right and this is what I am proposing”, because I do not think they

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would win it. An awful lot of projects are won when people know it is not the right one and that is actually the reason why I started Bryanston Square because I heard people say “I know the solution is not right educationally, but it was affordable and is what the client wanted”, which I think is outrageous.

Q294 Chairman: Or the financial package was the right one for them.

Mr Orlovsky: Or whatever. We just have to look at the reality which is that I do not think there are very many organisations in this country who are bidding for long term projects that have any intention of holding those projects for 25 years. I am sorry, I just believe that most want to recycle their equity so that they can move to the next project, and whether one is a constructor or a facilities manager, you just have to look at the growth of the secondary market and the infrastructure funds and you can see there is a desire to win a bid, to create a great project, to sell it, to move on, to be able to do the next one. To some extent if there is a process flaw in the LEP it is that the incentive in the private sector participants is not geared around delivering better quality young people, that does not really come into it; it is usually about building-related issues.

Q295 Mr Chaytor: I am sorry to interrupt at that point, but this brings us to the whole question of the way in which projects are subject to evaluation and these key performance indicators; you are saying the key performance indicators are all wrong really and there should be a stronger educational input.

Mr Orlovsky: I am not saying they are all wrong, but if we want to encourage the private sector responders to move towards thinking about the educational outcomes, then one wants to have that KPI there; if we do not, if we want people to focus upon being really good at delivering what the requirements are, then we do not need those key performance indicators but we do need to get our users, our initial group of people, to spend a bit more time in really working through what they want. At the moment a lot of that is incumbent upon the dialogue process in whatever is that short period of time in delivering the solution. Barry is right in that the actual bidding time from starting to bid to actually achieving preferred bidder may be quite long, but a lot of the major decisions are taken quite early. If one has a user base which has not had the chance of really exploring what it is that that future might be, if we are not asking the private sector to be tied into the outcomes of that future, then it sort of says that the process should put much more emphasis before the private sector responder is being invited to bid. One of those options would probably solve what we are all grappling with at the moment as being a bit of an issue. My colleagues on my right would probably say if users had spent more time knowing what is possible, and if they had spent more time dialoguing with the ICT providers and exploring how they were going to change learning, it would be better for them; my colleagues on the left, if they knew that users had thought through various

different concepts and knew roughly where it might change over 15 or 20 years time, we would be able to respond to those requirements as well.

Q296 Mr Chaytor: Can we test that thesis then with Barry and Mike? At the moment the only thing that you seem to have in agreement is you say there should be more money in the system, but you would say that, would you not? I am trying to see if there are other things on which you can agree?

Mr Shed: I am not sure the picture is as black as has been suggested. The buildings we are currently building are becoming much more flexible and if you look at the basic design of a school things change—the methods of teaching change and the schools that we are now trying to design with Bristol are much more flexible and have got many more flexible spaces, primarily by employing people like Marcus to help us and advise us so that we offer the very best solution for the kids of Bristol. The ICT issue is one whereby we can provide a more advanced ICT coping system, such that when the changes come and people require a much higher quality system, our system can take a further change. By installing our cableways in an accessible way we can replace those cables in 10 years time if we need to, so the flexibility in the schools recognises some of these issues that we are talking about; I guess it is impossible to come up with a school that is going to be perfect for 25 years time, but education fundamentally is still being taught in the same way as it was taught 25 years ago. I am sure the educationalists will argue that there are some changes, but primarily it is very similar. There will obviously be a revolution in some ways regarding ICT, use of computers, and kids are much more accessible, but all those sorts of issues we are trying to accommodate in what we are doing at Bristol. For example, we have designed, in consultation with our ICT adviser, big hubs for the equipment, we have security properly designed into the system, so we have actually gone an awful long way in giving this flexibility. The other issue that perhaps has not been picked up is that the very reason for BSF including ICT within the schemes—and I am fairly neutral as to whether it is in or out of our schemes—is that it comes under the same measures as the construction does, so it is treated the same, so delivery of the ICT system which traditionally has been challenged in some quarters, comes with the same measures as the construction. There is no argument in future on our schemes as to whether a room is inaccessible because the room has not been cleaned or whether the ICT is not working, it is the consortium’s issue. If that was outside of the consortium, that issue would still be there as a problem for the school, so it does give the school great clarity, and if we are looking at it from an educational point of view, you can see the benefit of including ICT within the scheme. There will always be this argument that technologies change, technology refresh needs to be accommodated, but perhaps that could be done by this educated design of the buildings whereby they are more flexible to accommodate future change.

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Mr White: One thing that Marcus said is absolutely right: it would be a very brave bidder who said we have listened to everything you said you wanted and decided to offer you something totally different; that would be a very short-lived experience. Genuinely we have to listen to what our customers are saying they want and if that is motivational or more innovative we have to take the view that it suits how that local authority and how that head teacher wishes to continue to deliver things.

Q297 Chairman: What we are trying to get at is that these are—as Marcus has said—very busy people who are running a school, have a fulltime job and suddenly these top professionals arrive and it is difficult. If you are looking for a house, often you go and look at a show house, do you not, because you can look at the sort of thing you guys are going to build; are there, for the schools of tomorrow, opportunities to actually build in partnership some of these schools that you could actually take people to? You could have one of these John Prescott challenges to build one, not for £65,000, but you get my meaning, do you not? You need somewhere to take people and say if you used all the technology, if you really did this, you know, BT, you guys and other partners—or do they already exist in schools you have built? I suspect from what you are saying that they do not, so why not build one?

Mr White: Our ICT partner that we work with at the moment on some of the projects has a classroom of the future, so he would take people to show them the classroom of the future and the technologies available in that. That is already happening and I think what Partners for Schools are doing or appear to be doing, from what we believe, is that at an early stage, before the procurement even starts, they make much challenge of their educational vision to make sure that is in place so that by the time we become involved there is a very clear view as to what vision is trying to be delivered.

Q298 Chairman: At the very beginning of this session I said to you, “Barry, would you guys educate this Committee?” I would challenge you then, where would you take us to see this superb good practice, where would you tell us to go? Would it be somewhere in Europe, would it be somewhere here, and if you cannot tell us how can you tell a head teacher you are talking to? You are the head of education at one of the leading construction companies in the country, is it not your responsibility to know exactly where you would take us and take that head and show them the future?

Mr White: There are places we would recommend you go to see what we believe is currently very good or best practice.

Q299 Chairman: You do not want to build the school of the future in Huddersfield for me and say that everyone can go—you could do it there but we would have to find you a site.

Mr White: We would be very happy to do so. The schools we are delivering in Bristol we would be happy to take anyone to and say this is what is

possible under the BSF programme because we believe it is a step change from what has been delivered in the past.

Q300 Chairman: Hold that for a minute, I know Nick has got to leave now but one of the things that is coming through is that you are more institutional than I thought you would be because what interests the Committee very often is the out-of-school learning that is probably the most revolutionary thing in this period of educational development that we have ever seen. Here we have a society in which little kids have to instruct their parents how to understand most of the IT in their homes, kids as young as four and five know how to handle the sophisticated television and all that sort of stuff. There is an educational revolution going on amongst very young children that is nothing to do with what they learn in school, so what is happening there, Marcus, and how do we cope with that?

Mr Orlovsky: We take people to Halifax and we go to—

Q301 Chairman: You could build a school right next door in Huddersfield.

Mr Orlovsky: I have to tell you, I do not understand why—if we were building a supermarket, if we were constructing a new supermarket which was a fairly inconsequential shed, although I know the supermarket operators will say it has got a huge amount of technology in it, we would probably mock one up inside a big shed somehow, a big warehouse, and we would try it out with some test customers. For the life of me I do not understand why we do not do that with schools. We look at little components, and the classroom of the future is great, but it is just a classroom of the future, not a school of the future, so one has to go Djanogly in Nottingham and see what those guys are doing with regards to the ICT, one needs to go off to see what Mike Davies is doing with Bishop’s Park in Clacton, to see what he is doing with school agendas, one needs to go to the Natural History Museum and see how they are trying to change themselves from being a collection into something else, go off to Montessori in Amsterdam and try and see how that group of people are dealing with the bottom 25% of attainment, the guys with 75% asylum seekers, and pick certain components. The difficulty with it is in picking those components and opening one’s eyes we still do not obviously have a model. There is a question about what should we be doing with ICT, should we be having a national ICT framework, a national model, and imposing it? We are a little too timid to do that, so in a lot of authorities we are a little bit nervous of the power of the heads, at the same time we want to put a framework in place which is replicable around the place, we have LEPs trying to do their bit and all of it is in a bit of a rush. I am not suggesting that we cannot get innovation there, but I am suggesting that what is going to happen is that some of the early schemes—and I know we are talking about Bristol, but it is not open yet, it is not built and we do not know if it works. Sometimes you see a great idea which then gets built

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and you find that because of the cracked marble and because the window has a flaw in it, it is not quite as nice as it should have been. A lot of designs which you see in PFI schools may have been okay, but a couple of marginal decisions got taken which ruined it. That is where we are; I am not trying to be institutional, I am trying to work out where the issues are, or trying to help you understand where the issues are.

Chairman: We are very grateful to all of you. Not only has Douglas been neglected, but you mentioned Clacton and I think he must respond.

Q302 Mr Carswell: I am just curious, you mentioned Mike Davies's Bishop's Park College in Clacton, what would you regard as successful about that?

Mr Orlovsky: What Mike has tried to do is just look back and to some extent he has almost—it is not quite what Steiner are trying to do because Steiner are trying to make education much more tangible at the individual level, but Mike has the work of having a secondary school divided effectively into three smaller schools where a group of teachers are responsible for a smaller group of students. Joining that school, therefore, you will join one of the three schools within it. There is a shared resource and the other thing he has done is to change his school week in that on Fridays there is a master class, which is a one-day class on an in-depth subject. That does not sound like very much, but it makes a heck of a difference.

Q303 Mr Carswell: What would you regard as successful about it, bearing in mind its first set of results are due to come out any week now?

Mr Orlovsky: That is a loaded question, is it not?

Q304 Mr Carswell: On a very serious point though, does this not illustrate that we perhaps are losing sight of what it is all about, which is learning and education? It is all very well having these faddish ideas about this, that and the other, but despite millions and millions of pounds of investment, literally millions of pounds in this case, if you are only able to produce a set of results that is simply not good enough are we not basically losing sight of what education is still thought to be about?

Mr Orlovsky: We have a set of results which we are using at the moment, and this is another debate, is it not? There is a set of results which we are using which is attainment at a point in time, effectively GCSE results, and we are saying it is A*-C and we are measuring everybody on that. I do not know if we have done the work on how much correlation there is between A*-C successes at a point in time—we are not measuring the curve, we are not measuring somebody who is on their way up, whether they are static or on their way down, we are measuring that point of attainment at that point in time. I do not know whether that measurement necessarily projects whether somebody will be a great contributor in our society; I suspect we may find that we do not have a perfect correlation, and I suspect we will find that some people who are wonderful contributors in society may discover their

abilities at an earlier or a later stage and it may not be reflected in that particular measurement which we are using. You will find that an awful lot of the teaching profession is saying I cannot measure and I cannot tell you whether this student is on the way up and I cannot tell you that this student is a very creative individual because we do not have a course on creativity, but what we have is a set of measures. If we choose to put everything on those measures then we will drive different behaviours and we will drive teachers and schools to teach to pass the exam. I do not know—and that is a wider debate—whether that is what we want or whether we want teachers and educators to educate people to be great contributors. We might say it is the same, except I spend an awful lot of time talking to teachers and I spend an awful lot of time talking to students. We are just three-quarters of the way through a programme for 10,000 students from challenging areas to help them get into university and I must talk to maybe 700 heads a year. In some places in the country there are heads who know that some of their departmental heads may be teaching parts of a subject in order that their students will do well in that exam, and there is a debate going on within the teaching profession at the moment about what is it that we are trying to achieve. I do not want to sound negative, I am trying to be really positive because the 10,000 kids that I met are just outstandingly brilliant and we are achieving some fantastic results. We are achieving fantastic results from people who, on paper, do not necessarily look that good, so I am a little bit concerned and I am trying to defend Mike because I do not know where Mike Davies's results will come out, but if you walk around that school and you see what those students are achieving and if you see the commitment they have, it is very strong; I would like to hope that that is a great blueprint. In the same way, if you go around the Natural History Museum, and see what some of those students are achieving, it is really good, and some of the kids walk out and say "Good grief, I really want to do some stuff now." If you measured at that moment you might not measure very high attainment, so it might take six months or nine months before something comes through, and that is the debate, it is a debate about what we are trying to build.

Q305 Mr Carswell: We shall see when those results come out.

Mr Orlovsky: I know.

Chairman: You missed Marcus's opening remarks when he expressed what he thought schools were about in terms of the sort of student he wanted between going into a secondary school at 11 and coming out at 16 or 18, so he had described that vision in some part. Anyway, carry on with your questions, Douglas, if you wish to.

Mr Carswell: That is all I need to know.

Q306 Paul Holmes: Could I just ask a very quick question. I agree with everything that Marcus has just said, however when any one of the five people giving evidence is recruiting somebody to work in

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their firm, do you look at their GCSE and A level qualifications, or do you assess something totally different and ignore their exam results?

Mr Orlovsky: I am lucky because I am in a smaller firm. I used to be in charge of graduate recruitment at Ernst & Young and that is what we did, we looked at results, and then we said that that actually can stuff somebody up at quite an early age, so we started putting in assessment tests, just to see actually how good people were at the sort of tasks we wanted, and that became a bit more mature. I am running a very small organisation and we recruit people who have got a passion and commitment, that is what we are interested in, whether people have got great results or not. I am not really so interested in what people have done in the past, I am more interested in what people are going to do if they join us and what change are they going to make in the future. I have not yet worked out how to measure what somebody can do in the future necessarily based upon what they may have done in the past at school. I might look at what their previous background has been, but I am much more inclined to go with someone who has got extracurricular activities and has done some wonderful stuff, which is the application of skills, because that is a demonstration of what a person is worth, more than necessarily what the academic results are which is the hope that they can go on to achieve great things.

Mr Shed: Inevitably we do look at qualifications, particularly for graduates, but it is not just about qualifications, it is about the person. You are recruiting the person, not just the person with qualifications, so as a first screening process the qualification is important, but in the end when you are talking to somebody it is how you react to that person and his enthusiasm. As Marcus has said, there is more to life than just what GCSE or what qualification a kid got at school.

Q307 Chairman: I want to get back to more of the nitty-gritty of how these things work now, and I am going to ask the team to look at the section we have described as “Cost to bidders and affordability”, and that is about this whole area where it is argued that the tender process is cumbersome, long and expensive. I am certainly familiar with that, wearing my environmental hat, in that there are enormous costs, for example, for an organisation to supply an energy-from-waste plant. I always put it into perspective—I think the Belvedere has just been given planning permission after 16 years, so I do not know how much that cost to prepare, but you take my point. Part of the evidence we have already had and some of the stuff that you have given us points out this real problem of the tendering process. Is there a level at which the tendering process is a barrier—we do not have to muck about with this, the fact is that you big building companies must add that to your cost, if it costs you whatever for the tendering process it goes into the price eventually, does it not? We know that, so is that inevitable? Is the tendering process also going to cut out the smaller and particularly the medium-sized operator; is it all going to be the big people, the big

architectural practices, the big contractors that are going to get these contracts because the system squeezes out those people that are not in that league? Can we start on that and then I will call Douglas to nail it down?

Mr White: First of all you are actually right, that at the end of the day, to an extent, people do have to recover their bid costs through bids that they are successful in, and not everyone in the public sector necessarily admits that or understands it, but it is absolutely right that that is the case. Is it expensive; the early projects under Building Schools for the Future probably are reasonably expensive to bid because people are learning a new process and therefore there is an initial cost in that; we are finding that on subsequent projects that cost is less because we have learned lessons from the first projects, which is a positive. Does it mean that only big players can be there? I do not think that is the case; there is a very varied range of bidders in the market between bigger and medium-sized companies and certainly within Skanska we use different sized architectural practices as well and we are working with very small architectural practices because we believe that they can bring a new vision and a new type of innovation to what we are trying to do, as well as working with some of the more established ones. There is very much a mixed offering within the market.

Q308 Chairman: John Sorrell from CABE said he was really worried about the smaller and medium-sized practices being squeezed out of the process; is that a genuine worry? He is a very knowledgeable chap as chairman of CABE.

Mr Shed: There has been a discussion for some time that PFI/PPP does squeeze out the smaller players and I do not know if that is the case. Certainly, as Barry has said, we make a point of using the medium-sized and smaller architects because that is where the expertise is. If you think about where the knowledge of building schools, for example, rests, it rests in a number of regional architects that have traditionally worked in the education sector, so the bigger named architects are often not the place to go for the best architecture in education. We use a selection of architects and we try to build relationships with a few so that we can try to use them around a number of projects.

Q309 Chairman: Why are people so cagey about telling us who is good and who is bad? Has CABE done an assessment of the five years of building new schools? I am a great addict of the *Good Food Guide*; it does not have any sponsorship, it has independent inspectors and when I go to a town I know in terms of the score out of 10 that the cooking is good and so on; it is a bible for me, it saves me from being poisoned in places. Why can we not have a star rating for people who actually have done these contracts in these past, so we know that this is only a two-star performer, treat with great caution because they have built a school with no natural daylight or corridors that nobody can walk down comfortably. Why can we not have a rating so that someone who is your client knows who to choose from?

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Mr Shed: I guess the answer is that it is all about the person procuring the building looking at more evidence as to what the person in front of him is actually going to deliver. We were talking earlier on about taking people to your projects that you are proud of, and that is something that we are happily prepared to do, so I guess that is probably the answer. We can all wax lyrical about what makes a good design; good design is often in the eyes of the beholder.

Q310 Chairman: That is an extreme, is it not? It is not rocket science that a room with no windows is not a good learning environment, come on.

Mr Shed: That is quite right.

Q311 Chairman: There are certain things that you know are awful. The group here went to a school in the Republic of Ireland and we all came out saying we had found the builder that Basil Fawly used to use, he was alive and well and building things. It had a corrugated roof, it was dark, it was awful; surely the consumer should be protected against that?

Mr Shed: I agree. I would need to come and see that school and I would love to see that school and find out what actually caused that to happen, because that is exactly what gets our industry a bad name. The fact that you can recount that example, the fact that CABE can recount examples of bad architecture does our industry more harm and it ignores the fact that there are people out there trying damned hard to actually do something much better, and the longer that CABE keep on coming out with those sorts of statements the more it does the industry down. I can take you to CABE ratings for some of the hospitals we have built where they have given us five stars, where they have said it sets new standards. That never gets publicised, all that gets publicised is the negative and that is always what is disappointing. CABE have seen our schools in Bristol and CABE have given our schools in Bristol a very good rating; that never gets publicised.

Q312 Paul Holmes: If CABE are saying that 50% of all the new schools in the last five years are poor, that is a fairly headline figure.

Mr Shed: I would not seek to protect some of those that built some of those schools and I can understand some of the circumstances behind them, but you need to look at the circumstances that made them poor. Was it poor because it did not look nice, or was it poor because they were dark classrooms? I have seen some reports that say something is poor architecture simply because it does not look very nice; it may perform great inside, it may allow the kids to get a good education but it is not necessarily poor. One man's poor is not necessarily the same—

Q313 Chairman: We knew that Nick could not stay the whole course, but he wants to say a word before he leaves.

Mr Kalisperas: It is just to make an offer to the Committee that we are not-for-profit as an organisation and we are also technology neutral, so we would be more than happy to facilitate a visit to

a couple of schools that we consider best practice. I can be in touch with the Clerk to the Committee if you would like.

Chairman: That is a very good offer, thank you, Nick. Sorry, Paul.

Q314 Paul Holmes: The specific examples they gave us on Monday afternoon were not to do with visual design, they were to do with a hall at the centre of a school so that every time the classrooms emptied out, all the kids doing exams in the hall were disrupted—there was no way around that because that was the way it was built—the one-way system because the corridors were too narrow and the library with no external windows and being able to share classrooms. All the examples they gave were just ludicrous for any building that people were supposed to work in, let alone teach kids in.

Mr Shed: I agree, you cannot condone those standards, those standards are valid criticisms, but I can take you to other very famous buildings where some of the same issues occur. I guess you can take someone inside this building and there are elements of this building that do not work, but CABE would still see this building as a great building.

Q315 Paul Holmes: They said that only 19% were excellent or good, so one in five of the new buildings in the last five years were excellent or good and 50% were poor. That is a pretty appalling record and if the next £45 billion goes the same way, that is a disaster for the taxpayer and it is a disaster for our kids who are going to be in those schools for the next 40 years.

Mr Orlovsky: If we were building our own house we would be very concerned about what it was going to look like at all times and we would be involved in that process. When you ask a management team from the school to get involved in that, we know that they sign off drawings but they may not necessarily know exactly what they are signing off. We have already said we do not know the reasons why some of those buildings are bad, but that I think is the clearest case and if CABE want to make a difference then we should have a CABE enabler who is not just looking at the architecture but looking at the functionality at all times through the process, just to hold the hand of the uninformed users. That may be something which, at the moment, does not necessarily have a huge amount of resource behind it, and I cannot imagine really anybody necessarily wanting to do that, to build a classroom with no windows, it is a mistake and it has just got built. Those are things that can happen because builders want to build and architects want to design, one might have lost momentum and off it goes. Somewhere one wants to try and put in the checks and the double checks; it is almost like doing an absolute design audit. It might be a peer review, it might be a good idea, before anything gets built, just in order to check it from the users' side rather than from the deliverer's side, because if you work on something for too long you cannot see the mistake; it is there everyday but you cannot see it because you have got too close. That might be an opportunity to

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make that change happen. We have talked to CAGE about trying to do that and CAGE have their own issues over what is the role of the enabler and where does the enabler continue to be in the process and, actually, how much veto or sanction have they got. At the moment I think they have a consultative role as opposed to an absolute arbiter role, and that might be quite a good thing to have.

Q316 Mr Carswell: I want to look further at a point you have already touched upon. You have a huge amount of public money, public procurement contract money through PFI, swirling around. Is it not the case that the BSF bidding process is a very effective barrier to entry to keep the ability to tender and receive that money in the hands of a few big corporations?

Mr Orlovsky: Yes. The number of smaller contractors and small architects who cannot enter this is very high, and I am afraid that is because at the procurement level we want to pass risk. I am a taxpayer, so it is all our own money, is it not, and if we want to pass the risk so that if something goes wrong during a period of time we have an ability to go back, then it is not surprising that if I have a local builder who may have a not inconsequential turnover of £150 million or £200 million, they could not bid for a contract of £50 or £60 million, it would just be too great a risk for them; likewise, we would not want to choose them because we would say if they had one major claim they would go bust. If you like it is cause and effect, it is not, so of course we are asking larger and larger organisations to bid because we would have more comfort that if something goes wrong we have redress. If the risk profile changed we would have smaller organisations joining and I know that the likes of very large building organisations do sub-contract so ultimately some work comes down, it is just that they may not be as visible. It is similar with smaller architects, the vast majority of architectural practices are five or six people, so although we are talking about a lot of large and medium-sized practices, you probably would not want to get a secondary school designed by a practice of four or five people, all of whom are working on it 100% of the time, because the perception of risk would be too great. That is what we have ended up with and as projects get bigger and bigger, so we are requiring the respondees to be like that. It is cause and effect and maybe if we reduced the risk transfer we would have more people entering, or maybe if we were not doing such major big projects we would have more people entering, but then we have another element of procurement in that we will have so many smaller contracts out there.

Q317 Mr Carswell: Do you think there is a set bureaucratic cost involved in setting up an LEP regardless of the number of schools involved?

Mr Orlovsky: We get back to the debate about is it a thick LEP or a thin LEP and is it a LEP which is actually trying to do something, which is staffed up, or is it a LEP which is simply a *poste restante* for a series of contracts which get administered? An awful

lot of authorities want to have the LEP structure but actually want to have a very thin LEP, so it is really a *poste restante* and it is a series of future purchase PFI contracts—I am trying to be non-institutional now. There is a reality on the ground about this and it is quite hard for an authority just to say okay, there is another £300,000 or £400,000 which is going to disappear in management costs to the LEP when I think I can do those things perfectly well myself, and I think that is what we are ending up with. If we have a thick LEP then, yes, there probably is a fixed price and you would not want people just kicking around because there is no project coming through at this moment.

Q318 Mr Carswell: Before I move on to the next question, did anyone else want to comment?

Mr White: Our experience of the market is that at the moment there are about 25 different bidding organisations bidding in BSF so there is very much a variety of size within those different bidding consortia, so for a programme that is going to actually bring to market 10 projects per year there is a very wide range of people competing in that market.

Q319 Chairman: Have we got the capacity in this country to deliver on BSF?

Mr White: Yes, I believe the capacity is there and we very much rely on smaller, local firms for that capacity, so in terms of actually delivering the work, we rely on local groundworks, mechanical and electrical contractors to actually work with us to deliver the actual work. In terms of the question of smaller architectural practices, we were asked by DfES to speak at a conference about using smaller architectural practices because we are one of the first people to really embrace that, and we are using a practice of five or six people to design a secondary school because we believe they can actually make a difference. In terms of the cost of the Local Education Partnership there are two important things: one is if the Local Education Partnership ends up duplicating activity with the local authority then that would be a failure and we very much set out our stall to say it must be substitution rather than duplication in nature, and as part of actually being chosen as a Local Education Partnership you have to guarantee future savings and the guaranteed savings that we have pledged on Bristol, for instance, are more than three times the total cost of the Local Education Partnership. In terms of the value for money balance, therefore, that has to be there from the public sector point of view, if the Local Education Partnership is simply an additional cost then you would be right, there would be no point in it, but if it is actually delivering better value for money and producing the savings, then actually it is well worth having.

Q320 Mr Carswell: A final question on this issue for me: if the planners get it wrong and there is some evidence, particularly in places like Clacton, that they may have got it wrong and their projected head counts of school places are way off course and there

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are many fewer places needed in years to come than there are available, this question will be key. Who is going to be liable for repayments to private sector partners if a BSF school has to close because of, say, falling rolls or, perish the thought, poor performance?

Mr Orlovsky: There are two things here, are there not, there is it a wasted asset, and if we are talking about sustainability then we should really be talking about buildings which have a primary use, which is a school, and if that was no longer needed as a school what would its secondary use be, because that then gives us the opportunity of having an estate of assets where we are not tied to a single use in any of them, and then we can start making the right decisions. We consider that to be an absolute fundamental in the design of a school, that we should be contemplating what could be the alternative uses. As an example, at this moment what we know is that we have a large aging population so you could say that maybe a school will become a long term care home, also consisting of rooms, also consisting of public spaces, also consisting of entertainment and dining and having a variety of accessible areas. It is not completely daft to assume that that could happen, or be a different sort of training centre or conference centre. We try—in fact, one of the tools that we use to ask heads that is to say to a head if you really want the maximum flexibility, one of the flexibilities is to be able to get out of the building, but you are not going to be able to get out of it if you just leave behind a school.

Q321 Chairman: I am conscious that we have got to cover sustainability in more detail before we finish. Barry, come back on that.

Mr White: The quick answer to that is it is important to note that only one school in three under BSF is actually PFI so that long-term payment only affects one school in three, the other two are procured through traditional design and build so they are very much a mixed economy. In either case it would be unwise to spend £20 million on any building unless there was a reasonable degree of certainty that it was going to be needed in the long term. That is why BSF and PFI at the centre are insisting that local authorities do have that long term vision in place as part of it before procurement starts.

Q322 Mr Carswell: I am intrigued by this, given that it is a discussion about sustainability. You made a comment about the possibility of turning an existing school into a care home for older people; do those considerations apply with reference to Bishop's Park in Clacton?

Mr Orlovsky: Behind the scenes, yes, you can review Bishop's Park and you can see what could it be used for if it was not a school, but I think that is a conversation for you to have with Mike Davies about what are its alternative uses. We were asked by the contractor, Waites, to have a look at what could be the alternatives for it and we produced some concepts for that; an awful lot of schools have got

that in that if we create an interesting social space which has then got a series of compartments, that gives us quite a lot of flexibility.

Chairman: We have to move on to other aspects of sustainability, not that we have not been talking about sustainability. David.

Q323 Mr Chaytor: Our inquiry is entitled "Sustainable Schools" but we have not talked about sustainability very much. I want to ask specifically Mike about the role of ICT and sustainability. We talked about ICT earlier in respect of its impact on teaching and learning and training staff, but what evidence is there in the contracts that are being developed and signed so far that ICT is being used effectively to improve the sustainability of the school in respect of the energy or water management or waste management, for example?

Mr Blackburn: Bearing in mind that BSF has only been going for a short period of time, to look at any degree of sustainability would be incorrect at this moment in time. You have to apply that question to different schools and to what has been done elsewhere and have Academies or other retail programmes that the builders have been involved with, using different facilities management type of techniques. If you do the same thing and apply the same principles to a hospital, to a building like this or a workplace, the answer is absolutely it does make a significant difference in energy management and all that.

Q324 Mr Chaytor: Have we got really good significant examples of where this has happened in the last two, three or four years?

Mr Blackburn: In terms of BSF schools it is too early to tell, we have only got the one in Bristol starting to come through, they are not built yet.

Q325 Chairman: What about the Academies or previous PFI schemes?

Mr Blackburn: I have not been involved in any of the Academies, I am afraid, so I have no idea whether they are or not.

Q326 Mr Chaytor: From BT's point of view, does BT not have a view on this or some models of good practice as to how energy management systems could be improved in schools, and are you absolutely lobbying for this. I would have thought this would be good business for BT in terms of getting a feed into these sorts of things.

Mr Blackburn: Yes, and we do with our partners which tend to be in the building management and the FM community where we combine ourselves with people like Carillion, and there would be discussions with Skanska and others as well about how do we take that technology, how do we take what we have done in the private sector and apply it to the school environment to get more sustainable heating, lighting and security which is another big issue within sustainability. Yes, we are trying that.

Q327 Mr Chaytor: Are there problems in terms of initial costs as against long term gains? Are the terms of BSF contracts going to be a barrier to the use of new technology in this way?

Mr Blackburn: If a contract is planned correctly and if the finances are planned correctly, then it should not be a problem at all; it is when you get the two out of line and you do not allow for a refresh in any shape or form, or you have to apply that back to the head teacher and say in three years time you have to go and find it out of your budget, that will be affordable in three years time. If you can predict what is going to be affordable in three years time, then it becomes difficult. Most of the contracts that we get involved with are 10 or 15-year contracts—a 15-year contract will have a minimum of two refresh periods built into the finances up front so that everybody knows it is there, at year five there will be a complete refresh, at year nine there will be a complete refresh. That is already discussed and debated; what you do not know is what it is going to be refreshed with, but you do know that there comes a point where you have the funding in the contract all agreed and you can now refresh the technology. In the original scope of BSF it was in, then it was out and I understand now we are getting authority to put the refresh capability back into the contracts again—it is a bit in out, in out.

Q328 Mr Chaytor: Could I ask Barry and/or Rob about the question of whole life costing of these projects, because previous PFI schemes and some of the Academy projects have been severely criticised for the very, very high revenue costs for the whole life of the school. Is that a fair criticism, have lessons been learned and do you see evidence that in the BSF contracts there will be a much tighter control of the whole life costs and the impact on the school's revenue budget over the 20 or 25 years for example?

Mr Shed: I guess the answer is that in Bristol we have now committed to a whole life costing budget for the next 25 years, so the risk is ours and we are now responsible for managing that risk and delivering the schools in the correct condition in 25 years time.

Q329 Mr Chaytor: It can be done.

Mr Shed: It can be done. If I could just pick up some of the points from the previous question around what are we doing as regards sustainability of these projects, Bristol has rainwater harvesting and we will reduce the school's costs by £3,000 a year by the fact that 40% of their water will come from rainwater collection; we have biomass boilers in the project, so we will cut down carbon emissions. There are some very powerful messages coming out of these projects and we are currently bidding on another London project where the same sort of standards are being applied, so this is why it is important to not get too hung up on the criticisms. The industry has come an awful long way in the last few years and I do believe passionately that the projects that are now being delivered are a step change. The one big challenge we have is that half of the estate of course is refurbished, and it is a much easier question to answer if you talk about sustainability in new buildings; it is a

much more difficult question to answer as regards refurbishing buildings because the expectations are up here and with new schools we have no difficulty in maintaining those expectations, but refurbishment is another challenge because there are difficulties with some of the old buildings in actually giving the same sort of standards as the new buildings. That is an issue we are addressing. Certainly, as regards the long term sustainability of these buildings, I believe the schools of the future will be far in excess of other similar buildings built around local authorities.

Q330 Mr Chaytor: Do you think that in terms of CO₂ emissions—you mentioned CO₂ emissions in the Bristol contract, but that is a local decision in that contract—there ought to be stronger specifications from the DfES in terms of CO₂ emission guidelines or in terms of energy efficiency standards? I know we have the BREEAM guidelines as the working document, but is that good enough, is that going to deliver the energy savings and improvements in water management that you would expect?

Mr Shed: The real challenge for all these new buildings is that of course we want to reduce the energy consumption of the buildings but, for example, in some of the hospitals we build the demands of comfort and the demands of patient care are such that we now install cooling into hospitals—

Q331 Mr Chaytor: Should that not be done by design?

Mr Shed: The biggest cost is the cost of energy to actually cool the facilities. We all expect a much higher standard of care in all the facilities that we enter and that does put pressure on the cost of the energy that actually maintains that level. The schools are naturally ventilated and that helps energy consumption, but other facilities—we all like to work in cool buildings, the consequence of which is you cool that building by mechanical means and natural ventilation is not always a viable method of keeping people below a certain temperature. There are challenges, therefore, and these are the sorts of challenges we address when we are actually putting together a design for any given project.

Q332 Mr Chaytor: If we had more buildings made out of concrete and less out of steel and glass, would that have a positive effect on carbon emissions?

Mr Shed: I looked at this building and concrete is a cooling medium, the mass helps to cool the building and that is why this building has concrete soffits. Our schools and hospitals are concrete, we generally use a concrete frame.

Chairman: This is supposed to be a sustainable building and it actually works most of the time. Paul Holmes.

Q333 Paul Holmes: Two quick ones on the sustainability issue that we have raised: one is that we have had bits of evidence from various places, including a very good school that we visited recently, that what people automatically think of as

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sustainable issues, like solar panels, are not being built into schools because they are too expensive up front, even though they might save money 10 years later. Are they of any relevance, should we be going more for grey water and that sort of thing?

Mr Shed: As a business one of Skanska's values is the issue of sustainability and protecting the environment, so we bring a lot of knowledge and expertise to this subject. If we use Bristol as an example, we have chosen those measures that we believe are economically viable and the issue around collecting solar energy is that it is a more expensive energy to collect; the issue around collecting wind energy is that it is more expensive to collect, so what we have tried to do for Bristol is have a whole range of sustainable solutions that actually help us. We are doing research at the moment on wind energy in that we are actually putting wind turbines on some of our site offices just to do a trial of how much we can generate and how that viability works, so we are always trying to push the market to see what can be achieved, but at the moment the cost of some of these other energy-saving measures are prohibitive so that essentially they are not sustainable.

Paul Holmes: Finally, it was Marcus who suggested that LAs should have their vision of where these schools are going to be in 10, 15, 20 years time so we do not have a brand new building which in 10 years time is redundant. Marcus also suggested that if that did happen we should be able to switch it into being an elderly care centre and things. You are actually running some schools on 15 or 25 year contracts, so what happens if 10 years down the line one of your schools does become surplus to requirements because in the brave new world of competing schools the pupils have gone elsewhere?

Chairman: Or the demographics change.

Q334 Paul Holmes: What happens to that school 10 years down the line when there is 15 years still to pay?

Mr Shed: There is a contract to pay for another fifteen years, so I guess what would happen is that consenting adults would sit down and work out another use for that facility, but there is a binding contract entered into by the parties on both sides to maintain the school.

Q335 Paul Holmes: And that contract to you is not just to pay you effectively the mortgage cost of building the school and paying that back, it is a management and a profit contract as well?

Mr Shed: It is the cost of repaying the capital cost initially and the cost of running that school for 25 years as well.

Q336 Paul Holmes: The profits you are expecting to make in years 11 to 25, you would get some compensation back even if the school had to close in 10 years time.

Mr Shed: Yes.

Q337 Chairman: Prime Minister's Questions is approaching and we are coming to the end. A very quick one: we went to a new school recently and they said they could not afford sprinklers, should schools not have sprinklers in case they catch fire, that is sustainability, is it not? Should they or should they not, or is it that we are being pressured by the sprinkling lobby?

Mr White: In every school that we are building at the moment a sprinkler is economically viable because the cost of insurance is so much cheaper for sprinklered schools. We think in future it is very likely that all schools will have sprinklers.

Q338 Chairman: We have just been to a brand new school just down the road here and it had no sprinklers.

Mr Shed: The issue of vandalism is now under control, which was one of the reasons why people did not put sprinklers in schools.

Chairman: Can I just thank you; this has been a really good session. Will you stay with us because it is in your interest and our interest to make this a really good Report because if we make a seminal Report that adds value it is really very important. Could you stay with us, and if when you leave here you think why on earth did that stupid Committee not ask me this question, please come back to us, or if you have inspiration and think ah, there is something they ought to know about or see, we would be very grateful for that help. Thank you very much for your time.

Wednesday 25 October 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor
Mr Douglas Carswell
Helen Jones

Fiona Mactaggart
Stephen Williams
Mr Rob Wilson

Memorandum submitted by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

INTRODUCTION

1. This document is the submission of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to the Education and Skills Committee inquiry into sustainability.

2. The Committee has posed specific questions relating to the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. This submission summarises the context for capital development in the further education (FE) sector and addresses the three main headings—sustainability, future learning needs and delivery and funding—and deals with specific themes relating to further education (FE) colleges.

CONTEXT

3. The LSC is seeking to both challenge and support the further education (FE) sector to develop world-class buildings for world-class teaching and learning. Since incorporation in 1993, about half (three million m²) of the projected size of the further education estate (six million m²) has been renewed or modernised. In 1993 the condition of the FE estate was very poor with less than 5% of the estate classed as excellent. By 2004–05 this had risen to about 40% with the percentage of excellent quality floorspace rising at about 7% a year at the current rate of modernisation and renewal.

4. Following completion of the LSC's Strategic Area Review process in 2004–05, the estimated capital investment to complete the renewal and modernisation of the FE estate over a five-year period amounted to around £5 billion. Further upgrading and extending the sector to meet the challenges of 14–19 reform and the Skills Strategy is likely to increase this figure to over £7 billion.

5. Based on the additional capital funding announced in the 2005 budget, annual capital expenditure by the LSC will rise from just under £500 million in 2007–08 to just under £750 million by 2009–10. If this level of funding continues, and most of it continues to be directed to the FE sector, the LSC estimates that the renewal and modernisation of the FE estate could be substantially completed by 2013. But, around 50% of the estate mostly dating from the 1950s and 1960s still requires renewal, is inefficient and hinders flexible, high quality delivery. Some of the poorest premises still support the most disadvantaged learners (for example specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). In addition, enhanced investment is required to meet the challenges of 14–19 reform and the need for the sector to respond to the call for more responsiveness to employer and learner demand through specialisation.

6. The LSC's 16–19 Capital Fund came into operation on 1 April 2006 with funds of £120 million for 2005–06 and £180 million on 2007–08. Providing the LSC with the ability to provide capital funding to schools it combines former DfES Basic Need funds for 16–19 provision and the LSC's 16–19 rationalisation funds to create a single capital fund administered by the LSC. It is intended to help fund the capital costs of the outcomes of 16–19 competitions and support the cost of new school or college places arising from school and FE 16–19 presumptions, increased participation and reorganisation to raise standards and/or promote choice.

7. It is expected that school 16–19 project proposals will comprise the majority of applications to the 16–19 Capital Fund. The fund does not support the costs of modernising existing further education (FE) 16–19 places which continue to be supported by the LSC's general FE capital budget. Other categories of 16–19 schools capital development continue to be supported by DfES capital expenditure programmes. These categories include the sixth forms in 11–19 Academies, the modernisation needs of sixth forms in schools and sixth forms in 11–19 schools in the Building Schools for the Future programme.

SUSTAINABILITY

8. The LSC believes the learning and skills sector in general and FE colleges in particular should contribute to sustainable development through the learning opportunities they deliver, the way they use resources and the way they work with communities. The LSC is providing leadership in the sector and published its Sustainable Development Strategy "From Here to Sustainability" in 2005.

9. Buildings and estate management is a significant focus of the Learning Skills Council's Sustainable Development Strategy. The total gross internal floor area of the entire further education college sector is approximately 7.13 million m² (excluding agricultural buildings and residences) against a target of 6 million m². Further education colleges spend over £400 million annually on maintaining and managing their premises and, for example, purchased approximately 1.7 billion kWh of energy at a cost of over £43 million in 2003–04.

10. The quality of space and work places for teaching and learning is fundamental to the education and training experience. It is essential, therefore, that providers are aware of a wide range of sustainability and environmental issues when they plan, design, build and manage their facilities.

11. To support its sustainable development strategy, the LSC has devised an implementation and delivery plan with 20 recommended actions against four key themes:

- positioning the sector;
- buildings and estates;
- curriculum; and
- community.

12. The main focus for the LSC is to make the LSC itself a “best practice” organisation and a role model for the sector by integrating sustainable development into its policies and everyday practices at all levels. In turn, the LSC aims to lead the sector in contributing to sustainable development through the way it manages resources, delivers learning opportunities and engages with communities. Over the next 10 years, the LSC's vision is that the learning and skills sector will proactively commit and contribute to sustainable development through its management of resources, the learning opportunities it delivers and its engagement with communities. Actions taken to promote sustainability and sustainable development include:

- (a) publication of the LSC's sustainable development strategy in September 2005;
- (b) commissioning the Learning and Skills Development Agency to survey the current level of sustainable development activity across the sector, against the actions in the strategy. A national event in late June 2006 will share its findings and show examples of good practice; and
- (c) commissioning of a major study and report on the relationship between design quality, costs and sustainable development from leading project management, design and engineering consultants. The report and its findings will also be published shortly and the LSC has already agreed to implement one of its main recommendations to uplift its cost criteria by 10% ring-fenced and targeted specifically at sustainable elements of building design and construction.

13. The LSC, in furthering its *agenda for change* programme, is also working closely with the DfES Centre for Procurement Performance, Office of Government Commerce and other organisations such as the Royal Institute of British Architects in developing programmes, initiatives and publications to improve client capabilities in smarter purchasing and capital procurement, to encourage better project management, to promote design excellence and improve sustainability including commissioning a BREEAM standard for the FE sector.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

14. Research commissioned by the LSC indicates that enhanced levels of capital investment are making an increasingly significant impact on college and learner aspirations and achievements. Research continues into this subject but recent work (2005) by consultants on a representative sample of projects has found that:

- each £1 million spent on improving the learning environment appears to lead to an additional 100 students or 0.3% increase in participation;
- for colleges receiving capital expenditure, it seems that attainment rates increase by 0.5% for every extra £1 million of capital expenditure, although more research will be carried out on this especially for larger projects;
- below a threshold level of just over £3 million colleges with very little capital expenditure do not do better in raising participation than those without investment; and
- for colleges with capital projects costing £7 million or more, there are increases in participation of 1.15%, with significant regional effects.

15. The ideal time to review the impact of capital investment on individual colleges is two to three years after project completion when the new premises are fully operational. Further time is required to evaluate the impact of most of the more recent larger projects initiated and agreed by the LSC since it was established in 2001. Nevertheless, there appears to be evidence of a continuing direct relationship between college and learner performance and the incidence of capital investment and this is a strong indication that the ongoing capital programme is responding to learner needs. This supports earlier research commissioned in 2003 which demonstrated a pronounced, and statistically significant, relationship between expenditure and success variables.

16. Qualitative evidence from research indicates positive relationships between capital investment and a wide range of outcomes including:

- providing a catalyst for wider strategic, organisational and/or curriculum change;
- improved facilities, which can raise learner recruitment and retention;
- enhancement in the quality of teaching and learning in response to an improved physical environment for learning; and
- better staff and student learner morale.

17. The recent FE White Paper charged local authorities with extending their BSF “Strategies for Change” to include new and proposed provision for 14–19 learners including BSF and the FE sector. These strategies will be complemented by the LSC’s participation in Local Education Partnerships and the LSC’s regional capital strategies and local capital plans developed in consultation with its stakeholders and partners at regional and local level. FE colleges will bring forward and deliver capital projects with LSC support in this context. The LSC believes that these measures taken together will ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the planning and delivery process and that future learning needs are properly identified and addressed.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

18. FE colleges are independent, private sector bodies responsible for proposing, procuring and managing capital projects as part of an increasingly pro-active process in partnership with the LSC. Capital project proposals are assessed against the LSC’s stringent criteria that assess the educational rationale and fit with strategic objectives (now being extended to reflect priorities in the FE White Paper), project affordability, viability, and value for money (procurement and financing) and which also include criteria related to the comparative capital costs of proposals and, as a proxy for running cost efficiency, floor space utilisation.

19. Projects are financed by colleges through a combination of long term borrowings, receipts from the sale of redundant property assets, contributions from reserves and grant support, principally from the LSC but also in some cases with support from other public bodies such as Regional Development Agencies. Procurement is usually by competitive tendering within the European Communities OJEU framework with larger projects following advice from the Office of Government Commerce on such innovative procurement routes as partnering and two-stage tendering. To date the scale of individual college projects has been insufficient to attract interest from Private Finance Initiative (PFI) consortia although some colleges have entered into development partnerships under the broader Public Private Partnerships (PPP) banner.

20. The LSC’s grant support is calculated on an affordability basis and is usually set at a rate which will enable a college implementing a capital project to achieve or remain in strong financial health. In 2005–06 the LSC approved just over £1 billion of projects on both an in principle and detailed basis. Since 2001 it has approved over 500 capital projects requiring estimated grant of some £1 billion towards estimated costs of just over £3 billion.

21. The LSC is currently reviewing the amount of borrowings that it is reasonable to expect colleges to incur. The LSC’s average grant contribution on projects approved over the last five years is about 35% within a range for most projects of 10%–60% but the LSC believes that this average will rise towards 50% over the next two to three years or so in line with the growing trend towards larger more complex and strategically significant projects.

22. But in supporting the aims of the FE White Paper as well as the renewal and modernisation of the FE estate the LSC capital programme will also have to address:

- the 14–19 agenda through its support of both FE and school presumptions and the development of 14–16 centres in colleges;
- supporting the Skills Agenda through the establishment of national skills Academies at the pinnacle of vocational networks of CoVEs and other specialist providers; and
- as part of a commitment to “fair contestability” to extend eligibility to capital support for new providers.

23. Through its new network of Area Directors LSC will reinforce and improve its strategic and working relationships with school and college providers and other stakeholders and partners, and in particular local authorities, to help develop educational and organisational change. This will help ensure that the aims of the recent FE White Paper will be underpinned by strategic capital investment aimed at developing and encouraging specialisation and increasing choice, access, quality and responsiveness for learners and employers.

24. The FE White Paper committed the LSC to publishing a full prospectus on the capital programme in the autumn, detailing how its capital policies will be taken forward in the context of the overall capital programme and the funding implications of these additional commitments will be considered in the context of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. The White Paper states that the capital investment programme will contribute to the LSC’s sustainable development strategy.

Witnesses: **Mr Martin Lamb**, Area Director, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Learning and Skills Council, **Mr Graham Moore**, Principal, Stoke-on-Trent College, and **Mr John Widdowson**, Principal and Chief Executive, New College Durham, gave evidence.

Q339 Chairman: Could I welcome Martin Lamb, Graham Moore and John Widdowson to our proceedings. They have, quite rightly, corrected me. Outside, the screen says “Sustainable Schools” but of course it is obvious from this evidence session that it is “Sustainable Schools and Colleges”. Welcome to this session. We very much wanted the inquiry to embrace schools and colleges because they necessarily should be joined-up and some of the questions will relate to FE and the links with HE. Welcome indeed. We are looking forward to hearing of your different experiences in the different parts of the country to help us with our inquiry. As you know, we are trying to look at the sustainable school and the sustainable college in the widest sense, not just in terms of the design, the build, the servicing and management of the premises, but the transport to the college and indeed what goes on in the college in the 21st century in terms of the learning environment. Martin, could I ask you to kick us off by introducing yourself. We have your CV, so would you say briefly where you are from and what you think the challenge is in terms of a sustainable college.

Mr Lamb: Thank you very much, Chairman. I am Martin Lamb. I am currently the Area Director for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for the Learning and Skills Council and previously have worked in a similar role in Berkshire and prior to that in the National Office, so I have a relatively wide range of different LSC experiences.

Q340 Chairman: We are expecting great things from you, Martin, because every time I look at Hampshire these days there is some leading educational innovation. I hope that is also true of colleges. Is it?

Mr Lamb: It certainly is.

Q341 Chairman: We will come back to that, then, Graham?

Mr Moore: I am Graham Moore, Principal of Stoke-on-Trent College. I have been there for 10 years and before that at Stratford-upon-Avon College. I am the Treasurer of the 157 Group, which is the large colleges group which works with the AoC to help improve the reputation of the sector, which we believe should be a lot higher than perhaps it is in some quarters.

Q342 Chairman: How do you get in the 157 Group?

Mr Moore: Quality and size are the two key criteria. You have to have at least a grade 2 in terms of leadership and management, and normally colleges have a turnover of over £35 million if they are members.

Q343 Chairman: That is 157 out of how many?

Mr Moore: About 400.

Q344 Chairman: It is reasonably exclusive, then.

Mr Moore: It is about 25 colleges, but between us we have quite a large proportion of the total turnover of the FE College Sector.

Q345 Chairman: It is paragraph 157 of the Foster Report. We are with you!

Mr Moore: Which is all about reputation.

Q346 Chairman: It is even more exclusive.

Mr Moore: It is even more exclusive than that.

Q347 Chairman: Have you thought about going to branding people and getting a different brand?

Mr Moore: We were conscious that sixth form colleges had a group and tertiary colleges had a group. We tend to be big, urban, city colleges, and we think there is a whole cluster of issues that surrounds that. Also, we like to feel we can exert some influence in the regions and so on, because we are distributed right across the country. We can perhaps help to lead our colleagues in putting reputation and the development of FE forward.

Q348 Chairman: It is good to know about that. John Widdowson?

Mr Widdowson: I have been Principal and Chief Executive of New College in Durham for the last eight years. I am also Chair of the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges—it sounds a bit exclusive, all this—which are those colleges that offer a lot of higher education within the FE context, which we define as 500-plus full-time equivalent HE students within the college. There are some 25 members of that. I also chair the Further Education National Consortium, which is a group of 140-plus colleges, which looks at learning and resource-based learning across the sector and devises learning materials and tries to encourage people to use different methods and different approaches. The reason, I guess, I am here is that we have just completed a complete college rebuild, a complete campus rebuild, that finished about a year ago.

Q349 Chairman: Thank you. I will start with Graham. What are the greatest challenges when you are deciding what to do in terms of rebuilding or refurbishing a college these days? There has been quite a substantial investment in new build in the college sector which has been going on for some years now. What have been the challenges, in your experience?

Mr Moore: We have just had one building completed and I think I would like to start by saying the whole sector has welcomed the greater attention to capital expenditure in FE. It is good that it is not just schools having a big programme of building; there is a significant programme in the FE sector. We start from a good-news story, in the sense that there is quite a lot happening, and I would say there is a very positive relationship with the LSC, in terms of positively being encouraged to look at new projects and think about high quality buildings. That comes very much from the leadership of Mark Haysom and the LSC. That is a very positive side of the story. On the ground there are a number of issues we would like to see done better. In Stoke, we are a pathfinder for Building Schools for the Future. Because the

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colleges are very significant in the 11–16 issue in Stoke, because many of the schools are 11–16, it would be very nice if Building Schools for the Future had looked at schools and colleges and the context. With 14–19 being so linked between what schools do and colleges do, it is unfortunate that the capital programmes are not so obviously linked. Clearly our LSC is very keen that as the schools are redeveloped, so the colleges are redeveloped, and we have a university quarter—so there is another element there: the links with the university and the capital building programmes. If you really want to transform a city, one of the key issues is ensuring that the school sector, the college sector and the FE sector, and HEFCE, LSC and the local authorities, all work closely together. I guess there is room for progress in that. There is some progress but there is room for development.

Q350 Chairman: How well does it work in your patch?

Mr Moore: We work quite closely with our schools. The secondary heads and the two college principals, the sixth form college and ourselves, meet together regularly, once a month or so. We have good relationships. We have a lot of students from the local schools into the colleges, so that relationship works quite well. We are developing cluster ideas with the local schools. But, when we come to the building programme, we are trying to say, “Look, if you have a cluster of schools, what vocational specialisms are you going to put in each school? How is the Building Schools for the Future going to link to that? What facilities do you need post-16 in the colleges to match that?” Then, when we talk to the local authority, who are supportive, they say, “Well, Building Schools for the Future money is specifically Building Schools for the Future money. It cannot be used for colleges.” If you look post-16, the money that the LSC has for building colleges can also be used for school sixth forms—so they can access two groups of money: the schools’ money and the LSC money to top up the schools’ money—but it does not work in the other direction. If we want 14–16 developments, is it better to do, for example, construction in schools or in the college environment with specialist resources? It may be quite advantageous to bring the young people for a day a week or something into the college, with the links with the employers and so on as well, to get that sort of vocational experience, but the funding for *Schools for the Future* would have to go into the schools. It could not go into the colleges in those sorts of circumstances. That is perhaps not a joined-up approach.

Q351 Chairman: It is not joined-up enough.

Mr Moore: Not joined up enough. There are steps to join it up.

Q352 Chairman: In your area we have the new diplomas coming in. If everything goes on track, there will be 50,000 students taking the new diplomas this time next year—in fact, they will have started in September. What level of cooperation and

discussion is going on between colleges and schools on that at this moment? Then I want you to compare that with how much discussion is going on in terms of building new schools and refurbishing schools and colleges.

Mr Moore: We have a collegiate in the city which is made up of the local authority, the schools, the LSC, the colleges, and that is quite a good basis for this sort of discussion. The person we employ to lead the collegiate has worked very hard. We have had an Edexcel BTEC consortium for several years in the city where the colleges provide the verification processes to ensure that the school standards in vocational areas are quite high. We hope this will make the schools ready for the new specialist diplomas—they will be used to working in that sort of structure—and that is working quite well.

Q353 Chairman: I have not heard them called BTEC diplomas before.

Mr Moore: The BTEC diplomas are what exist at the moment. The new diplomas, of course, are coming on.

Q354 Chairman: The name keeps changing.

Mr Moore: The name keeps changing. I do not think we are allowed to call them vocational diplomas any more but next week it might be something different.

Q355 Chairman: That is right.

Mr Moore: We knew that vocational education in schools was key to the agenda, so working with the schools and trying to help them deliver at the same sort of standard as the colleges seek to deliver education vocationally seemed an important issue for us. We agreed that with the secondary heads; we agreed that through the consortium. Of course we are now going through a gateway process, so we all say which of the lines, if you like, of the diplomas, which of the first five, we would offer. I think you will find that the colleges are ready to take those lines up completely and the schools will pick and choose a bit. We are trying to help the schools so that two adjacent schools do not pick the same diploma lines, so they can begin to get a specialist flavour about their activities.

Q356 Chairman: You will be well into the 14–16 area if you are doing those diplomas.

Mr Moore: Yes.

Q357 Chairman: But you are still not getting any cash that is up to 16.

Mr Moore: I think it is very odd that Schools for the Future is so tightly defined as “schools”.

Q358 Chairman: I just wanted to get that nailed down.

Mr Moore: That is why I made the point about the title of this inquiry. I think you do have to look across the 14–19 agenda and look at capital expenditure in that context. I am not saying it is not joined up at all. That would be totally wrong of me. I am saying that there are ways. Particularly if we look at the schools department in the DfES, they are

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less likely to look into the college sector than the college sector is to look into the schools' activity. I think it works better from FE into schools.

Q359 Chairman: The schools' department in the Department are the big bully boys, are they not? They seem to rule everything, do they not?

Mr Moore: You would not expect me to say yes to that, would you? But they do have a big voice and they do have a big pot of money and they do also have the Academies' agenda as well. The Academies' agenda can well affect the provision for 14–19. I am sure the LSC can speak for itself but I know our local office would like to be more involved in those discussions so that we have a really joined-up strategy in the local area.

Q360 Chairman: How do you feel on the mornings when you pick up the paper and Lord Adonis has said, "We really want every school to have a sixth form"?

Mr Moore: I think he needs to look at the economics of that statement. In a place like Stoke you would have a lot of very small sixth forms because we have two large colleges who between them cover the spectrum, if you like, from the very academic to the very practical, and there are an awful lot of economies in breadth of curriculum on offer. As soon as you have a few schools, each one of those schools having a sixth form, and maybe the sixth form is perhaps 100, if they are lucky, then the range of curriculum they will be able to offer and the number of diplomas and so on they will be able to offer by themselves would be very small. If the philosophy is that no institution by itself can provide the range of provision, then you have to be very careful, it seems to me, about having lots of small institutions who will all probably want to do A levels and who will be very uncertain about how many they can get for a diploma. In each school you might have six or seven people wanting to do a particular diploma line. That, I think, is where FE comes in. FE having the vocational expertise is very well placed to lead in local areas with the authorities on that vocational agenda. I was quite surprised when money that had been coming through the colleges and going out into the local schools was transferred or is in the process of being transferred into school budgets and not being ring-fenced, because there is always a danger that that money may be used more generally in a school rather than to push the 14–19 vocational agenda, so I do have some concerns there. Again, many of our local schools, because they like and value what the colleges have been doing to support them, will use some of that money to go on using those services. But I think there is some variation across the country as well. What I am talking about in Stoke is probably at the better end of the spectrum. In some parts of the country it may be a lot less joined up than that.

Q361 Chairman: John, how does it seem from your point of view?

Mr Widdowson: There is a lot that Graham says that resonates what happens up in the North East, certainly in County Durham. In terms of the diplomas, one of the things we are trying to do there is to build on what has happened 14–16. To echo what Graham says, in my own college we have 500–600 young people a week coming in from 13 schools to take a variety of vocational courses leading to qualifications.

Q362 Chairman: They will all be under 16.

Mr Widdowson: That is right. We have had to make changes. We have had to train staff to deal with the different age group. We have had to learn a lot more about what happens in school, behaviour management policies and things like that, which are quite different from the way we have done things in FE, so we have had to re-skill a number of our staff to deal with these young people. The aim obviously is to get them to continue post-16 because the other thing I would add to what Graham says is that a lot of the developments post-16 need to be aimed at engaging more young people, whether it is in training or in education, because we still have far too many who do not engage—as I am sure the Committee will know too well. One of the things we look at is how we can use that linkage with the school sector to try to pick that middle group of young people and those who are going to become disengaged at 16, to make sure that they have something positive to do post-16 and that they actually see there is some point to the other things they do at school. I think our experience—although it is not particularly scientific, but talking to school head colleagues—is that it does have an impact on a number of young people: they become better attenders at school, they see more point in pursuing their studies to 16 and then go on to apprenticeships or maybe to employment, and a number of them will come into college. Something like 63 last year of the increased flexibility, 14–16 students, came on to college courses, so it does seem to be working.

Q363 Chairman: You have built a new college, have you not?

Mr Widdowson: We have.

Q364 Chairman: Had you ever built anything before?

Mr Widdowson: I was involved in a build project in Cambridge before.

Q365 Chairman: So you had some experience.

Mr Widdowson: Yes, I did.

Q366 Chairman: Where did you look to for broader experience? This was quite a significant challenge. What kind of back-up do you get?

Mr Widdowson: First of all, we get a lot of backup through the process with the LSC in terms of testing the ideas, which eliminates some of the more fanciful ideas. I think you get a very clear grip on the need to control the budget. The first thing you learn is what you do not know, actually—which is a bit Donald Rumsfeldt, I know. You actually find the gaps in

your own knowledge, because, in my experience, these large projects test the professional staff in a college—the permanent employees: the senior managers certainly in a college and the middle managers and the academic staff—and test them to the hilt and take them beyond their area of experience a lot of the time. It is not often that academic staff have to make judgments that literally get built afterwards and they then have to live with. It really is a very testing thing and you need to get in all sorts of expert advice. Sometimes, for governing bodies, that can be quite a difficult thing because you are looking at things like advice on project management and maybe independent third-party project management. You are looking at managing substantial financial operations—first of all, in terms of the contracting process, with a variety of builders and others or with the consultants, but also you are undoubtedly these days talking to banks and other financial lenders to work out the best deals, the structuring deals, you are looking at VAT. There are all sorts of things on which you need to take advice. In the normal run of a professional career in colleges you probably would not come across such things in the same way as a major building programme confronts you with.

Q367 Chairman: Is there anyone from the Department of Education and Skills who gives you help with this process?

Mr Widdowson: It is done mostly through the LSC, with the LSC's property people.

Q368 Chairman: We will ask Mike in a moment how much expertise they have. What about the sustainability element. First of all, do staff and the students have any say in what sort of college you are building?

Mr Widdowson: Staff, and the local community as well. We rebuilt on the current site but that has still excited lots of interest from the local population—mostly around transport: the possible increased use of traffic around the site. We had a green transport plan, for example, which we discussed with local residents to try to put that at rest. One of their key issues was around car parking. In any one day we have 3,000 full-time students on site, or something like that, a number of whom, because of the rural catchment we serve, will come in their own cars. It is important that we think about that. The locals were very concerned that we did not have lots of on-street parking, so we had to provide car parking on the campus to alleviate that. A local hospital, half a mile away, had started to charge for parking and the streets were flooded with cars and the locals were not happy. We consulted with the locals. We consulted with students, although the problem with consulting with students is that the students with whom you consult have left the college by the time the project is built, so the students who walk in through the door live with the influences of their peers of a couple of years before. Then there are all the things you have to consult staff about, particularly in a college environment—because we have built restaurants, hairdressing salons, beauty therapy rooms,

motor vehicle construction workshops, science laboratories, and it is impossible for any one individual to have complete knowledge of those areas. You have to say to staff at quite a low level in the college, “Look,”—if you are designing a motor vehicle workshop, for example—“how do you want it laid out?” and you set up that dialogue with them and the professional team.

Q369 Chairman: At any time did the sustainability of the building come into play?

Mr Widdowson: Yes.

Q370 Chairman: Was that one of the fanciful things?

Mr Widdowson: No.

Q371 Chairman: We have been to schools where they have said, “We wanted to be sustainable but it was all too expensive, so a lot of it was left out.” Did that happen to you?

Mr Widdowson: Part of the value engineering process that you inevitably have to go through means that you look at all these things. For example, at the early stages of design we were very interested in photovoltaic panels for generating our own electricity from light. We could not get the grant that was needed to sustain that, but we have built the building in such a way that it will take those panels in the future, so that it is strong enough to take the panels on the roof. We have designed it in such a way to take them, but we could not include them in the initial bid. We have looked at all sorts of other ways of sustainability: rainwater recovery, our waste recycling policy, energy consumption. Building management is a big thing, just controlling the buildings and controlling the environment within the buildings. For example, we demolished everything on site. There was not a single square metre on a 28 acre site that was not touched by the build and none of it was taken off site. It was all recycled and used to re-level and as foundations for buildings and roads and things. We did look at it right from the start and we included it in the contracting and procurement process as well.

Q372 Chairman: You did a lot better than New Wembley, where, apparently, according to the Environment Agency, most of the construction waste was littered all around London in major fly-tipping disasters. Martin, in terms of these pots of money and the fact that a lot of 14–16 are being educated in these colleges, how come they do not get a fair share of that particular pot of money?

Mr Lamb: I think the answer probably is that it is because of the way the Department has designed its capital flow. We have capital funding from the Department that is for colleges and school sixth forms for 16-plus. Local authorities, through their BSF and normal capital routes, have the capital funding for pre-16s. One could argue that you could do it slightly differently but the current arrangement, as Graham said earlier, is that BSF money in local authorities for 14–16-year-olds has to be used on

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school sites; it cannot be used for 14–16 facilities on college sites. That might be an area where a little bit more flexibility would be helpful.

Q373 Chairman: Would you and your LSC colleagues not say to someone in the Department; “Look, this does not make sense. There is this emphasis coming from the Department for Education and Skills to retain young people in education. Part of that means 500–600 pitching up in a local college, 14–16.” Does the message go back to our friends over here in the Eden Project that there is something changing in education and that these three parts do not seem to suit modern day needs?

Mr Lamb: My understanding is that the Department is reviewing all its 14–19 funding arrangements, both for capital and for revenue, to reflect the changes with the specialist diplomas coming in. That is likely to report around the end of this year or early next year, and I imagine one of the issues that that report will address is the funding of 14–16 vocational centres or vocational activities that will be necessary to deliver the diplomas across England.

Q374 Chairman: Martin, when you are sitting there in your role as the adviser to John and to Graham or the people like John and Graham, what sort of strength do you have at the LSC in terms of knowing about building a new construction and sustainability? Do you have a unit that has that expertise?

Mr Lamb: Yes. The way we distribute the expertise is that we look at three broad areas. First, the education and strategic environment of the college, which is usually looked at by the area director—and most of us have education curriculum backgrounds. We then have a regional property adviser who is a professional property surveyor. Each of the nine regions within the LSC has a professional regional property adviser who provides the expertise and advice to the college on issues to do with space utilisation, sustainability, issues to do with the design of the building, planning regulations and the whole range of technical issues. Then, finally, usually the most challenging aspect, is affordability and price and one of our professionally qualified accountants deals with the financial affordability issues with the college, both in terms of borrowing requirements and also value for money issues for the project. So we tend to operate in those three areas, but of course the colleges, as independent, autonomous bodies, need to seek their own advice and guidance when they get into the project, because project management, particularly of big projects, tends to be particularly challenging, both to college managers and the governing body.

Q375 Chairman: You know as well as I do that if you are banging the table for affordability and price, very often sustainability goes out the window. Are you the hard man that arrives and says, “Stop this sustainability nonsense. I want this done to a price?”

Mr Lamb: I hope we take a commonsense approach to that, which is, on the one hand, we are looking to sustain the best possible value for money for the

investment of public money in college buildings but at the same time that we do not reduce that to a non-creative, non-individual approach. We are just in the process, this month, of publishing new guidance on the whole capital project scene, including changed advice on sustainability, where we will now take sustainability issues that bring an upfront cost, such as the electric panels, and, if there are particular additional costs associated with sustainability, we will now bring in additional uplift to the cost parameters we use for sustainability.

Q376 Chairman: We went to a school which shall remain nameless where they told us that a lot of the sustainability stuff was seen in the up-front capital cost as too expensive, so it went, although, with something like putting sprinklers in a school against a fire hazard, over seven years they would recoup the cost of that investment. The insurance premiums would be high because they had not put sprinklers in. They made the decision: No sprinklers because of the upfront capital costs. Would that happen in a college?

Mr Lamb: I would hope it would not.

Q377 Chairman: You are not sure. Graham, John, would it happen on your patch?

Mr Widdowson: There are a number of choices you have to make. It would be wrong, with respect, to think that every sustainable input to a building costs more money. There are some areas where, as you say, you can recover it over a reasonable time. In our own case, with the photovoltaic argument, it was a 20-year recovery. It is a long time. In other areas, in terms of water recovery or passive infrared detectors in rooms, operating-cost money can be saved. A light switched off after 10 minutes of no movement, saves money for the college. There is a positive benefit environmentally but also in terms of our bottom-line budget. There are gains to be made from introducing sustainable elements to a building. But you balance up, and not everything can be paid for.

Mr Moore: There is a lot of expertise supporting the sector. We have Arup, for example, who work with us on the mechanical and electrical side of our new project, and they have a very good reputation in this field, but, inevitably, if you have overall limits that are placed on the cost per square metre, which the LSC has guidelines for, then there is an element of compromise and you do more of one or you do less of another in terms of those up-front costs. I think it is very welcome news now that the LSC is moving to a somewhat more flexible position, with this extra 10% if you can demonstrate that your activities are sustainable and will bring a return in your long-term investment appraisal—which we all have to do, of course. A 20-year investment appraisal is required for every college proposal. Do not underestimate the amount of expertise that the FE sector has developed, not just with the LSC but with those people serving the LSC, architects, engineers and so on. There is now quite a track record of good performers in the sector and many colleges will

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exchange information so as to help others make the right decisions about the companies to use to move this forward.

Chairman: Thank you very much for those answers. We are now going to drill down, first on improving the FE estate.

Q378 Helen Jones: The Association of Colleges, in its memorandum to the Committee drew attention to the fact that very often the most deprived areas are served by the poorest buildings. In your experience, Martin, what is the LSC's priority? Is it to improve buildings in those poorest areas or is it to wait until there are proposals from colleges and go with the flow?

Mr Lamb: A couple of years ago, the answer to that would have been that the LSC would respond to proposals from colleges. Since the end of the strategic areas reviews we have taken a much more proactive line—and, again, as Graham mentioned earlier—our chief executive is very keen that we are able to transform the FE estate in terms of its buildings for fit for purpose and 21st century style. We now have in each of the regions a regional capital strategy which looks at all the colleges in that region. It looks at the state of the buildings and how much of their accommodation is in good quality and poor quality and we engage with the colleges in a discussion with them and their governors about putting forward proposals to improve the estate. We have just about now replaced half of the available FE estate across England, so, if we are halfway through, it is probable that is the easy half, where there was an inclination to want to do things at college level and the buildings needed to be replaced. We still work on the assumption that we want to replace that other 50% and we are engaged with day-to-day discussions with colleges about how that might happen; in some cases, with complete refurbishment and in others with partial refurbishment or partial new build.

Q379 Helen Jones: How is that reflected in the amount of capital funding that the LSC gives to particular new-build projects? Let me give you an example of what happened in my area. My local college had the indicative amount of funding from the LSC. It has had that amount reduced for actual capital because it was in good financial health, thus saddling it with a larger debt over the years, whereas the sixth form college down the road was given a larger proportion of its capital project from the LSC. My college serves the most deprived communities. Is that sort of strategy sustainable in the long term, saddling those most deprived communities with the biggest debt?

Mr Lamb: I do not think there is any connection directly between whether that was a result of being in a more deprived area. The judgment about how the LSC funds a particular project is to do with the financial assessment of that college. If the college is in a strong financial position, then it is judged that it is right for that college to make a greater contribution to the overall financial project than if it is in poor financial health.

Q380 Helen Jones: I am sorry, but is it right to saddle those colleges with a larger debt over the years which they will then have difficulty funding? Are you not penalising those people who have looked after their finances properly?

Mr Lamb: That certainly is one way of looking at it.

Q381 Helen Jones: I think it is a very sensible way of looking at it. What is the point of looking after your finances properly if the LSC then funds a lower proportion of your capital costs than if you did not look after them?

Mr Lamb: The argument has always been that if you have a certain amount of reserves you should use those reserves towards the building project. There are three components that make up the financial contribution. There is the disposal of assets—and some people have assets to dispose of and others do not. There is then a borrowing requirement. In our new advice we have recognised some of the challenges of the level of debt. We are now looking at slightly less high levels of debt. It was traditionally 40% of turnover after the third year of the completion of the project and we are now looking at that being closer to 30% rather than 40%, so we have recognised that there is an issue; that college governors are often understandably reluctant to enter into large debt to engage in capital projects. Nevertheless, one of the discussions we have with the colleges is to ensure that the servicing of those debts is not to the detriment of the financial health of that institution and that they can afford the debt that they have required for that project.

Q382 Helen Jones: I might come back to that in a minute because it all comes down to how you afford it. Graham, you are serving a fairly deprived area.

Mr Moore: In Stoke I think we can empathise. We have the same sorts of situations. It is a big problem. I inherited a big college with £6.5 million of debt and a rather bad reputation a few years ago. Over the years, we have paid back that debt and we actually paid it back over about five years. Now, with our new building programmes, I am told that there is £10–12 million at least we could borrow. That of course puts you back in the same situation again and that is money that you cannot spend on the students because that is coming out of your revenue income before you have the money to spend on staff and on the quality of the education you deliver. It does seem odd that a comparable school, say, with a sixth form would not be faced with the same sorts of situation. I think there is a simple reason for this, that the capital funding programme for schools per head is more generous than the capital funding programme for the LSC, and the LSC has to adopt some sort of rationing mechanism. I think there is more flexibility in the FE sector to realise capital assets and reshape your estate and there may be some spare capacity. Clearly, with the Government's current policy, which is cutting back the number of adult numbers, it may be that colleges can slim down. More of their delivery is offsite, in companies and so on, so there is a change of provision, so there is some flexibility. Fundamentally, however, I cannot understand why

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I should have a large debt owing to the bank and use part of my revenue money to pay that back over a period of years at the expense of the current education of our students, whereas in the school sector that does not happen. It is a deterrent and it has led a college like mine to be more cautious about its capital development programmes. Although we are very strongly encouraged by our local LSC to move forward on what are quite exciting plans, it is cause for thought. We do not know and we will not know for some while yet how much money we might actually get from the LSC. That will be part of the negotiation. We put a plan forward, we go to the LSC through the regional group, to the National Capital Committee, and they make a decision about how much they are prepared to give us.

Q383 Helen Jones: I have to say that I was talking about different funding levels from the LSC to a college and a sixth form college, but I take your point on the schools. Martin, what assessment does the LSC make, when it decides what proportion of a building project it will fund, of the effect on future students and the quality of education offered to students in servicing the debt?

Mr Lamb: Part of the process of scrutinising those applications includes a detailed investment appraisal of the project. Very often, the project itself will generate savings in running costs to that institution. It is possible that in those discussions the change to the new buildings will meet a significant reduction for the running costs of that college, so, in a sense, they are not necessarily having to service the debt from money that would have been spent on the students directly, it may just be that the more efficient heating is saving quite a lot of money. That is a very complex and detailed assessment which leads to the judgment by the National Capital Committee of what the level of support will be.

Q384 Helen Jones: Does this complicated and detailed assessment include any consideration of the type of students that a college deals with, of the deprivation in its area, of any of the social indices that we look at generally in education?

Mr Lamb: Not directly.

Helen Jones: Thank you.

Q385 Chairman: While Graham was talking about the comparisons with his funding and the funding for schools, how do you compare that with the funding for higher education down the road?

Mr Widdowson: As a mixed economy college, one-third of our students are HE students. One of the difficulties we had was that the Higher Education Funding Council did not contribute to our development at all in terms of direct funding. We get some capital element within the money that we get from HEFCE but their approach is not project based, it is formula based. Therefore, although we have increasingly got more capital from HEFCE, it was not there at the start of the project.

Q386 Chairman: It is the capital element that follows the student, is it?

Mr Widdowson: Yes, that is right. It is built into the formula that you get in terms of the amount per student, whereas with LSC it is the process that Martin has outlined. I do think there are issues around that. There are issues there, particularly if it is in an area where there is not a lot of higher education, and it is the widening participation issue at that level as well, where you need to have perhaps a different approach. You need to have facilities, where a formula-based approach will not give you the critical capital that you need to create a higher education centre in a part of the country where there probably is not, if I may say, a lucrative market for mainstream, easy-to-get at students. You are trying to bring in students who would not otherwise participate. That is difficult. It needs aspirational surroundings for it to work.

Mr Moore: In Staffordshire it is a bit more complicated. We have something called SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation) which involves all the Staffordshire colleges and one or two other colleges in Shropshire and round about—and we are all on the SURF Board! and it is very exciting. Because we have this arrangement, the funding is channelled through Staffs University; it does not come directly. We were entitled to direct funding from HEFCE but we pooled it with all the other colleges because we believed that, together, there was a global sum of money that was about widening participation in higher education and delivering it where it was required and it gave us flexibility to move the money between the colleges. It is fair to say that Staffs University has provided some capital money. There is a joint HE facility with Tamworth and Lichfield College—a very nice facility in Lichfield—and there is some work being done in Burton. Some capital money has flowed through that arrangement but it is done, if you like, through the board and we agree overall where the money should go—because if you were to spread it thinly it would make no difference to any one of our institutions. If we can see some opportunities to develop the facilities, we have done that. It is a bit ad hoc. It depends on Staffordshire University's generosity, because it is not specifically identified. It comes to Staffs University; it may or may not get passed to us.

Q387 Fiona Mactaggart: This story sounds a bit like your story when you came in: "Is this Building Schools for the Future? We are not schools." You seem to be the poor relation to schools, because they have their funding pot and you are not allowed into that. You are the poor relation to HE. Some generous universities, like Staffordshire University, which uses institutions like you to recruit into its degree programmes—whereas the Warwicks of this world might not need to to the same degree—generously let you have some crumbs from the table. It seems to me, from what I am hearing from you, that the sector, in terms of capital investment, is an afterthought to other people's programmes. Is that how it feels? Or have I misunderstood?

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Mr Widdowson: I do not think it is an afterthought. Traditionally FE has dealt with the difficult cases, if you like; with areas of difficult recruitment; with work that is relevant to employers, relevant to minority groups and so on. What we have is symptomatic of that filling of the gaps, if you like, and the difficult to define role that the sector has, because it does those things that other people do not a lot of the time and it deals with those people that other parts of the education world do not deal with as well as we would all want. I think that makes it quite difficult sometimes to put us in the right position. On the other hand, it gives us some control as well. None of us want to be in debt. I do not want to be in £9 million of debt from the building we have built, but it is worth it if you look at the difference it makes to the students who come in and the way it raises their aspirations. These, a lot of the time, are the kids who do not stay on in school sixth form, who are looking at employment as much as they are at higher education, and it is a tangible expression of how much value we put in them and what investment we put in them. Though I would rather not have the debt and I would rather that all colleges were in financial category A and that was one of the criteria and all the other things, I still think that the control that the current system gives to college governing bodies, working with the LSC and others, allows us to respond in a way that a bigger system might prevent.

Mr Moore: It may not appear as fair for the FE as the other two sectors, but it is the best deal that FE has ever had. I think we ought to say that very clearly. We are in a position where we can see a transformation. Yes, we might not like to bear the burdens and we see other people perhaps not having to bear the burdens that we do, but I think we are always being entrepreneurial and we will get on and do it because we understand that it is in the best interests of our students and it makes a difference. When you put them in the right setting and you get the right behaviour and the right support out of them, it improves the success rates—which is what we are all about. We would want to do it and we would want the best support that the Government was able to provide us with through the LSC. No, we perhaps do not enjoy being regarded as third in queue for the handouts, but we are getting more than we have ever had before, which is very positive.

Q388 Fiona Mactaggart: Martin, you described the planning process and it was not clear to me how connected that was in terms of Building Schools for the Future in an area, as to how that works and how your planning process plugs into that. Clearly we are talking about the same students.

Mr Lamb: One of the features of Building Schools for the Future is that it is in, I think, 15 waves and if you are at the end of the programme the money does not start to arrive until well into the 2015 area. One of the challenges, for example, certainly in my previous role in Berkshire, was that none of the unitary authorities in Berkshire were in the early phases of Building Schools for the Future, so, in terms of doing a college development—and I was

deeply engaged in the one at Bracknell and Wokingham for the new college on the main Bracknell site—there was no possibility of linking it to Building Schools for the Future because at that time, and still, Bracknell are well down the Building Schools for the Future. There is a critical timing issue. Yes, if Building Schools for the Future is operating in your locality in the current planning frame, you could have discussions about how that fits in, but we expect to have the Bracknell and Wokingham College rebuilt before Bracknell would have even started its Building Schools for the Future. The timing issues are very complex, with getting links between schools and colleges, if the local authority is far away from the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Q389 Fiona Mactaggart: Is there any way of solving that?

Mr Lamb: Not easily. I think the issue, as you know much better than I, is that the sheer scale of the Building Schools for the Future programme meant that you could not do it all at the same time. Then there was a judgment about whether you did it uniformly across all local authorities a little at a time or whether local authorities over a period of time replaced all their schools at the same time. I think, from memory, Peterborough was one of the early ones, and they had quite a sizeable amount to tackle with the school buildings in Peterborough, but it might be a little longer before other local authorities are in the same position as Peterborough, who were in the phase 1.

Fiona Mactaggart: I liked John's description of entrepreneurialism in the sector. That matches my experience of this. In a way, that means that we are talking about a sector that has traditionally got on with it. I think that is part of what you are telling me: "That is what we do: we get on with it." That means we are in a sector where perhaps the fact that you are not part of a big complex plan is not the end of the world because you are quite resourceful and so on. I am interested in how much importance you put into your future planning on things like recreational facilities for the students or on people understanding how to get around college buildings. I was in a college in my constituency the other day and none of the staff managed to get me effectively from one bit which they worked in to another bit.

Chairman: Is this new build or old build?

Q390 Fiona Mactaggart: It was middle. Not very new, but they did not know their way around. These are the sorts of things which make parents of younger students feel anxious about going into FE: Are there places for them to do sport? Is it easy to get about? If we talk about sustainability, part of sustainability has to be more whether the student experience is one which fulfils all these things. I am wondering how much that was planned into what you did and whether you think you are getting it right.

Mr Widdowson: Clearly with total campus rebuild you have to think about those things, because you have to think about what the use of the site is going

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to be over 30, 40, possibly 50 years, and community use. The fact that you have a community on site is really important. The worst thing in my view that you can do is just build a few buildings. You have to have some vision about what it is there to do. It has to raise people's aspirations. They have to feel as if it is built for them. For example, in our design brief we talked about where students would perhaps rather be than in an educational institution. That is probably a shopping mall or something like that, where young people go. We tried in certain parts to give that feel to it, so it is a familiar environment. When you talk to students who come into the new campus, they will talk about it being like a university campus—which is quite good because that is the seed we are trying to plant—or like an airport—which is okay—or like the Metro Centre, the big shopping mall up in Gateshead. All of those things are good things because they have a sense of movement, of aspiration, of a place where they want to be, not as institutional perhaps as things have been in the past. I think that is the same for parents as well. It has to be safe physically and in terms of the environment as well, and it has to be somewhere where they feel comfortable as 16, 17, 18-year-olds, studying for two or three years, whatever it is, or for longer than that in some cases. It has to make a contribution to the local community. Our sports facilities are open to the community. We are open seven days a week. We have a gymnasium that members of the public can join. It is significantly cheaper than the commercial competitors that we have, but it attracts a different sort of person, I am being honest about it, who would not normally feel able to pay £400 or £500 a year or whatever it is to join a gym. We feel it has that community contribution. We have local clubs and societies. The badminton club has its meetings there. We have dance classes. A karate club starts this Friday. These are not college activities but they are using the college facility. That was our aim.

Q391 Fiona Mactaggart: Did you have to do the inventing and sorting all that out yourself? Is there a support mechanism which helps perhaps less experienced, less entrepreneurial college principals get these problems solved?

Mr Widdowson: My personal view is that colleges are in that position in all their local communities—or should be. They are part of the social cement that binds a lot of things together. This is a personal view of what a college principal should think, I guess, but, when you have the opportunity to redesign a campus, you need a strategy. You do not just say, "Let's put up a building because this one is falling down." You need a vision of where you want to be in 10–20 years time with that particular building and that campus. You need to put these ideas in; otherwise, you are not fulfilling the potential that the college has in its community.

Q392 Fiona Mactaggart: I am absolutely sure you are right about that. I am trying to get at whether that attitude is structured into the system, rather than that we just benefit from those people who have

that attitude. Are there ways of helping college principals to take that kind of approach—not necessarily people who have had a massive rebuild, like you—in every stage of their rebuild?

Mr Widdowson: We have had visits from over 50 colleges now. Some ideas they do not like and do not see them working in their particular context. Others will take ideas and say, "Yes, we can develop that. We can build on that."

Q393 Chairman: Is this the exclusive brethren of your membership or is it from the other colleges that are not in the 157?

Mr Widdowson: I am not in the 157 Group, Chairman.

Q394 Chairman: Graham, you are in the 157 Group. You have an even more exclusive group, do you not, John?

Mr Widdowson: It is about as exclusive, actually!

Q395 Chairman: But do people, outside the clubs, come?

Mr Widdowson: Yes, of course. Very few of the club have arrived, actually. As Martin was saying, it is as colleges come to look at their estate and take the brave step of either a total redevelopment or a major build. You would not come and look at our campus if you were building an extension to an existing building, but if you are building a significant building or building a total campus it is worth the look, to see the mistakes we have made and the things we do differently.

Mr Moore: We are all here under the AoC umbrella, which does pull all the colleges together, although we may be different. Sixth form colleges, for example, have a different ethos and a different approach from a general FE college. It is a relatively small number nationally. We know each other quite well. We do support and interact very well. We have beacons and so on and people come and share very openly right across the colleges. It is quite a supportive structure that exists in FE. We have a quite challenging agenda in Stoke which is called the University Quarter, where Staffs University, the sixth form college in Stoke and the general FE college (my college) are working together to develop educational facilities to lead economic regeneration in Stoke—which is desperately needed, because we are right at the bottom, if you like.

Q396 Chairman: Who are the partners in that?

Mr Moore: Staffs University, the sixth form college and ourselves are the key educational partners, but it includes the regeneration zone, the new programme of housing renewal, the local authority and the LSC. We are trying to see how we can work together to help Stoke to regenerate using education as the key push. We work very closely with the schools as well. We believe that school development in the city is going to be a major factor in regeneration as well. If you think about what a sixth form college needs, it tends to be perhaps more protective, looking more at an environment which is

quite close and to some extent inward looking; a general FE college is helping people to go out in all sorts of directions, with apprenticeships, and lots of adult students as well as young students; and the university very much wants to participate in the regeneration of Staffordshire and North Staffs—a regional university, if you like. With our capital programmes, we are trying to see how we can share facilities between the three institutions—like, for example, a sports village. The sixth form college, in partnership with the local authority, has some wonderful sports facilities; at the general FE college, we have a fitness centre but we have very little else—we are on a very cramped site and we have no sports facilities locally; the university has some sports facilities. If we can all come together and develop this sports village idea for the university students and the students from the two institutions, that is a wonderful synergy for the three of us. We can see the same with business, for example. We have a centre of vocational excellence in business and professional studies; the university has a large faculty; the city needs a leadership and management centre within the city. You can see how the university and the college can bring that together. The sixth form college and the university want to do something for science. Together they can provide much better science facilities which 16–18 students, undergraduates and post-graduates can use. There is quite a lot of synergy but of course we are all looking at different funding streams. We have Advantage West Midlands¹ and other people who are prepared to put some money into the overall regeneration concept, if we get it right, but the LSC is clearly going to be the key funder. We are probably talking about £60 million, that sort of figure, from the LSC for the two institutions and then HEFCE at the moment is talking about putting £10 million or £15 million in. If we can get synergy between the LSC and HEFCE and we can get AWM and English Partnerships to come on board, we could have a really exciting package. We are all working hard to convince our three governing bodies, which are separate, that what we will do will benefit all of us but benefit even more the community working together. It is no different from what I was saying earlier about the schools and colleges wanting to work together on 14–19 so that we have real synergy. There are a lot of us in the sector—and I think FE colleges are very good at it—trying to provide that synergy between HE on the one end and the schools on the other to really look at how we transform our communities.

Q397 Fiona Mactaggart: If there were a recommendation which could make it easier for these funding streams to be managed at the receiving end, can you see at all what it would be helpful for us to do in terms of projects which are using different bits of money and access money? What would you say would be a helpful reform to get better regeneration?

Mr Lamb: Whatever the spectrum is—and you could say that is the schools, the FE and HE—there are boundaries between the funding rules of those different organisations and the respective parts of the Department that fund them. I think we will want to see some degree of flexibility around the sort of boundaries/the zones between those, such that it was possible, where it was appropriate, for BSF funding to be used in the college sector; where it could be possible for FE funding to be used in the 14–16 school sector and at the HE/FE interface—on which I think we have made some progress, but it is still quite a difficult area—across what I would call the core educational funding. But I think Graham has also mentioned that in many projects, particularly big projects now, there are lots of other public funding streams, through the Regional Development Agency, through English Partnerships, through Sport England, and with that, the more funding streams there are, is an exponential level of complexity in trying to get them all together. I think it is really how best we can put all public funding streams together for the best possible delivery in the community.

Mr Widdowson: I think it is that agreement on common purpose and that long-term commitment to it. I think Graham's illustration there about the impact on regeneration in a community, there are projects around the country where that same thing could be said; not all of them have advanced as far as it has in Stoke and other parts of the country. I think when educational opportunity becomes limited by debates over funding streams and who should pay what, when and in what proportion, that is when the other questions will have to be asked, but I think in terms of long-term commitment, there needs to be agreement on what the project is there to achieve, what the vision is. Everyone has got to buy into that in the long-term, and that sometimes can be a problem because institutions move, the management changes, funding councils change from time to time. You are talking about, again, a period of 10, 20 years and a lot of the time we tend not to think in those terms, but that is a minimum for the length of investment that we need.

Mr Moore: It is a complex problem. You need the vision at a local level. That vision is the local partners and the local authority perhaps crucially sharing a vision about what they want for their area. Obviously the LSC and HEFCE need effectively to talk each other. I think, though, the real, crucial solution is here within Government. It comes back to the DfES and its tendency (and they will never forgive me for this) to work in silos; so you have got the school silo and the FE silo and the HE silo. There are some efforts, I know, amongst the Ministers to speak to each other about these issues and try to have a joined-up approach. There has been a sort of batting at 14–19 between FE and the school sector in recent years, whereas it is a clearly shared responsibility, but if a minister for schools has a set of schools' agendas and a minister for FE has some FE agendas, if those agendas do not overlap, if Alan Johnson does not set them targets for actually achieving some joint operation, let us say, on the

¹ Note by witness: A Regional Development Agency.

capital pots, then it will not happen because each of them will focus on what they are tasked to do in their particular areas. So, from this Committee's point of view, I think it has got to start at the top with the DfES and how they can see their funding of education as a whole, not just the particular bits of education they are responsible for, as something which they do have to make more joined-up. I am sure they would protest that they are already trying to do that, but I think there is still some way to go in making that a reality. When people come down from the DfES to, say, Stoke and only want to talk about the schools' expenditure or the LSC only wants to talk about FE expenditure, then there is something still not quite right, there are not the right messages coming down. If you want to make a recommendation, it is how the capital pots can be better integrated than they are at the moment, not just at the moment with FE money being used for schools post-16 but also in the other direction. That would be very helpful.

Chairman: I was going to move straight on and focus on sustainability, but I have got a question from Stephen that links very much into the area that we have been discussing.

Q398 Stephen Williams: Can I start off with Mr Lamb from the Learning and Skills Council. Does the Learning and Skills Council include within its capital grants to colleges significant amounts to upgrade ICT, or is that expected to be funded out of college revenue streams?

Mr Lamb: In a college development part of the funding that would be agreed would include not just the infrastructure for ICT but would also include significant fixed equipment for science, engineering—the high cost areas. So, yes, there is an equipment element within the capital grant.

Q399 Stephen Williams: This is to either of the college principals. When you have rebuilt a college or you are planning the rebuild of a college (and, as Mr Moore has said, often that means you have got a larger debt than you started with), there are significant debt servicing costs, how do those servicing costs impact on a college's ability to renew and upgrade its ICT provision over the next few years after a project has taken place?

Mr Widdowson: Two things. One is that when you have the opportunity to do a rebuild then what we said to our design people was: "Do it from the inside out. Look at the technical infrastructure", because that is what is going to be what sustains the college and the learning environment for the next 10, 20 years, so that has to be up to scratch. We almost built the IT infrastructure before we built the fabric of the building, and I was actually more concerned about how that was going to operate than perhaps the external appearance, because once you are in and working that is what the building is meant to do. In terms of the sustainability of the kit, if you like, one of the things we have looked at is leasing, rather than purchasing, kit. Colleges are pretty big players in the market place as clients for various businesses. If you are sharp about it, from a business perspective, you

can get some really good deals. You can actually have, as we will have, a turnover every three years of the IT facility, because the students we are taking in now, everyone has got a mobile phone, everyone is highly IT literate in their own particular way, but they expect that level of performance from the college, particularly if we set ourselves out as technical institutions that will lead them to employment. It has got to reflect their expectation.

Q400 Stephen Williams: What would be a typical cycle of ICT renewal? Would it be two years, three years, four years?

Mr Widdowson: We are aiming at three years on a lease basis, yes, and so every piece of kit will be turned over every three years.

Q401 Stephen Williams: And leasing gives you more flexibility to do that and sustain capital purchase?

Mr Widdowson: Yes, plus you do not have the disposal cost these days as well.

Q402 Chairman: I want to move on to sustainability, but perhaps just before we do (and we have had a very interesting exchange so far), when you built your new college, for the simple-minded amongst us, what proportion came from where in percentages? Did 50% come from LSC? How much came from reserves or selling off a bit of crucial inner-city land that you had had for years as a nice little nest egg? What was the percentage that came from all those generous local employers around Durham?

Mr Widdowson: I think the inner-city in Durham is a cathedral, so I think it is inappropriate to answer that. We are slightly different.

Q403 Chairman: They probably gave you a lot of money too.

Mr Widdowson: Am I allowed to make no comment on that, Chairman. The project cost (and this is going back three, four years, when we started this) was £35 million plus. That was sourced from three and a bit sources. We had a 35% grant from LSC. That was about nine, £10 million, something like that. We did dispose of a site, which was a complicated disposal, because one of the things that happens in a lot of educational institutions, particularly colleges, is that room reutilisation can be quite poor if the facilities are inadequate, and our room utilisation was very poor for those two sites, so we disposed of the site. That was a site primarily for higher education, so there are lots of strategic risks around that and bringing the whole thing onto a single campus, but that released about nine million pounds, something like that. We then borrowed about the same amount, structured over 15 years, so that if we can pay it back more quickly we will, and we are going to. Going back to a previous point, we were financial category C when we started to look at this, we became financial category A before we started it and we maintained that category throughout, and that meant we could use college funds and college resources to do it, and we got a small amount of money through the Centre of Vocational Excellence Programme that the LSC

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have established, so something around about a quarter of a million pounds from there to just improve facilities in Automator technician training.

Q404 Chairman: Is that similar to your package?

Mr Moore: So far we are only part-way through our building programme and it has been about a third, a third, a third, a similar picture. Land values are not very good in Stoke, people are not falling over themselves to buy property, so it has been more difficult to raise money in that direction. So, we have had bank borrowing and we are up to about five million pounds of borrowing at the moment and, clearly, if we go ahead with the rest of the building, we will go substantially beyond that, but it is true to say we have also been in difficulties. Because we paid off 6.5 million pounds of debt, we did not recover from category C, we are still in category C. We do not find it easy to raise money from local employers and local individuals; so, as the Government policy to raise a fee contribution from employers and individuals goes up to 50%, we are not getting takers at 50%. We have the choice of just not running the programmes or doing some sort of compromise on the fees we charge. In a city like Stoke it would be disastrous if people stopped participating in education. I have a real worry about the adult fee policy in that context. It may be all right in some parts of the country, it is deterring a lot of people with poor educational qualifications from upgrading those, and if we just take it on the nose and do not charge, we will stay in category C or it will get worse. I have seen a reduction in student numbers over the last two or three years because as this fee policy is biting, and we have tried to implement it, so fewer and fewer people enrol. The LSC in their latest forecast are expecting 200,000 less students to participate. They wrap it up by saying it will be short courses and perhaps less relevant qualifications, but for many people in a place like Stoke a short course is the way in. We would need less capital money the less we do, but the less we do the less good I think that is for our local community. What is the position of a general FE college for the future? I can see its position to some extent 14–19; I am having difficulty seeing what the long-term position of adult provision in further education is because it is all going to be contestable, private providers and so on can come in. Do you want college buildings for the 21st century for adults if you are going to a different way of delivering them? So, the funding is diverging from the revenue point of view. Will the funding from the capital point of view diverge and will most of the money tend to focus now on 16–19 expenditure and there will be less for adults? I think that is an interesting question to which I do not know the full answer.

Chairman: Let us look at sustainability.

Q405 Mr Chaytor: Martin, 50% of the FE estate has been renewed since 1993. To what extent has the choice of colleges for a new capital build been arbitrary? You earlier indicated that it was driven by the innovative approach of individual college managements, but my question would be to what

extent has it also been driven by the accident of those colleges which happened to have large land banks that they could dispose of, and, if that is the case, what are the implications for the next 15 years and the next 50%?

Mr Lamb: If you start from 1993 when colleges were incorporated, there were relatively modest capital developments in the early days because the FEFC did not have a capital funding stream from the Department. Over time it has developed and got bigger, but it has been very much that we have been reactive to colleges. I recall when I worked in the FEFC we had a college in the eastern region that was able to sell a small piece of land to one of the big supermarkets. I think they got £27 million. That college then had quite a sizeable amount of investment, but it would not at that time have been possible to do that because there was not enough public funding for capital, and there was a bit of serendipity that that college just happened to have land that was just outside the Green Belt that was just possible. So, I think there was an element that, yes, there were those that had disposable assets. As with almost everything, it is a feature of the quality of leadership and management, both the governing body and of the principal, in terms of their vision for the future, and some had little choice as the buildings were either condemned as being unsafe or no longer meeting a whole range of regulatory requirements. So, I think there has been an element of a range of issues to do with assets, issues to do with the leadership and management and issues to do with sheer practicalities, and at that time I think that was probably the only way of doing it. Subsequently, I think we have got to the stage now where it must be a more planned and reactive programme by the LSC where we are discussing with every college its future building strategy because we have a window of opportunity in the current CSR capital time where there is funding available for colleges. It is worth saying that we have never turned a college down because there was not sufficient funding. Colleges are only turned down if the project does not meet a series of criteria or it is badly thought through, badly financed or badly conceived. At the moment we are just able to meet those demands from the available capital funding.

Q406 Mr Chaytor: In renewing the next 50%—

Mr Lamb: I think the next 50% will be more challenging.

Q407 Mr Chaytor: —to some extent, the colleges that do not have large assets to dispose of, the level of public funding will obviously need to be considerably higher?

Mr Lamb: Will increase. One of the things that we have looked at is that most of those college proposals tended to be partial rebuilds. They did not have enough money to bulldoze the complete site and start again. We are now encouraging colleges to be more radical in that thinking and, if necessary, to bulldoze the complete site and start again, and I am sure over time the percentage support will go up from what is currently an average of about 30 to

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35%. Certainly some recent projects going through the National Capital Committee have been closer to 50 or 60% funding by the LSC as we get into the more hard to reach capital areas.

Q408 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the new-build to date, virtually all of that will have been designed and to some extent constructed, before the doubling of gas and oil prices. My next question is to what extent do you think the existing new-build has fully taken on board the problems of the costs of energy over the life cycle of the building, and what advice has the LSC given to the first 50% of colleges in terms of the implications of energy costs?

Mr Lamb: As I was saying earlier, one of the significant savings often from going into new buildings is that they are much more energy efficient than the old buildings, and we have always encouraged colleges to develop that to the maximum. What, of course, is always immensely difficult is knowing quite how energy costs will change in the future, but my belief is that the technical building requirements that we impose on colleges push them into energy saving, even if they needed to be pushed, which I doubt.

Q409 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the support that the LSC gives, you referred earlier to the property adviser function and the accountant function?

Mr Lamb: Yes.

Q410 Mr Chaytor: But you did not refer to the economist function or the architect function. I want to know how proactive the LSC has been in encouraging the design of long-term sustainability and energy efficiency into the existing build and is that going to be improved in the future? Are you going to be more proactive in the future about building the long-term sustainability into the design of buildings and the long-term costs of managing energy?

Mr Lamb: I think, as more colleges are being engaged in the process, more professional experts from commercial practice have been engaged in both the design and the technical support for those, and that is where we are getting the sort of corporate experience in the sector of being able to say, "Yes, this is how this particular college dealt with the project", and one of our roles is to facilitate saying, "Ah, yes, I know exactly. Go and have a look at the work that they have done at South East Essex College in Southend in terms of design activity."

Q411 Mr Chaytor: In terms of residential building, there has been a recent revision to the Building Regulations which significantly increases the efficiency of residential property. Has there been a similar revision to the standards for new college buildings? For example, at our party conference this year the Prime Minister quoted the figure of a 40% increase in energy efficiency in residential buildings because of the new Building Regulations. Have we seen that same scale of increase in the energy efficiency of educational buildings?

Mr Lamb: I am afraid I do not know immediately the answer to that, but I will arrange a written response to that.

Q412 Chairman: The BSF people talk about BREEAM standards?

Mr Lamb: Yes, we have BREEAM standards as well.

Chairman: You do. That is what we are talking about.

Q413 Mr Chaytor: Is there any kind of incentive scheme that you would offer through the grant allocation that you control to encourage colleges putting forward bids to be more energy efficient, for example? I think you mentioned earlier that you are increasing the margin by about 10%?

Mr Lamb: Yes, and that was really to meet the additional costs of some of the more energy efficient systems compared to the less efficient.

Q414 Mr Chaytor: Conversely, is there a penalty system for those colleges who put forward bids that do not, in your judgment, take on board your long-term sustainability of energy, your water management, waste management? Would you ever refuse a bid on the grounds that it had not sufficiently dealt with issues of energy, water and waste management?

Mr Lamb: My understanding at the moment is that we do not have those precise criteria but that we would be seeking colleges to move into that direction and, hence, add the additional funding, which is often the incentive that they need to move in that direction.

Mr Widdowson: I think since 2003 BREEAM approach has been applied to college buildings. So, in looking at the building that we have constructed we had to look to apply BREEAM, although it does not have a BREEAM rating because that is not compulsory. The BREEAM standard is the one that we followed. I think again, going back, it is usually said in what appeals to college principals, if you actually look at the way in which some of these approaches to energy—gas, electricity, water—within a new-build concept can actually save running costs. For example, we now know we have no leaks from our mains water system. Before it was leaking underground constantly and had been doing so, we assume, for the last 20 or 30 years, nobody knows, and the same for gas. The other thing that probably has been beyond our expectation has been electricity consumption. So, we have saved on our expectation of gas, but electricity has actually gone up, and that is because there is more use of things like computers in the college now, we have more than we thought we would have, and that is going to be the case over time, I think. So, electricity consumption concerns us, and we go to the market to purchase it to get the best value that we can.

Q415 Mr Chaytor: Broadly speaking, what is the proportion of the total college revenue budget that is consumed by energy?

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Mr Widdowson: I would have to let you know about that. I have probably got it in some of the figures I have got here, but it is reduced on what it was before from old inefficient buildings, that is for sure, because it goes back to the point Martin made before about giving our boards of governors assurance we can afford loans. We have to show we can make running cost savings somewhere, and that is in the reduction and the more efficient use of space but also in terms of revenue costs on power and on facilities, but I can give you the figure afterwards.

Q416 Mr Chaytor: Your college also has got thousands of car park spaces as well.

Mr Widdowson: Yes, we have.

Q417 Mr Chaytor: How sustainable is that?

Mr Widdowson: We serve a rural community and public transport does not reach various parts of that community at a time that will allow people to come into college. We also have a large number of adult students who use their own transport. The college is located where there are 26 buses per hour going past the campus, we encourage a car-share scheme as part of the Green Transport Plan, and the planning authority insisted on a Green Transport Plan before we actually were given planning consent, and we encourage students to use public transport and we provide our own transport, our own buses from rural communities in collaboration with the local authority, so we hope that will actually be a disincentive because those buses are free. So, we are hoping to discourage people from using their own transport, because if you get something for nothing, then people in the North East normally will go for it.

Q418 Mr Chaytor: Do you charge for the car park?

Mr Widdowson: No.

Q419 Mr Chaytor: Do people from the hospital use your car park as a hospital car park?

Mr Widdowson: Not when we catch them.

Q420 Mr Chaytor: Could I come back to Martin. The whole issue of transport—car parking, transport, green transport plans—does that appear anywhere in LSC guidance to colleges for their new-build?

Mr Lamb: It is an increasing challenge with the planning authorities, but there are one or two sites which had to be abandoned simply because the planning authority would not accept the increased volume of activity that that site would generate. So, it is one of those issues that we are very clear that the college and us need to talk with the local authority, particularly about transport plans, particularly about the use of cars and their decreasing inclination to agree to large car parking facilities. In some urban areas it is a really challenging issue.

Q421 Mr Chaytor: Finally, what of the comparison with the BSF scheme? The BSF published a glossy brochure describing model schools for the future and there was, to some extent, an element of sustainable design in that. The LSC has not used the

concept of model buildings and it has been entirely up to different colleges and their architects to design as they think fit. Have you missed a trick there? Was that conscious? Is there some value in revisiting that and promoting model designs that conform to the best standards?

Mr Lamb: I think we promote model principles, we do not promote model designs.

Q422 Mr Chaytor: Principles—P-L-E-S?

Mr Lamb: On this occasion, yes, because I think college buildings are nearly always rather more complex. I am not saying that schools are simple to design, but they tend to have a greater degree of uniformity, whereas colleges have a number of quite complex facilities which are difficult to produce in what might be seen as a sort of model kit for college design.

Q423 Mr Carswell: On the question of sustainability, I had a couple of questions on which I would be interested in your comments. It seems that the LSC is a pretty key driver in this new building programme and it seems that when it comes to awarding grants the LSC's opinion matters a great deal. For example, the proposals for redevelopment would need to show a commitment to sustainability issues. Forgive my scepticism, but is it not quite so top-down and dirigiste that perhaps sustainability could become a very modern justification for a very ancient vice of central planning and quango state planning? Surely, if you really want to achieve sustainability, you do not try and do it from the centre, deciding what is and what is not going to constitute sustainability, you let go; you organically allow communities to decide what suits their needs. Perhaps, rather than have *faux* consultations with the local communities, you empower local communities, possibly through their town halls, possibly through the colleges directly, but you get the big quango state off people's backs if you want real sustainability. There is a question mark on the end of that!

Mr Lamb: I think if we were proposing a model college and said, "This is the sort of college that should be built in this locality", I would entirely agree with you. That is not what we say. We design the curriculum on offer, the vision rests, quite properly, with the governing body in consultation with the community, so I do not think that we are being, in this case, centrally directive at all. However, we have a very proper accountability for public money that the scheme makes sense, is educationally sound and is affordable.

Mr Moore: I think that colleges are often unique in their local community and that actually you do not want FE colleges to look the same all over the country, you want them to contribute to their particular local community. Local communities have different priorities, certainly 'green' planning—we have been hearing plenty about that—and working with planners. One of the biggest challenges that we all face is working with local planning committees. We have a great plan to work with a Grade II park. We have a terrible site which used to

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be pottery factories and it is gradually being converted into an FE institution. It has got a canal wall on one side and it has got hedges on the other. We want to bring those hedges down and open up a Victorian terrace onto a park and bring the park and the students together and create a very different sort of environment. The local people are in favour of that, but the planners get very twitchy. This is somebody who went on to design Central Park in New York and, therefore, there are all sorts of considerations with English Heritage. A lot of the delays in college building programmes up and down the country actually can be traced to a very complex relationship with local planning regulations, and that is much more difficult to satisfy than in some ways the LSC's overarching views about what they want in terms of public expenditure. So, I think there is plenty of local initiative and sometimes some local bureaucracy comes in here as well.

Q424 Chairman: If you ever want to see any development anywhere for the longest time, do not ever get involved with Railtrack! I think John wants to come back in.

Mr Widdowson: Clearly, I would not want to take the dirigiste view because, as both Martin and Graham have said, colleges fit their local communities. Therefore, if I am being honest, as a principal certainly my governing body would not take very kindly to being told in detail what we had to do because, if I can speak on behalf of the governors, they are there in a position of trust to reflect the needs of their local community and they take that seriously—they take the risk seriously and they take the outcome seriously—so I think that is best done at that level. However, to go back to a point that the Chairman made right at the start of this session, I think there are decisions to be made about what you put into a project and what you do not, and I think there need to be some guidelines, some parameters set up, so that corners are not cut simply to meet a rigid bottom line and take short-term interests into account rather than long-term sustainability, and that is where, I think, you need that guidance, a very light hand obviously, but that guidance needs to be there. You also need to persuade people of the value of taking that approach and the fact that it can actually be an economically rational thing to do as well as good for the environment.

Chairman: Are you not tilting here, Douglas, at the wrong kind of windmill, in the sense that this is the most local of educational provision? Your Government set the FE sector free, in a sense, did they not, and even in terms of funding we saw a third, a third, a third. It is pretty independent, is it not, and builds what it likes in some senses?

Mr Carswell: I am slightly asking the question in order to get an answer, and I like what I heard.

Q425 Mr Wilson: Lots of public buildings are now funded by a private finance initiative. I was wondering whether there was much of this in the FE sector and whether you think that in the long-term that is affordable and sustainable.

Mr Lamb: This is not an easy question either. There is, I think, only one PFI project in England, which is at Newbury College in Berkshire, and it probably is that the conventional wisdom is that PFI projects are required to be of a certain size and most individual college projects do not reach the size to make PFI a useful way forward; but, as bigger projects come along, that debate might change because there are certainly now projects in the design stage that might end up at 80–100 million, and that is probably closer to the PFI size of where people believe PFI is the most useful route. Smaller projects traditionally have not been seen as good for PFI, as I understand it.

Q426 Mr Wilson: What is your personal view as to whether borrowing at those levels is sustainable for a college?

Mr Lamb: We think it is sustainable, otherwise we would not require them to do it. As both John and Graham have said, it is built into the funding assumptions for their college budgets that they have to sustain the debt in a particular way. It is one way of stretching public money rather further than if we made a 100% grant.

Q427 Mr Wilson: But you might stretch it to breaking point over a period of time.

Mr Lamb: Indeed.

Q428 Mr Wilson: I noted down in the first section that you borrowed nine million, John?

Mr Widdowson: Yes.

Q429 Mr Wilson: And, Graham, you have borrowed 12 million for your new building?

Mr Moore: We will probably by the time we have completed the new campus. We are about five million at the moment.

Q430 Mr Wilson: What sort of pressures is that going to put on the college? Presumably you have got other borrowing as well, have you, or is that the total?

Mr Widdowson: No, that this is the totality of the borrowing. There are two things; there are good pressures and bad pressures. It makes us look at the business model of the college and makes us as efficient and business-like as we can be, taking into account the mission and what we are there to do is put students first, and so we look at other ways of bringing in other moneys other than public moneys, so we outsource a lot of services, which improves the quality actually, we think, as well as making savings over time, but not in core functions—things like catering, cleaning and so on—which tend to take up a lot of principals' time, although the debate of the price and quality of chips in the canteen tends to predominate when you talk to students, but we are able to address that. I think also (it is a point Martin made) in all inefficient buildings you see a lot of money going out of windows in the form of that is the only way you can control the heat in a classroom where the heating system in the building has gone completely. So, it is a balance between the improved

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facility for staff and students, the impact that has on student recruitment, because I think, certainly within most LSC projects that I am aware of, there is an assumption that there will be a growth in student numbers, but it is not just about replenishing the building stock, although that itself is a good aim, it is also about addressing those young people principally but also older learners (agreeing with Graham's point before) who do not currently engage in education or training, and that is part and parcel of that rebuild process, and it makes us more business-like, and that is a good thing.

Q431 Mr Wilson: How would you feel, for example, Graham, taking on a 100 million pound rebuilding project? Have you that level of knowledge and experience to be able to get involved in something of that size and scope and all the debts that that is going to create?

Mr Moore: You put the right team together, and I think you do have a situation where, by and large, FE college contracts do get delivered to the price that is negotiated. I think, if you look at the totality of the public sector, we are actually quite good at keeping to our budgets because it is partly our money. We know that the LSC is not going to put extra money in and, if we overrun, it is our borrowing that suffers, so there is a very strong incentive for us to keep the contractors to the price that is actually agreed, and most of us will go into fixed contract price arrangements and we will do a lot of work previous to that. There are a lot of people to advise the sector as well. There are a lot of people who have been through this, so there are teams out there that will support us. We would not know the expertise necessarily ourselves, but I think the issue is that we know people who we have got confidence in and who will work with us and advise and support us. So, we have quite a good record of keeping contracts to price, and that may be because it is focused. A local authority doing lots of schools has perhaps a much bigger task than us focusing on one. I would say it is a leap of faith, however. Who knows what is going to happen in three, five or 10 years time in the FE sector. We know there are falling rolls 16–18. We have seen that a lot of the 20-year forecast is based on increasing numbers. It is not at all clear to us that the Government's policy will in the long run support increasing numbers in FE, so we may find ourselves with debts in five, 10 years time which are not being supported by the growing number of students that we put into our 20-year forecast. How can anybody really, with confidence, make those sorts of forecasts for an FE sector which is going to be in a very contestable environment? It is quite difficult, but that is part of the process that we have to go through with the LSC.

Q432 Mr Wilson: You have quite neatly summarised some of the concerns I have about it. It sounds, Martin, that this is a route that you want to go down and you see colleges going down. Do you not have any qualms about colleges taking on these huge debts and these huge amounts of money?

Mr Lamb: They need to be affordable debts, because one of the other roles the LSC has is monitoring on behalf of our statutory role the financial health of all colleges. So, in a sense, there is absolutely no incentive at all for the LSC to drive colleges so far down the debt route that they become financially at risk. The judgment, as always, is whether that level of borrowing is affordable or not, and we spend quite a lot of time in our assessment processes with colleges ensuring that those debts are affordable, and, in certain sets of circumstances, the amount of debt may not be as high as the maximum. There is a degree of flex in the amount of borrowing we require of colleges for their project.

Q433 Mr Wilson: An affordable debt today may not be an affordable debt tomorrow.

Mr Lamb: Indeed.

Mr Wilson: The CABE recently surveyed the quality of newly built schools and found that over 50% were poorly designed and built. What would they find if they did the same in the FE sector?

Q434 Chairman: There was the CABE analysis.

Mr Lamb: Yes. My hope would be that they would find rather more well-built, well-designed colleges.

Q435 Mr Wilson: You have not done any research of your own?

Mr Lamb: I am not aware that we have in that sense.

Mr Widdowson: I can only speak from one college's perspective, but if you look at the impact on the students, which is the most important thing in a way, the only important thing, then retention rates have certainly gone up, since the completion of our build, up to 93%, which is very high and higher than we anticipated, if I am being honest. Secondly, student recruitment rates are going up in the 16–18 target group. So, it is yet to be proved over a sustained period of time, but it does seem that it raises people's eyes a little bit and makes them think about staying on in full-time education, makes them think about a high quality apprenticeship programme rather than just drifting, as a lot of people in my part of the world certainly do. Our NEET group is 10% and unknowns about the same; so that is 20% of young people. We do not quite know where they are and what they are doing. It is too high. We have certainly seen this year a 14% increase in enrolments from that 16–18-year-old group and this the first year of full operation of the campus. Retention registers say over 90%, which is the top, decile of the colleges.

Q436 Chairman: Why has not the sector won any prizes. I am going to the CABE Annual Presentation Awards on Thursday evening. I do not see any FE colleges getting awards for their stunning architecture and I do not think I can remember one getting one. I have not seen a RIBA award for stunning architecture. In fact, I was very upset that the CABE Awards shortlist all seem to be in Scotland and London and nothing in the northern regions.

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Mr Widdowson: Chairman, I am glad you mentioned that, because our college project is up for an award on 8 November, which is an LSC RIBA award. There are six short-listed projects. So, hopefully, on 9 November there will be some good news in terms of good projects within the FE sector.

Q437 Chairman: That is all for the FE sector, is it not?

Mr Widdowson: Yes.

Q438 Chairman: It is only judging what is the best in the sector, not in comparison with the best libraries or offices?

Mr Widdowson: No, it is within the FE sector to find good buildings. There are two other things that probably it is worth drawing attention to. One is that there was a learning skills network piece of research done on sustainability. They have show-cased six colleges, I think it is, of which the project I have been involved in is one, and we have won a couple of awards, but they tend to be trade awards; so we have got an award for our IT infrastructure, in fact two awards for that, from the trade as opposed to the usual suspects in RIBA and FE circles, so that it is a more commercial judgment about what we have actually done.

Q439 Chairman: You and Graham mentioned your role in lifting communities in terms of revitalising them, and part of that is the quality. When I was in Manchester recently that decision by Manchester Local Authority to ensure that public sector buildings were of highest quality, which interestingly drags the private sector along to raise their levels and standards of quality of build, that is what you are about, is it not?

Mr Moore: It is partly the modesty of the sector, as always. If you go to City and Islington College here in London, for example, they have got some very fine buildings. If you look at Matthew Bolton College in Birmingham, a very strong landmark building in the centre of Birmingham makes a very big impact. We have won local awards for our Construction Centre of Excellence, which is a real pleasure to go in, and everybody can see all the working environments, and so on, and it is very eye-catching and it has been well done, but we do not have the sort of moneys that, say, an Academy has. We can not afford Sir Richard Rogers, and so on. We do not have that sort of money in our budgets to spend.

Q440 Chairman: Graham, a lot of the awards go to really good local architects. If you get a really good local architect, give him a bit of scope, you can still win the prizes.

Mr Moore: I think there is a lot to be proud of in the sector and, you are quite right, I would like to see more of that happen; but to look at the question slightly differently, I am aware of Building Schools for the Future in Stoke and the sort of say that each individual head teacher has in what is a big scheme, and it is a bit of a rush, quite frankly, it is a production-line process. There are standard buildings, and so on, head teachers are asked their

opinions, they do not always get what they want, but what we do get in the FE sector, whether it is for good or bad, is what we really ask for because it is for us, it is for the future, it matters to each institution. We spend a lot of time trying to get it right with our staff and our students and I think those are more individual buildings, more interesting buildings, more fit for purpose buildings. Certainly, if you look at the estimation of our students and student satisfaction levels, the customer seems to be very pleased with what they get, and it is because of that ownership, the fact that we are big enough to do it ourselves and we are big enough to care very much and, if it is our money as part of that equation, then we want to get it right. The only issue is whether we can spend enough to make it as dramatic as we would want it to be.

Chairman: I am glad to hear that. All Members of Parliament have a building that they really detest in their constituency. Mine is my FE college building, which was built in the 1960s, 1970s and is awful, but we are rebuilding it.

Q441 Stephen Williams: Some more questions on finance, although we have had a pretty good go at it already. In County Durham and Staffordshire, as you look around at these new BSF schools sprouting up around your counties, are there any lessons from how they have done things that you think are transferable to your colleges, or have they financed it in such a different way that there is not anything you can learn from the processes they have gone through?

Mr Widdowson: I think it is early days in terms of BSF in County Durham. I think there are two things. In terms of design and operability I think the flow in my part of the world will be the other way. There have been now four college projects and others in the region. I think there is a lot to be learned there, some good lessons and some things not to do, which I think the school sector need to have regard to in putting together their interpretations of these model buildings, and so on, and the way the buildings are going to operate—how students make their way around, how you control communication flows—that can add cost later. I think the second thing is around value for money and the need to challenge. One thing I have learned over the three years it took our project to take shape were the technology changes as it goes through. So, what was designed on day one may not be the best or the cheapest technology when it comes to be put into the building. You have choices to make all the way through. One of the things I would like to put into BSF is that ability to be flexible during the design and build stage and not simply buy something off the shelf and plonk it down on a green field. One of the greatest advantages but challenges and the hard work of the project we are involved in is the risk that you take when you say, “No, we will not have it that way, we will have it this way”, and live with the consequences of that when you see it being built. Graham has mentioned this issue of

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ownership which, I think, the college sector has. I would like to see transferred as well because that gives you that value for money.

Q442 Stephen Williams: Picking up on what you are saying and what you said to earlier questions as well that even though your financial situation is more complicated and not as generous as BSF, you think because of that you have more control over your projects than a head teacher who might be offered a conveyor belt approach and the school drops off at the end?

Mr Widdowson: It is an interesting sort of comparison between that control and influence, and it is a unique opportunity, it is a great professional opportunity to do something like that, with, I think, sometimes the false peace of mind that what you are going to get at the end is exactly what you want. On balance, I would much rather have that control and that involvement than have to have someone else's mistakes. I am happy to put up with my own mistakes, if I make any, and principals occasionally do, and it is very clear we have to address that.

Q443 Stephen Williams: Chairman, in response to some of Fiona's questions about the different funding streams for new 16–19 provision, existing provision, Academies sitting separately, and so on, one of the recommendations one of you said that you would like from our Report is that there should be more collaboration and joined-up thinking perhaps. Can you think of any examples around the country where that collaboration is already taking place or is this fragmented approach rife everywhere?

Mr Lamb: There certainly are examples. The Knowsley Collegiate College, which has a 14–19 dimension, is frequently quoted as an example.

Q444 Chairman: We were interested in Knowsley because they seem to be doing interesting things in Building Schools for the Future as well.

Mr Lamb: Yes.

Q445 Chairman: Any others?

Mr Lamb: That is the one I know best.

Q446 Chairman: If you have any inspiration later, will you write to the Committee?

Mr Lamb: Yes, of course.

Mr Widdowson: I think the other thing maybe is if you take my own context, and that is where these new-build colleges have occurred, then it is about influencing the process under BSF with their partner schools, so not replicating facilities within schools, and that is about communication and talking at a fairly basic level about what goes into the design so that (as Graham said) every school does not build a construction centre when there is a perfectly good and serviceable one capable of expansion in the college. So, it is about collaboration, it is about talking at the early stage before things start to get put into bricks and mortar or steel and concrete, and then reaching agreement at a very local level. Knowsley is a good example of agreement reached

at local level about how these facilities can be jointly used and jointly developed to the benefit of everybody, as opposed to sectoral self-interest or institutional self-interest coming in.

Mr Moore: The local authority clearly has a key role to play in this. They decide which schools are going to get the money, which schools are going to survive. We have gone for a cluster model in Stoke where we have groups of schools in four clusters, and the colleges and the local authority are trying to work with those clusters and get the head teachers in those schools, who might be a bit competitive on the ground, to actually work co-operatively together, to look at what their schools are going to look like, and, therefore, I think we will get better schools as a result using local authority curriculum people to look at the curriculum planning for the city as a whole, and they do have a responsibility to look at the curriculum planning for the city as a whole, and to take note of what, as FE colleges, we also do. So, I think there are some pure opportunities, some synergy there, and when you have got collegiates, and across the country you have got 14–19 groups across every part of the country now, if you use those effectively, then you can actually move quite well down this road of trying to bring those collaborative capital fundings together.

Chairman: We are coming to the end of this session, but David has a question around FE and HE.

Q447 Mr Chaytor: Two very quick questions, I think perhaps to John. In terms of HE capital, the capital element is rolled up as a component of the revenue formula, but it is the same capital basis as HE and FE will get?

Mr Widdowson: Yes.

Q448 Mr Chaytor: Are there, therefore, any improvements you can suggest in terms of funding capital for HE and FE?

Mr Widdowson: I think there are two things. One is, as I think I said before, where there is a strategic need for more local HE delivery that a particular HEI or group of HEIs may not wish to make in that area, for whatever reason. You can think of areas—Grimsby comes to mind—where there is not a university within 40 miles, and so they talk to the principal of that college, and he firmly believes, and I think he is right, that people will not travel either that 40 miles for all sorts of reasons, so there needs to be high quality HE provision locally available. The current approach does not make that possible unless the particular HEI decides to put some of its own capital there, and there are lots of issues around that. I believe HEFCE have a strategic development fund that might be changed to address that.

Q449 Mr Chaytor: I was going to say, you are absolutely sure that there is not a separate HEFCE fund now for exactly those circumstances?

Mr Widdowson: It is not available directly to colleges; it has to be done through an HEI, is my understanding.

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Q450 Mr Chaytor: Secondly, on the question of planning, how long did it take to get all the planning consents both from the local authority and from the LSC for your new-build?

Mr Widdowson: It took just over two years to do that.

Q451 Mr Chaytor: Which is the most cumbersome, the local authority process or the LSC process?

Mr Widdowson: The local authority process was complicated because of the disposal of the site and, although the two proposals are not tied together, they are viewed in parallel, inevitably. There are always issues around highways, issues around main services, so the planning environment is very complex. On top of that, if you think of my own project, it was a pre-existing college site and yet it stimulated the most objections of any planning application in the City of Durham to date, mostly around transport issues and traffic. So, I think you need to take into account in your planning, like every component part of a major project, whether it is funding, VAT, whether it is the planning process, managing the LSC process, because that has to be managed by the college as much as LSC managing the college, all that goes into the project. You cannot really take any one element out of it, and then you commit to getting the thing done as rapidly as possible and you come out at the end, hopefully, with what you wanted.

Q452 Mr Chaytor: The LSC makes the point that the local authority's emphasis on affordable housing on new sites is a difficulty, because presumably it means you cannot release the value of the asset that you would like to, but it is a bit of a dodgy argument, is it not? More executive housing, which deprives young people the chance of getting a foot on the ladder, or building your college?

Mr Widdowson: Yes, I think it is an issue. It has been an issue on the two projects I have been involved with where planning authorities have certain aspirations for a site that the market is telling them are not the right aspirations for that site, and that can depress the land value actually, as can other planning complications. The more complex a site, the larger a site in some cases, the longer it takes, and you have to factor that into the whole thing.

Q453 Mr Chaytor: Finally, from Martin's point of view, do you think that the LSC approval process is as quick as it can be or are there things that the LSC is considering to speed it up a little bit?

Mr Lamb: I think inevitably, because there is quite a lot of activity associated with capital appraisal—we are doing about four times the volume of capital that we were—we have had to look at ways of slimming the process down but still retain that very important challenge that the projects are both the right projects and affordable for government money.

Q454 Mr Chaytor: Presumably with the second half of the estate to be rebuilt, there will not be the same complication in terms of asset sales and land sales and that there is a higher group of components.

Mr Lamb: That may very well make it less time consuming, because planning is notoriously challenging.

Mr Moore: I was simply going to defend the LSC by saying that they have a clear planning structure. If you follow that, then the bid should be reasonably smooth if you do that job well. It is not so predictable with a local authority planning structure, and therefore that is normally where I would expect the delays to take place because you do not know quite what their objectives will be. The planning game is an issue. They treat us very much like the private sector. If they see an opportunity, and it could be housing, it could be road improvements, there are a number of things that they could be asking us to fund, in our case it is improving a park when we take advantage of being next to the park, those are the sorts of things which put up the cost. The other thing which John alluded to is VAT. For a number of years we in the FE sector have tried to get the Treasury to look at VAT in a different way. Schools, local authorities, do not pay VAT. We, by and large, do. The only time you can avoid VAT is if you can prove that your building is going to be used exclusively for 16–18 and, therefore, it is not going to attract any fee income. In a general FE college that leads to some very artificial situations. We have two buildings looking over the park. We cannot join those two buildings, because one will be used by young people, the other one will be used increasingly by adults, and yet the local planning authority wants us to join the two buildings. So, we are going to build an arch between the two buildings, which does not touch either building. It satisfies the VAT requirements, so that we do not pay VAT on one building but we do on the other, but it is a bit of a nonsense. Again, if you as a Committee can make further representations to the Treasury, it has happened with things like museums, for example, where museums can claim back VAT. We as colleges find that very difficult and it puts up 17.5% on the price of our buildings. It is quite a big added cost.

Mr Chaytor: You still get wet as you move from one building to the other!

Q455 Chairman: One last thing before we cease to be quorate. Sustainability, very often, is not just about buildings, it is about the attitudes and the behaviour of the people that work in the college and come to the college to be educated. What do you do in the FE sector in terms of citizenship? How do you energise that capacity? Most people talk about citizenship in schools, they do not talk much about it in FE or HE. The Committee went to a school last Thursday where the school was so energised because the students wanted healthy food, they wanted to cut the energy bills down, they wanted clean toilets and the structure of the school involved people in order to achieve those objectives. Do you do anything in citizenship in your colleges?

Mr Moore: We do lots. In fact, citizenship post-16 is very strong in many colleges. We have won some awards for the work we do on citizenship, working, for example, with South Africa and exchanges, and

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so on, looking at the different cultural backgrounds and how much they value education and how much is valued here. We have got seven out of nine in our Healthy Eating Award Scheme, and so we have got stars in seven of the nine categories.

Q456 Chairman: What about sustainability of the environment, energy costs, turning off the lights, being conscious of your transport, your personal carbon footprint?

Mr Moore: I think increasingly if you look across the FE sector you will see colleges taking those responsibilities extremely seriously and putting it high on the agenda. Certainly, if you see the behaviour and the way students behave in new buildings, it does make an enormous difference.

Q457 Chairman: So they will be conscious of their carbon footprint; they will know what that meant?

Mr Moore: You may be going further than we are as yet, but we are heading in that direction, that is what I am saying.

Mr Widdowson: I think with new-build the one thing that our students are conscious of, all colleges, I think, will have a student representative forums of one sort or another and they are very concerned about the micro-environment, if you like—litter, chewing-gum, smoking. You can start from a one-off. Students do not like an untidy environment actually. What we found over two years is that students look after new buildings a lot better than old buildings seem to fare. They take a pride in them. If you asked them, they would not say it that way, they would not say, “Yes, we are really proud of our new buildings”, but they do actually respond. We have got student groups this year who want to undertake environmental projects around the place, some of our learning difficulty students particularly. It is a way for them to get involved in the wider community, and that is a really good thing because it enhances the inclusivity of the college as a community as well. We have also got others, but, being honest about it, a lot of our students will learn to drive or to ride motorbikes in the time that they are with us, so I guess they are less concerned about their carbon footprint at the age of 17 or 18 when they get a driving licence and a bike than they might

be a bit later on. I think we have got to be realistic about that as well, but it gives us the opportunity to raise those issues.

Q458 Mr Chaytor: It is interesting you say that. Why should a student from 11–16 have a really high consciousness of that kind of issue and then come to you and be transformed into a different sort of citizen? I do not see that. It is not joined-up.

Mr Widdowson: In terms of the temptations of what is available in terms of 16, 17, 18, they have to learn to cope, it is part of the maturing process, I guess, and not every young person goes through that. We have some very active students in terms of environmental issues, driven by particular issues, whether it is recycling, whether it is the biodiversity of the site, all the trees and things that have been planted on the site. In my experience, different students, different groups of students, will take particular issues and particular threads and pathways as opposed to this broad approach that perhaps might be more traditional. There is certainly a group in my college who are very concerned about fair trade issues. You would not say that was a general thing that all students would be immediately aware of, but that student group are very strong advocates and have made some difference to the purchasing policies of our catering contractors, and so it works in all sorts of different ways. Our challenge is to disseminate that across large institutions at very diverse disparate people.

Q459 Chairman: It was very unfair for me to bounce that on you, but if you did, when you get back, want to give us a few paragraphs on what you are doing in citizenship, we are looking at citizenship in parallel to this inquiry and it would be most useful if you could give some written evidence to the Committee because we have not looked at the FE position. One slight worry we had, John. I thought there was a dry moat round the cathedral or some part of Durham, and I wondered if it was going to fill up now you have sorted out your leakage problems, but I hope that is not a threat.

Mr Widdowson: There is a very wet river as well, Chairman!

Chairman: Thank you very much for your attendance. We have learned a lot.

Wednesday 1 November 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
 Jeff Ennis
 Paul Holmes
 Helen Jones

Fiona Mactaggart
 Mr Gordon Marsden
 Stephen Williams

Memorandum submitted by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)

We welcome the Education and Skills Committee's decision to look at sustainable schools as we consider the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) refurbishment and new build programme to have the potential to help generations of young people learn new, sustainable patterns of behaviour.

This submission looks at sustainable development, sustainable schools, and school buildings, concluding with recommendations. We have also answered the Committee's relevant questions specifically in the final section.

The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) is the Government's independent adviser on sustainable development. The SDC is a non-departmental public body. The SDC advises Government across a range of policy areas including education and young people, buildings, climate change and health.

1. WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND HOW IS IT RELEVANT TO SCHOOLS?

The twin goals of sustainable development, defined in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, are *living within environmental limits* and *ensuring a strong, healthy and just society*. The UK Government has said it will achieve these goals through a *sustainable economy*, *good governance* and *using sound science responsibly* (HM Government 2005).

The four priority areas for action identified in *Securing the Future* are:

- *Sustainable consumption and production*—working towards achieving more with less and assessing costs and benefits across the whole life-cycle.
- *Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement*—protecting the natural resources on which we depend.
- *Sustainable communities*—creating places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.
- *Climate change and energy*—confronting the greatest threat to our environment and society.

In addition to these four priorities, *leading by example* and *changing behaviour* are integral to delivering on Government's vision for sustainable development. The Building Schools for the Future programme is the major opportunity for the Government put sustainable development into action on the schools estate. To do this the public sector should put sustainable principles at the centre of its capital investment to create school buildings, grounds and facilities that support sustainable behaviours among pupils, parents and the local communities.

Formal education has a crucial role to play in promoting sustainable development, both in raising awareness and developing skills. Promoting sustainable development in schools means integrating high standards of achievement and behaviour with the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community involvement and citizenship—many of the same aspirations of *Every Child Matters*.

By linking learning to issues of direct concern to young people—their personal quality of life, and the wellbeing of the communities and environment around them—their school experience becomes more relevant and compelling. For example, issues like climate change, global justice and local quality of life may be turned into engaging learning opportunities for pupils, relevant to key learning outcomes as well as a vehicle for teaching many core curriculum subjects—and a focus for action among the whole school community.

Working towards sustainable development goals in a well designed, comfortable and inspiring building can also improve staff morale and retention, and recruitment of new staff, as well as providing a focus for cooperation with the parents and the local community.

The Prime Minister called for this in September 2004 when he said:

“Sustainable development will not just be a subject in the classroom: it will be in its bricks and mortar and the way the school uses and even generates its own power. Our students won’t just be told about sustainable development, they will see and work within it: a living, learning place in which to explore what a sustainable lifestyle means.”

The Government’s 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy builds on this:

“Sustainable development principles must lie at the core of the education system, such that schools, colleges and universities become showcases of sustainable development among the communities they serve.” (HM Government 2005)

The DfES Sustainable Schools strategy—currently out for consultation until end August 2006—proposes a framework for sustainable development in schools through eight “doorways” (sustainability themes) as follows: (DfES 2006)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| — Food and drink | — Buildings and grounds |
| — Energy and water | — Inclusion and participation |
| — Travel and traffic | — Local well-being |
| — Purchasing and waste | — Global dimension |

2. WHY SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL BUILDINGS?

We need to make a radical impact on children’s understanding and experience of sustainable development if they are to develop the life skills needed to build a sustainable society. In a nation of 60 million people and great diversity this challenge is central to social goals. Capital investment in England’s schools presents a key opportunity as the vast majority of the population will pass through the 3,500 secondary schools during their lives. This natural “bottleneck” provides a unique opportunity for learning about sustainable development.

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy states that *“the Building Schools for the Future programme will ensure that all new schools and Academies will be models for sustainable development.”* And further that it *“provides a valuable opportunity for increasing the efficiency of the school building stock”* (HM Government 2005).

Moreover, it is an explicit requirement of the Government’s new Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan that:

“Treasury and DfES must work with Building Schools for the Future programme to ensure that it is meeting high sustainability standards and to learn lessons for other capital projects.” (HM Government 2006b)

However, while a vision for sustainable schools has recently been published by the DfES, its implications in terms of the design of school buildings has not been sufficiently thought through. The Government is not yet aware whether its capital investment programmes will result in the schools estate producing higher or lower carbon emissions, nor what the impact will be on water demand, waste production, traffic or other environmental factors. The communications of the delivery body, Partnerships for Schools, make scant reference to sustainable development. This is extremely worrying.

2.1 *The scale of the opportunity*

The Government is undertaking a series of major capital investment programmes in school buildings which will radically alter children’s learning environments. Huge sums of money are committed to these programmes, with very tight timescales. BSF is funded to the tune of 0.5% of GDP. The next major opportunity presented through comprehensive renewal of school building stock is likely to be up to 60 years away.

This capital investment programme offers the opportunity to change not only the fabric of school buildings, but the whole school experience for generations of children. BSF is a programme of national significance in terms of financial expenditure and resource use in construction, creating an opportunity to transform the construction industry and product markets. This has relevance across many policy agendas for public procurement not just education. The economies of scale will allow huge cost savings to be made, supported by standardisation.

BSF offers the Government the high profile opportunity to lead by example in cutting carbon emissions and resource use. But these opportunities will only be realised if those running BSF think at the scale of the programme, seeing their decisions in the context of a big shared vision.

2.2 *Design for learning*

A strong theme within the DfES Sustainable Schools strategy is that school buildings, grounds and the local surroundings offer a resource for learning about real issues in real places among real people as a natural part of their education. The school then becomes a testing ground where pupils think through the problems and opportunities right on their doorstep, while studying the connections to larger, sometimes global challenges. In other words places where sustainable living is normal behaviour, rather than the exception.

School buildings should ensure that sustainable design features are revealed, interpreted and amenable to “hands on” monitoring and use by pupils. We see BSF as a major opportunity to integrate “design for learning” features into all new and refurbished building designs.

Future learning needs should also be considered fully within school designs such that school buildings become environments in which enable young people and their communities can engage with sustainable development in theory and practice. It is not clear that BSF will deliver schools that are ready for this challenge into the future.

2.3 *Energy efficiency and carbon emissions*

The UK’s climate change goal is to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2050. In the face of rising consumption, this is a major challenge and will require significant effort from all sectors. Even then achieving this target is unlikely to be sufficient: there is already increasing evidence that by 2050 reductions in the order of 80–90% will be required by 2050 or sooner. The Government is committed to leading by example and a clear commitment in a major public building programme will send a powerful message to the private sector that Government is committed to early action on meeting this goal. It is unlikely that there will be another overhaul of the school estate before 2050 on a comparable scale to the current investment, and there is no guarantee that it will ever be repeated.

A recent scoping study commissioned by the DfES with the SDC investigated the total carbon footprint of the schools estate—including emissions from energy use in school buildings, commuting to school and procurement activities. The scoping study shows that while the schools estate contributes 2% to national carbon emissions, it represents almost 15% of UK public sector emissions. Half of the emissions that schools produce derive from energy use within school building (SDC 2006).

The SDC is exploring next steps for this study and how targeted emissions reductions could be achieved, giving wider benefits. For example reducing emissions from commuting to school by encouraging cycling and walking brings health benefits.

Schools spend a significant amount of money on heating and powering buildings. Primary schools each spend on average £6,300/year on energy, and secondary schools each spend £39,000–£55,000/year on energy (BRE 2006a), the latter is comparable to the cost of a teacher. Volatile energy and water prices mean schools could be at risk of unaffordable bills if they are not safeguarded through well designed efficient school buildings. Further, the extended schools programme will increase energy costs for buildings by up to 50% due to increased opening hours of school buildings.

We expect that the energy efficiency standards will rise as BSF progresses and therefore first waves could be disadvantaged through lower standards and higher running costs. Whilst we welcome the fact that earlier waves are focusing on deprived schools which will address inequality issues, these schools may also become saddled with higher lifetime energy bills. It may therefore be necessary to provide additional funding for sustainable design in earlier waves.

2.4 *Wider environmental opportunities*

Sustainable design and management saves money through energy, water, waste and purchasing efficiency, cushioning school budgets from the effects of rising utility bills. This is likely to be an increasingly important consideration over the lifespan of the new and refurbished school building stock. Doing “more with less”—and doing it at the earliest opportunity—produces a classic “win-win” for the environment and the school budget. A primary school in Hadleigh in Suffolk has no heating bill due to high building efficiency, solar water heating and, naturally, human body heat. This school can move into the future without the burden of an escalating heating bill.

Environmental design, construction and operation of school buildings can contribute to pupil health and living healthy lifestyles in a number of ways. School buildings should enable young people to maximise health benefits in the way they travel to school, the indoor environment, eating and play.

2.5 *Participation in design*

As schools increasingly become a community resource, communities should have greater involvement in their creation. Pupils, parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, heads and governors should all be engaged in the development of the brief and design process. For secondary schools, parents of pupils in the feeder

schools also have a legitimate interest. Participation in design must be very carefully handled in order to ensure it can be meaningful and provide satisfactory outcomes for all parties. The current short design and consultation period in BSF is therefore not adequate.

As noted by the DfES Sustainable Schools strategy, “*Schools that involve pupils in the design of playing areas experience reduced incidents of bad behaviour, including bullying and vandalism. Pupils begin to feel, ‘This is my school and I want to look after it.’*”

3. OUR ASSESSMENT OF BREEAM

The DfES’s response to the environmental agenda has been to make it a condition of capital funding that new build and refurbishment projects achieve at least a “very good” rating under the BRE’s environmental assessment method for schools “BREEAM Schools” (BRE 2006b).

The Government’s commitment to the use of BREEAM Schools on all capital investment in schools is encouraging, and will ensure that school buildings are delivered to an environmental performance level beyond the statutory minimum of the Building Regulations and DfES Building Bulletins. BREEAM Schools is relatively new and will require some time to become settled in the construction industry, and it will be some time before its impact can be fully evaluated. We are very keen for this evaluation to be conducted independently of Government and for the lessons learned to be disseminated widely.

The major drawback of BREEAM Schools is that it does not encapsulate a vision for sustainable school buildings and is therefore unable to inspire, and is not designed to assist with the basic design decisions necessary to make the most of the current capital investment opportunities. The current urgency on the climate change situation and lack of progress towards sustainable development demands a very much stronger response than BREEAM and the question of whether to seek BREEAM “very good” or “excellent” is something of a red herring as neither would on its own create a generation of sustainable school buildings. If BREEAM is the limit of the aspiration, BSF and other capital programmes will fail to support schools sufficiently in meeting these goals.

Below, we place the Government’s own goals for sustainable schools against the BREEAM standard and assess whether the latter is sufficient to achieve the goal.

Potential targets for a vision for the school estate are also suggested—the aim is to start a discussion and suggest the level of aspiration we would expect. These are prompts for targets and goals that we consider should be developed by DfES, in partnership with stakeholders such as Defra, SDC, Cabe, industry, and NGOs. Some targets are based on the targets for the government estate, which we consider could be adopted for schools.

(i) *Food and drink*

Government goal

An unhealthy diet contributes to obesity and poor pupil concentration. Healthy, ethically sourced food can reverse these effects while protecting the environment and supporting local producers and suppliers.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of healthy, local and sustainable food and drink produced or prepared on site (where possible), with strong commitments to the environment, social responsibility and animal welfare, and with increased opportunity to involve local suppliers.

BREEAM does not currently contribute to the “food and drink” goal.

Potential school building vision:

- Space for growing food on all feasible school sites.
- Space and facilities for composting food, green waste and biodegradable materials and all school sites.
- Space for community farmers market on all feasible school grounds.
- All schools to have suitable facilities for preparation of fresh food.

(ii) *Energy and water*

Government goal

Rising demand for energy and water is storing up problems for future generations. Energy and water conservation can tackle this problem while saving schools money.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of energy efficiency and renewable energy, showcasing wind, solar and bio-fuel sources in their communities, and maximising their use of rainwater and wastewater resources.

BREEAM creates a framework to encourage designers to implement low energy and low water design features. CO₂ emissions should be minimised, and energy management is recognised. Low water use fittings, rainwater/greywater recycling and water management technologies are encouraged. BREEAM does not define a carbon emissions goal for school buildings. However, the energy standards for refurbished schools are the same as for new schools, which sets a challenging requirement.

Potential school building vision:

- Construction phase of all new buildings/refurbishments carbon neutral.
- All school buildings carbon neutral in operation by 2020.
- All schools carbon emissions (direct and indirect) reduced by 30% over 1990 levels by 2020.
- All schools showcase renewable energy (with technologies safely accessible where possible) for use as a learning resource and community focus.
- All schools optimise rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling, with a target to reduce mains water consumption by 25% on 2004 levels by 2020. Consider setting a water consumption target of m³ per person/year.
- All schools to have interactive displays about heat, power, water usage and weather conditions.

All above goals should be achieved despite the increase in demand anticipated through extended schools.

(iii) *Travel and traffic*

Government goal

Rising vehicle use adds to congestion, road accidents and pollution. Car-sharing and public transportation help ease these concerns, while walking and cycling also boost fitness and well-being.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of sustainable travel where vehicles are used only when absolutely necessary and facilities for healthier, less polluting or less dangerous modes of transport are exemplary.

BREEAM rewards designs for site selection for good public transport facilities, good cyclist facilities, and safe and secure pedestrian and cycle access routes. BREEAM does not have high aspirations for delivering cycle/ pedestrian travel—a maximum of cycle spaces for 10% of pupils is required.

Potential school building vision:

- All schools to have cycling facilities for 100% of pupils that have the option to cycle to school.
- All schools to be located on designated cycle routes, or appropriate cycle routes to be established if they do not exist. Infrastructure requirements for the creation of safe walking and cycling routes and public transport within the school catchment to be an integral part of the planning application and construction costs for new schools and major refurbishments.
- All schools to have well defined safe walking routes within at least a 1.5 km radius of the school. Infrastructure requirements to deter the school run (eg to encourage parking away from the school and provision for safe walking the last 1.5 km) to be an integral part of the planning application and construction costs for new schools and major refurbishments.

(iv) *Purchasing and waste*

Government goal

Waste, and the throw-away culture that encourages it, can be addressed through sustainable consumption. Schools can reduce costs and support markets for ethical goods and services at the same time.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of resource efficiency, using low impact goods that minimise (or eliminate) disposable packaging from local suppliers with high environmental and ethical standards, and recycling, repairing and reusing as much as possible.

BREEAM encourages use of construction materials with a low life cycle environmental impact and reuse/recycling of construction materials as well as encouraging provision of facilities for recycling of consumables in use.

Potential school building vision:

- Diversion of 80% of construction waste from landfill.
- All schools to reduce their waste arisings by 25% by 2020, relative to 2004–05 levels.
- All schools to recycle 75% of their waste arisings by 2020, with goal of zero waste to landfill by 2050.
- All schools to include combined school and community recycling facilities.
- All schools to have live interactive displays about recycling progress, material flows for use in learning.

- All schools to have repair workshops to recondition equipment or prepare for reuse or charitable giving.

(v) *Building and grounds*

Government goal

Good design of school buildings and grounds can translate into improved staff morale, pupil behaviour and achievement, as well as opportunities for food growing and nature conservation.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be regarded as living, learning places where pupils see what a sustainable lifestyle means through their involvement in the improvement of school buildings, grounds and the natural environment.

BREEAM recognises good design practice in:

- engaging the community: to involve the local community and building users, flexibility in the design to enable the building to be used as a shared facility with the local community and reducing the opportunity for crime;
- design for good management: enabling building users to understand and operate the building efficiently, buildings that can be easily maintained during lifecycle; and
- learning dimension: the building and school site to be a learning resource.

However, these elements are not prioritised within the BREEAM tool. This means they are not weighted heavily in the scoring in comparison to energy.

BREEAM also recognises good practice in designing for comfortable and healthy internal environments considering daylighting and visual environment design, ventilation and indoor air quality, healthy materials and thermal comfort.

BREEAM also encourages design practice to promote ecology through use of brownfield land and land that already has limited value to wildlife. It recognises improvements to ecology, including pupils and staff in the design of the school grounds and developing partnerships with local wildlife groups.

Potential school building vision:

- All schools increase the ecological value of their estate by 50% over 2004 levels by 2020.
- All sustainable design features to be revealed and interpreted as learning resources.
- All schools to engage stakeholders in design of buildings and grounds.

(vi) *Inclusion and participation*

Government goal

Schools can promote a sense of community by providing an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that values everyone's participation and contribution, and challenges prejudice and injustice in all its forms.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of social inclusion, enabling all pupils to participate fully in school life while instilling a long-lasting respect for human rights, freedoms and creative expression.

BREEAM does not promote design of accessible environments for visually or mobility impaired users.

BREEAM recognises involvement of the local community and building users in the design process in order to increase local "ownership".

Potential school building vision:

- Accessible, flexible, adaptable design of building and grounds for all.
- Quality space for display of school work and ethos to community.
- Facilities to allow monitoring of performance of the school environment to promote learning about the building.
- Meaningful consultation in school design involving pupils, staff and local community (including feeder schools).
- Quiet areas for thought and prayer.

(vii) *Local well-being*

Government goal

With their central locations and extensive facilities, schools can act as hubs of learning and change in their local communities, contributing to the environment and quality of life while strengthening key relationships.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of good corporate citizenship within their local areas, enriching their educational mission with active support for the well-being of the local community and environment.

BREEAM recognises involvement of the local community and building users in the design process in order to increase local “ownership” and accommodate a range of travel options for building users.

Potential school building vision:

- All schools to include facilities and flexibility to act as extended schools, including child care, adult learning and other community use.
- All schools to showcase sustainable design features and technologies to the local community, such as renewable energy systems and water/energy efficiency devices.

(viii) *Global dimension*

Government goal

Growing interdependence between countries changes the way we view the world, including our own culture. Schools can respond by developing a responsible, international outlook among young people, based upon an appreciation of the impact of their personal values, choices and behaviours on global challenges.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of good global citizenship, enriching their educational mission with active support for the well-being of the global environment and community.

BREEAM recognises the specification of responsibly sourced materials in construction.

Potential school building vision:

- All timber used in building projects to be obtained from certified sustainable sources.
- All materials used to have country of origin recorded.

This brief analysis suggests that BREEAM Schools does encourage incremental improvement in environmental design of school buildings, but by itself offers no guarantee that projects will deliver the standard of buildings needed to support sustainable schools. In particular BREEAM Schools does not offer a vision of sustainable school buildings that those commissioning, designing and constructing can work towards.

3.1 *How BREEAM Schools could be strengthened*

BREEAM Schools has an important role in delivering improved environmental standards in buildings. We feel that some elements of the BREEAM process could be improved to deliver a short-term advantage.

It is important to maintain a level of flexibility in setting standards for sustainable design, in order to maintain value for money, and allow designers optimise designs for their locality. Standards should remain performance based rather than prescriptive in approach. We do consider that a radical review of the standards in BREEAM Schools and the Building Bulletins will be necessary to deliver the sustainable schools vision. The vision of what BSF is aiming to achieve in terms of sustainable development should be included in BSF documentation and made clear to clients, designers and contractors. Cabe Client Design Advisers should help with dissemination of the vision.

The tradability on key resource efficiency areas such as energy and water consumption should be reduced to set minimum standards for key resource efficiency criteria. This would mean that all schools achieving BREEAM “Very Good”, for example, would have to achieve a defined energy efficiency/carbon reduction standard above the regulatory minimum. The development of the Code for Sustainable Homes is an example where this weakness is being tackled.

We are aware that other versions of BREEAM require a Post Construction Review to ensure that elements designed into the building are delivered during construction. Without this, changes and ‘value engineering’ during construction may mean that the completed building does not actually achieve its BREEAM standard. This should become included in BREEAM Schools.

4. FURTHER BSF CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Our focus up to this point has been on BREEAM Schools, but there are a number of other issues that we consider need attention.

We are aware that many players within the construction industry would be able and willing to deliver higher standards if required. The SDC and industry partners are keen to co-operate in helping to define a vision for sustainable school buildings, and how this may be achieved in practice. Industry initiatives such as the Schools Design Forum being developed by the BRE Trust (in association with the SDC), and the British Council for Schools and Education (to be launched on 19 June 2006), are two vehicles that may be used to find solutions with industry.

4.1 *Operation of sustainable school buildings*

There is currently no standard for the resource efficiency of schools in use. The operational energy use of buildings is notoriously complex to predict as it is determined by a range of building management factors. Monitoring of a number of “sustainable” schools revealed that their energy consumption was significantly higher than predicted.

A payment mechanism is included in BSF contracts which attempts to encourage energy efficient management and operation of school buildings in use. This transfers the demand risk of energy consumption onto the private sector operator without exposing them to the risk of price volatility. However, it does not appear that the payment mechanism incentivises continuous improvement in energy efficiency or installation of low carbon technologies. Better incentivisation arrangements will need to be developed to ensure schools are maintained and operated to minimise emissions. It may be worth considering the payment mechanism developed by the Department of Health for health buildings, which includes incentives for continuous reduction in energy consumption.

Post occupancy evaluation of schools would enable assessment of both the performance of the building as built but also an assessment of the ongoing operation of the school. Many aspects of the building-related vision outlined above will require ongoing care in operation and maintenance of buildings to deliver enhanced sustainable performance.

4.2 *Whole life costing*

There continues to be a split between the management of capital and running cost budgets, which works against the use of whole life costing in design. Capital budgets for schools are fixed by DfES on a formula basis and there is no flexibility within that formula to ensure that whole life costs may be minimised through increased capital investment. The DfES should consider accommodating whole life costing in the capital budget formula.

SDC’s research suggests that increased capital funding with paybacks within 30 years would deliver additional savings of 20,000 tonnes of carbon per year for the secondary schools and up to 10,000 tonnes of carbon per year for primary schools (BRE 2006).

The study showed that the 15% of schools that will undergo “minor refurbishment” in BSF could benefit from £5 million investment in energy efficiency that will payback in less than five years, saving £5,000 annually for each school.

Installing micro wind turbines and biomass boilers in 10% of schools undergoing major refurbishment or being rebuilt would require an investment of £45 million, and save 15,000 tonnes of carbon per year, paying back within 30 years.

Further, “invest to save” resources are limited at the local level. The recently announced £20 million revolving loan fund for energy efficiency to be administered by local authorities should be made available to schools. This would enable schools to make investments in resource efficiency which would reduce utilities bills, allowing the school to pay back the initial investment over several years and benefit from savings into the future.

The vision proposed in this submission may require increased capital investment but will deliver greater direct and indirect savings across the public sector.

4.3 *Evaluation and continuous improvement*

The procurement of schools through BSF will run for 15 years, which allows time for lessons learnt to be fed back into the procurement process. There is a need for a process that identifies, validates and promotes learning (of pros and cons) of all new and refurbished schools, including independent reviewing and reporting. As schools are procured in waves, with delivery consortia getting exclusive contracts to design, construct (and potentially operate) a series of schools, a requirement for evaluation and feedback into future projects is also essential.

The Key Performance Indicators for BSF include three environmental indicators (number of schools achieving BREEAM very good, construction waste, energy efficiency). A greater range of indicators is needed to track whether the BSF programme is delivering sustainable school buildings to achieve the sustainable schools vision, and establishing whether buildings are being managed in a sustainable way.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Although the DfES capital investment programmes are very ambitious in terms of scale, we consider them to be unambitious and unfocused in terms of sustainable development. Without a clear vision and absolute goals defining what is meant by “sustainable school buildings”, the pressures to deliver new schools on budget and on time will mean that sustainable design will remain a low priority. We consider that there is a very real risk that programmes like BSF will be very rushed and risk delivering poor design and poor levels of sustainability. It would be highly regrettable from the perspective of educational standards, children’s

well being, cost-efficiency and, ultimately, the quality of life of local communities across the country, if this rare opportunity was lost. Anything less could deliver schools that might be barely acceptable today but not fit for the future.

The scale of this public investment requires standards of sustainability to be raised significantly, whilst also achieving value for money for the public purse. The public sector is committed to lead by example to deliver sustainable development, as the recent Sustainable Procurement Task Force report (2006) so clearly states. It is our view that the Government is in a position to raise sustainability performance significantly whilst maintaining value for money.

Identifying and specifying how school buildings can help meet the 2020 vision encapsulated within the DfES's own Sustainable Schools strategy is vital if we are to bring the capital investment programmes on track in terms of delivering world class schools of lasting value to our communities. We ask the DfES to seize the opportunity, be bold and think big in approaching the huge task.

We feel the mood is right for determined action in this area. Our view is that it is better to get the delivery mechanisms and performance standards right than rush through another wave of ill-designed schools, which will be our legacy for several decades. Perhaps one of the reasons we are having to build so many new schools now is because the last waves of buildings were not inspiring, not built or maintained to last, not built with sustainability in mind.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The DfES should recognise sustainable development as the overarching principle for BSF and not one in a long list of competing agendas.

The DfES and Partnerships for Schools should work with the SDC, Defra, Cabe, NGOs and industry groups (such as SDF) to formulate a bold, but practical, vision of sustainable school buildings and a sustainable schools estate. This vision should be consistent with the goals of the DfES Sustainable Schools strategy and the UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

Taking into account leading practice, the DfES should commission research into (a) the true costs and benefits of high quality sustainable design based on the vision outlined above, and not restricting their thinking to "very good" or "excellent" on the BREEAM Schools scale; and (b) methods of linking sustainable design to pupil learning.

A delivery road map should be developed for and with building clients, designers and contractors, incorporating revisions to BSF contractual documents and tools such as BREEAM Schools. The latter should be radically adjusted to become a key tool to delivering the vision.

A process of evaluation and reporting should be developed to ensure delivery of the vision, including regular independent reviews, post occupancy evaluation, increased range of Key Performance Indicators and feedback of lessons learnt into the procurement process.

Capital budgets for BSF should be reviewed to incorporate allowance for whole life costing. Better incentives should be developed to encourage resource efficient operation of school buildings.

The vision, road map, research and guidance should be actively promoted through all available communication channels, positioning sustainable development as a fundamental objective of the capital programmes, not a "bolt on".

7. EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

As the above sections may have raised more questions than they answer, we list summary answers to relevant Committee questions below.

Sustainability

Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?

BSF will not currently ensure that schools are sustainable. The vision for sustainable schools delivery through BSF has not yet been sufficiently developed. A number of elements are currently limiting the potential to deliver sustainable schools through BSF.

Will schools built under BSF satisfy the Government's definition of sustainable development as being that "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"?

The BSF programme will not contribute sufficiently to delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy or the DfES Sustainable Schools Strategy. The scale of the opportunity to deliver these visions has not been grasped and the programme is currently focused on delivering incremental change in a number of defined areas rather in the context of a much bigger picture. Sustainable development needs to be the overarching principle of BSF and not one in a list of many agendas.

How effective are the tools currently used in BSF to secure sustainable school design, including the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)?

Our assessment of BREEAM Schools is that it does not suitably define a vision for sustainable schools, and will not on its own secure sustainable school design. It will deliver incremental improvement in environmental performance of school buildings, but a step change is needed to move towards the Government's sustainable development (and indeed sustainable procurement—HM Government 2006b) goals.

Delivery and Funding

How well is the BSF delivery and procurement model working to deliver sustainable schools and best value, including through Partnerships for Schools and Local Education Partnerships?

Partnerships for Schools does not promote sustainable schools as an overarching priority, nor even as a priority.

How successfully are Private Sector Providers working within the BSF framework to deliver sustainable schools and best value?

The BSF contractual arrangements are not designed to sufficiently incentivise private sector providers to design, build and operate sustainable schools.

Are BSF funding levels sufficient to deliver sustainable transformation?

BSF funding levels are based on a fixed formula and do not allow whole life costing to maximise benefits of upfront investment in sustainable measures.

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June 2006

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)

Dr Stewart Davies is a business leader with 20 years' experience in industry. Roles in the last seven years have included involvement in the construction supply chain as a member of the boards of the Steel Construction Centre, the Concrete Centre and the BRE Trust. Appointed to the Sustainable Development Commission in January 2006 as a Commissioner on a part-time basis, he has prioritised opportunities for helping the construction sector to work more effectively with Government to deliver national sustainable development goals and is currently providing input to the refreshing of the Government's Sustainable Construction Strategy. He is giving evidence on behalf of the Sustainable Development Commission, which is working on sustainable schools in the following areas:

- Capacity building within the DfES on sustainable development (including full time secondee to DfES).
- Report on opportunities for improved carbon savings from spend on education buildings—March 2006.
- Report on carbon footprint of the schools estate—April 2006.
- Co-sponsoring the Schools Design Forum, set up by the BRE Trust in June 2006.
- Input to DfES Vision on sustainable schools (ongoing).

KEY POINTS FOR ORAL EVIDENCE:

1. Sustainable schools have the minimum environmental “footprint” and the maximum sustainability “mindprint”. Sustainable schools are efficient schools that consume less energy, water and materials, and produce less waste—a win-win between efficiency and sustainability. They are also effective schools that recognise the power of sustainability issues to motivate pupils, engage them in learning, and boost their achievement, behaviour and well-being.

2. The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC), along with other stakeholders including the construction industry design and supply chain and local authorities, is concerned that BSF is not currently designed to maximise its contribution to sustainable development. In particular, it is not working towards a vision of sustainable school buildings that those commissioning, designing and constructing can collectively own. One consequence is that we do not know how BSF will contribute as a whole to, for example, carbon emissions reduction, waste minimisation, water consumption and sustainable travel.

3. BSF could and should be working transparently towards Government aspirations in these areas and taking the agenda further, for example carbon neutral schools by 2015. To do this, there is urgent need for the vision (plus associated KPIs and guidance) for the schools estate at 2020, and how it will contribute to national sustainable development goals (on carbon, water, congestion, waste etc), to be developed in cooperation with industry and local authorities. We recommend that the DfES takes as a starting point the DfES Sustainable Schools strategy.

4. To achieve alignment with national sustainable development goals, a new framework of sustainability standards will be necessary to raise standards for school buildings further than BREEAM currently mandates. Standards for key resource efficiency criteria such as carbon emissions and water consumption are not fixed, but “tradable” within BREEAM, whereas we believe all projects should achieve a defined energy efficiency/carbon reduction standard above the regulatory minimum. The Code for Sustainable Homes is an example of where this weakness is being tackled and a new framework for sustainable schools should be developed in collaboration with the construction industry design and supply chain to be significantly more ambitious whilst also being fully deliverable.

5. The funding of sustainable design and construction standards needs to be addressed to allow assets to be procured on a whole-life value basis.

- PFI provides an opportunity to incorporate whole life costing in areas such as energy usage where responsibility for construction and maintenance/operation is held by one private sector organisation over a 25–30 year period. In practice, adjustments are needed to ensure that up-front decisions are consistently being made to minimise running costs and environmental impacts over that period. Imposition of a cost of carbon through the term of PFI contracts might be one such mechanism, which would, for example, incentivise distributed electricity generation on site.
- Non-PFI projects are not funded on the basis of minimising whole life costs. There is a great opportunity to reduce high carbon emissions through major and minor refurbishment with significant potential for ongoing cost savings direct to the school budgets. These opportunities are not being exploited. Capital funding should be released wherever a positive net present value can be shown for resource efficiency measures.

6. There is no encouragement in BSF to adopt sustainable design where there is no direct return to the investor, even if the wider health, environmental and social benefits are clear. For example, there is little incentive to practice responsible sourcing, minimise waste and traffic associated with school operations, or to develop grounds for food growing and biodiversity conservation, despite the fact that these measures will unlock savings for other parts of Government—eg DH, DfT, Defra, DCLG. A mechanism should be developed to ensure these benefits are valued and incentivised within the procurement system, eg through an improved sustainable design and construction standards framework.

7. The sheer scale and profile of the BSF programme make it a test case of the Sustainable Procurement Task Force’s highly relevant findings. The SPTF report recommends that Government uses public buying-power to support social, economic and environmental aims, transform markets, and deliver real long-term efficiency and sustainability improvements. The SPTF identifies schools as a priority area and recommends that DfES and HM Treasury work together to ensure that BSF is meeting high sustainability standards and to learn lessons for other capital projects. Giving priority to the implementation of the insightful and pragmatic recommendations of the SPTF report would greatly enhance the likelihood of success of the BSF programme in delivering sustainable schools.

Memorandum submitted by BRE

BRE welcomes this inquiry and wishes to take the opportunity to provide some background on the scope and aims of its Building assessment method known as BREEAM, specifically in relation to BREEAM Schools. We would also like to provide summary data on the numbers of buildings achieving “VERY GOOD” and “EXCELLENT” (the top two levels of performance), and on the numbers of buildings currently being assessed.

BREEAM was first established in 1990 and its aim since then has been to recognise and encourage developers, and owner occupiers, to reduce the environmental impact of their buildings. A large proportion of the construction industry sees Buildings Regulations as the target level of performance rather than the legal minimum. It is therefore vital that this proportion of the sector is encouraged to improve. The lowest level of performance, in BREEAM (“PASS” level), is therefore based just above the minimum standards required in building regulations and any other mandatory standards.

These minimum standards are at a higher level than in other sectors due to the DfES requirements, set out in Building Bulletins. When the Building Bulletin relating to acoustics was first released, construction industry professionals questioned whether it was even possible to achieve. It is certainly challenging when read in conjunction with the requirements of the Building Bulletin relating to energy use, ventilation and thermal comfort. Because of these challenging, mandatory standards it is harder for schools to achieve a “VERY GOOD” rating under BREEAM Schools than it is for an office under the BREEAM Offices scheme.

It is for this reason, and because there was no increase to the allowed cost per square metre for new schools, that BRE advised DfES to require a “VERY GOOD” rating rather than the “EXCELLENT” standard set by the OGC. From the schools used to pilot BREEAM Schools it was felt that achieving a “VERY GOOD” rating would be possible within the current budget constraints of £1,050/m². It was also felt that this would allow schools such as St Francis of Assisi (with a sustainability specialism) to demonstrate their environmental credentials by exceeding the required minimum level of “VERY GOOD”.

Due to the length of the design process there have not been many BREEAM Schools certificates awarded yet (only five of the 269 school buildings registered for an assessment have fully completed, although two of these assessments have not yet cleared the quality assurance process). Of these only two have met the “VERY GOOD” rating. The other three ratings are either “PASS” or “GOOD”. These low ratings could be put down to the BREEAM process being started too late in the design process and therefore many of the credits would not be possible to achieve. However, it does highlight that achieving a “VERY GOOD” rating is not as straight forward as was indicated by David Lloyd Jones in the uncorrected transcript, from the meeting on the 24 May 2006.

In conclusion it can be said that the earlier in the design process that a full design team can be put together, the better the school is likely to work. By the same token the earlier in the design process that BREEAM is considered, the easier and cheaper it will be to get a higher BREEAM rating and therefore a more sustainable school.

As a final point, we would like to stress that, on reading through the transcript of the 24 May meeting, it is clear that even amongst experts there are some misunderstandings of the topics that BREEAM covers, and on the difficulty of achieving certain ratings. BRE would therefore welcome the opportunity to give more detail on the scope of the method before any conclusions are drawn as to the applicability and difficulty of the method and the associated DfES target.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by HTI (Heads Teachers and Industry) Ltd

“Every school should also be an environmentally sustained school, with a good plan for school transport that encourages walking and cycling, an active and effective recycling policy (moving from paper to electronic processes wherever possible) and a school garden or other opportunities for children to explore the natural world. Schools must teach our children by example as well as by instruction”.

DfES strategy document 2005.

“Securing the Future” requires public services and systems to be delivered without negatively affecting future generations or people in less affluent parts of the globe.”

Government response to EAC report on Education for Sustainable Development.

“Sustainable development will not just be a subject in the classroom: it will be in its bricks and mortar and the way the school uses and even generates its own power. Our students won’t just be told about sustainable development, they will see and work within it: a living, learning place in which to explore what a sustainable lifestyle means”.

Tony Blair, Prime Minister, September 2004.

1. INTRODUCTION

HTI is an independent, not for profit, social enterprise that works in partnership with business, education and Government to enhance education leadership and the employability of young people.

HTI (Heads Teachers and Industry) has been at the forefront of developing resources for schools and school leadership teams in the area of Education for Sustainable Development since 1996.

HTI has produced since that date two web sites www.e4S.org.uk (Education for Sustainability) a curriculum resource and www.thinkleadership.org.uk an on-line auditing and benchmarking tool for schools to utilise in understanding their environmental performance.

HTI has also designed and delivered training programmes for school leaders and governors (200+) on Leadership and Sustainability in the West Midlands region and is working with Cambridge University Programme for Industry and Durham County Council on the development of a leadership development programme for school and LA officers called "Leading into the Future".

HTI is also engaged with other NGOs' in seeking to develop opportunities for Education for Sustainable Development to be incorporated into all leadership programmes delivered through the National College for School Leadership (NCSL).

This paper has been prepared by Stan M Terry MA, Environment Consultant for HTI.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BSF is an ambitious government programme which seeks to achieve a whole scale transformation of the building fabric of the nation's schools. At the same time it proposes a transformation in the learning processes undertaken in schools and a re-orientation towards sustainability.

Change will be a constant factor in education for the foreseeable future. This needs to be taken into consideration when designing the buildings, the curricula and the learning experiences of students for the next 25 years.

The importance of this once in a lifetime opportunity to effect a significant cultural change in our education structures is highlighted.

Questions are raised as to the capability of the construction industry in delivering sustainable buildings within the programme, given their long history of waste and profligacy. The minimum recycled requirements of the programme are identified as a significant missed opportunity.

The involvement of LAs in the BSF programme is welcomed but the ability of the LAs to deliver within a framework of competing policy arrangements such as the ECM and extended schools agendas is highlighted.

Effecting significant cultural change will be required of this programme but the concept of sustainability is little understood in the teaching profession and within communities. Therefore there is a need to deliver development opportunities to ensure understanding.

Future learning needs of students and communities are identified as an area of significant concern, given that the learning environments required in the future are little understood by most architects and teachers. This once again highlights the importance of providing early opportunities for learning amongst target groups.

The process of building schools for the future provides an opportunity to put into practice government best practice procurement processes, however this idea of sustainability and the principles of best value as exemplified by Gershon may create a conflict which will need to be resolved.

BSF schools must embody the principles of sustainable development. They must demonstrate to their communities their commitment to the process. However, the success or failure of the programme will not rest with the design of the buildings but the processes which are undertaken to realise the project and the quality of the training and development given to leadership teams, teachers, governors and the communities in which schools will be located.

CONTEXT

In less than three decades environmental/sustainability education has developed from a marginal activity to being an increasing focus for our collective view of the purpose of education and learning.

Mounting evidence of environmental destruction and significant climate change impact necessitates a change of focus in the learning experiences, to be undertaken by our children, in schools, to ensure that they are capable of the critical and systematic thinking required to ensure the security of our planet for future generations.

Schools have a particular role to play in securing the future for our young people. They, as places of learning, can help students understand our personal and societal impacts on the planet. As models of good practice they can demonstrate to young people and the community what sustainable living is about. Schools should be preparing young people to take positive active roles in finding solutions to both local and global problems and preparing them for a sustainable future world.

To that end, schools need to adopt an approach to the design and delivery of their curricula, which encompasses sustainable development at its heart. Schools must also adopt an environmentally sustainable approach to the utilisation of the buildings and grounds within which they operate, as well as developing policies focussed on sustainable purchasing of goods and services delivered to them as organisations.

BUILDINGS AND TRANSFORMATION

Building Schools for the Future will invest over £45 billion in transforming all secondary schools over the next 15 years. It has been announced that BSF will be expanded to ensure significant numbers of primary schools will also be re-furbished. This is a welcome investment in the future of the education system.

It is an investment moreover that is urgently needed. For many children their present learning environments are generally poor and militate against successful learning experiences.

There is a growing body of evidence from the USA and from the UK which makes clear that learning environments are significantly important in ensuring increasing levels of student performance (HMG group 1999 and 2001 and CABE 2002).

BSF represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to create schools that are fit for the 21st century and beyond.

The Government is clear that BSF is about capital investment to transform learning and working environments in schools with the objective of delivering higher standards of educational performance. It is an educational programme rather than just a building programme.

The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy offers a broad but simple definition of sustainable development as that "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

In the context of the Building Schools for the Future programme it is essential that the programme itself, the buildings it produces and the processes which are undertaken to achieve the completion of the programme are transformative.

To achieve this, the programme must offer much more than simply the provision of environmentally neutral buildings.

It should offer the opportunity for radical changes in the manner in which students are educated, provide buildings which have minimal impact upon the environment, ensure learning opportunities which engage with the whole community of the school and which exemplify to its community the practices and process which are designed to enable the community to achieve sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY

Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable-environmentally, economically and socially?

A building programme as envisaged by BSF is likely to have a significant impact on the ability of the UK construction industry to deliver the programme. Historically the UK construction industry has not been noted for its environmentally sustainable track record.

Some 60% of the raw materials processed worldwide are used in building and construction. The waste record of the UK construction industry has been poor. Some 17% of all waste arising in the UK (434 million tonnes) are created by Construction (70 million tonnes). Of this total 30% is deposited in landfill. Research evidence has also shown that some 20% of all materials delivered to construction sites are never used and consigned to landfill as a result of wasteful/poor practice on site.

Indeed the DTI draft strategy for construction survey (2006) makes clear that "The Government believes that the time is now right to take initiatives further, with a look towards 2020 and encouraging the introduction of more complex sustainability plans, for example in the fields of: 'whole life costing' of buildings; implementation of 'site waste management plans' and gaining a wider adoption of key performance indicators throughout industry."

It makes clear that the construction industry must embrace more sustainable forms of building and make better use of resources in their delivery. Yet this is a target towards 2020. BSF should be providing the opportunity to the industry to achieve such targets.

The target figures for the use of recycled aggregate materials in the BSF programmes to date are a clearly wasted opportunity. There are requirements for utilisation of recycled materials in the project, but the volumes are minimal (10%).

The programme should provide opportunities for the development of a zero waste philosophy on BSF contracts, with on site utilisation of materials and enforced separation of waste materials by all contractors to promote further use. But this opportunity has been wasted. One must ask the question WHY? Is it too difficult for the industry to achieve?

WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme) in a study published in May 2005 has made clear that there is a case for an increasing utilisation of recycled material content in BSF projects.

The Davis Langdon study (2004), identified by WRAP, on exemplar designs for schools identified that 10% recycled requirement would not increase the costs of BSF projects and could be achieved without difficulty, indeed figures of 17% could be achievable without increased costs.

WRAP makes the point that the recycled content target for BSF school projects could be set higher. But after consultation with PfS has set the figure at 10% because of perceived increased costs, if set higher! Whilst the P4S LEPS schedule identifies waste leaving the site at less than 3.5% of total production output and as a per cent of construction value what evidence is there to date that such targets have been met or are likely to be met?

It has been pointed out that there may be significant longer-term savings to the industry through efficiency gains in considering and finding viable solutions too many of the topics raised, such as waste minimisation. Indeed the document “Building a better quality of life—a strategy for more sustainable construction” (2000) made clear that savings of 30%+ could be made in the construction sector by adopting more sustainable practices.

It would seem an opportunity to significantly improve the recycling and waste production attitudes of the UK construction industry has been sadly lost by adopting such a cautious approach under the BSF framework!

BREEAM

Examples of environmentally sound school buildings are not common. To that end the BREEAM assessment tool launched in 2005 is to be used to assess new build and refurbishment school projects based on environmental performance levels. The assessments are made in terms of:

- Management.
- Energy use.
- Health and well-being.
- Pollution.
- Transport.
- Land use.
- Ecology.
- Materials.
- Water.

The DfES has made it a requirement of funding for all new schools and refurbishment projects to aim for a very good rating. It is recognised in the construction industry that there are limitations to the BREEAM assessment methodology as it stands at present. By not insisting upon designs achieving “excellent” ratings in all respects an opportunity to promote the sustainability agenda through the school building programme has been lost. The opportunity to drive construction towards excellence standards in all aspects of BSF should have been considered a priority.

ENHANCING LEARNING

In considering the Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy we need to ask if the environments to be created through BSF will enhance the learning, health and quality of life for the schools and communities in which they are developed.

Defining the likely needs of learners and their communities for the future is difficult to predict. The ways in which we learn, what we need to learn and the likely and unlikely demands of a knowledge driven economy will ensure that if nothing else there is likely to be constant change over the next 25 years.

The process of designing and delivering “education” for the next 25 years and beyond in such a climate of change becomes seriously problematic. This has significant implications for the design of learning environments that are being created under the BSF programme.

The funding being allocated for the programme requires that LAs’ work with schools and other stakeholders to create an educational vision for the future for these schools. The vision forms the heart of the LA strategic business case for BSF which has to be approved by DfES and PfS to ensure the money for the project is forthcoming.

However, that vision is somewhat constrained by national policy priorities eg Academies, personalised learning etc. This constrained vision is further diluted by the habit of most architects and practices of staying within the boundaries created by issues such as DfES area guidelines, building bulletins, etc.

Where is the opportunity for a true vision of learning for the next century to determine the buildings, which will be required to deliver the sustainability agenda?

The opportunities for innovation in the physical environment of schools being constrained are further limited by the inability of school leaders in general to be able to effectively envision their own learning environments for the future.

School leaders, governors, teachers, students and communities need assistance in building a vision for their school of the future. Without that kind of support we will simply get more of what we have now and the transformative opportunities presented by BSF will be lost both in building design and pedagogic practice.

CULTURAL CHANGE

We need to effect a culture change in our schools if we are to deliver truly 21st century schools otherwise we will simply have an incremental improvement on 20th century models.

LAs should be required to ensure that cultural change processes are embedded in school communities, which will be impacted by BSF. It is important that school leadership teams are provided with the knowledge and understanding to enable them to make sustainable choices in their involvement with the design process.

It is HTI's experience that most school leadership teams have little understanding/close knowledge about the sustainability agenda as it affects their school or their communities and will require specific opportunities to undergo CPD, which will enhance their understanding and enable them to envision a truly sustainable school design for the 21st century.

Whilst PfS is making efforts to support such a process the decision to engage with facilitating organisations rests with the LAs. Many LAs will work to engage with school staff, pupils and communities, however, the nature of financial constraints will effectively mean that much consultation which takes place, assuming it does take place, will be at a cursory level.

Significantly more work needs to be undertaken to ensure that such processes are embedded in the programme to ensure effective cultural change. The opportunity to develop awareness and effect cultural change needs to be delivered through focussed CPD opportunities for Heads, Governors, Teachers and the school community otherwise BSF will only effect improvements [which may be limited] on a 20th century model rather than a 21st century model. Indeed the opportunities presented by BSF will not be able to be realised, unless the training programmes for all teachers and school leaders provided through NCSL and the TDA incorporates the issue of sustainability.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

Sustainable schools are not only well managed environments. They are also where learning is at the centre of everything. Pupils achieve high standards through the contextualisation of the learning they undertake. The impetus for achievement comes from issues that matter to young people. The school estate and the local area are used as a learning resource so that pupils are engaged in real issues amongst real people and the get the opportunities to understand the local in the national and international context.

Sustainable development is a cross cutting theme in the national curriculum in England with specific references to four statutory subjects, but the opportunity exists to utilise its links across all subjects in the curriculum.

Government expects to change behaviour in the community in respect of sustainability through learning, but also through the capital investment in school buildings. School buildings will be expected to be managed sustainably, with the whole school becoming a medium for the community to acquire positive sustainable habits.

Thus schools should have in place greener travel arrangements for pupils, which include walking and cycling to school, which can contribute significantly to the health of the population.

They will require efficient management of schools buildings which should result in lower energy and water bills. However, there are conflicts, which are likely to occur, when one considers the Extended Schools and Every Child Matters agendas in conjunction with the BSF programme.

Local recruitment of staff and local purchasing by the school can effectively contribute towards the sustainability of the community. Better health can be promoted through better, locally sourced, catering arrangements. Working with parents and members of the local community on issues of sustainability provides the opportunity to improve the reputation of the school, attract additional pupils and influence local affairs.

Crucially BSF appears to have little to offer schools in terms of learning environments for the future without a radical reconceptualisation by teachers and architects/LA's of their role in the education process. Richard Felden has made clear that "The science of designing learning environments is currently remarkably underdeveloped".

Certainly whilst the DfES publishes guidelines determining the amount of space funded per pupil and the uses to which it can be put, most architects do not depart from the guidelines. Hence how transformational might the learning environments created under BSF be? The present approach limits the potential for schools in terms of the vision, the how, where and when they deliver learning and to whom!

This is compounded by teacher's attitudes/knowledge towards classroom design. An unpublished Design Council/Mori research survey (2005) makes clear that most teachers do not appear to recognise the need for change in their classrooms, principally because most teaching in schools is wedded to a traditional pedagogic transmission model of learning focussed around a content heavy national curriculum.

The curriculum in our schools must change and with it the forms of learning, in order to grasp the opportunities presented by possible new learning environments. However, if schools do not understand the need to change their operational approach towards the curriculum, timetable and communication processes then we are unlikely to make the most of any transformational opportunity presented by BSF.

There is a need therefore to address through CPD teachers understanding of the design process and its applicability to pedagogy. If this happens then there will be opportunities for innovative and sustainable change in schools and learning. If not change is likely to be fragmented and piecemeal.

The Environmental Audit Committee in its 2005 report made clear that it considered that the Government was failing to get its message across to the general public with regard to sustainability and that "in far too many schools, ESD is either not known about or is judged to be low priority". BSF cannot bring about a significant change to deliver on sustainability on its own. It needs a co-ordinated approach, which involves LAs, the DfES, NCSL, schools, school Governors, leadership teams and members of the local community to deliver effectively on this agenda.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The involvement of LAs enables the integration of BSF into the wider strategic plans for regeneration and reform in local services. However, this brings its own tensions. The LA with a strategic overview may run into conflict with the views of local schools and their communities. If LAs have a strategic brief they may for example wish to reduce the number of schools within their area through BSF processes, or re-locate a school. This may bring them into conflict with communities and existing schools.

It might, given the opportunities presented by "Trust" school proposals, create difficulties in delivery on BSF given that LAs will be investing their own resources and are unlikely to welcome a transfer of assets to Trusts and as such may not be keen to invest above the amounts required by the schools capital programme. This may have implications for the overall funding available for developmental/preparatory work with communities for whom BSF proposals are being produced. LAs are also constrained by the DfES limiting BSF funding for extended school facilities.

Whilst LAs have a duty to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development the evidence presented by the review of Statutory Sustainable Development Duties Report of 2006 is that they struggle to achieve additional responsibilities. If this is the case then achieving sustainable development through BSF builds may prove difficult to achieve. It is also true that the capacity of some LAs to manage significant change may be limited given their internal re-organisations as a result of the *Every Child Matters* agenda.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

Procurement

Sustainability has to be at the core of the purchasing process. Within the context of climate change, carbon emissions and threats to biodiversity environmental considerations must also be treated as seriously as financial decisions.

The Environmental Audit Committee made clear in its 3rd Report of Session 2005-06 that "there is some urgency for general targets for sustainable procurement to be agreed with local authorities. Central and local government representatives should enter into a dialogue to set such targets and to improve the promotion and dissemination of good practice".

That said, a conflict between the idea of sustainable procurement and the principles, which underpin the implementation of Gershon may occur. Best value driven agendas may conflict with sustainability agendas. The case for sustainable procurement can be made from the principles of sustainable development alone. It should not be cost dependent but it is dependent upon effective data being available. There is still according to the EAC (3rd report 2005-06) a "clearly undesirable tension between what is seen as cost effective and what is seen as sustainable procurement, a tension which needs to be resolved as a matter of urgency"

Until such time as this tension is removed BSF projects are likely to suffer unduly.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Each of the BSF projects is part of a wider programme, which has at its core the transformation of our educational environment. LAs and schools need to be partners in planning for such transformational change. The involvement of communities in developing an educational vision for their schools is crucial to the process of effective change. If the programme is to be successful local authority advisers must work with the local communities to establish their vision for their school of the future. Such a process will require time and facilitation expertise to succeed. Evidence to date is that the extent to which opportunities for such work to be undertaken has been variable. It will require commitment and funding if innovation focussed approaches to design of buildings is to be followed through with local communities.

CONCLUSIONS

Schools have a significant role in helping secure the future for our young people. As learning environments they can assist young people in understanding the impact we have on our planet and why we need to adopt principles of sustainable living. The Government would like every school to be a sustainable school.

Sustainability means finding solutions to improve of the quality of life of everyone without causing significant damage to our environment and storing up or transferring problems to the future. To make progress towards a healthier, more inclusive and sustainable society we need to embrace sustainable development.

BSF should assist the process of moving towards a sustainable approach within education. However to do so BSF schools must embody the principles of sustainable development in that they should be

- (a) models of healthy, local and sustainable food, prepared on site where possible with a strong commitment to the environment, social responsibility and animal welfare with the majority of food procured locally; and
- (b) exemplars of energy efficiency as well as users of renewable energy sources whilst maximising their use of rain and waste water resources.
- (c) The embodiment of sustainable travel principles with the majority of students walking or cycling to school and car journeys minimised.
- (d) Models of resource efficiency, reducing the level of their consumption and implementing re-use and recycling procedures. They should also embody their beliefs by undertaking sustainable procurement policies and minimising the waste materials, which leave the school.
- (e) Buildings designed and managed in such a way as to exemplify the principles of sustainable living with opportunities for students to learn from the buildings and grounds.
- (f) Exemplars of corporate citizenship approaches with positive support for local well being and the environment through their position as learning hubs within their local environment.
- (g) Focussed on the practice of global citizenship.

To achieve sustainable schools will not simply be a matter of building or refurbishing the nation's school stock, although such a programme is sorely needed.

Whilst the BSF programme is an ambitious programme which seeks to achieve widespread transformation in the learning process through a significant change in the learning environment there is a danger that it may fall significantly short of its ambitious targets.

The nature of constant change within our society creates an immediate problem for the programme in that no one can be sure what education, as a process will look like in 25 or 50 years' time. Can we realistically design buildings for a process that is likely to change significantly over the next 25 years? Can we afford to invest in building structures, which may not be fit for purpose in 25 years' time because the nature of learning and learning environments has changed significantly, and have not been adequately designed to meet those changing needs?

BSF may have as its primary task the development of a cultural change for education in the 21st century. If so, is the programme best placed to deliver on its outcomes in its present format?

Well-designed working environments support effective and successful working practices, but physical innovation will not alone bring about successful change in our schools. It is only by adapting to a sustainability focus that impacts the curriculum, the pedagogic approaches, the systems and the structures of education that we might see schools becoming models of sustainability principles.

Schools must exemplify sustainable development principles in the ways in which they operate and must have leadership teams who understand the need to effect constant change, which operates within the parameters of sustainability. The leadership teams of today's schools will require significant CPD in order

for them to envision the framework for sustainable schooling required by BSF. Their present levels of understanding about sustainability are significantly low. To enable them to begin to realise the vision will require urgent and ongoing attention.

The external constraints imposed by guidance documents which frame the BSF programme may ultimately, reduce significantly the impact of the programme. Whilst it is welcome to see LAs involved in the process there are difficulties inherent in attempting to develop the BSF process in conjunction with Every Child Matters and the Extended Schools programme. Conflicts are likely to surface.

The capacity of the construction industry, through Public Private Partnerships to deliver BSF, whilst exemplifying sustainability principles through processes such as sustainable procurement may be at odds with the BSF KPI's and present construction industry practice.

It is also apparent that investment from LAs may be further limited given the possible impact of Trust status school processes, which may develop in the near future. This raises the possibility of reduced input in developmental stages of programmes by school leadership teams, teachers, parents and the community.

The quality of design will be crucial to the success of the BSF programme and this must be evaluated constantly and whilst BREEAM schools standards of "Very Good" apply to all projects it is surprising that "Excellent" is not the required standard for all BSF projects.

Finally it is interesting to note that the exemplar school designs which are promoted through the PfS web site rarely, if ever, mention principles of sustainability as a driving force for this agenda.

June 2006

Witnesses: **Dr Stewart Davies**, Business Commissioner, Sustainable Development Commission UK (SDC), **Mr Alan Yates**, BREEAM Technical Director, Building Research Establishment, **Mr Stan Terry**, Environmental Consultant, Heads Teachers and Industry Ltd (HTI), and **Mr Martin Mayfield**, Associate Director, Arup, gave evidence.

Q460 Chairman: I welcome our witnesses today, Martin Mayfield, Stewart Davies, Stan Terry and Alan Yates and say thank you very much for the giving of your time to come before this Committee. I know that we have the power to persuade you to come if that was necessary, but it is always nice when people come on a voluntary basis. This is a very important inquiry for us. As you know as well as we do, £42 billion of our country's money, taxpayers' money, is going to be spent on building schools for the future. We actually want to make them schools we can be proud of and that will be appropriate in their design and everything else for the 21st century and, with the backdrop of the publication of the *Stern Report* this week, I think all of us have sharpened our interest in all things sustainable. We really want to get as much as we can out of this session. May I thank in particular Martin Mayfield from Arup who I think was dropped into this by two colleagues we met recently. We said, "What you have been telling us is so interesting, would you like to come and give evidence to the Committee?" and they said, "We would not but we have a member of our staff, a colleague, who is much better than we are". So, you were rather dropped into it. We welcome Stewart Davies from the Sustainable Development Commission and thank you very much for your briefing; it was extremely useful. Stan Terry is from HTI (Heads Teachers and Industry Ltd) and Alan Yates from BREEAM. May I begin the questioning by saying to you, Stewart Davies, here we are perched . . . well, I say "perched" but we have begun. We went to a school in Elsea 10 days ago and we were told that they had suddenly been chosen to be in the programme. They were more or less told, "You have hardly any time at all. You have to start this whole process yesterday". We said, "Everyone tells us that the school should be fully

engaged, the students, the staff, the support staff, everyone should be engaged in this process of deciding on design and so on" and they said, "Well, no time". Is that typical or is the slower, more gradual approach more typical?

Dr Davies: I have certainly heard that same story, that the actual processes of procuring and agreeing the specification for schools somehow ends up in a mad rush where it is not absolutely clear who the ultimate client is between local authority, head teacher, partnership for schools and so on, and that the timescales can seem incredibly rushed. The point I would make in response to your question is that key to getting sustainable schools is to get the right basic structure designed in. This is not really about bolt-on windmills and so on, it is about getting a fundamental construction that is resource efficient. Getting that design process right, having the client interaction right and having the right information and time for that have been less than adequate.

Q461 Chairman: Why is there this inadequacy? There is a first wave, is there not? We have interviewed some of the first wave schools and their partners. Why is it that we are not giving people enough time? Who is not giving the schools enough time?

Dr Davies: I am going to run out of detailed knowledge of that but it is certainly coming about through the bidding process that is somehow compressing that time allowed for client and designer interactions.

Q462 Chairman: Do any of our witnesses this morning know why we have this truncated period of time?

1 November 2006 Dr Stewart Davies, Mr Alan Yates, Mr Stan Terry and Mr Martin Mayfield

Mr Terry: The reality is that head teachers would love to have new schools built and therefore they are very keen on the idea of having a new school built and I think, the truncation occurs because it can be circumvented. You can come in with a proposal and people say, "Thank you very much, I would love to have that", but they do not actually spend the time getting the process right at the front end because time equals money and there is a kind of urgency factor that is built in to try and move this agenda forward. Certainly some of the evidence is that, in the initial phase schools, they are not necessarily fit for purpose because they have not actually spent time talking with who the real client is and I think you made the point that who the client being very often clouded. The client should be the school/head teacher and the community which it is part of.

Q463 Chairman: Dame Ruth Silver, the Principal of Lewisham College, last night said to me that, when she heard that we had been looking at the FE sector, she said, "What our principals in the FE sector need to be taught is to be good clients". I said, "Ruth, 50% of the estate has been renewed already; it is quite late on in the process". Are you telling me that we are too late to save the sustainability and the good design of the first wave?

Mr Terry: I do not think that it is too late, I think the issue is that, in terms of school leadership teams for example, you have to train those clients. I know that the National College for School Leadership is in the process of developing a programme at this time which is being trialled at the present moment and is going to be run out next summer depending on how it is evaluated, and that is going to be developing things for those leadership teams in schools.

Q464 Chairman: But no school has yet been built under the programme, has it?

Mr Terry: No.

Mr Mayfield: The majority are under contract or at the preferred bidder stage on the wave one projects.

Q465 Chairman: Martin, would you say that it is too late to make sure that they are of good design and sustainable?

Mr Mayfield: Yes.

Q466 Chairman: Yes?

Mr Mayfield: Because the requirements that the bidders have been asked to fulfil do not reflect a sustainable level of development. They reflect at best very good or possibly excellent BREEAM which is an incremental step in building standards but go nowhere near as far as they need to go to achieve a sustainable level of development.

Q467 Chairman: Alan, would you agree with that?

Mr Yates: I would agree with that. The issue really is that it is down to the basic inherent quality of the initial thought process in the design and we need to start getting the inherent nature of the building design sorted earlier on in the procurement process. If you then come in at a later stage, you are tinkering around the edges. I would suggest that there

probably is some scope to make some improvements to the first wave but you are not going to achieve very high levels of performance over and above those that are currently in the contract.

Q468 Chairman: Let us take a real school in a real first wave. Who are the villains here? Are there any villains or is it all poor leadership that is shared amongst contractors, clients, heads and the Government? Who is to blame for this? This is going off half cock, is it not?

Mr Mayfield: Yes. There is a balance of the methods of incentivisation and the standards which people are holding up as good standards and high standards. There are also elements of contradiction between the relevant building bulletins which are acknowledged within the marketplace but also drive towards solutions which are inherently higher in terms of carbon emissions occasionally and do not drive in a clear—

Q469 Chairman: Can you explain to me what these building bulletins are.

Mr Mayfield: Building bulletins were originally produced by DfEE as guidance for school designers. So, they were produced as guidance documentation but they are now used within the BSF environment as benchmarking and in a much more legislative manner. They are giving standards rather than guidance, so the language of them is not quite right. For instance, there are guidance notes on acoustics, on energy, on IT, on lighting and so on and, whilst there have been some efforts to move these forward and coordinate them . . . For instance, the acoustic guideline drives for a very high level of acoustic quality which drives for buildings to be sealed, which drives for buildings to be air conditioned and the carbon emissions of an air conditioned building is around double that of a naturally ventilated building. So, it is pushing it in the wrong direction for good reasons but there are contradictions there which need to be addressed.

Q470 Chairman: How do we make the best of the situation now? How do we learn from these mistakes, this early wrong start? How do we put it right?

Dr Davies: I would start with being very clear about what the deliverables of the programme are in terms of sustainability because that has yet to be properly researched and mapped out. I think getting a clear link from the Government's stated policy to how much sustainable development improvement this programme is required to achieve is essential.

Q471 Chairman: The people in the DfES do not know anything about this. They are civil servants, for God's sake! Arup is one of the leading names in engineering and in construction. You are the expert. Your Commission are the experts. You guys are the experts. Civil servants will by and large be led and guided by you. We are going to wait a long time for some expert on sustainability in the department, are we not? After all, they work in a greenhouse! It must

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be one of the worst buildings in London! Come on, where is the leadership? You are not going to get it from the department, surely.

Dr Davies: If there were a defined task to do that mapping, I think it could be well led by DfES but with support from experts.

Q472 Chairman: How do we get that kind of quality of knowledge and leadership in the Department? Who gives it to them? Who physically goes into that building and says, "This is the way. We will all sit around this table and we are going to sort this out"? Who should be at the table?

Mr Mayfield: I think that there is a need for a clear understanding of what we are trying to achieve, which is technically there. I am afraid that I have not written anything for today but I have read the SDC1 and I think that there are some very good statements in here about where we should be going. We should be quite clear about what we are trying to achieve and then that should be held up as BREEAM excellent or as whatever we choose to define it as and then we can work away from that. At the moment, we are working down from where we are. We need to work away from where we need to be, not from where we are. So, there needs to be a clear set of standards developed, which I think is quite easy to do. For the wave one projects which have been built it is too late, but what we must make sure of is that the future schemes developed through the wave one relationships do not suffer the same fate because there is pressure now on a number of projects to deliver the next set of schools and the next set of schools rather than saying, "Hang on a minute, what are we really trying to achieve here?"

Q473 Chairman: Alan, if you were advising the Department, what should they do?

Mr Yates: I think the most important thing is to learn the lessons and to make sure that you have a good feedback mechanism from that first plan.

Q474 Chairman: We have already built how many Academies? You would have thought, here is a laboratory to try this stuff out. Did no one in the Department actually look at the Academy programme? How many are we up to? I see Philip Green Fashion Academies. I think we are in the mid-thirties and they are up and running, they have been designed and built.

Mr Yates: Yes.

Q475 Chairman: Did no one from the Department go round and say, "The most sustainable and the model that we should learn from are these"?

Mr Yates: I think that there has been some review of what has happened, but I do not think that there has been a coordinated gathering of that feedback from past experience. If we are to ensure that the later phases of the BSF programme achieve the sorts of standards that we perhaps all would like them to achieve, then let us use that and have a really coordinated effort to collect that feedback. We can debate whether the standards are the right standards

or not, but the practicality and the experience of actually putting those existing standards into practice provides a sound framework for applying whatever standards are felt to be appropriate. BREEAM can provide this framework. It is very easy to set environmental standards; we could all advise on setting those and we could get some wonderfully high level standards. At the end of the day, like most things in life, this is a matter of priorities and where you set the balance between very high environmental performance standards and the other aspects of sustainability in terms of costs, in terms of social impact and so on. Those all need to be balanced. In terms of what the Government need to do, they need to provide that set of priorities to the programme. The panel here are sustainability experts particularly in terms of the environmental aspects of sustainability, certainly the BREEAM side, but really to input into the process and to advise the Department on setting appropriate standards and achievable standards on the environmental side, there needs to be that sort of political decision in terms of priorities.

Q476 Chairman: It is a little depressing, is it not? Here we are on course to spend £42 billion of taxpayers' money and you are saying that we are not doing it right.

Mr Terry: I am not sure that spending £42 billion/£45 billion on new schools necessarily fell within a kind of sustainability envelope initially with the idea of building the new schools; sustainability has come on board in the process. I wonder about a government which is spending that amount of money but not making demands on the construction industry by saying, "You must do this". I look at the study that WRAP did, the Davis Langdon study, which actually identified that you could put up to 30% of recycled material into new building, new school buildings in this sense, and it would not impact on cost. The Partnership for Schools has reduced the level to 10%. Why? I think they identified in that study that you could save up to 4,000 tonnes of waste material going to landfill, but they have opted for a lower standard. I do not understand why because I am not involved at that level, but I would like to see who made that decision.

Q477 Chairman: We have Partnership for Schools coming to see us and we might ask them questions about that. Martin, you are the lone industry person here in a sense. Is it partly your fault? Should a company of your quality or Skanska who have given evidence not come before the Committee and say, "Look, this is what we want. Please, build us something"? If they said, "Look, we want this, we don't want any of the recycled stuff", surely it is up to you to have said, "No, no, no. You want sustainability. This is what adds up to sustainability".

Mr Mayfield: I think that there is a moral dilemma for us because the construction market is driven by the needs that are presented in front of it to build these things as quickly as possible to move forward the agenda and there has not been enough time given

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to understand what is sustainable. I think that the marketplace is capable of delivering. There are not good examples in the UK; there are good examples globally—Scandinavia is one place to look—but I think that the marketplace is responding to the agenda that is placed in front of it.

Q478 Chairman: You work all over the world. You helped build this building and this is supposed to be sustainable.

Mr Mayfield: Yes and it is. Keeping it to BSF, I think that the construction firms, particularly the international ones, can deliver this. However, they are not being presented with the right set of hierarchical needs to enable them to focus on these issues and they are not being given time to do them in the BSF process either because it is far too quick. I have personally been party to schemes where we have tried to do as much as we can within cost and time envelopes and we know that the winning schemes have not done as much but have given a bit more area or a bit more this or a bit more that and it has been pushed by the wayside. The agenda is moving quite quickly which is helping but historically it has not. There are schemes on site now and in design that have no level of climate change resilience and if we even hit the medium/low climate change scenario, those schools will need air conditioning over their design life. So, their carbon emissions will go up over their design life, not down. There has not been clarity of requirements coming out to allow somebody to say, “Actually, that works and that does not”.

Q479 Chairman: How many schools are in the first wave? Does anyone know? I do not think we have had that evidence given, have we?

Mr Terry: There is evidence that has been talked about here regarding the time envelope, actually doing the research. There is evidence in the States that shows that naturally ventilated buildings improves student performance, so it should be one of the strict criteria that says that is what you build. However, if we are building schools which have to be sealed because of the criteria and therefore have to have air conditioning and part of that is that we are putting a lot of money into ICT but that generates heat in itself and increases the amount of energy use that has been . . . There needs to be a much clearer image of what we are trying to achieve in terms of sustainability built into the process and I do not think that it exists at the moment.

Q480 Chairman: Should we slow the whole process down so that we get it right?

Dr Davies: I would suggest that there needs to be some really smart and intensive thinking but I do not think this would result in necessarily slower delivery of improved schools, given some very fast and deep thinking at this upfront stage.

Mr Yates: And making sure that you pull together and think through the linkages between different initiatives/different pushes that are being made. Due to the speed of the programme and because of the pressures on the construction industry and so on,

there is a strong move towards what is known as modern methods of construction, a very broad range of construction techniques, but there is very little experience of how those actually perform in use. A significant number of those are relatively light weight construction techniques and that raises questions over the adaptability of those buildings into the future. For example, the issue of needing air conditioning. If you have a building which is very light weight, then it will not be able to absorb higher temperatures to the same degree and you are much more likely perhaps to need a building system in there which is an energy using system that will air condition that environment, so air conditioning and therefore higher carbon emissions as a result. It is thinking through the balance between all these different messages that the construction industry has been given.

Dr Davies: I want to make it very clear that this is not one of the situations where the step into sustainability is being done with the supplying industry kicking and screaming. In fact, quite the opposite. I spend quite a lot of time as the Sustainable Development Commissioner talking to the construction industry. It is the other way round. There is frustration that there is not the clear prioritisation of sustainability because the industry knows how to deliver it and because of its own CSR wants to actually be seen to deliver sustainable schools.

Chairman: Thank you for those initial answers. Let us move on and broaden the questioning but still talking about sustainability.

Q481 Paul Holmes: Is this not all very alarming? In some of the earlier evidence sessions we have had, we have heard that a lot of the new wave of schools are not very good as educational places to work in and learn in and now we are hearing from you that also they are not actually very sustainable either, even that they are going to be less sustainable than what they are replacing. The Government have launched a sustainable schools strategy this year and they have said that care for the environment will be second nature to all the pupils in the new school building programme, yet the evidence seems to be quite the opposite. The Sustainable Development Commission has said that the Government have not thought it through, they do not know whether the new schools estate will mean higher or lower carbon emissions or what the impact will be on water demand, waste production and traffic. This is very worrying. It is more than worrying, it is a disaster, is it not?

Dr Davies: It is a clear opportunity to do a lot better and it really does start with that mapping of the policy through to delivery in setting a vision of what is going to be the contribution of this programme to carbon reduction. Schools are 15% of the public sector’s carbon footprint. There is a tremendous opportunity in this programme to demonstrate through leadership how that can be reduced through good construction.

Q482 Paul Holmes: What would be the key features in a list of five, shall we say, of what should be a sustainable school? What are the most important things?

Dr Davies: Before I come on to the bricks and mortar, what we are looking for is something with the minimum environmental footprint but the maximum environmental “mind print”, as I call it. There is a tremendous opportunity here to affect the way that children who will soon be adults and who will soon be consumers think about the world. I had the opportunity yesterday to visit Beaumont Primary School in Hadleigh, Suffolk where a lot of the inherent structure has been got right: there is the natural lighting and there is the natural ventilation. Yes, there is a windmill but there is a living green roof, solar panels, rainwater collection and so on. That has a tremendous educational impact on the kids and it is integrated in their curriculum. That is all absolutely fabulous and there are a few such beacons of good practice. In terms of what the features should be—and we have mentioned some of them already—there should be as much natural lighting and natural ventilation as possible, probably something around high thermal mass so that we are proofed against climate change tipping us into air conditioning and its high carbon footprint. I think that another very important one is on site electricity generation, whether that is windmill, solar or whether it is biomass or indeed whether it is even quite old-fashioned technology in terms of gas powered combined heat and power where there is a tremendous carbon saving from generating electricity locally in a school. That would be my list but I am sure that my colleagues here would have another list.

Mr Mayfield: There is a standard for space utilisation in schools, BB98, which defines what all the size and spaces are and that sets quite a rigid framework for school designs. So, you get a school with X size for X number of pupils. If that could be turned over or reconsidered, there is the opportunity to lengthen the educational day and reduce the size of the school by 10 or 15%. If you can reduce the size of the school and spend the money that you were going to spend on that extra bit of school, you are making the building that is left perform better and I think that is something that is worth serious consideration. Ban air conditioning is an easy one. Develop the schools so that they do not use power in its neutral state. So, when they need heating, a bit of heating in the winter and possibly a bit of cooling in the summer if it is absolutely unavoidable but not to default to heavily engineered solutions. There are a number of solutions that can work. The buildings that look sustainable will be radically different architecturally and in operation to the schools we have seen today. You cannot design that school in a manner and tweak it because there is such a fundamental difference between where we are and where we need to be. I think that there has to be an acceptance that these things will look and operate massively differently. On the windmill side, I agree with the educational side of wind turbines but a

1.5 kilowatt wind turbine is a seventh as effective as a 1 megawatt wind turbine. You spend seven times as much money doing that to get the same carbon reduction. There is an educational benefit to it but the fundamental difference we need is a low carbon infrastructure to support low carbon buildings. The buildings cannot do it on their own.

Mr Terry: The real issue here is that we are building schools in which future generations are going to be educated and all those schools are at the heart of their communities. If you build a school which conforms with sustainability principles and the curriculum is designed to emphasise those kind of approaches, then children learn by kind of osmosis and they spread that message out in the community. It is difficult to change hearts and minds in the community and amongst businesses as well but the best way to do it is to deliver it through the educational experience that these children are having. Kids are great at picking up when you ‘don’t walk the talk’. If you are building a building and telling them about sustainability, they know that you are not operating in that way. The majority of schools do not think about their waste output; it all goes into the same bins. What is the point of trying to teach source separation to kids in a school throughout a lesson programme and then they watch the school throwing everything out into one bin? The lights stay on. Where I live near Aylesbury, I came back from the cinema last weekend via the brand new Aylesbury College which is being built and, at 11.30 at night, every single light in the building was on. It was like a beacon from the community—here we are! We are empty but all the lights are on! I do not understand why they do not operate on those kinds of principles. The LSE has said that colleges should operate within sustainability principles. Here is a brand new building which seems to be saying, “Up yours. We are going to do it the way we want to do it”.

Q483 Paul Holmes: On the renewable energy side taking into account the strictures about cost and everything, I have taught a number of pupils in different schools, both old ones and brand new ones, where they are very disappointed that they are having all these lessons and hearing all this from the Government and it is not in their school. We visited one of the Academies in Southwark that has won the design award as the best one and the kids there were saying, “We have no solar panels, turbine windmills or whatever” and there is no way that you can monitor what the end use of the school is. They were quite despondent and that was a brand new state-of-the-art designed winning school.

Dr Davies: Quite possibly, the ICT department needed a power station of its own to run it! Another feature of what people look for in “sexy”, new educational buildings is the big arrays of PCs but there is an energy efficiency impact in the way they are set up. There is a right way to do it and there is a wrong way to do it and I am not sure the specification is right.

Q484 Paul Holmes: What is the reason why that tends not to be there? Is it the cost factor because the architect argued, “We had to strip it out because of the cost” or is it the lack of regional guidance?

Dr Davies: We have touched on this earlier. I think it is about the priority. If you want to build sustainable schools, that has to be the priority and you then have to work out how you optimise the financing of that to suit it. At the moment, we are working to a very old-fashioned financial model for the amount of money per square meter of school that has not taken account of the new urgency about building sustainable schools.

Q485 Paul Holmes: On an issue such as the use of grey water and recycled water, what percentage of all these new schools that have been built at enormous expense to deliver this sustainability use grey or recycled water?

Mr Mayfield: Grey water recycling is quite expensive but rain water reclamation is used reasonably often because it can be shown to pay for itself reasonably quickly. Of all the bolt-ons, it is the one that survives longest through the value engineering process.

Q486 Paul Holmes: Out of, say, 50 new schools, how many have rain water?

Mr Mayfield: Eight or 10 would be a guess.

Q487 Paul Holmes: So, less than 20%?

Mr Mayfield: Yes.

Q488 Paul Holmes: Which again is not very good. My final question, which is certainly not a building feature, is that one of the things the Government said is that, as part of sustainable schools, we should encourage alternative transport, walking and cycling to school. On the other hand, they are encouraging schools to recruit their children from miles away and parents co-opt into schools that are miles away. Is that not totally contradictory from the point of view of what we are talking about?

Mr Terry: From my point of view, if you have a local authority and it has to rationalise its educational provision when it is going to build a new school, it may need to close down several schools around and move it to a different site. The problem is that you are going to have to transport children to and from that site. Where I used to be in a rural community, you had to have public transport or private transport to get kids there, but that still meant that many, many parents travelled 10 or 12 miles to get their kids to school. You have to think very carefully about where you are going to locate the school at the front end. If you are going down the road of saying, “We want to have local schools so that kids can cycle and walk to school”, then you have to put that as one of your priorities.

Q489 Paul Holmes: And that is not in any of the criteria?

Mr Terry: I do not think so, no.

Q490 Mr Marsden: Stewart, I wonder if I can come to you first. The evidence which you have given to the Select Committee was very strong and forceful regarding your concerns about the Government not having looked at the issue of high and low carbon emissions and you have said that this is extremely worrying. What level of engagement have you had with DfES in terms and I literally mean at what level? Have you been engaged on a regular basis with officials who are doing BSF? Has Alan Johnson or Jim Knight or Andrew Adonis had you in for a greater chat at any stage? The message we seem to be getting is that you and your colleagues and the other people here are putting out lots of good ideas but meanwhile the great Titanic, the DfES, is proceeding smoothly down a separate path and not really taking them on board. Is that a fair assessment or not?

Dr Davies: I would like to take it in parts before I assess it as fair or not. I think that the doors are open and that there is constructive discussion going on. In fact, we have a secondee from the Sustainable Development Commission full time in DfES as part of our capacity building role. I certainly would not position it as being “barricades and rock throwing” at all. It is not at that status. Clearly, it is not being influential enough in the ultimate priorities.

Q491 Mr Marsden: You basically need to have certainly senior civil servants if not ministers prepared to sit down with you, even if it is only for half-an-hour, and talk through some of the inherent problems in what you are saying.

Dr Davies: Yes.¹

Mr Marsden: That is useful to know. I want to move on now to the issue of environmental sustainability as a whole. I went to two of my schools in Blackpool the other week, both of them in a different context: one is looking at a complete rebuild and one is looking at partial rebuild. Both the heads there said the same thing to me—“It is really exciting but it is really worrying because we do not know what we are going to want to put in our classrooms in 10 or 15 years’ time. One of them was old enough, as I am, to remember language laboratories. Language laboratories were the great thing of the future at one stage and we had all these old-fashioned tape machines and, within a few years, they were completely redundant because of technological change. There are similar issues in terms, I would suggest, of banks of computers, portable as opposed to fixed etc, etc. What is going in at the moment as part of BSF? Never mind the environmental sustainability at the moment, what is going in at the moment to make sure that the spaces that are created in classrooms under BSF will be fit for purpose given the school technologies and the possibilities of five, 10 or even 15 years hence?”

Q492 Chairman: We must have shorter questions. I am trying to get in as many sustainability questions.

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Mr Mayfield: I have been doing some work and having some discussions with the major IT providers. BSF is a big deal for them; they are putting a lot of effort into it. The overriding view is that future ICT requirements will actually have a lesser impact on the building than historic ICT requirements. So, there is not too much concern. There is a great deal of debate over whether or not schools should have raised access floors throughout and the costs associated with that and there are other practical issues associated with it. In ICT terms, there is not a general concern and I would agree with that. We will see ICT start to disappear into the education process as the tools become smaller and easier and lower powered.

Q493 Mr Marsden: Has that been factored into the tenders and you and colleagues are now agreeing with the DfES and individual schools?

Mr Mayfield: The fact that it is of lower impact means that it does not necessarily have a cost. That is a kind of long-term view. There is a driver to increase the number of PCs per pupil which is increasing power demands and is increasing heat loads, so there is a potential that, over the next 10 years, you will see a problem arising as there is more and more IT in schools, more and more air conditioning and so on and so forth before technology actually starts to drive that down again.

Q494 Mr Marsden: Is there anything that we can do to close that gap?

Mr Mayfield: Yes, building levels of climate change and ICT resilience into the BSF space because, if you overlay climate change and ICT heat gains, you will find that some of the things that are being built today will not be fit for purpose.

Dr Davies: I would like to make a brief comment on that. The improvements in energy efficiency in the buildings that have been a result of BREEAM coming in have actually been outweighed in carbon terms by the increase in electricity going into ICT. So, we have actually gone backwards.

Mr Terry: And you have the issue of extended school days now as well. You have schools open from 8.00 in the morning until 10.00 at night 50 weeks of the year and there is going to be increasing community use on those kinds of facilities. You are going to have those facilities absorbing more energy continually from that point of view.

Q495 Mr Marsden: Can I ask a question and perhaps, Alan, you would like to pick up on this. I am quite old fashioned about the way in which I look at these things and in one of the previous sessions I was a little concerned that no one at any point specifically mentioned materials, old-fashioned materials, in terms of sustainability. In your requirements under BREEAM, they do not talk about materials, do they?

Mr Yates: Yes, they do. There is a whole section in BREEAM that looks at the issue of materials for key building elements on a life cycle basis, so it looks at the embodied impacts, that is a range of environmental impacts, of construction materials as

they go into the building but then also as they are maintained throughout the building's life. This covers inherent impacts of materials and the impacts of responsible sourcing.

Q496 Mr Marsden: You have eight different—

Mr Yates: It is one of the eight categories.

Q497 Chairman: We are going to come on to BREEAM in a minute.

Mr Yates: It is one of the categories.

Q498 Mr Marsden: Can I ask a question finally about an issue about which we have already heard, the time gap. You are saying that your impression is that everything is powering ahead and that is one of the reasons why some of these issues cannot be taken into account by DfES and by schools, but I am led to understand that there are a number of authorities where BSF is already behind for a significant period of time. First of all, why is that, if they are powering ahead in the way that has been described and does that offer some opportunity for reflection?

Mr Mayfield: Some are behind but the marketplace only gets to look at them once they come to the marketplace and the period of time that the market is then given to respond is not changing, be it 13, 16 or 17 weeks. It is how long they have to take the requirements of the council and come up with a response. So, even though they are drifting, that period of time is not changing.

Q499 Mr Carswell: I heard you talk about contracts with the DfES and schools, but I wondered if you have ever thought—and this is perhaps a question more for Mr Terry—that maybe there is either too much or too little central guidance on this whole sustainability agenda. Do you sometimes think that there needs to be more guidance or do you sometimes think that actually maybe it should be left to the schools and maybe they could work out what really is sustainable in the context of their communities? Do you ever sometimes wonder why we national politicians are discussing building materials in local schools? Why do we have a national commission on this? That is food for thought.

Mr Terry: My feeling is that we do not have a leadership group in the education profession who understand the principles behind this, so they need educating very rapidly. They are generally bright people and they can pick it up very quickly and they can ask the right kind of questions. If you have a client base which is not knowledgeable, it will be led by the professionals who will talk them into what they think would be a good solution. You have to be courageous as a head teacher in terms of asking the right kind of questions. Appearing stupid is not normally a head teacher's role. This is an important issue and I know that the national college are now about to move forward on this agenda, but there is nothing inherent in the way in which we train our teachers, for example, through the leadership programmes that exist at the present moment. There is an optional unit in Leading from the Middle,

which is a training programme through the national college; there is one unit in the NPQH but it is an optional unit; there is nothing else that exists at the present moment. They are running hard to try and solve the problem. I think that you have to educate the client to be able to ask the right kind of questions and to actually have the kind of visioning view as to what they want from their schools. I think the issue you raised earlier on about what kind of schools we are going to have comes back to what we want in terms of the curriculum we are going to have in 15 years. That is a bit of an imponderable. So, it is delivering an envelope that actually fits what we might want to do. I think that you have to give people the opportunity to visualise where they would like to be and the kind of education process that they would like. Are we going to have boxes in 15 or 25 years' time? How are kids going to learn? Will they be in a classroom of 30 or are there going to be individualised learning programmes? Leadership teams in schools need to be able to thrash those kind of issues out and they need to be able to demand—perhaps that is the wrong word—by saying, “What we want from our new school for the future is this and you, the designer, and you, the company, can come up with the ideas that fulfil our dream”.

Dr Davies: I think that there is a balance to be struck. The head teacher is exactly the right person for making the decision with the leadership team locally about trade-offs and optimising the local situation. However, we should not be reinventing the wheel at that time. There is a huge inefficiency in a process where there are, in a sense, too many options, and I think that a degree of standardisation working on some clear goals from DfES about what sustainable schools look like would produce a best practice, that would then present a more focused set of options to local leadership.

Mr Mayfield: I do not think that we need any more guidance. What we do need is the correct setting of standards to what is sustainable and what is not. I think that there is enough paper around written about it.

Q500 Chairman: Come on, that is the standard. Come on.

Mr Mayfield: No, the standards that are given.

Chairman: That is central direction. Douglas would hate that. You are going to say, “Within these parameters, you should work”. Douglas is saying, why do you not let the local community and head get on with building—?

Q501 Mr Carswell: I assume that there will be a national curriculum in 15 years' time.

Mr Terry: I would not see it as a problem in letting heads in their communities actually go forward on these programmes, but they have to have the basic understanding in order to make those kind of decisions.

Q502 Chairman: No, no. Stan, you have to spell out what you mean by basic understanding. What Stewart is saying is a basic understanding and what Martin is saying is a basic understanding is very

different, is it not? I take it that Alan would disagree with that too. He would want a different standard, whether he wants BREEAM or a super BREEAM, I do not know, but clearly from your evidence you submitted to the Committee you do want guiding. You do not want people not having sustainability knowledge at the local level.

Dr Davies: Best practice sustainability knowledge should be mandated into standards and may I make reference to the Government's Sustainable Procurement Taskforce which provides some very valuable insight that is directly relevant to BSF programme in terms of both specification but also particularly capability building.

Q503 Chairman: That relates to standards being about recycled material you could put in, *etc*, does it not?

Dr Davies: As just one example, yes.²

Q504 Chairman: Martin, I jumped on you unfairly then. You are a sharp operator, are you not? You are Arup, you are big. I know that your work is co-op which is always rather nice to remember but you go in there and you could have a naïve head teacher who has never built a school. You can get away with anything, can you not?

Mr Mayfield: We have moral obligations not to get away with anything! No, we win commissions because of our credentials and our abilities to produce more sustainable buildings. The problems we have is the datum which is out there. When we say to somebody, “Sustainability actually means this”, it is so far removed from what today's expectations are in terms of how it looks, how it operates and how long it is going to take to build and everything else that it just gets thrown out. It is nowhere near the agenda. We are driving in that direction but we do not have a framework within which to say, “That works. That is what is required and that is the right standard”. The standards that are set are too easy to achieve and do not reflect sustainable development.

Mr Yates: Part of the reason why I think they are very easy to throw out is because the client, in terms of the school, the LA and so on, do not feel that they understand the issues. In terms of needing additional guidance, I agree absolutely in terms of, we need guidance for those stakeholders in the process in order that they can ask the right questions and they can avoid having the wool pulled over their eyes. I also agree that I do not think the industry needs a lot more guidance in terms of how to meet the objective of more sustainable schools. What they need are clear performance standards and I absolutely agree that those need to be set at national level initially but with some degree of flexibility at a local level on some of the issues.

Q505 Mr Carswell: It is an interesting answer but I am perplexed because you said that it has to be national standards. Why? Why can the local authorities in the town halls of Essex and Cornwall and London not decide these things?

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Mr Yates: For a start, they do not have the expertise, but potentially they could have some knowledge. A lot of the issues are issues at a national level in terms of overall carbon emissions and in terms of materials procurement. It is not even a national issue, it is a European issue or indeed a global issue. So, allowing the decision making process to go right down to the very local level does not seem to make much sense in those areas. I think where I would agree that local priorities have to take over is when you start getting into issues, particularly issues of social sustainability in terms of the links of a school with the community, the whole extended school agenda. I think that sustainability is a very broad agenda.

Q506 Mr Carswell: It begins to sound to me as if sustainability is a modern justification for more central government.

Mr Yates: I think it is simple, clear performance standards coming from the centre and then you allow local interpretation of that in terms of how those standards will be met, but you have to make sure that everyone involved in the process fully understands what those mean and part of the problem at the moment seems to me that the educational side does not understand. Your head teacher is not going to understand and we should not be expecting those sorts of people to understand, the detailed technical balances that have to be taken account of. You are weighing up options. There is not a simple black and white solution to any of this which is why BREEAM as a method is set up in the way it is.

Chairman: We have to move on because we have limited time. We would now like to look at the BSF process in detail.

Q507 Stephen Williams: Following on from what Douglas was saying about involvement right down at the grass roots level, if I may begin with Dr Davies from the Sustainable Development Commission. You have recommended that various stakeholders should be involved in the design process of the school, which obviously would include the head teacher. What sort of other people should be involved at design process level?

Dr Davies: If you take the head teacher and the leadership team who of course bring their community input as well because they are clearly major stakeholders for the school, then it is important that there is the right technical consistency and I think that the idea of having advisers and a supporting team for schools going through this process is key and then there has to be the Las and other stakeholders that are concerned about the alignment with Government policy through the Department, the DFES.

Q508 Stephen Williams: Is the head teacher the principal spokesperson for everyone involved at the professional level in the school or would you expect the designers and the architects to talk to the cook about the kitchens or the children about the playground and the corridors?

Dr Davies: My experience in business as well as in the area of sustainability is that engagement brings great ideas from all sorts of unexpected places. I wholeheartedly recommend that engagement processes are set up that allow that to happen. Coming back to this issue of 13 to 18 weeks to get these decisions made and not all the information being available at the front of that period of time, engagement is largely squeezed out of the BSF process.

Q509 Stephen Williams: As there is not enough time, do you think your recommendation in practice does not actually take place to the level you recommend?

Dr Davies: Yes, absolutely.

Q510 Stephen Williams: If you look at primary schools that probably litter all of our constituencies, certainly I have looked at primary schools in South Wales and they look remarkably similar to primary schools in Bristol that were put up in Victorian and Edwardian times, so there was a national model, if you like, of designs of primary schools in that period. Do we really need different schools to flourish in different ways in different parts of the country given that a level playing field in topography in 800 to 1,200 pupils? Can we not have a standard secondary school or do they all need to look different?

Mr Mayfield: There are climatic differences across the country and those are going to change over the next 20–30 years. There are different solutions for different areas but there are overriding issues that do not change such as the relationship with the sun. All school buildings should have a relationship with the sun path, so you should be able to look at a school and know which way is south from the way that the school looks. So, there are some issues that are the same but there are regional climatic differences.

Q511 Chairman: It rains everywhere in Britain!

Mr Mayfield: Absolutely.

Q512 Chairman: That is not going to change, is it? Your guys in your profession build flat roofs all over Yorkshire and Lancashire and probably in Scotland. They have leaked ever since. The Victorian schools did not have flat roofs and they do not leak and some of them are pretty darn sustainable today, are they not?

Mr Mayfield: Well designed flat roofs can be a benefit.

Q513 Chairman: Could you show us one? We would love to see one.

Mr Mayfield: Yes, I can show you some schools with well designed flat roofs because, if the water sits on it, when the water evaporates, it takes heat away from the school.

Q514 Chairman: Martin, you are being a bit . . . No, you are not being disingenuous! Martin, you are suggesting that there is somewhere in the world that you know about the sustainable school. It is not in

England, so we cannot see it easily, but could you point us to where this has developed in order that we could look at one?

Mr Mayfield: I do not think that you can point to a sustainable school. I think that you can point to different schools that are responding to different climatic issues and, taken together, there are a set of principles.

Q515 Chairman: If we locked you in a room for all the weekend, could you come up with a sustainable design that we could replicate all over Britain? That is what Stephen is asking.

Mr Mayfield: Yes. However, a sustainable school is only as good as the infrastructure in which it sits. So, it will not get there on its own, it needs to be part of a waste, transportation and energy infrastructure that supports it in the right manner. So, yes, you could design a building that fits into that but not on its own. Well, you could but it would not be repeatable in a formal manner.

Q516 Chairman: Would you measure the Victorian school? I went to a 1904 Edwardian school the other day and it seemed to be pretty sustainable to me. It was made of local brick; it had local tiles on the roof; it did not have any air conditioning; the children seemed to be reasonably well served in it; they did not have much of a playground which was the only downside. Are we in danger of trendy, fashionable buildings replacing buildings that are pretty sustainable anyway in terms of their carbon footprint?

Mr Mayfield: I think that there is a lot to be learned from the past. I do not think that we need to start afresh, but those buildings are really poorly insulated, so the geometries of them are good and some of the materials are sustainable but there are things that need to be done to change that. I said before that a sustainable school will look radically different and it will. It will still look like a school but it will look radically different to the schools we have today.

Q517 Stephen Williams: I turn to Mr Yates and talk about BREEAM. What does BREEAM actually tell us about a school because, as I understand it, there were nine factors but a school might not have to meet all of them? If a school meets with BREEAM criteria, what can we actually expect of it?

Mr Yates: What BREEAM is trying to do is to provide an overall measure of environmental sustainability. It is not a full sustainability method; it is concentrated on the environmental aspects. It does that by evaluating performance against a wide range of issues in those issue categories that you have talked about and it brings all of that together into a single score, or a single rating, so that there is a clear message in terms of the overall impact of this building on the environment. What it does not do is to set specific standards against each individual area. There is an element of tradability in there which allows for taking account of the local context, it allows for the local priorities, the sort of local decision-making that was talked about earlier,

flexibility in terms of design solutions, and so on, but it is really trying to provide this overall measure of environmental impact and it does that through a weighting system which takes account of the relative importance of each of the diverse issues that it looks at.

Q518 Stephen Williams: Given this weighting system, suppose a school has been built on a brownfield site but the materials that were used to build it were not terribly good and it wasted a lot of water and it was badly insulated, could it still meet the criteria on average?

Mr Yates: It will get some ticks in boxes in terms of its site selection but it will perform very badly in those other areas, and, because of the way the scoring system works, there is a lot more emphasis placed on what you might consider to be the key environmental impact, particularly in terms of CO₂, which is 25% of the overall score. So, it uses the weighting scoring system to place emphasis on the key areas.

Q519 Stephen Williams: The expectation is that schools should aim for a “very good” BREEAM assessment or even an “excellent”. Are there grades below that? Is there an adequate one or a good one?

Mr Yates: There is a “pass”, a “good”, a “very good” and an “excellent”.

Q520 Stephen Williams: What sort of message does it send out to children and parents who go to a “pass” school under BREEAM as opposed to an “excellent” school?

Mr Yates: None of the BSF schools should be “pass” because the requirement is for a “very good”.

Q521 Stephen Williams: The requirement is for “very good”, so you would not expect any to be “pass”?

Mr Yates: You should not. I think it is fair to say that there are probably some at the moment because of the issues that we have talked about in terms of the speed of procurement in the first round. The issues that needed to be considered have not been considered early enough in the process. There are some at the moment. I am aware of one that has gone through certification and has achieved a “pass”, there is another one that has achieved a “good” and there is one that has achieved a “very good”. Those are the three that have completed the process at the moment.

Q522 Stephen Williams: So in the first wave there will be schools below “very good”?

Mr Yates: There will be, and the important thing is to learn the lessons from that first round so that we do not find ourselves in that position in later rounds, it seems to me.

Q523 Stephen Williams: At the design stage when all these measurements are being assessed, are you aware of any areas where it might have led to a school being rated at “excellent” or “very good” but,

because of the expense issue, have been squeezed out of the design process which has led to the school going down to “very good”, for instance?

Mr Yates: I am not personally aware of that. We would not have that information because we are not involved in the detailed assessment itself, so we are not in discussion with design teams.

Q524 Stephen Williams: Chairman, are any of the witnesses aware of schools at the design stage being squeezed out because of cost or budget?

Mr Mayfield: Yes, all the time. I think it is also worth saying that the problem with BREEAM is that BREEAM’s “very good” is not very good at all. I am not having a go at the standard, it is just that people think, “If I am doing BREEAM “excellent” then I am doing really well”, when the reality is that you are doing really badly.

Q525 Stephen Williams: Even if you are excellent you are doing badly?

Mr Mayfield: Yes.

Stephen Williams: You need to expand on that?

Q526 Chairman: You are saying BREEAM is useless then.

Mr Mayfield: No, I am saying that BREEAM as a process is a useful tool kit. I am just saying that the data that are set within there, compared with where we need to be sustainable, it is not even nibbling away at the edges, well, it is nibbling away at the edges.

Mr Yates: It comes down to the initial point that was being discussed, which is how we define a sustainable school, does it not, and the balance between the environmental impact of that building and the impact in terms of cost, particularly because we are about cost. The parameter that was used in terms of setting the different rating thresholds did have a cost element to it, so the very good rating is set at a level. I have got a cost study in front of me carried out by Faithful and Gould on the cost of compliance with BREEAM standards. The “very good” level, the additional cost is somewhere in the region of 3% on the capital cost of a new school; to achieve the “excellent” standard it jumps to 10%. So, as you get to higher levels there is a significant cost implication and, therefore, in a programme like BSF there are implications in terms of deliverables.

Q527 Chairman: What does BREEAM stand for?

Mr Yates: It is the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.

Q528 Chairman: You are saying, Martin, that is not good enough. We need a different kitemark, a kitemark that says: “This is sustainable.”

Mr Mayfield: Yes; absolutely.

Q529 Chairman: Could that be devised?

Mr Mayfield: Yes. There is enough consensus. There is always debate about whether it is 20% of where we are today, or 15%, or whatever, but there is enough consensus on where it is to be able to develop that standard, yes.

Q530 Fiona Mactaggart: How big is BSF as a client in terms of construction in Britain today? How does it compare with Tesco or whoever does other buildings? How big is it?

Mr Mayfield: It is in the top three.

Q531 Fiona Mactaggart: It is in the top three. What I am hearing from you is that you have got stupid clients really. You are saying it nicely, but basically you are saying that the clients, “Don’t know nothing.” You are saying that one of the top three construction programmes in the country has not got properly trained clients. I would like to hear from Martin what the difference is between these clients and their competitors in terms of the other two in the top three. What is the difference?

Mr Mayfield: These clients hold the kids that are going to have to deal with this issue in the next 30, 40 years.

Q532 Fiona Mactaggart: I understand that, but I do not want the politician’s answer, I want the company answer. What I want to know is how differently a property developer or someone who deals with property portfolios (Tesco or whoever) deals with this?

Mr Mayfield: I would say that the major commercial clients are financially driven. What we are seeing in those markets is a shift. The bigger developers are actually seeing this as an issue because of its impact on their stock market value and are starting to move towards it. We are now seeing developers wanting to engage much more positively and wanting to understand where this is going to take them, because they see this issue as a risk to their assets and a risk to their future profitability. So, whilst they are coming from a lower datum, they are moving quicker, I would say, than the schools estate currently.

Q533 Fiona Mactaggart: What kind of tools do they use? Do they use BREEAM as a tool or do they have other tools to assess what you do?

Mr Mayfield: There are a variety of tools and benchmarking mechanisms. I think BREEAM is a reasonable tool. It comes back, quite simply, to setting the data at the right level.

Q534 Fiona Mactaggart: Are there examples? What you are saying is that public procurement, in terms of the value that it puts on sustainability, has started at a slightly higher basis than private procurement, but private procurement is moving in that direction and probably moving faster than public procurement. Is that what you are saying?

Mr Mayfield: I would say that is correct.

Q535 Fiona Mactaggart: Are there other tools that these private procurers are using other than BREEAM which are cleverer, more subtle, which are part of this faster movement?

Mr Mayfield: Yes, we have our own sustainability tool, so there are a number of tools out there, and they all try to address the same issues, some more broadly and some more specifically. I do not think the tools are necessarily the issue. It is the setting of

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the datum and where we are trying to get to. Others do use BREEAM, others use other tools. I do not think the type of tool is the issue.

Q536 Fiona Mactaggart: So it is not the type of tool, it is the standards inside it?

Mr Mayfield: Yes.

Q537 Fiona Mactaggart: In effect, what we are hearing is that, even if we set the BSF standard at “excellent”, that would not be high enough?

Mr Mayfield: Absolutely, yes.

Mr Yates: If your aim is to achieve a real step-change in terms of environmental performance of schools and move towards a more carbon-neutral situation in terms of new school building, then that is absolutely right, but the framework works for those sorts of standards.

Q538 Fiona Mactaggart: Is BSF actually helping to change costs of things? If we are the biggest client, is it actually shifting costs? It seems to me that the biggest clients should be the market-maker, and I am not hearing that BSF is being a market-maker at the moment.

Mr Mayfield: I think there is sporadic evidence. There are one or two schemes which are better and they have won because they were better solutions in sustainable design terms, but there is not an overriding shift at the moment.

Q539 Fiona Mactaggart: Is that because we are not learning the lessons of the best clients within it?

Mr Mayfield: Yes, I think we are not being clear on what the hierarchy of needs are within that.

Q540 Fiona Mactaggart: Could you teach the clients to be better? Could you design a crash programme for head teachers, for local authorities, which could say: “We will put you through this in a day and, by the end of the day, you would be a much better client than you were at the beginning. We cannot teach you what you know about your schools, but we can teach you to be a better client”?

Mr Terry: I would not think that would be impossible. That is what National College is trying to do at the present moment, although it is more than a day’s process, it is an extended process. I think educating the client to ask the right kind of questions would be a crucial step up in making a change in the process. If you have got a market and you have got £45 billion, that should have a major impact on the way in which the industry works, because you should be able to demand those kinds of things, and if you have heads coming back and saying, “Actually I understand X. Why can you not deliver me X?”, that might change the market place from that point of view. Certainly, when you have something like the WRAP study which says you could go for 30% recycled in some respects and then PfS go at 10%, that seems to me a nonsense. We should be demanding: what can you achieve? How can you push the envelope to make it a more sustainable structure and utilise materials which can be recycled, create the markets. This is one of the big

issues in the construction industry. The markets are not there for recycling. If we said, “You must have 30% recycled”, you would move the market.

Fiona Mactaggart: One of the things I am struck by is the cost of all this. We are in a situation where it costs something like £14.50 per metre square to build a school building,³ it costs about £2,000 per metre square to build a new office, so we are doing this relatively cheaply. I can understand why schools are to some degree cheaper than offices. Nevertheless, how much more would it cost per square metre to get the kind of environmental standards that you, Stewart, for example, are arguing for? What would be the additional cost at present; and I want Martin to answer whether or not he thinks that by setting them we would actually drive down the costs and, if so, how fast? Do you see what I mean?

Chairman: Do you want Stewart first?

Q541 Fiona Mactaggart: Yes, I wanted Stewart to say what he thought the additional costs were, because he is the person who is talking about the standards, and then I want Martin to assess whether there is a speed of reduction of costs if you actually set those standards.

Dr Davies: As I have got the opportunity to speak first, let us talk about the kind of standards for, maybe, a 60% reduction in the carbon footprint of a school. There is not a full line of research on this area, but we think, ballpark, somewhere in the region of 15%, 20% is what it would cost, but—and you talked about moving the market—if a programme as large as BSF went consistently for that style of construction and level of requirement, then you would have the traditional learning curve in business that reduces costs, so I think there should be a good opportunity, as the BSF programme went on, for that cost difference to come down. The second point is that, of course, you get some of that up-front cost back in lower operating costs, and it may be that it is a 10-year payback, but in the life of the schools programme you may well get your money back as you go along. The third point I would make on cost is the opportunity for standardisation. If, instead of doing things 500 different ways in 10 different colours, you can actually reduce that to 50 ways in five colours, you can get a cost reduction as well. There is an additional cost upfront at the moment that is not factored into financial model that dictates the allowed cost per square metre and we need to change the financial model against which schools are being procured to get fast enough progress in this area.

Mr Mayfield: I agree with what Stewart has just said in terms of numbers. In terms of how to do it, we need to move the datum from cost per square metre to cost per pupil to allow greater innovation around how to deliver the curriculum. The amount of money that councils get given by the Government is based upon a standard which relates to area, so if we can take that out of the picture and relate it to pupils, you can then look at innovation, reduce the size of that school or optimise the size of that school to deliver the curriculum. I think that is one thing that needs to be done. There are also tensions between the different

³ *Note by Witness:* (Alan Yates) I think it is set at £1,080m² not £14.50—set at 2003 so with inflation this will have gone up.

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standards. There are the acoustic requirements that force up cost and there are other requirements that push cost up. I think if some hierarchy could be placed upon them, I am not saying throw the standards away, but relax them and say that standard is more important than that standard or another standard; so if you lifted up the agenda in that respect and changed it from cost per square metre to cost per pupil, I think you could see it happening relatively quickly. The first opportunities to do that are on the schemes that have been procured in the first wave. Where the schools are now being designed and built, that is too late, but there are relationships built up there between contractors, designers and councils that are going to move forward with their second waves and their third waves without going through the procurement loop. You could introduce it into that process quicker but more effectively.

Q542 Fiona Mactaggart: What you are saying is that actually there is an opportunity to negotiate in existing relationships better solutions that might be rather clunky if they are done in a bidding-type process?

Mr Mayfield: Yes, the problem with bidding is that it is very quick, the datums are already set, you have to give everybody clear standards so there is a level playing field, and there is not the skill in enough of the councils to be able to differentiate between somebody who is doing it and somebody who is saying they are doing it, in black and white terms.

Q543 Chairman: We have to move on, because we have another set of witnesses. I want to push you on one thing, Martin. You seemed to suggest the private sector, but who are the other two major clients? You said they are in the top three. Who are the other two in the top three then?

Mr Mayfield: I think of it on a sector basis, so commercial and healthcare would be the other two major sectors.

Q544 Chairman: You say commercial, in terms of sustainability, is moving faster?

Mr Mayfield: I would say it was.

Fiona Mactaggart: It is starting from another place.

Q545 Chairman: Could you, another time, show us some of that, or tell us where to see it?

Mr Mayfield: Yes.

Q546 Chairman: As someone who represents a constituency near Leeds where the private sector has been allowed to build with almost no civic leadership, we have got Legoland which looks less

sustainable than anything I have ever seen, whereas in Manchester we find civic leadership with the demand of the public sector, which drives high standards. You have pulled up commercial to the public sector level. I do not see the private sector leading in either design or sustainability.

Mr Mayfield: Some of the designs on the table for commercial buildings in Leeds have moved on a generation.

Q547 Chairman: So in Legoland there is better sustainability?

Mr Mayfield: There is some commitment, and that is partly driven through local development frameworks. Leeds has a local planning framework which has demanded greater levels which the developers responded to, and they have sold well and let well and that has given developers the confidence to be more innovative.

Q548 Chairman: Why does Manchester not look so much better than Leeds then?

Mr Mayfield: That is a completely different discussion.

Q549 Chairman: Thank you very much, that has been very valuable. One last thing, to all four of you. Should we have the kitemark or should we have a champion for sustainability driving the Department, or linking the Department perhaps with the Department for the Environment?

Mr Mayfield: I think just the kitemark, because there is enough capability out there to deliver it. We just need a clear standard.

Q550 Chairman: You like the kitemark. Stewart?

Dr Davies: If it needs a champion to get the thinking joined-up very urgently, then that might be a good idea.

Q551 Chairman: What about you, Stan?

Mr Terry: I agree. If it is going to get the agenda moving forward quicker, we want a champion but we need a kitemark which says, "This is what is good."

Q552 Chairman: Alan?

Mr Yates: I think it is the champion really, because setting the kitemark is the easy bit. I think you need to sort out the priorities.

Chairman: Excellent. Thank you very much. If you think of anything we should have asked you or anything you should have told us, please get in touch with us. We would like a relationship to make sure this inquiry report is good.

Further supplementary memorandum submitted by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)

The following note contains excerpts from the Procuring the Future Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan: Recommendations from the Sustainable Procurement Task Force (Defra 2006).

The UK Government's 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy set out the ambitious goal to make the UK a leader in the EU in sustainable procurement by 2009. The strategy recognised that this was important in moving towards a more sustainable economy, firstly because the scale of the public sector spend on goods, services, works and utilities, at 13% of GDP, is capable of stimulating the market for more sustainable goods

and services. Secondly, because only with government leadership can the consumption patterns of business and consumers be shifted onto a more sustainable path. Acknowledging that simply continuing with current efforts would leave the UK short of that goal, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury established a business led Task Force under the chairmanship of Sir Neville Simms to devise a National Action Plan to deliver the UK objective.

PUBLIC SECTOR PRIORITY SPEND AREAS

The Task Force identified 174 Government spend. A prioritisation process resulted in 10 areas of spend being identified for priority action. Construction procurement (building and refit, highways and local roads, operations and maintenance) was identified as the first of these 10. The report also identified that attention should be focused on sectors where it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in future spend (eg Buildings Schools for the Future Programme, London 2012 Olympic Park Construction).

SCHOOLS

England's schools are currently undergoing a major programme of capital investment, bringing with it tremendous opportunities for building sustainable schools, which can act as models of sustainable development in their communities. Over £2 billion per year is being invested in rebuilding or refurbishing all secondary schools through the *Building Schools for the Future (BSF)* programme, and a *Primary Capital Programme* to rebuild or refurbish half of primary schools will be launched shortly. This programme therefore offers a huge opportunity to put sustainable procurement into practice and make a reality of whole life value. Sustainable Development Commission research shows there are opportunities for maximising the sustainability benefits from the schools' building programme through:

- introducing energy efficiency measures into the 500 secondary schools that, under current plans, will undergo "minor refurbishment". These schools will save 5,000 tonnes of carbon (tC) per year, with a five year payback, after which those schools benefit from an average of £5,000 cost savings per year; and
- using microgeneration as demonstration technologies in the 3,000 secondary and 9,000 primary schools due for major refurbishment or rebuild. If just 10% of these schools install microgeneration, a minimum of 23,400 tC could be saved with payback on the capital cost within the timescale of a PFI contract (25–30 years). This would raise awareness in schools and contribute to the commercialisation of microgeneration technology. Using biomass heating (as in the Bristol Building Schools for the Future project) because the benefit of running cost savings will be achieved.

To realise these benefits means ensuring that capital and running costs can be looked at together—whereas these have traditionally been split in the schools funding framework even for PFI contracts. It means moving away from artificial limits—such as the cost per m² figure. And it means exploring options such as Energy Services Companies (ESCOs) who can provide capital funding for the sustainable energy systems in return for a long term energy supply contract. This approach could be expanded to cover a range of utilities including security, water, and ICT services. The move towards a managed service for ICT by the Building Schools for the Future programme is evidence of the economies available.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The Task Force identified that public sector organisations have limited capacity to deliver sustainable procurement. It also identified opportunities to build sustainable procurement training into existing training programmes. The Task Force recommended that public sector organisations establish effective Management Information Systems to support delivery of sustainable procurement; upgrade procurement capacity and train staff; achieve a specified standard of sustainable procurement capacity over the next three years; and those with procurement spend over £1bn per annum appoint a Commercial Director to the Board by April 2007.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

The Task Force called on HM Treasury to simplify and clarify existing guidance on whole life costing and to reinforce the requirement that it is applied in public spending. All public organisations are called upon to examine their budgeting arrangements to make sure they encourage and support sustainable procurement. Big capital spend programmes should be reviewed to make sure they are meeting high sustainability standards, starting with Building Schools for the Future.

The Task force called on HM Treasury and DfES to work with Building Schools for the Future programme to ensure that it is meeting high sustainability standards and to learn lessons for other capital projects.

Meetings in the past six months between SDC and DfES to discuss BSF

1 November 2006	Parmjit Dhanda MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Children, Young People and Families SDC: Sir Jonathon Porritt, Chairman
19 October 2006	Chris Wormald, Director of Academies; and Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital SDC: Stewart Davies, Business Commissioner; Jake Reynolds, Senior Advisor, Education
21 August 2006	Chris Wormald, Director of Academies; Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital; and Andrew Thorne, Advisor, Schools Capital SDC: Jake Reynolds, Senior Advisor, Education; Lizzie Pomeroy, Senior Advisor, Buildings
April—July 2006 <i>November 2006</i>	Informal meetings every four to six weeks between Chris Wormald and Jake Reynolds

Annex 1

**SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:
KEY ISSUES**

Briefing for HM Treasury

Sustainable Development Commission, November 2006

Why this paper?

England's schools are currently undergoing a major programme of capital investment, bringing with it tremendous opportunities for building sustainable schools, which can act as showcases of sustainable development in their communities. Over £2 billion per year is being invested in rebuilding or refurbishing all secondary schools through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, and a Primary Capital Programme to rebuild or refurbish half of primary schools will be launched shortly. These programmes therefore offer a huge opportunity to put sustainable procurement into practice and make a reality of whole life value.

The UK's climate change goal is to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2050. In the face of rising consumption, this is a major challenge and will require significant effort from all sectors. Even then achieving this target is unlikely to be sufficient: there is already increasing evidence that reductions in the order of 80–90% will be required by 2050 or sooner. The Government is committed to leading by example and a clear commitment in a major public building programme will send a powerful message to the private sector that Government is committed to early action on meeting this goal. The BSF is a unique opportunity: it is unlikely that there will be another overhaul of the school estate before 2050.

A recent scoping study commissioned by the DfES with the SDC investigated the total carbon footprint of the schools estate—including emissions from energy use in school buildings, commuting to school and procurement activities. The scoping study shows that while the schools estate contributes 2% to national carbon emissions, it represents almost 15% of UK public sector emissions. Half of the emissions that schools produce derive from energy use within school buildings, which can be directly influenced by capital investment.¹

Schools spend a significant amount of money on heating and powering buildings. Primary schools each spend on average £6,300/year on energy, and secondary schools each spend £39,000–£55,000/year on energy,² the latter is comparable to the cost of a teacher. Volatile energy and water prices mean schools may be at risk of unaffordable bills if they are not safeguarded through well designed efficient school buildings. Further, the extended schools programme will increase energy costs for buildings by up to 40% due to increased opening hours of school buildings.

Through the BSF programme half of all secondary schools will be rebuilt, and 35% will undergo major refurbishments. 15% of secondary schools will undergo minor refurb without any energy efficiency improvements required.

¹ Sustainable Development Commission, 2006, Schools Carbon Footprinting: Scoping Study.

² BRE, 2006, Review of opportunities for improved carbon savings from spend on education buildings.

What do we think needs to be done?

The Sustainable Development Commission is aware that the schools programme is being put into place in a way that is delivering sub-optimal outcomes for sustainable development, and we list below the actions we believe Government needs to put in place to deliver a change in focus. Evidence from existing school building projects reveals that the wider benefits of a sustainable development approach is not being factored into funding decisions. Our advice focuses on the following areas:

- The use of whole life costing for wider sustainability benefits.
- Funding mechanisms to ensure long term energy and carbon savings can be delivered.
- Adjusting the design of the capital programmes to enable improved delivery.
- An outcome focus to evaluate whether the outcomes will align with broader sustainable development goals.

These are summarised below and the rest of this paper develops these in some further detail. Attached at the Annex is an analysis of the current BREEAM Schools, which is the basis for BSF schools design, and this explores some of the inadequacies of the standard from a sustainable development perspective.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Research*

Commission research into the whole-life costs and benefits to schools and their communities of sustainable building measures. We know the score on energy efficiency, but the benefits of investments in water, waste, travel, food etc. are less quantified.

2. *Invest to save*

Put in place a mechanism to fund sustainable buildings and grounds investment in new and existing schools, based around the whole-life cost reduction model identified above. The SDC has identified three options:

- (a) The Government funds a national invest to save scheme since benefits arise across departmental boundaries (eg DH benefits of sustainable travel and food; Defra benefits from reduced energy use).
- (b) The Government matches local authority (or school-level) contributions (like current Salix scheme co-funded by Carbon Trust) to create a rolling fund held locally that can be used to invest in measures identified through the research above.³
- (c) Third party funding is used to finance specific sustainability measures, ie schools/local authorities partner with specialist Energy Services Companies (ESCOs) which can provide capital funding for the sustainable energy systems and take on operational/maintenance risk in return for a long term energy supply contract. This approach could be expanded to cover a range of utilities including water and waste, but is unlikely to be a model to finance wider sustainability measures.

3. *Design of BSF and other capital programmes*

Make the following adjustments in BSF/other capital programmes to drive system change:

- (a) Extend the lifetime of the BSF programme from 15 to 20 years. In other words spend the same amount each year on creating fewer, higher-quality, schools, but continue beyond the current end date of 2018 to ensure the same number of schools benefit to a higher standard.
- (b) Re-evaluate PFI contracting arrangements to build in stronger incentives for meeting sustainability goals. The 25–30 year lifetime of a PFI contract is clearly less than the expected lifetime of a school building, but should allow whole life savings to be made on significant resource efficiency measures. Unfortunately, PFI investment decisions are commonly made on the basis of much shorter timescales.
- (c) Develop a much bolder, and more absolute, minimum standard for school buildings—ie a Code for Sustainable Schools—to replace the current BREEAM Schools standard and other ad hoc guidance.

³ For example the SDC understands that the DfES is planning to bring forward additional devolved capital funding to schools. A proportion of this funding could be reserved to create a revolving fund for sustainability measures.

4. Focus on outcomes

Current Government efforts to support sustainable school design are input rather than outcome focused. Hence it is currently unclear how a programme like BSF will contribute to macro-level sustainable goals like carbon emissions reductions. This is a highly significant weakness: BSF should be working towards an explicit vision that is aligned with Government strategy on sustainable development.

- (a) Government should set out a national strategy for the environmental performance of the schools estate.
- (b) This should include bold targets for 2010, 2015 and 2020 and explain how the various forms of capital investment will help achieve them.
- (c) Targets should cover at least carbon emissions (including carbon neutral status), water demand, waste production and travel management.
- (d) In the area of carbon emissions, they could mirror central govt commitments to carbon neutrality by 2012.

What next?

The Sustainable Development Commission would welcome discussion with HMT officials to explore these ideas further. The SDC Chair, Jonathon Porritt is meeting with the Stephen Timms, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, on 7 November, and will almost certainly raise some of these issues at that meeting.

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

We need to make a radical impact on children's understanding and experience of sustainable development if they are to develop the life skills needed to participate in a sustainable society. Formal education has a crucial role to play in promoting sustainable development, both in raising awareness, forming values and developing skills.

Promoting sustainable development in schools means integrating high standards of achievement and behaviour with the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community involvement and citizenship—many of the same aspirations as *Every Child Matters*.

The DfES Sustainable Schools strategy⁴—consulted on over the summer 2006—proposes a framework for sustainable development in schools through eight sustainability “doorways” as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Food and drink | 5 Buildings and grounds |
| 2 Energy and water | 6 Inclusion and participation |
| 3 Travel and traffic | 7 Local well-being |
| 4 Purchasing and waste | 8 Global dimension |

A strong theme within the DfES Sustainable Schools strategy is that school buildings, grounds and the local surroundings offer a resource for learning about real issues in real places among real people as a natural part of their education.

SCHOOLS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy states that “the Building Schools for the Future programme will ensure that all new schools and Academies will be models for sustainable development.” And further that it “provides a valuable opportunity for increasing the efficiency of the school building stock”.⁵

One particular area of interest is the contribution that BSF will make to reducing the carbon footprint of the schools estate, and to reducing emissions in line with the Government's Climate Change Programme. Half of secondary schools will be rebuilt through BSF and 35% will undergo major refurbishment. These schools will be required to meet the carbon performance standards of the Building Regulations. 15% of secondary schools (500 schools) will undergo “minor refurbishment” without any energy efficiency improvement required.

Energy Efficiency

Sustainable Development Commission research shows there are opportunities for maximising the sustainability benefits from the schools' building programme through introducing energy efficiency measures into these schools. They will save 5,000 tonnes of carbon (tC) per year, with a five year payback, after which they would benefit from an average of £5,000 cost savings per year. This will be achieved through low cost measures such as installing improved energy controls, improved lighting, insulated pipework and draught-proofing.

⁴ DfES, 2006, Sustainable Schools: for pupils, communities and the environment.

⁵ HM Government, 2005, Securing the Future: delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

Renewables

On site renewable technologies such as micro-wind, photovoltaics, solar water heating and biomass heating can raise awareness in schools and their communities and contribute to the commercialisation of microgeneration technology.

Using microgeneration as demonstration technologies in just 10% of the 3,000 secondary and 9,000 primary schools due for major refurbishment/rebuild would save at least 23,400 tC with payback on the capital cost within the timescale of a PFI contract (25–30 years—without grant funding). A £50 million capital grant stream has been announced for the installation of microgeneration technologies for local housing authorities, housing associations, schools and other public sector buildings and charitable bodies. Criteria for award of grant funding have not yet been released, so it is not clear how many schools will be able to benefit from funding for microgeneration.

As this funding is very unlikely to cover 100% of microgeneration installation costs, match funding will need to be found by schools.

BREEAM SCHOOLS

- The DfES’s response to the sustainability agenda has been to make it a condition of capital funding that new build and refurbishment projects achieve at least a “very good” rating under the BRE’s environmental assessment method for schools “BREEAM Schools”.
- The SDC has explored the eight DfES doorways in terms of how they could be supported by sustainable school building design. This analysis is included as an Annex in this paper. The role played by the BREEAM Schools standard is also described. Potential targets for a vision for the school estate are also suggested—the SDC is initiating a process to develop a vision so this is work in progress.
- This brief analysis suggests that BREEAM Schools does encourage incremental improvement in environmental design of school buildings, beyond the statutory minimum of the Building Regulations and DfES Building Bulletins, but by itself BREEAM is not sufficient to deliver sustainable schools across the piece. Furthermore:
 - BREEAM Schools does not offer a vision of sustainable school buildings that those commissioning, designing and constructing can work towards. One consequence is that we do not know how BSF will contribute as a whole to, for example, carbon emissions reduction, waste minimisation, water consumption and sustainable travel (for example, we cannot know if carbon emissions will increase or decrease).
 - BREEAM Schools is a flexible standard allowing credits to be scored in any area. The tradability on key resource efficiency areas such as energy and water consumption should be reduced to set minimum standards for key resource efficiency criteria. This would mean that all projects would have to achieve a defined energy efficiency/carbon reduction standard above the regulatory minimum. The development of the Code for Sustainable Homes⁶ is tackling this weakness.
 - BREEAM Schools does not address areas of the built environment that would contribute to the “food and drink” doorway, identified in the Sustainable Schools consultation. It could also incentivise higher performance on other doorways such as “local wellbeing” and “global dimension”.
 - In many priority areas, BREEAM Schools does not incentivise higher performance above the credit thresholds—ie it rewards designs that incorporate cycle parking for 10% of pupils, but does not give any incentive to increase facilities towards 100% of pupils.
- The DfES has not identified a vision for the contribution of the transformation of the schools estate to “macro” UK sustainable development goals, and so intervention is being implemented on a piecemeal basis. The SDC recommends that a vision (plus associated action plan and guidance) should be developed and agreed immediately for the schools estate at 2020. We recommend this work is undertaken in cooperation with industry, client and policy stakeholders to encourage buy-in to the outcomes.
- We consider that a radical review of the standards in BSF and other capital programmes will be necessary to deliver sustainable schools. Such a review would take in BREEAM alongside the range of other requirements, goals, bulletins, standards and guidance that has become associated with capital investment in schools.

⁶ New homes standard being developed by DCLG.

FUNDING AND WHOLE LIFE VALUE

- Schools capital and operational budgets have traditionally been kept separate, yet the concept of procuring for whole life value blurs this distinction. School buildings should be financed to deliver the best value to pupils and their communities over the life of the building. To realise these sustainability benefits means ensuring that capital and running costs can be looked at together—whereas these have traditionally been split in the schools funding framework even for PFI contracts. It means moving away from artificial limits—such as fixed budgets per m² of school floor area.
- Whole life costing is the practice of looking at the cost of building, maintaining and running a building across its whole life, rather than just the build cost. This funding approach is supported by HM Treasury, who would in general expect departments to factor in such best practice across their own capital programme. The situation is different with BSF, however, as the DfES and HM Treasury signed up to a 15-year programme to rebuild or remodel every secondary school in the country. We understand that any rethink involving a higher initial build-cost would be very likely to affect the length of the BSF programme and would therefore need to be agreed across Government.
- The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is being used to finance the majority of the new build schools in BSF. In theory, PFI supports whole life costing as the responsibility (and risk) of both building and maintaining/operating the building over 25 years is held by private sector contractors. As such, they are incentivised to invest in energy-saving and other cost reducing measures (eg durable or low maintenance elements), as these will, over time, contribute to increased profits. In practice, many PFI companies keep their capital and revenue budgets separate, only consider very short paybacks, and miss the opportunities that exist to optimise sustainable design over the buildings' lifetime.
- The majority of the BSF refurbishments are procured conventionally. DfES do not fund this at whole-life levels, and whilst it encourages local authorities to do so, this is not mandatory. This means that for the 50% of secondary schools that are being refurbished, there is no means in place for schools to invest additional capital up front in order to protect themselves from rising utilities costs in future, or to maximise their contribution to wider sustainability goals.
- Schools themselves do have an incentive to invest in whole-life measures as the pay back is directly to their budgets. However, they are constrained by both a lack of awareness of basic energy-saving measures, and insufficient funding for major works. Many schools do not have the capacity or inclination to make significant sustainability interventions.
- Not all sustainable design features will provide a whole-life financial return directly to schools, PFI companies or local authorities, yet they may produce real health, environmental and economic benefits to communities and the wider public sector. Examples include school transport, catering, food growing, conservation, or sustainable technologies with long pay back periods. Many of these features link directly to the goals of Every Child Matters, children's achievement and government strategies and goals around sustainable development and communities.
- The various procurement methods and financing mechanisms being used in schools capital investment should be reviewed and strengthened so that no school project aspiring to increase its contribution to sustainable development is denied that opportunity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINANCING SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

1. *Research*

- Commission research into the whole-life costs and benefits to schools and their communities of sustainable building measures. We know the score on energy efficiency, but the benefits of investments in water, waste, travel, food etc are less quantified.

2. *Invest to save*

- Put in place a mechanism to fund sustainable buildings and grounds investment in new and existing schools, based around the whole-life cost reduction model identified above. The SDC has identified three options:
 - (d) The Government funds a national invest to save scheme since benefits arise across departmental boundaries (eg DH benefits of sustainable travel and food; Defra benefits from reduced energy use).
 - (e) The Government matches local authority (or school-level) contributions (like current Salix scheme co-funded by Carbon Trust) to create a rolling fund held locally that can be used to invest in measures identified through the research above.⁷

⁷ For example the SDC understands that the DfES is planning to bring forward additional devolved capital funding to schools. A proportion of this funding could be reserved specifically to create a revolving fund for sustainability measures.

- (f) Third party funding is used to finance specific sustainability measures, ie schools/local authorities partner with specialist Energy Services Companies (ESCOs) which can provide capital funding for the sustainable energy systems and take on operational/maintenance risk in return for a long term energy supply contract. This approach could be expanded to cover a range of utilities including water and waste, but is unlikely to be a model to finance wider sustainability measures.

3. *Design of BSF and other capital programmes*

- Make the following adjustments in BSF/other capital programmes to drive system change:
 - (a) Extend the lifetime of the BSF programme from 15 to 20 years. In other words spend the same amount each year on creating fewer, higher-quality, schools, but continue past the current end date of 2018 to ensure the same number of schools benefit.
 - (b) Re-evaluate PFI contracting arrangements to build in stronger incentives for meeting sustainability goals. The 25–30 year lifetime of a PFI contract is clearly less than the expected lifetime of a school building, but should allow whole life savings to be made on significant resource efficiency measures. Unfortunately, PFI investment decisions are commonly made on the basis of much shorter timescales.
 - (c) Develop a much bolder, and more absolute, minimum standard for school buildings—ie a Code for Sustainable Schools—to replace the current BREEAM Schools standard and other ad hoc guidance.

4. *Focus on outcomes*

- As explained previously, current Government efforts to support sustainable school design are input rather than outcome focused. Hence it is currently unclear how a programme like BSF will contribute to macro-level sustainable goals like carbon emissions reductions. This is a highly significant weakness: BSF should be working towards an explicit vision that is aligned with Government strategy on sustainable development.
 - (a) Government should set out a national strategy for the environmental performance of the schools estate, including bold targets for 2010, 2015 and 2020, and explain how the various forms of capital investment will help achieve them.
 - (b) Targets should cover at least carbon emissions (including carbon neutral goal), water demand, waste production and travel management, and should mirror central government commitments such as carbon neutrality by 2012.

CONCLUSION

- The BSF programme provides a unique opportunity for the schools estate to contribute significantly to sustainable development goals. Schools are in a key position to influence learning and lifestyles of pupils and also the wider communities in which they are located.
- The standards that have been established for BSF and the funding mechanisms in place do not support schools in fully achieving the sustainable performance set out in the DfES Sustainable Schools Strategy (2006) and the UK Sustainable Development Strategy.
- As recommended by the Sustainable Procurement Task Force, the DfES and HM Treasury need to work together to review how schools (rebuilt and refurbishments) can be procured on the basis of whole life value (broadly defined) to maximise the contribution to sustainable development.

Annex 2

ANALYSIS OF BREEAM SCHOOLS BY SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL THEME

1. FOOD AND DRINK

Government goal

An unhealthy diet contributes to obesity and poor pupil concentration. Healthy, ethically sourced food can reverse these effects while protecting the environment and supporting local producers and suppliers.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of healthy, local and sustainable food and drink produced or prepared on site (where possible), with strong commitments to the environment, social responsibility and animal welfare, and with increased opportunity to involve local suppliers.

BREEAM does not currently contribute to the “food and drink” goal.

Possible built environment response:

- Space for growing food on all feasible school sites.

- Space and facilities for composting food, green waste and biodegradable materials and all school sites.
- Space for community farmers market on all feasible school grounds.
- All schools to have suitable facilities for preparation of fresh food.

2. ENERGY AND WATER

Government goal

Rising demand for energy and water is storing up problems for future generations. Energy and water conservation can tackle this problem while saving schools money.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of energy efficiency and renewable energy, showcasing wind, solar and bio-fuel sources in their communities, and maximising their use of rainwater and wastewater resources.

BREEAM creates a framework to encourage designers to implement energy and water efficient design features. CO₂ emissions should be minimised, and energy management is recognised. Low water use fittings, rainwater/greywater recycling and water management technologies are encouraged. BREEAM does not define a carbon emissions goal for school buildings. However importantly, the energy standards for refurbished schools are the same as for new schools, which sets a challenging requirement.

Possible built environment response:

- Construction phase of all new buildings/refurbishments carbon neutral.
- All school buildings carbon neutral in operation by 2020.
- All schools carbon emissions (direct and indirect) reduced by 30% over 1990 levels by 2020.
- All schools showcase renewable energy (with technologies safely accessible where possible) for use as a learning resource and community focus.
- All schools optimise rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling, with a target to reduce mains water consumption by 25% on 2004 levels by 2020. Consider setting a water consumption target of m³ per person/year
- All schools to have interactive displays about heat, power, water usage and weather conditions.

(These goals should be achieved despite the changes in building use anticipated through extended schools.)

3. TRAVEL AND TRAFFIC

Government goal

Rising vehicle use adds to congestion, road accidents and pollution. Car-sharing and public transportation help ease these concerns, while walking and cycling also boost fitness and well-being.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of sustainable travel where vehicles are used only when absolutely necessary and facilities for healthier, less polluting or less dangerous modes of transport are exemplary.

BREEAM rewards designs for site selection for good public transport facilities, good cyclist facilities, and safe and secure pedestrian and cycle access routes. BREEAM does not have high aspirations for delivering cycle/pedestrian travel—a maximum of cycle spaces for 10% of pupils is rewarded.

Possible built environment response:

- All schools to have cycling facilities for 100% of pupils that have the option to cycle to school.
- All schools to be located on designated cycle routes, or appropriate cycle routes to be established if they do not exist. Infrastructure requirements for the creation of safe walking and cycling routes and public transport within the school catchment to be an integral part of the planning application and construction costs for new schools and major refurbishments
- All schools to have well defined safe walking routes within at least a 1.5 km radius of the school. Infrastructure requirements to deter the school run (eg to encourage parking away from the school and provision for safe walking the last 1.5 km) to be an integral part of the planning application and construction costs for new schools and major refurbishments.

4. PURCHASING AND WASTE

Government goal

Waste, and the throw-away culture that encourages it, can be addressed through sustainable consumption. Schools can reduce costs and support markets for ethical goods and services at the same time.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of resource efficiency, using low impact goods that minimise (or eliminate) disposable packaging from local suppliers with high environmental and ethical standards, and recycling, repairing and reusing as much as possible.

BREEAM encourages use of construction materials with a low life cycle environmental impact and reuse/recycling of construction materials as well as encouraging provision of facilities for recycling of consumables in use.

Possible built environment response:

- Diversion of 80% of construction waste from landfill.
- All schools to reduce their waste arisings by 25% by 2020, relative to 2004–05 levels.
- All schools to recycle 75% of their waste arisings by 2020, with goal of zero waste to landfill by 2050.
- All schools to include combined school and community recycling facilities.
- All schools to have live interactive displays about recycling progress, material flows for use in learning.
- All schools to have repair workshops to recondition equipment or prepare for reuse or charitable giving.

5. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Government goal

Good design of school buildings and grounds can translate into improved staff morale, pupil behaviour and achievement, as well as opportunities for food growing and nature conservation.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be regarded as living, learning places where pupils see what a sustainable lifestyle means through their involvement in the improvement of school buildings, grounds and the natural environment.

BREEAM recognises good design practice in:

- engaging the community: to involve the local community and building users, flexibility in the design to enable the building to be used as a shared facility with the local community and reducing the opportunity for crime;
- design for good management: enabling building users to understand and operate the building efficiently, buildings that can be easily maintained during lifecycle; and
- learning dimension: the building and school site to be a learning resource.

However, these elements are not prioritised within the BREEAM tool. This means they are not weighted heavily in the scoring in comparison to other elements.

Possible built environment response:

- All schools increase the ecological value of their estate by 50% over 2004 levels by 2020.
- All sustainable design features to be revealed and interpreted as learning resources.
- All schools to engage stakeholders in design of buildings and grounds.

6. INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

Government goal

Schools can promote a sense of community by providing an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that values everyone's participation and contribution, and challenges prejudice and injustice in all its forms.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of social inclusion, enabling all pupils to participate fully in school life while instilling a long-lasting respect for human rights, freedoms and creative expression.

BREEAM does not promote design of accessible environments for visually or mobility impaired users. It recognises involvement of the local community and building users in the design process in order to increase local "ownership".

Possible built environment response:

- Accessible, flexible, adaptable design of building and grounds for all.
- Quality space for display of school work and ethos to community.

- Facilities to allow monitoring of performance of the school environment to promote learning about the building.
- Meaningful consultation in school design involving pupils, staff and local community (including feeder schools).
- Quiet areas for thought and prayer.

7. LOCAL WELL-BEING

Government goal

With their central locations and extensive facilities, schools can act as hubs of learning and change in their local communities, contributing to the environment and quality of life while strengthening key relationships.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of good corporate citizenship within their local areas, enriching their educational mission with active support for the well-being of the local community and environment.

BREEAM recognises involvement of the local community and building users in the design process in order to increase local “ownership” and accommodate a range of travel options for building users.

Possible built environment response:

- All schools to include facilities and flexibility to act as extended schools, including child care, adult learning and other community use.
- All schools to showcase sustainable design features and technologies to the local community, such as renewable energy systems and water/energy efficiency devices.

8. GLOBAL DIMENSION

Government goal

Growing interdependence between countries changes the way we view the world, including our own culture. Schools can respond by developing a responsible, international outlook among young people, based upon an appreciation of the impact of their personal values, choices and behaviours on global challenges.

By 2020 we would like all schools to be models of good global citizenship, enriching their educational mission with active support for the well-being of the global environment and community.

BREEAM recognises the specification of responsibly sourced materials in construction.

Possible built environment response:

- All timber used in building projects to be obtained from certified sustainable sources.
- All materials used to have country of origin recorded.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by ARUP

THE QUANTIFICATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TARGETS REGARDING CARBON REDUCTION IN SCHOOL DESIGN

This note has been prepared to outline how school design needs to be changed in order to reduce the ecological impact of the buildings in construction and operation in order to support a Climate Change Mitigation Strategy that targets a stabilisation of CO₂ levels in the order of 550ppm.

SCOPE

The note is concerned with an aspect, Environmental Sustainability alone, and specifically carbon emissions. Socio-economic needs have not been considered. However, the design and operation of School Buildings play a fundamental part in the education of today’s children in how to deal with an issue that is likely to become a fundamental change driver over their lifetime.

Where should our focus be?

Our impact upon the planets ability to regulate CO₂ levels can be broadly split in to two issues:

- Carbon Emissions.
- Reducing the ability of planetary systems to absorb atmospheric carbon.

The primary method in which Schools can support the tackling of these issues is through curriculum development and strong leadership in citizenship.

However, of all building types, school building design should lead in demonstrating the level of reduction required in order to stabilise carbon emissions at an acceptable level.

How far do we need to go and why?

Within the global scientific community, there is disagreement regarding how much we need to reduce carbon emissions in order to achieve an acceptable concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. A significant number of variables are currently preventing the agreement of an accurate figure. Estimates seem to range from 60 to 100%. The following is indicative of the process of definition.

According to the Met Office,⁸ it is predicted that by the year 2030 the capacity of the biosphere to absorb carbon will be 2.7 billion tonnes per year. Therefore, in order for the carbon cycle to achieve balance, the world's population can emit no more than 2.7 billion tonnes. In 2030, global population is likely to be around 8.2 billion. Therefore each person in the world will have a carbon allowance of 0.33 tonnes. The UK currently emits 2.6 tonnes⁹ per person. Therefore a reduction of 87% is required to achieve a sustainable level of carbon emissions. This is a simplistic approach and does not take in to account the negative effect of the 200 years that CO₂ remains in the atmosphere.¹⁰

The UK Government's draft Climate Change Bill commits the country to reducing Carbon emissions by 60% by the year 2050. Irrespective of the actual reduction figure required, due to the rate at which our building stock is refreshed (approximately 1% per annum), new and refurbished building carbon emissions need to be reduced dramatically in order to have any effect upon total emissions from buildings (currently around 1/3 of UK emissions).

If, for instance, 70% of all schools are to be refurbished or replaced between 2010 and 2050, to achieve the 60% reduction the new and refurbished schools would collectively need to operate at an 86% reduction below current emissions in order to achieve the overall 60% reduction.

Although it is acknowledged that significant levels of carbon reduction will be virtually impossible to achieve on a wide scale immediately, there are several reasons why a strong target needs to be introduced immediately:

- Carbon emissions in schools are still rising due to ICT proliferation;
- The Design and Construction techniques required to achieve this figure are not widely understood, therefore there is a significant capacity issue; and
- There is a need to realign public and construction industry understanding of the degree of change required.

Therefore, a standard of design, construction and operation is required that reflects zero climatic impact. It is acknowledged that in the vast majority of cases this standard will not be achieved and therefore should not be required under building regulations. However, an environmental "kitemark" should be defined that correlates with zero impact in order to demonstrate how much design and operational behaviour needs to change in order to deliver schools which will work within the ecological capacity of the planet.

What does this mean for school design?

The issues can be split in to direct and indirect carbon emissions.

Direct	Indirect
Power	Food
Heating	Transport
Cooling	Consumables
Water	Waste

School Building design drives the direct emissions and has a significant impact upon the indirect emissions. It should also be noted that behavioural changes are vital in order to effect the requisite reduction in carbon emissions.

From our work in designing low and zero carbon buildings in other sectors, the following issues should be considered:

- Extension of the school day to maximise the utilisation of the building;
- Significant changes in learning models to support a move towards high levels of pupil centred learning from home in order to reduce the size of the building;
- Increase in landtake to maximise daylighting and natural ventilation;
- Banning Air Conditioning, unless a system can be proposed that has lower carbon emissions than a well designed naturally ventilated solution;

⁸ Colin Forrest *The Cutting Edge: Climate Science to April 2005*: http://www.climatecrisis.net/downloads/THE_CUTTING_EDGE_CLIMATE_SCIENCE_TO_APRIL_05.pdf

⁹ Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Annual 2003, 2005*, Table H.cco2 (World Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions from the Consumption and Flaring of Fossil Fuels, 1980–2003).

¹⁰ The Royal Society, *A Guide to Facts and Fictions about Climate Change*, 2005: <http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=1630>

- Softening of acoustic regulations to promote natural ventilation;
- Integrating energy systems with surrounding residential developments to maximise plant operational efficiencies; and
- Significant increases in capital cost.

Why BREEAM in its current form is inappropriate

The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) is an easy to use tool used across the construction industry to assess the sustainability credentials of a building. The tool functions by awarding points across a structured matrix of design, construction and operational characteristics. It is a reasonable tool to guide teams in improving the sustainability credentials of a building. However, it has two characteristics which render it currently inappropriate as a methodology to achieve the degree of carbon emissions required to achieve the 60% reduction target.

- Only around 1/3 of the assessment relates to carbon emissions.
- BREEAM “excellent” can be achieved with a relatively minor improvement in carbon reduction.

These issues need to be addressed if BREEAM is to be used to support the headline reduction target.

LIKELY IMPACTS

Based upon our knowledge of the introduction of strong carbon reduction targets, the likely short term impacts of the introduction of a strong carbon reduction target for the sector are:

- Increased Design and Construction Programme in the order of 30% due to Technical and Delivery Capacity issues; and
- Increased Capital Costs in the order of 20% due to Design and Construction changes.

The latter point may be partially addressed by revisiting the space norms and curriculum.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- The incorporation of carbon reduction planning within the procurement of ICT solutions for schools.
- Re-evaluation of the acoustic design standards.
- Undertake research to establish how a school would operate if it had a physical size 20% lower than currently defined under BB98.
- Undertake a desktop study to examine how a school can be designed and operated to achieve the requisite carbon reduction targets.

March 2007

Witnesses: **Mr Chris Archer**, Services Director (Policy and Performance), Children’s Services Department, Nottingham City Council, **Mr Jim Burke**, Principal, Academy of St Francis of Assisi, Liverpool, and **Ms Caroline Morland**, Edunova Ltd, gave evidence.

Q553 Chairman: Could I welcome Jim Burke, Chris Archer and Caroline Morland to our deliberations. I saw Jim and Chris. Caroline, were you listening to that last session?

Ms Morland: Yes.

Q554 Chairman: I hope you found it interesting. We certainly found it a very good session. We are squeezed for time but we are going to get started. You listened to that. Were they talking about the world that you inhabit? Did it strike a chord with your experience?

Mr Burke: Certainly. I am the principal of a new Academy which was built very much with sustainable development in mind. It is a joint faith Academy serving a very disadvantaged area of Liverpool. We moved into our new building in September 2005, although it was not actually completed until March 2006 so we had a phase of contractors on site. Nevertheless, our Academy has many environmental

features which were alluded to, so we have been re-harvesting rainwater, using solar power, we used recycled materials for part of the furniture infrastructure, concrete mass structure (which obviously has thermal mass benefits), photovoltaic cells, et cetera, so we feel very privileged that we have got a lot of these sustainable features. Where I sympathise with head teachers in the BSF process, though, is that I had 12 months of helping at the planning stage, so I was able to work with architects, understand what the building was going to be about, the features that it had. I had that opportunity also to start planning the curriculum so that sustainability could be integrated into the curriculum. My colleagues in BSF have to manage their schools on a day-to-day basis at the same time as trying to prepare for their new school, trying to take on board all the issues of sustainability and crash courses in a day. I had 12 months, effectively, and so when people ask, “Can you skill up heads very quickly?”, I think that is going to

1 November 2006 Mr Chris Archer, Mr Jim Burke and Ms Caroline Morland

be immensely difficult in terms of everything else that a head teacher is supposed to do. The other aspect is that we are very much a greenhouse in the sense we have been closely monitored, and, to be fair to the DfES, they have already produced case studies on sustainable schools, and I know that because we feature in a booklet which they recently produced. What they are starting to do is produce a body of evidence to look at what schools should have if they are to be truly sustainable.

Q555 Chairman: Why are you so good on sustainability?

Mr Burke: Because at the outset our school's speciality was always going to be science/sustainability, and so when the architects were engaged that was their brief: "You have got to build a sustainable school."

Q556 Chairman: How did you make yourself a good client? Why are you so good? *The Independent* says you are Britain's greenest school. Have you been a secret environmental warrior all these years?

Mr Burke: *Aux contraire*, I was obviously very interested in the environment and sustainability, but again I worked very closely with the architect and the builder. Just post design stage the architect was engaged because he had environmental sustainability credentials, but I was able to engage with him at a very early stage, and indeed my senior management team were able to engage with the architects at an early stage, so we were part of that process. We came in looking at what would the impacts of sustainability be on our students, on our curriculum, on engaging the community, but effectively the architects themselves were the people who were there as the experts, and really there was a steep learning curve for us which they helped us with considerably.

Q557 Chairman: Chris, if you were advising, what sort of back-up would you give in Nottingham if you had got a new school, a new wave? Are you in the first wave?

Mr Archer: No, we are in wave two.

Q558 Chairman: You listened to the last lot of evidence and you have now listened to Jim. Where are you in all this?

Mr Archer: I think the first thing to say is I learnt a great deal from the first set of evidence, so I will make that quite clear from the outset. Secondly, from the point of view of the position in which we find ourselves in wave two, our first reference scheme schools and their head teachers and management teams and their student body—we have not heard too much about the involvement of students in that whole process—are actively engaged in planning what their school will look like when construction begins, we hope, in January 2008. We are talking about a much better lead-in time than the lead-in times that you have heard about thus far. I think it is also true to say that we have put our emphasis at this stage on thinking about what will the educational experience look like, what is education looking like as we cast our eyes forward, what sort

of experience do we want those young people to have and what can they tell us about the experience they are having now to help us get it better for the future? The sustainability and environmental issues are on the agenda, but they are a little bit further behind, and it seems to me, having listened, that one of the crucial things that I have heard this morning is that BREEAM, for example, is not good enough. We are in the process of thinking, providing we are heading for that BREEAM "excellent" standard, then we are going to do what is necessary. If that is not the case, we need to know quickly, because we do have a will to do that but we can only do it with the best kind of advice.

Q559 Chairman: Have you gone to look at schools like Jim's to learn lessons?

Mr Archer: We have not specifically looked at Jim's school and we have not sought out schools on environmental sustainability yet, although I think that we are minded to look at those issues already. We have some primary schools in Nottingham that already have some significant environmentally friendly features, so we have got that on the agenda but it has not been a primary focus as yet.

Q560 Chairman: Caroline, we are looking at the sustainable school holistically and Chris has just mentioned what goes on in a school. We have been concentrating to date a lot on the building, the fabric, the sustainability, and so on, the energy, the carbon footprint. Do you know anything about schools later in the 21st century? People have been saying to this Committee, "It is not going to be 30 students in a room with a teacher with white boards or computers, it is going to be something different". Is it?

Ms Morland: I think it has the potential to be something different. I think it will stay comparatively the same if we are not investing, as you say, in some of this expert dialogue about how we move from where we currently are to some of those potential features, because one of the tensions in the system is everybody has their day job, so, they are out there, they are delivering, they are working with young people, they do not have the time to go away and think about how they are going to deploy their ICT to re-engineer the process of learning, how they are going to change the group organisation, the curriculum and the timetable in advance of them locking themselves into an infrastructure. It is that process and building capacity within the system to release the debating time and the exploring time for all the practitioners and the students and, critically, the parents, stakeholders who have views and opinions about this, in a debate about how it could be different. It is interesting. Just picking up on some of the earlier evidence, it is that debate between conflicting priorities. I have spent a lot of time working with schools and stakeholders trying to develop recommendations or specifications. Their key priority is always going to be learning and outcomes, and that is what they think about, and they tend to then prioritise things like equipment, furniture, area. So the bigger the better, then we have

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got some flexibility to reorganise and do different things above and beyond sustainability, because that is who they are, they are practitioners—that is their deliverable, their outcome and their experience. So, unless we have got a balancing voice sitting alongside them championing sustainability in a positive and collaborative way, because I think everybody's heart is in the right place, they want a sustainable school, but if we are then throwing more money at the problem, that money will get spent on bigger schools, it will not necessarily get spent on more sustainable schools.

Q561 Chairman: So you are suggesting there should be a sustainability champion locally?

Ms Morland: I think so. I am a big advocate. Again, trying to solve the problem of how we find the time for this consultation and how we find the time to get expert clients is that we need a smaller team of representatives who can become the experts on behalf of a group of schools or a cluster of schools. There has got to be constant communication back down, but I think, going back to the point about is BSF the biggest programme, in one sense it is one of the biggest programmes, in another sense it is one of the most fragmented and smallest programmes because the actual individual procurement decisions are actually quite small and, therefore, are not getting the impact and the savings.

Chairman: Thank you for that.

Q562 Jeff Ennis: I guess most of my questions will be focused on trying to tease out from Chris a bit more information about the Nottingham model. It appears to me, Chris, you have got quite a high percentage of new Academies coming on stream. I am wondering why you decided on having three Academies in Nottingham, and who were the sponsors of the three Academies as well?

Mr Archer: The short answer is we will have four, at least that is what we aim to have, because we already had an existing Academy, Djanogly City Academy. The short answer probably is that the opportunity of that much major investment into the city was seen as locally too good an opportunity for future generations to miss. I think underlying that there is a series of other issues. Clearly, we had a good relationship with Djanogly Academy and felt that it was doing a good job, and therefore the opportunity to replicate that was important to us. I think it is also true to say that we have pockets of chronic under-achievement in Nottingham and we are looking at every opportunity we can to raise that achievement and to raise the aspiration that leads to that achievement.

Q563 Chairman: Graham Allen keeps telling us about that. He is trying to do something about it.

Mr Archer: I am sure he does, as he tells us when he talks with us. I think that we saw it as the opportunity. The third thing is that we have embraced the notion that we have got to look at every possible opportunity in the diverse nature of secondary education possibilities that are around to us, and Academies are clearly one of them.

Alongside that, of course, we want to make sure that we do not leave these as free, independent organisations which do not play a part in the whole, but I am sure you are going to come to that in a moment.

Q564 Jeff Ennis: I am wondering, because hopefully you are going to have a big BSF programme as well as a new Academy programme, how well will these programmes mesh together? Will it be a seamless service or are there any tensions between the two?

Mr Archer: It has been absolutely fundamental to us from the outset that the two are as seamless as they can possibly be. What we have tried to develop is a vision for educational provision across the city that sees those Academies strategically placed. We have set out, for example, to create three clusters of secondary schools across the city, but they will now be co-operative clusters. They are already formed into education improvement partnerships. The Academy will be a significant player in each of those education improvement partnerships from the outset; they will co-operate with us over things like 14–19 provision, hard to place pupils, the issues related to SEN. It is fundamental to our planning of those Academies within the whole BSF programme that they are a part of the whole family of schools and not separate from it.

Q565 Jeff Ennis: How do you engage the communities in such a big rationalisation process? I have been involved in that, because we have got a big BSF programme in Barnsley currently. Will the communities know the difference if they are in an Academy area or in a BSF area?

Mr Archer: I suppose I hope, in a way, that they do not. What they experience is excellent education in every area of the City of Nottingham, but there will be opportunities for young people who are experiencing their education in Academy to go into other community schools to access part of their 14–19 offering, the vocational element of it perhaps, they might go into other schools as part of their Extended Schools offering, so gifted and talented students might pass from one school to another for different things. In a sense, I hope that what we do not see is a two or three-tier system, because we want excellence for all of our communities. So far, when we have presented to our communities that this is our vision and this is our hope for them, almost overwhelmingly we have had community support for that approach.

Q566 Jeff Ennis: Do you see there being any difference in the sustainability element that is embedded in the new schools between BSF schools and the Academies? Are they all going to be working to the same high standard?

Mr Archer: I think the major change over the last six months, of course, has been the move to embed the procurement of the Academies in the Local Education Partnership through the BSF process as opposed to being procured separately. What that means is that as a local authority, and, therefore, into the Local Education Partnership, we will have

the opportunity to have a very significant say in the building standards and the sustainability standards that we are expecting to produce. There is still quite a bit of tension yet to work out how that whole system is going to work. Nevertheless, the trade-off will be that we ensure that consistency.

Q567 Jeff Ennis: One final question, Chairman. It is not really relevant to the sustainability issue, but I notice that you have got five secondary schools and two special schools involved in the BSF programme in Nottingham, according to our brief. Did you consider the possibility of having a joint campus between a secondary school and a special school like the Darlington Education Village-type scenario?

Mr Archer: We actually have and are developing one. It is not going to be quite the same mode as Darlington, but we have a campus where a brand new special school is going to be created from the closure of two highly successful special schools already, to create a centre of excellence which will sit side by side with our full service extended school, which is to be heavily refurbished, but will also sit on the site of a primary school, also sit on the same campus as the local tartan running track and the sports centre and the proposed new competition-standard swimming pool. So, what we are aiming for is a campus of some magnitude here.

Q568 Helen Jones: Caroline, do you think that we are perhaps missing a major opportunity here to rethink the way that education is delivered? It was interesting, you said earlier that practitioners find it difficult to do that because of time, but, surely, if you are a major practitioner in education, that ought to be one of your major concerns? Why is that being missed, in your view, if it is, and what can we do about it?

Ms Morland: I think there are a lot of debates going on in the education community about new models for learning, and so on. I think there is a challenge. I suppose my personal experience is heavily emphasised on the capital programmes, and the prioritising of spending for the capital programmes tends to be in highly deprived areas and in schools that need their attainment and achievement improved. So, you are dealing with stakeholders who are currently managing quite significant operational challenges and, therefore, they have less time.

Q569 Helen Jones: Or in some cases not managing.

Ms Morland: Exactly, in some cases not managing. So, we are orienting quite a lot of the BSF funding and thinking to a group of people who are dealing with behaviour, dealing with deprivation, dealing with stabilising a school community so they can start accessing the curriculum and achieving and not necessarily targeting some of the capital programmes to more of our innovative schools who are high performers who may have more space in their leadership and mental time to explore new models of learning.

Q570 Helen Jones: Does the capital programme not give you a major opportunity to tackle those issues? Why are people missing out on the connection is what I am asking.

Ms Morland: I think the day-to-day practicality of actually having the time to engage in thinking through the vision. Nottingham and all the BSF authorities are going through processes of pulling head teachers together, communities, stakeholder engagement and debating conversations, but actually getting those head teachers away from their day-to-day reality and having the confidence to believe that there is a new way of working that they can deliver on the ground. We can all talk theory, the Chairman mentioned it at the beginning, but it is that genuine belief that they can deliver that theory and it is not going to destabilise what is happening today. That is a lot of the tension in the system from my experience.

Q571 Helen Jones: Jim, St Francis of Assisi serves a very deprived community. How much did changing the kind of education that was on offer affect your thinking and how did you link that into making the school sustainable in environmental terms?

Mr Burke: The school was built on the principle of sustainability. We looked at it: how do we build sustainability into the school? Obviously there are opportunities across the curriculum, and we have engaged in major projects involving subjects like DT, geography, science, art, *et cetera*, which have engaged the children practically. One practical activity they have engaged in is they have designed, costed and produced garden areas around the school—these are our new Academy intake—which was a fantastic learning experience and directly related to the curriculum, and so sustainability is really at the heart of everything we are trying to do. In terms of teaching and learning, clearly again I had time—we keep coming back to this—to look at what the building was about and how we could or how we should change our teaching and learning activities to ensure that we were taking terrific advantage of the building and, at the same time, raising standards. Whilst we have only been open 12 months, I think that all the effort that the staff and governors have put in has proved beneficial. Our results have improved remarkably after just 12 months, and not only have achievements improved but attendance has improved, people's attitudes have improved and exclusions have reduced, and so I feel that we have taken terrific advantage. In addition to that, we have also attracted terrific community support, because again, in terms of sustainability, our resources are there for the use of the whole community. We are open from seven in the morning, when our first pupils arrive, to 10 in the evening and our communities basically use it from five o'clock onwards. All in all, I think the building of a school in that area has had enormous benefits for the whole community.

Helen Jones: That leads me on to what I want to ask about the building and design of schools. The schools that we are going to build now have got to deliver, not just the kind of education we want now

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but they have got to be buildings capable of perhaps delivering a vastly changed education in the future. They are also expected, in many cases, to deliver things for the community around them in terms of community facilities and so on. I wonder if any of you can tell me what you know about any best practice involving the community but also what assessment is made of these buildings to see whether they will be fit for purpose, not just now when they are built but at the end of this century?

Q572 Chairman: Who is going to take that? Caroline, you have looked at the private and the public sector experience, have you not?

Ms Morland: Yes, we advise on both of those. Starting at the end, how we are checking that they are future-proof. Certainly on a technical level, there is quite a lot of emphasis throughout the BSF process on this and the architects are being challenged. Some of the things that schools are now asking for in their more expert role is: "Show me how that building looks when we open it in September 2009, show me what it will look like in 2013 and show me what it could look like in 2020."

Q573 Helen Jones: How do you know if it will be fit for purpose if nobody has thought through the educational implications?

Ms Morland: We are building in choice, so the solutions that are coming out now are more around the plural world, that the building will be fit for multiple ways of doing things with different configurations and different deployment of technology and internal structures. So, we are not backing one horse. We are not saying we can look into a crystal ball and we know what it is going to be like in 15 years' time for that school. What we are saying is it could be this, it could be that and it could be another and this building will be resilient to certain forms of adaptation to enable it to operate irrespective of which model ends up evolving and developing in that community and in that school. I suppose there is a small suite of scenarios that we are genuinely considering, some respond to the smaller schools, school within a school type concept, some respond to the more personalised, more autonomous learner that Kent and Birmingham may be pushing. There are probably four or five scenarios that we test a technical building against rather than 150, but what we are striving for is that we are not making that determination, we are not forcing a single pathway in terms of the infrastructure, and we are enabling the building to move depending on how the educational emphasis goes.

Helen Jones: When St Francis's was built, as I understand it, in the original model the Academy's sponsor had quite a strong role. I wonder if I could ask Jim how strong a role the sponsor had in driving the designing and whether Chris could tell us what is happening in Nottingham where the whole thing seems to be more integrated. What is the role of the sponsors in Nottingham compared with the role that they would have had in driving the design of St Francis?

Q574 Chairman: Jim, you are an early Academy, are you not?

Mr Burke: Yes, we are one of the first 27, I think. Our sponsors had significant influence in the design of the school. As I say, our sponsors are the Catholic Church and the Church of England, and sustainability in the environment and care of the environment were key features of the building; so when they engaged the architects the brief was, "Build me a school with those principles of sustainability at the heart of any design", and that is why they engaged the firm that they did, because the team of architects employed very much met the criteria laid down by the sponsors.

Q575 Chairman: Who were the architects?

Mr Burke: Capita Percy Thomas.

Q576 Chairman: And the builders?

Mr Burke: Birse.

Q577 Helen Jones: What about Nottingham?

Mr Archer: I think this is an area that gives us some anxiety and it is yet really to be tested. The situation currently is that the sponsors are engaged in the visioning process, they have appointed their project management groups, they have got a project manager appointed by the DfES Academies unit to develop all of that. At the same time we are working really hard to ensure that we have got the infrastructure in place to develop the outline business case for what the building will be and what it will look like. We have already got indications of what the funding envelope is, but we have obviously got to turn that into some kind of outline plan, probably up to RIBA Stage B, to hand on to the LEP when it is formed at the end of next year if we are going to meet our target of the buildings being completed by September 2009. What gives me anxiety is ensuring that we do not have discontinuity between what the sponsor wants and believes and has an aspiration for and what we can deliver and what meets our fundamental standards and that sustainability will be part of this.

Q578 Helen Jones: Who are the sponsors?

Mr Archer: The sponsors who have been declared for the two Academies that are in that feasibility stage, in one case it is the Edge Organisation, which is a charitable organisation, and you are familiar with them; in the other case it is a combination of a private sponsor, David Samworth, and the University of Nottingham, and they are working in concert.

Q579 Helen Jones: Finally, we have talked a lot about building new schools with the BSF and a lot of schools are being refurbished as well. How do the sustainability issues feed into the refurbishment of schools—perhaps Caroline can answer this—and are people as aware of them when they do refurbishments as they should be?

Ms Morland: I have sat on a couple of design teams very recently having this conversation, and I think the reality is that expectations on the client side have

not understood the impacts of sustainability in terms of refurbishment. What I am hearing from the design teams (and that is obviously their competence, not mine) is that just to upgrade technically a refurbished school to some of the sustainability standards that we want to achieve will take the lion's share, if not 100%, of the funding envelope and will leave almost nothing for re-equipping or re-modelling the actual areas of the school and how they would work. We have got a client out there who thinks they are going to get a refurbished school that will move them towards new ways of working, and actually what they are going to get is window replacement, structural changes, changes to their heating systems which will make the building more sustainable but, to be honest, they will not, or may not, notice in terms of its impact on the actual operation of how that school can work.

Q580 Paul Holmes: The figures for the cost of building new schools, on average we are told that a BSF school is about £14.5 million and that an Academy is about £25 million. The Government quibble about this. In Nottingham's experience what is the cost of the two areas of schools that you have either built or are about to, and what was Jim's cost?

Mr Archer: Obviously, I do not know about Jim's cost. The figures that we are looking at obviously vary according to the size of the school, but I would have said slightly more than the £14 million, nearer towards the high teens of millions for the average type of comprehensive school that we are going to build.

Q581 Paul Holmes: What about the three Academies?

Mr Archer: The Academies are going to be built to the same funding formula. Back to the previous question, managing that tension between expectation and reality, I think, could be quite difficult.

Q582 Paul Holmes: What was the cost of your Academy?

Mr Burke: Capital cost was just over £16 million, £16.5 million. That is for 7,800 square metres.

Q583 Paul Holmes: Does that include all the design costs?

Mr Burke: There are the fees on top of that. In total I think everything came to around £20 million with the fees.

Q584 Mr Marsden: What proportion of your students at the Academy are special needs or children with disabilities, would you say? What sort of numbers?

Mr Burke: On the special needs register we have approximately one-third of the school. Statementing is quite low, about 2%, which is fairly average.

Q585 Mr Marsden: The reason I ask the question is we are talking about sustainability, and access is part of that as well. I just wondered, accepting they are not all going to be in a wheelchair or have that sort of physical disability, to what extent access was built into the design process and to what extent you are finding fewer difficulties in accommodating them compared with your experiences in traditional schools previously?

Mr Burke: Of course the building has to comply with DDA regulations, which it does, so there is no problem in terms of physical access. I think the issue is curricular access given the large number of youngsters with special needs that we have. That is where most of our energies are aimed. In terms of the predecessor school, it is very similar, because the predecessor school was similarly in a disadvantaged area with similar numbers of youngsters with special needs. What we are finding though is that we can far greater meet the needs of our youngsters with special needs in a learning environment such as we have with the emphasis on technology, just with the whole building. It is a lighter, airier building and it is more conducive to learning. There is no doubt that a building can have a direct impact on youngsters learning, particularly youngsters with special needs whose needs generally, certainly in the predecessor school, were not well served.

Q586 Chairman: Do the students love the school?

Mr Burke: Absolutely, they are very proud of the school. When we have visitors, which we do regularly, the youngsters take the visitors round and, without exception, we have had terrific feedback about how knowledgeable, how keen, how proud they are of the school, so it has made a fantastic difference in terms of self-esteem.

Q587 Chairman: In your part of Liverpool, was there ever any thought of making a multi-faith Academy embracing other faiths.

Mr Burke: Well, I would argue that ours is.

Q588 Chairman: It is dual.

Mr Burke: It is dual, it is Catholic/Church of England, but really it is Church of England/community. So, in fact, if you look at percentages, it is somewhere in the region of 50% Catholic youngsters, probably 15% Church of England and the rest are youngsters of no faith and other faiths.

Q589 Chairman: Do you have a substantial number of Muslim children?

Mr Burke: We are increasingly attracting some, because the predecessor school was a Catholic school. We are now joint-faith but our admissions area is the immediate area of Kensington and Fairfield where there are a significant number of youngsters with English as an additional language, so our numbers will increase as the Academy grows.

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Q590 Chairman: Are you totally happy with your architect and your builder?

Mr Burke: Yes, without a doubt.

Chairman: That is a good recommendation.

Q591 Stephen Williams: A quick question to Mr Burke first and maybe the other witnesses as well. In these sessions when we talk about sustainability we tend to look at the carbon footprint, how the school contributes to current learning patterns or the wow factor for the children, that you have essentially just mentioned, but “built to last” ought to be part of sustainability as well. How confident are you that the children of Fairfield and Kensington, I think you said, in Liverpool will still be going through the gates of this school in 2106?

Mr Burke: Do you mean will it be attractive to them?

Q592 Stephen Williams: Will the building still be there?

Mr Burke: The concrete structure has a 200-year lifespan, we know the wood has a 70-year lifespan, and so in terms of sustainability I think we have got reasonable value for money.

Q593 Stephen Williams: So the wood is there for the next 70 years?

Mr Burke: Yes.

Q594 Chairman: What do you make of the suggestion that all schools should have sprinkler systems put in when they build them? Is that part of sustainability? Do you have them in your school?

Mr Burke: No, we do not.

Q595 Chairman: Is that not an horrendous cost for insurance if you do not have a sprinkler system?

Mr Burke: You mean because we do not have a sprinkler system, did the costs go up? Not at all. We are a concrete mass school.

Q596 Chairman: It is just that we were told that many schools are not having sprinkler systems, and this Committee has been told that every school really should have them, and that in fact the payback, in terms of reduced insurance premiums, is that you will have paid for it in six years. Chris, what is your philosophy on this? Is it part of sustainability to have sprinkler systems built into a modern school?

Mr Archer: Our thinking at the moment is that we probably will, driven by our insurers to make that a likely necessity, yes.

Q597 Chairman: We visit schools in terms of all sorts of inquiries and we go to some newly built where they say, not just sprinkler systems, “We have cut this out, we have cut that out”, and they seem to be concentrating on the upfront capital costs, whereas they are not looking at what the payback would be in terms of reduced energy bills and insurance premiums over a 10, 20-year lifetime. Is that something that you recognise, Chris?

Mr Archer: I think there is a definite danger that the long-term is going to be sacrificed for the short-term. Obviously, PFI contracts lead you towards certainly

a 25-year period and considering sustainability over that period of time, but there is not any doubt, the talk that we have had of a once in a generation opportunity to renew, and so on, means that we have to get this right for a sustained period of time. We have got to imagine that these buildings are still going to be occupied in 100 years’ time, like some of the Victorian ones we have talked about, and therefore we have got to do our best to ensure that they are within the value for money and the timeframe that we have got.

Q598 Chairman: Have you got a sustainability champion in Nottingham?

Mr Archer: We have got a member who is a sustainability champion who, I have to say, makes demands on the BSF team on a constant and regular basis, yes.

Q599 Chairman: He sounds like a good lad to me. It is probably a woman actually.

Mr Archer: It is not in fact, it is our Deputy Leader.

Q600 Chairman: Oh, is it? Caroline, what is your view on this?

Ms Morland: Just a couple of points. I think there are some practical budget issues, particularly around life cycle costing. When the capital budget is controlled by one group and some of the operating costs over the next 25 years are controlled by another group on design and build, the school will pay the insurance premium or the local authority will, and it will come out of a different pot. There are some logistical, financial and practical problems and if you do not make the same people responsible it is quite difficult to make good decision-making around whole life costs.

Q601 Chairman: Is it not Chris’s team’s job in any area where there is a Building Schools for the Future project to balance the current capital costs with the long term?

Ms Morland: Yes, but he will also be constrained by where he gets the money given to him and his capacity to borrow against future savings in order to top up the capital fund even if he knows on paper that it is that.

Q602 Chairman: If you had had the local authority behind you, Jim, would you have gone for a sprinkler system?

Mr Burke: We were advised at the time that it was not a requirement and, to be honest, when our school was being costed it was at a time when it looked as though the Academies’ budget was getting out of control. I think the advice was that it would have cost an extra 5% on capital cost, or something like that, for a sprinkler system, so it was deemed that we would not have one.

Ms Morland: To be honest, there is conflicting information coming out from the insurance sector as well about how much they value it and do not value

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it. It does depend on the overall fire engineering of the building how much difference a sprinkler system makes.

Chairman: Perhaps we should get an insurance guru to tell us about that. Fiona?

Q603 Fiona Mactaggart: I was going to ask you, Jim, a question which connects to this, which is you used to run schools, and Cardinal Heenan was the one before the present one; what is the difference in cost of running the building at your present school and the previous schools that you have run?

Mr Burke: The modelling that was carried out prior to construction indicated that energy costs would make us one of the most efficient secondary schools in the country. We are monitoring that very closely. In fact, Reading University are monitoring energy use costs. The first year of energy use has not been as efficient as the modelling would have indicated, but people tell me that that is normal. The architects reckon that it will take three years before the building settles down so that we can really see excellent energy savings, but certainly the detailed modelling which was carried out would indicate that within two years from now we will be extremely energy efficient.

Q604 Fiona Mactaggart: But you have not seen it in lower checks yet?

Mr Burke: Interestingly, the local authority came round two weeks ago and they are comparing us with PFI schools. Our square metreage is 7,800 square metres and we were being compared with schools with 3,000 square metreage and we were using less gas, for example, than they were, so already we have seen some benefits.

Q605 Chairman: We saw a school down in the West Country that really is energising its students to be involved in the sustainability agenda. They have got an energy group and the head there said once this independent group of students got together—and they have 22 different groups ranging from recycling, a link partnership with an African school in a village in The Congo and so on—all these groups did not really cost anything because, by and large, the energy group itself by turning off lights and being energy conscious saves an enormous amount of money. Do you energise your students?

Mr Burke: Absolutely. We have eco councils in each year group and we have a school eco council and they are the driving force behind a lot of the energy savings and the waste management. They are involved in a lot of the decision-making and that is how students, as you say, we are trying to prepare consumers of the future, and this has been one mechanism which we have already found to be very beneficial.

Q606 Chairman: Has anybody from Knowsley been talking to you about their very ambitious programme?

Mr Burke: Yes, the BSF team from Knowsley have visited us. We have had a few BSF teams.

Q607 Chairman: They seem to be doing a standard model, are they not, a one-size-fits-all model. Is that right?

Mr Burke: I am not sure, I could not say.

Q608 Chairman: We are intending visiting Knowsley.

Ms Morland: I think they are but, to be honest, Knowsley have got a track record over the last 10 years of consulting heavily at a collective level with all their schools so their standardisation is part of an overall harmonious and collaborative strategy and they are building on that, they have not kept on that for BSF.

Q609 Chairman: Is there a Lego kind of approach to it?

Ms Morland: I think there is a lot further we can go in terms of commonality. As you say, should a school in inner city Liverpool generically be any different from a school in inner city Manchester? I think we do have to recognise that there are different curriculum models and pedagogic styles and there is a policy around diversity and choice, so I think that will drive differences in architecture, but I think it will be around four, five, maybe half a dozen models and you can standardise around that sort of suite. It is never going to be identical but I think we can go a lot further in that direction.

Q610 Chairman: We are coming to the end of this session and I have one last question, and that is even if you get the BSF, you are all experienced professionals in the sector, outside of Building Schools for the Future or the Academies, is the Government doing enough to raise in school and in local education authorities the question of environmental sustainability?

Mr Archer: I think that it could figure more largely on the agenda being put forward through Building Schools for the Future and through Partnerships for Schools. I do not think it has figured as strongly in the guidance and the national conferences and so on which you might have expected.

Mr Burke: It could do more, there is no doubt about it, but it has started. Sustainable Schools is now a major initiative. There is a longitudinal study on sustainability in schools.

Ms Morland: One thing that I would say that I would view as very positive is almost all the local authorities that we are coming across are very big on economic sustainability for their towns and regions. They are really leading and pushing that agenda and it is coming back through into the supply chain that they are looking for local employment, local sourcing. They want the retention of the BSF funding in their cities and regions and they want that to be a multiplier effect, so they are very much

1 November 2006 Mr Chris Archer, Mr Jim Burke and Ms Caroline Morland

looking at the learning agenda and the employment agenda and BSF is a big pump prime for that, and I would sponsor that and advocate that as a good idea.

Q611 Chairman: It is linked to their regeneration agenda.

Ms Morland: Big time.

Q612 Chairman: If you were going to give this Committee something that you wanted to be in our report, and if we missed it out it would be not such a good report, what should we have in that is close to your heart?

Mr Burke: Having been through the process where I have had time to work with the architects to understand the whole issue of sustainability, I would have said time for heads and colleagues who are involved in the BSF project to really get their heads around sustainability and the implications of it.

Mr Archer: I would build on that and say can you also reflect the tension between the expectation and the excitement generated in communities for BSF with the need for that planning cycle. You heard earlier on that these things are having to happen very quickly, therefore there is not time and I do recognise that that is a problem for us. Equally, if the whole timeframe for BSF is so protracted, that excitement and that community engagement withers because they do not believe it is ever going to happen, so we have got to balance speed with that sort of planning.

Ms Morland: I think it is echoing my last point, it is putting the context of Sustainable Communities into this, that schools are engines for skills and cultural and economic growth for communities. It is not all about energy, it is not all about resources; it is about people as well and it has got to have that balance.

Chairman: That is a very good note on which to end. Caroline, Chris, Jim, thank you very much for your attendance, it has been most useful. We will swing by your school if you are not careful!

Wednesday 6 December 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor

Mr Gordon Marsden
Fiona Mactaggart

Memorandum submitted by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out the Government's broad capital strategy for schools incorporating Building Schools for the Future and Academies and to a lesser extent FE. It sets these programmes within the broader context of our drive to refurbish school buildings, including primary schools, and how this supports the wider agenda to improve educational provision for all our children and young people. It sets out how we are supporting good design and the processes in place for ensuring that educational transformation is at the heart of the renewal process. The paper addresses the issues of sustainability in its environmental, social and economic aspects. We cover a lot of ground but—perhaps inevitably—touch on some areas in more detail than others and therefore further information is available in the supporting documentation. However, if the Committee wishes to have any more detail on anything contained in this paper or indeed anything that is not covered we are ready to provide further information as requested.

The Government's aim is to rebuild or refurbish all secondary schools and significantly improve half of all primary schools over the next 15 years. The school building programme, including the far reaching Building Schools for the Future Programme, supports the Government's wider drive to raise education standards, personalise learning and place schools at the heart of their communities.

The investment in our school buildings provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform our schools estate so that we have buildings that inspire learning and benefit every pupil and member of staff and are a source of pride as well as a practical resource for the community. Sustainability will be at the heart of the programme. This means schools constructed and delivered in ways that are environmentally friendly; sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing methods of teaching and learning and contributing to local regeneration schemes.

The challenge is to combine excellent buildings that are good value for money with support for the highest standards of teaching and learning for years to come. The investment will enable the construction of high quality classrooms, kitchens, dining halls, sports and ICT facilities and staff and community rooms. We aim to have school buildings that are both inspirational and get the basics right; school environments that are by turns practical, sustainable, delightful, pleasant, accessible and secure: buildings that support the principle that every child matters and serve the local community.

The school renewal programme is ambitious. And with the scale of investment comes responsibility. It is incumbent on everyone involved to play their part effectively and to work in partnership to make the most of this opportunity. They include the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), local authorities, non-departmental public bodies (such as Partnership for Schools (PFS), diocesan bodies and faith groups, architects, designers, contractors and builders, the school workforce, governors and pupils. But above all success will depend on how well we work together. For instance, designers and architects are key to the programme but they may have a limited knowledge of education imperatives and practicalities. Those in education may be experts in their field but unaware of the prospects open to them through innovative design approaches. That is why effective partnership and engagement bringing different areas of expertise together early on is so important. And in terms of environmental sustainability it is most readily affordable if built in from the start and not as something bolted on later.

Good design is essential to our programme and can make a significant difference in simple ways: imaginatively designed dining halls can promote healthy eating; wider corridors can improve the flow of pupil traffic and cut down on bullying; classrooms with good acoustics and ventilation can improve concentration and behaviour. The DfES is supporting good design in a range of ways. We are producing design guidance; disseminating best practice; fostering demonstration projects, both real and conceptual; providing tools to support technical guidance or help users better understand their needs and communicate them to designers; providing professional advice on individual projects; and innovative projects that encourage greater user participation. And we have funded the *joinedupdesignforschools* exhibition which explored how good design can improve the quality of life in schools by listening to the pupils.

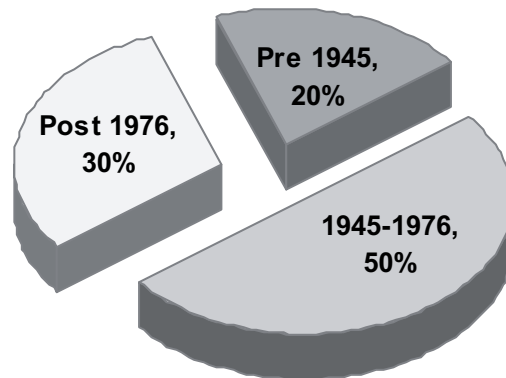
In recent years the backlog of need has been substantially addressed, and the hundreds of newly built and refurbished schools and programmes such as Classrooms of the Future have shown us what can be achieved. But there are also instances where things have not gone as well as everyone would have liked and it is important to learn from these mistakes. Later PFI programmes, for instance, have learnt the lessons of some

of those earlier ones where the experience was less than satisfactory. Everyone involved needs to learn from these mistakes as well as from the wide range of successfully completed projects that point the way to an exciting future.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

THE SCHOOLS ESTATE

There are approximately 23,000 maintained schools, (excluding early years and further education), in England. 20% of school buildings were constructed before the second world war. 50% were built between 1945 and 1976, a period that included much system-building, and 30% since then. System building was typified by school designs of the 1960s and 1970s which facilitated rapid construction at a time of growing need but have left a legacy of high running costs in terms of maintenance and energy use.



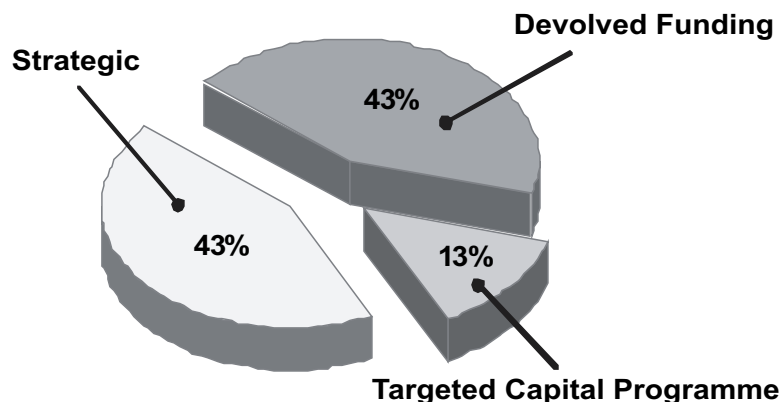
The post-1976 percentage, which includes new school buildings, has doubled in the last four or five years—ie there has been as much new school building since 2001 as there was in the preceding 25 years. 3% of accommodation is in temporary buildings. The maintained school building stock has a replacement value of, very roughly, £130 billion.

THE CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Government's main capital strategy was introduced in 1999 following extensive consultation and provides for a balanced programme of investment. The underlying principles represented a move away from centrally directed bureaucratic bidding processes in favour of a balanced programme of investment as follows: significant levels of funding directed locally to be prioritised locally and a move to three year budgets to provide greater support for effective planning.

The investment is divided into three parts.

- Firstly, money for every school to spend how it likes on buildings and ICT.
- Secondly, funding for every local authority, diocese and their schools to spend on modernising facilities, improving disabled access and providing places for pupils.
- And thirdly funding for a more strategic approach to renewal across the entire school estate, through BSF and the new primary programme. The funding is divided as follows:



- Devolved: about 43% of the investment is devolved to local level allowing every school to spend on its own needs and every local authority (LA) and its partners to tackle its highest priorities.

- Targeted: around 13% of the investment is through targeted capital programmes which allow high priority building projects to be progressed which cannot be tackled through formulaic allocations, or await BSF. As part of this strategy there is also a government ambition that by 2011 all LAs should have funding to rebuild at least one secondary school through BSF, the Academies programme, or the TCF funded BSF one-school pathfinder scheme.
- Strategic: about 43% of the money will be delivered through the BSF and the primary programme. Building Schools for the Future, in conjunction with the academies programme, aims to renew all secondary schools in 15 waves starting from 2005–06. In March 2006 the DfES published its proposals to refurbish half of all primary schools over a 15-year period. £150 million will be invested in 2008–09 rising to £500 million from 2009–10. The consultation ended on 14 June 2006 and we will report in autumn 2006.

INVESTMENT

The level of investment is now six times higher than it was in 1996–97.

Investment in schools in recent years has been as follows.

1996–97: £700 million
1997–98: £800 million
1998–99: £1.1 billion
1999–00: £1.4 billion
2000–01: £2.1 billion
2001–02: £2.4 billion
2002–03: £3.3 billion
2003–04: £4.2 billion
2004–05: £4.9 billion
2005–06: £5.5 billion
2006–07: £5.8 billion
2007–08: £6.3 billion

These figures include PFI credits and capital funding for ICT.

Since 1998 the overwhelming majority of schools will have benefited from significant improvements including the replacement of thousands of temporary classrooms; new roofs; the installation of major and efficient boilers and improved toilet facilities (in part through the “bogs and boilers” programme); better lighting systems have been installed and CCTVs and security fencing has made schools safer. The specialist schools programme has seen expenditure of £150,000 (£50,000 raised by the school) for each school and has supported the development of facilities in line with the school’s specialism such as drama spaces, sprung floors for dance and so on. We have seen the reduction in class sizes and the removal of external toilets.

There has also been a PFI programme—largely new build schools with some refurbishment. The 100th schools PFI project was signed in May this year. There are now 817 schools in England covered by contracts and the total allocated PFI credits have now reached £3.658 billion. Of the 817 schools 444 are operational and 373 either building or about to start building.

BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

OVERVIEW AND RESPECTIVE ROLES

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) investment is designed to secure a step-change in achievement and attainment in our schools, and is therefore prioritised according to educational and social need (as measured by GCSE results and eligibility levels for Free School Meals).

BSF projects are managed by local authorities with the assistance of Partnerships for Schools (PFS—the non-departmental public body charged with delivering the national programme), dedicated DfES officials and the Local Government Association’s Public Private Partnerships Programme (the 4ps). Partnerships for Schools provide authorities with advice, guidance and challenge on project planning and management, procurement and their education vision on a day to day basis. DfES BSF officials provide local authorities with advice on policy related matters, and ensure that they have rapid access to the relevant policy teams where necessary. The 4ps are the Local Government Association’s project management and procurement specialists, and are available to provide training to members, senior officers, head teachers and governors through their “Expert Client” programme—helping authorities to deal with private sector bidders in a robust, confident and effective manner. They also help authorities to identify any gaps in their internal capacity which may need to be met by using external advisers.

Once projects have received funding approval, local authorities go to market to seek private sector partners with which to form a Local Education Partnership (LEP). LEPs are a new model of procurement designed to deliver more reliable supply chains and genuine on-going commitment from the private sector partner to the successful delivery of the project. LEPs can also be used to deliver a wider range of services above and beyond BSF projects—enabling local authorities to obtain greater value for money and to develop deeper and more effective partnerships.

BSF FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

BSF funding is provided on a formulaic basis—reflecting the authorities’ pupil place planning projections over 10 years—to provide sufficient capital to entirely rebuild 50% of the existing estate and to remodel or refurbish the other 50%. This formula was developed on the basis of local assessments of the condition of school buildings and to ensure equitable funding across and throughout the length of the programme. Capital funding has also been identified to support the implementation of ICT through BSF.

BSF PROCESSES

Currently, there are three key approval stages for a local authority to pass through before it can commence procurement:

- *Education Vision*—the authority must set out its strategic plans for the future of education locally. The Education Vision must encapsulate the authority’s approach to raising standards and a range of other Departmental policy priorities (eg extended schools and community use, Special Educational Needs, 14–19, PE and sport etc) as set out in the relevant guidance.
- *Strategic Business Case (SBC)*—the authority sets out how it plans to utilise BSF investment to secure the aims and objectives set out in its Education Vision, and what this means for the school estate. The Strategic Business Case will include details of local consultations, funding arrangements (eg conventional or PFI, use of any other funding streams), affordability, procurement planning, project management, phasing and prioritisation of works, arrangements for lifecycle maintenance etc.
- *Outline Business Case (OBC)*—the authority sets out more detailed plans for the delivery of its first phase of BSF investment (usually covering a smaller number of schools than that in the Strategic Business Case), that are sufficiently developed to go to market. Once the Outline Business Case has been approved by the Treasury-chaired Project Review Group the authority can issue the relevant OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) notices inviting expressions of interest from potential private sector partners. It is at this stage that bidders submit detailed design proposals and drawings on a sample set of schools within the project.

From wave 4 onwards however, (January 2007), in order to reduce the length of the pre-procurement stages—and to better ensure a closer integration of education strategies and school building proposals—we will be replacing the requirement for authorities to submit both Education Visions and Strategic Business Cases with the requirement to submit a single document entitled a “Strategy for Change”.

In their “Strategy for Change” proposals authorities will be expected to set out their plans for delivering greater diversity of provision, choice and access as set out in the Government’s recent White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* and the current Education and Inspections Bill.

SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

All BSF guidance and documentation—from both PfS and DfES—makes it clear that BSF is not merely a buildings programme. Educational transformation is at its heart. The first formal requirement for authorities selected for BSF investment is, therefore, that they must submit an Education Vision (or Strategy for Change from 2007), setting out their strategic plans for the future of local education.

Local authorities are required to demonstrate that they have consulted on their Education Vision with the full range of local stakeholders, including: school communities, (staff, governors and pupils); Learning and Skills Council; local Further Education colleges; local businesses and employers; local faith and diocesan organisations; and Sport England and other relevant sport governing bodies (eg FA, LTA etc).

In order for a local authority’s Education Vision to be approved by both PfS and the Department, it must demonstrate that it has robust proposals relating to the following areas: School improvement (including consideration of Academies where appropriate and relevant); school organisation—including diversity of provision to ensure choice for parents and pupils; Every Child Matters and Children’s Trusts; extended schools and community use; Special Educational Needs provision; behaviour and attendance; healthy schools; PE and sport; personalised learning; 14–19 provision; specialist schools; ICT; and school workforce reform.

SCHOOLS AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

The provision of extended services and activities by schools, or the offer of access to services, is a major, essential element of the Building Schools for the Future programme. A local authority, proposal, therefore, needs to demonstrate how the capital funding allocation will support the delivery of extended services and activities—accessible to pupils, families and the wider community—by schools.

We see schools as a national resource which should be fully utilised. They should be at the heart of their communities, opening up their facilities and providing a wide range of opportunities to all in an open, safe and welcoming environment. Schools have much to offer in terms of offering facilities and hosting local

services, and because of this have a strong influence on local affairs. BSF proposals need to demonstrate that schools will provide access to, as well as joint use of, facilities by the wider local community. They need to identify whether physical changes are needed to buildings to provide more flexible learning spaces or additional space to accommodate community services and activities, and demonstrate flexibility of space that will be required over time with changes in community use.

Through their strong connections with local people and through the extended services that many are already offering, schools have an important role to play in realising the goal of sustainable communities. Links with the community help schools in raising pupils' motivation, expectations and achievement. This leads to higher standards and improved behaviour. Support from parents and local community organisations can be a crucial factor in improving pupils' attainment and combating social exclusion. Our objective is to see all schools provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, and to use their teaching and wider influence to address the needs of the local environment and community. In developing BSF proposals, local authorities must demonstrate that developments will lead to better, coherent, joined up and locally provided support for children, families and communities.

We also look at how well BSF and extended schools are aligned with other funding strands. Proposals should support the development of a coherent programme that enables various capital resources held by the local authority, schools and others to be better joined up for greatest impact and best use of schools as community assets.

In addition Academies are contractually bound by virtue of their funding agreement (a contract between the Secretary of State and an Academy Trust) to be at the heart of their communities, sharing facilities with other schools and the wider community. This is particularly powerful when considering that Academies are situated in areas of significant disadvantage and deprivation. Access to high quality resources, a community focal point and a source of pride in an area of deprivation will undoubtedly contribute to the regeneration of that area. The extended schools agenda is an important component in the strategy to realise this aim. The majority of Academies offer some form of extended schools provision, while others are already seeking extended schools status.

BSF AND ICT

The BSF approach to ICT is founded on the following principles:

- ICT provision should be seen as the “fourth utility” by teaching staff, staff and pupils. From their perspective it should be simple to use, and integral to the school environment—from the building design stage onwards.
- ICT provision should be viewed as a service that establishes the basis for the long term use of ICT.
- ICT provision should be seen as an agent for change, enabling teaching staff and pupils to transform the way they work.

The funding allowance for ICT within BSF is at unprecedented levels. At the heart of these principles is a philosophy that new schools will be designed and built around the use of cutting edge ICT, including teaching and learning, school management and buildings management systems and solutions. The aim is to optimise the educational impact of ICT, in a way that “retrofitting” ICT to existing school buildings cannot hope to emulate.

PROGRESS ON BSF—THE CURRENT POSITION

BSF projects are prioritised according to educational and social need. The first consultation on BSF and invitations for expressions of interest were announced in July 2003. However, we had already begun working with four “Pathfinder” projects (including one joint project involving three local authorities) in March 2003. Following the consultation a further 12 projects (including one joint project) were named in wave 1 of BSF in February 2004. In November 2004, we announced 20 new projects for the second and third waves of BSF. We began working with the authorities in wave 2 in January 2005 and with those in wave 3 in September the same year.

In total, 39 local authorities are now actively engaged in the programme with projects covering around 360 schools. Progress to date is described in more detail below.

Wave 1: Business cases have been approved for 13 of the 16 projects in wave 1. These authorities are now in the process of procuring partners to deliver BSF. Two further authorities are also making good progress but are following a slightly different process due to existing contractual arrangements (Manchester have an existing framework arrangement and Stoke have an authority-wide PFI contract to provide energy, energy management, and repair and maintenance work).

The leading wave 1 project (Bristol, one of the “Pathfinders”) appointed a preferred bidder in December and is expected to sign a contract in June 2006. This will enable building work to begin on the first BSF schools (other than a number of “quick win” projects which were funded in wave 1 local authorities ahead

of their main BSF projects). These new school buildings are due to be ready for occupation in September 2007. Three other wave 1 projects have also appointed preferred partners and a number more are expected to do so over the next few months.

Wave 2: Authorities in wave 2 are currently preparing their strategic plans and business cases. One wave 2 project has already begun procurement (in May 2006) and others are expected to follow shortly. Work on the first wave 2 schools should be completed in 2009.

Wave 3: Most authorities have now completed the first stage of developing their BSF projects, with visions for transforming secondary education in their areas approved by the Department. The first wave 3 authorities are now submitting their strategic plans to the Department for approval.

PROGRESS ON BSF—SLIPPAGE AND ACTION

There has been significant slippage in BSF projects in waves 1–3, with the majority of projects behind the ideal project timelines. Key common factors behind such slippage include: lack of capacity or experience in delivering large projects in local authorities; insufficient corporate support and leadership; insufficient involvement of school improvement teams (as opposed to solely property) at local levels; inaccurate pupil place planning (omission of SEN numbers has for example been a common flaw); planning obstacles, including unavailability of sites in London in particular; difficulties in agreeing Education Visions at a local level; and poor stakeholder engagement or consultation. Most slippage occurs at the pre-procurement and planning stage, and we have tried to address this in 2 key ways:

- (i) Authorities within waves 4–6 will be prioritised on their capacity to deliver; and
- (ii) We have reduced the pre-procurement approval stages from 3 to 2 by combining the former Education Vision and Strategic Business Case stages into one “Strategy for Change” stage. This will ensure that authorities can have confidence in their key strategic ambitions as early on in the process as possible, as opposed to spending a year drafting an Education Vision which fails to meet the required standards.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM WAVE 1

It is important that we learn the lessons from the early stages of BSF and continuously improve our processes as we progress. That is why we are introducing a new formal stage of approval within the BSF process to replace 2 existing ones. As indicated above, instead of authorities being required to submit both an Education Vision and a Strategic Business Case, from wave 4 onwards they will only be required to submit a Strategy for Change. This Strategy for Change will set out both the authority’s plans and ambitions for improving education provision, and the implications of those plans for the school estate. We need to ensure that an authority’s school estate plans really do underpin a strategy for change and improvement—and indeed are determined by it. By integrating educational and building plans authorities should be able to achieve a single coherent strategy, with educational priorities continuing to be at the forefront throughout the process, rather than simply being viewed as an initial hurdle.

Other lessons learnt have included:

- BSF projects need the highest level of corporate support/ownership within a local authority to ensure rapid delivery.
- It is never too early for LAs to begin planning and consulting with stakeholders on their strategies to maximise the potential benefits of this unique opportunity for transformational investment—particularly around school organisation/pupil place planning issues, and of course to secure local consensus and support.
- Early planning is also crucial to securing as much joined-up funding as possible.
- Rationalising of the school estate, where possible (eg. Knowsley—replacing 11 schools with 8 new learning centres), maximises the potential of funding (allowing greater levels of new build).
- Importance of having a local “design champion” from the beginning of the process—hence introduction of CABE Enablers for future waves.

INCLUSION OF ACADEMIES IN BSF PLANS

Tackling underachievement and underperformance is a central plank of all local authorities’ BSF proposals. Where appropriate, (ie where schools are falling beneath floor targets) we expect local authorities to objectively consider the potential for Academies in improving school standards and providing parents with access to good schools. Projects that contain innovative Academy proposals within their plans are likely to progress more rapidly to approval.

DELIVERING ACADEMIES THROUGH BSF

On 23 March 2006 the Department announced that the Academies building programme will in future be delivered by Partnership for Schools (Pfs). From this date there will be two delivery routes:

New Academies that are in local authorities (LAs) that are included in the BSF programme will be delivered by Local Education Partnerships (LEPs) or any other approved alternative procurement route. The delivery of these Academies will be integrated with BSF waves and will be included in BSF proposals in the same way as any other secondary school. Academy Building Projects delivered by LEPs will broadly follow established BSF arrangements.

New Academies in LAs that have yet to be prioritised for inclusion in BSF will be delivered using a National Framework that will be managed by Pfs. The framework is expected to be in place by September 2006, with providers who will have demonstrated levels of efficiency and cost that are comparable to those in BSF. To build an Academy, LAs will hold a mini competition to select a provider from the framework.

Delivering Academies through BSF is a significant move by the Department to realise greater savings and efficiencies. However, in order to maintain progress, the individual Academy projects which were underway prior to the integration of the delivery of Academies with the BSF programme (ie underway prior to March this year) will continue along the traditional procurement route to completion (estimated at around 30 projects).

PROGRESS ON ACADEMIES

27 Academies are already open. 18 more are set to open in September 2006. A further 60 plus are in development. We are in discussion with potential sponsors about over 100 more projects. Our aim is to have at least 200 Academies open or in the pipeline by 2010, including 60 in London.

It is early days but we have good evidence that the Academies are working:

- In 2003, their first year, the average 5+ A*-C GCSE results in the three open Academies was 24%, compared to an average of 16% in their predecessor schools in 2002.
- In 2004 the Academy schools achieved close to 30% 5+ A*-Cs. This included improvements at Capital City Academy, Brent, from 14%-29% and of 26%-33% at the City Academy, Bristol.
- In 2005, Academies improved results by nearly 8 percentage points compared to last year. This is three times the national average increase of 2.4 percentage points.
- The average 5+ good GCSE results of the 14 Academies with pupils sitting GCSEs was 36.4% in 2005, compared to an average 21% in their predecessor schools in 2002. This represents a 73% improvement in GCSE performance in three years. 12 of the 14 Academies with pupils taking GCSE saw rises on what their predecessor schools had achieved in 2002.
- The Academy model builds on the tried and tested successes of the 15 City Technology Colleges. In 2004, 11 of the 15 CTCs recorded more than 75% five or more good GCSE passes, with two achieving 100%. The national average is 53%. Their value added performance is similarly outstanding.
- Parents are voting with their feet—almost all of the Academies have been oversubscribed on opening and for each year afterwards. For example, in September 2005, each of Lambeth, City of London and Mossbourne Academies received over 1,200 applications for 180 places in each.
- There is ongoing evaluation of the programme to make sure that it is working. An early evaluation concluded—“Academies do seem to have made a strong impact on the educational aspirations of large numbers of children from disadvantaged areas and their families”.

COSTINGS

Academies are built to the same area and cost guidelines (Building Bulletin 98) as all other departmentally funded schools. The average cost of a new secondary school with 1,300 pupils and a sixth form in a high-cost inner-city area is £25–30 million and this is the same as the average cost of an Academy of this size and location. The average cost per pupil of new build voluntary aided schools which the Department is currently funding is £23,886; the average cost of an Academy is £23,370.

Academy cost overruns are now falling. Academy costs overall have been slightly higher to date than some other school building schemes and those currently projected for BSF projects due to the following factors:

- Academy projects usually involve complicated and restricted inner city sites with a higher than normal proportion of “abnormal” costs;
- Academy projects had, until recently, been procured on a “one-off” basis which meant they had not been able to access the economies of scale achieved through large, multi-school PFI or BSF procurements. This is changing now that Academies can be procured as part of the BSF programme. Academies can also learn lessons on design by being incorporated into BSF and equally BSF can learn from Academies;

- As Academies are independent of local authorities, we have not assumed that they can recycle fixed furniture and equipment to the same degree as other school building projects, and allowed for additional funding accordingly.

MANAGING COSTS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Inevitably, at the inception of the Academies programme we focused—successfully—on making the rapid progress needed to get a major programme moving over reasonable time scales. But that does not mean that lessons have not been learnt and the need for careful management of capital costs and value for money has been ignored. On the contrary:

- lessons from the earliest projects and induction in Government guidance and standards is provided to all architectural firms;
- a framework contract has been drawn up laying out common conditions and obligations for firms involved in Academy projects;
- processes for analysing project designs in more detail at an earlier stage of an Academy project have been implemented; and
- Construction Project Managers are appointed to offer advice and guidance on design and building issues to each Academy project.

EVERY CHILD MATTERS AND EARLY YEARS

Building Schools for the Future and Academies, our long-term, strategic programmes transforming secondary schools are underway. For the early years Sure Start is also providing new modern infrastructure for the expansion of childcare and the development of children's centres and Sure Start programmes for children in the most challenging circumstances.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. This means that organisations providing services to children—from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups—will be teaming up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.

The Government has made free part-time, early education available for all our 3 and 4-year-olds, and substantially expanded childcare provision with a wide variety of providers—nurseries, childminders, before and after school clubs and holiday play schemes increasingly delivered alongside early education and other family services—to meet parents' different needs and provide real choice.

Sure Start Children's Centres enable children under 5 years old and their families to receive seamless, integrated services and information, including help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals. Children's Centres build on the successes of the pioneering Sure Start Local Programmes, Early Excellence Centres and Neighbourhood Nurseries, and are about mainstreaming the lessons learned, so the benefits can be extended to all young children and families. Sure Start Children's Centres are one of the key features of the Government's Ten Year Childcare Strategy which aims to ensure all families with children have access to an affordable, flexible, high quality childcare. The Government is committed to delivering 3,500 Children's Centres—one for every community—by 2010.

The Strategy also includes the commitment that families with children from 3 to 14, who need it, will have access to affordable, flexible and high quality childcare from 8–6 and throughout the year. We are building that offer around schools as part of a range of enriching, out of hours, extended services for pupils and the local community that schools will host. We want all schools to become extended schools by 2010, providing a core offer of activities, with at least half of primary schools and a third of secondary schools doing so by 2008.

Our investment in schools also impacts on areas that are of vital importance in encouraging a choice of healthy life styles. We are therefore developing a "Healthy Schools" programme to improve health and well-being for children. The important strands for capital investment are healthy eating and sport. This means good food where possible freshly prepared on the premises from local ingredients and served and eaten in good surroundings. And sports facilities that offer a wide range of activity and encourage children to participate for more than the statutory minimum and to continue out of school.

PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

We have already been improving primary school buildings, for example by tackling the backlog or repairs and reducing infant class sizes. We are now turning our attention to the long term needs of primary school buildings. Now is the time to encourage and enable all local authorities and communities to start the long-term transformation of primary schools across the country.

We published our proposals in March to rebuild, remodel or refurbish half of all primary schools over 15 years. It will help achieve a number of strategies already underway such as Every Child Matters; Better Standards for all and Primary Strategy. It also brings together the 10-year childcare strategy, workforce strategy, and ICT and extended schools programmes.

Some £150 million extra is available in 2008–09, rising to £500 million in 2009–10. It is expected that investment will remain at that level for around 15 years, subject to future public spending decisions—some £7 billion in total. This could be added to other DfES capital for primary schools to create a much larger sum for investment. On top of this could be added: other eligible investment from central government departments and agencies; local government investment, receipts and prudential borrowing; as well as contributions from the private sector and others. Only by joining up this funding and targeting it precisely will we achieve the ambitions of this programme. All local authorities will benefit from capital allocated by a simple, open formula reflecting pupil numbers and deprivation. Devolved formula capital will, of course, be available for primary schools not directly benefiting from this programme.

It should be possible, using DfES investment, to improve at least half of all primary schools and primary-age special schools. Within that, we would hope to rebuild or take out of use, as a minimum, at least the 5% of school buildings in the worst physical condition nationally, and to improve or take out of use the 20% of the worst condition buildings in our most-deprived communities. With strategic and joined-up planning and funding, we would hope to exceed these targets. Other schools benefiting from the programme will have substantial improvements. The programme should also contribute to other national aims such as to raise standards, improve school food or promote sport and languages.

FE CAPITAL

In addition to capital investment in schools, the Government is committed to transforming the Further Education estate, recognising the legacy of underinvestment which left the sector characterised by unfit for purpose facilities. Over the past four years, capital investment has begun to have an impact on improving the quality of the estate enabling more flexible and efficient delivery. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has approved grants of just under £1 billion to support 524 building projects in the sector, worth a total of nearly £3.2 billion. Evaluation of the impact of that investment by PWC (March 2004) reported that:

- Quantitative evidence suggests a positive relationship between capital investment and learner outcomes, in particular success rates.
- Qualitative evidence provides strong evidence of a positive relationship between capital investment and a wide range of outcomes including:
 - Providing a catalyst for wider strategic and/or curriculum change.
 - Improved facilities, which can raise student recruitment and retention as well as enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Improvement to college reputation resulting in better staff and student morale.

Earlier this year, we published the FE White Paper, *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*. It sets out reforms to the FE sector to ensure learners are equipped with high quality skills for productive, sustainable employment and personal fulfilment; and employers have the right skills for their business to succeed in a competitive global economy. The Government recognises significant further capital investment is required to support this vision. Including the new joint schools and FE 16–19 capital fund, designed to improve choice and diversity in 16–19 provision, investment through the LSC is set to rise to £748 million in 2009–10 from £291 million in 2004–05. This means Government investment will more than double in real terms by 2009–10 compared to 2004–05.

To help ensure this investment supports the needs of learners, employers and communities now and in the future, the White Paper detailed a number of reforms to the FE capital programme including regional capital strategies, which will guide investment ensuring that there is sufficient capacity, an effective pattern of specialisation and increasing choice and responsiveness for learners and employers. Importantly, to ensure a coherent approach to 14–19 reform through the BSF programme, the scope of local authorities' Strategies for Change have been extended to cover all the settings in which young people aged 14–19 will be learning in future. As funding flows through the Local Education Partnership to implement BSF, the LSC will direct its capital resources to support the FE component of the vision. This will mean that for the first time, there is effectively a fully integrated strategy to deliver for 14–19-year-olds across schools and the FE system.

The importance of environmental sustainability through capital investment is gaining recognition and priority in the sector and a number of reforms are underway. The LSC's Sustainable Development strategy *From Here to Sustainability* sets out an action plan for developing a sustainable approach in relation to Environmental Management Systems (EMS), Building and Design, Procurement, Biodiversity and Travel. The Learning and Skills Council's written evidence to the Committee will set out in full how the FE capital programme aims to support investment in an FE sector which meets the needs of learners, employers and communities now and in the future.

PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI)

PFI was introduced into the schools sector in 1997 with the first project a single school in Dorset. The programme has progressed rapidly, and in May 2006, the 100th schools PFI contract was signed. This means that in total 817 schools are receiving investment through this route, with a total capital value of £3.66 billion in PFI credits. In future all PFI will be delivered via the BSF programme.

Schools PFI contracts are between individual local authorities and private sector partners for the provision of buildings and services, for the life of the contract, which is usually 25 years. The private sector partner funds and procures the investment in the school buildings (usually new build, with some grouped contracts including remodelling and refurbishment of existing buildings) and is responsible for their maintenance over the life of the contract. It is therefore in the interests of the private sector to consider full life costs and sustainability in construction.

DfES supports PFI procurement with guidance and assistance to local authorities, directly and through Partnerships UK (PUK). This includes standard contracts, which are developed with advice from PUK and HM Treasury. All PFI contracts must demonstrate value for money to be endorsed by the Project Review Group, which is chaired by HM Treasury.

PUK REPORT INTO SIGNED PFI CONTRACTS

We know that PFI has a mixed reputation which is why we decided to do a survey to sort out the myths from the reality. The survey by Partnerships UK was published last year and is available in the House Libraries and through www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolsprivatefinanceinitiative.

Positive feedback included: teachers report that they are delighted with the buildings, which are well designed and work well; schools delivered on time and sometimes to a higher level of finish than the specification; facilities already well respected by pupils and the community; a positive impact on children, behaviour and attendance; higher proportions of children are staying in school for lunch; improved security; buildings maintenance better than before, and applications to the school have risen.

The clear lesson is that contracts work best where there is co-operative partnership working between the public and private sectors. There are, however, also areas where some schools have been disappointed and the report makes several recommendations for improvement, all of which we are happy to accept and to work on implementing. The main areas of dissatisfaction are the working of helpdesks and agreeing variations to the contract in response to developing needs. The report was based on early contracts and many of the recommendations have already been incorporated in later contracts. The Department and its partners including PUK, 4ps and now PfS have learned from experience and worked to standardise and improve contracts. The clear lesson is that PFI is not yet perfect and we will continue to work hard in partnership with schools and industry, to implement the recommendations, to learn from experience and continuously to improve.

IMPROVING PFI—WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- All PFI contracts must in practice as well as in theory deliver the services specified and serve everyone's best interest. In the interests of the children, we must not have schools hampered in their efforts to give children the best education by contractual difficulties.
- Working together with partners, we are acting to help some of the single schools that were the first to sign contracts and where the projects are not working as well as they should. We will continue to do this. The lessons learnt from these early contracts have been incorporated into later contracts.
- We will work with schools, with authorities, with Treasury, with PfS, PUK, with 4ps and with the market, to secure further improvement. And if required, we will work directly with contractors. We are not prepared to see teachers' efforts and pupils' potential wasted because of avoidable problems.

PFI AND SUSTAINABILITY

PFI is about a process of continuous improvement, and that includes the area of sustainability. In some early contracts, for example, energy costs were passed directly to the schools. There was no advantage to the private sector in designing buildings to reduce energy consumption. Now contracts pass the risk of energy costs to the private sector partner, ensuring they are motivated to design and build energy conservation measures from the start.

In future, all PFI credits will be allocated to BSF projects. BSF projects are required to achieve at least a "very good" BREEAM rating for environmental sustainability (see section on environmental sustainability for further details). Because of the targeted and managed nature of the programme, BSF is the first major investment programme for some time where a complex evaluation is possible. We are appointing PricewaterhouseCoopers to evaluate BSF for us. Whilst the core of this evaluation is the impact of BSF

investment on educational standards, this will include evaluating the factors which act as levers to improving achievement. These will include the design and construction quality of the buildings which BSF is funding and value for money. Lessons learned will be disseminated to inform the rest of the BSF programme.

SUPPORTING GOOD DESIGN

If schools are to provide excellent educational facilities for the next 20–30 years, designs must take account not only of current needs but also of likely future change. We need to be aware of likely educational, technological and social developments. Key drivers now include:

- a more diverse and flexible curriculum;
- new ways of learning (including beyond the school boundary and traditional school hours);
- the impact of ICT and more personalised learning;
- a range of extended services on school sites (including childcare, after school clubs, adult learning and family support); and
- the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities onto mainstream school sites.

New school buildings should serve their communities for many years to come and it is important that they facilitate good teaching and learning, provide attractive and comfortable environments for all users—staff, pupils and the wider community—and that they are robust enough to need minimal maintenance over time. Excellent design will inspire teachers and learners, optimise inclusion and help to improve behaviour and attendance. Design quality encompasses a number of issues but should include sustainability, flexibility, adaptability and value for money.

The Department is addressing design quality on a number of fronts, recognising that the best school designs come from a successful partnership between designers, users and providers. The work we are doing to ensure good school design divides broadly into five areas:

- design guidance;
- inspiring demonstration projects, both real and conceptual;
- tools to support technical guidance or help users to better understand their needs and communicate them to designers;
- professional advice to individual projects; and
- innovative projects that encourage greater user participation.

There are many organisations with an interest in school building design with which the Department works closely: Commissioners for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the Sorrell Foundation, Open House (in London), the Design Council, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and School Works. We held a highly successful design conference last December (05) with significant representation from the public and private sector where we gained a greater understanding of the barriers to good design and—hopefully—inspired everyone to aim as high as possible. As a result of this we set up the School Design Advisory Council (SDAC) as a forum that brings together these and other stakeholders including local authorities and schools. In addition we are working closely with PFS to ensure BSF deliver excellent design.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

All guidance is developed in consultation with local authorities, schools and educationalists to ensure it is relevant to users' current and future needs. Recent publications include:

- *Building Bulletin 101 Ventilation of School Buildings;*
- *Building Bulletin 93, Acoustic Design for Schools;*
- *Building Bulletin 98, Briefing Framework for Secondary Schools specifying space standards for school buildings and grounds;*
- *Designing Schools for Extended Services;*
- *Inspirational design for PE and Sports Spaces; and*
- *Primary Ideas:* a toolkit of design principles, ideas and projects for primary school environments aimed at inspiring staff, pupils and parents.

Forthcoming publications include:

- *Building Bulletin 77: Designing for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:* applicable to specialist provision in mainstream schools, co-located or independently sited special schools;
- *Designing School Grounds; and*
- *Building Bulletin 99, Briefing Framework for Primary Schools* specifying space standards for school buildings and grounds.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

DEMONSTRATION SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

Thirteen new schools will be constructed within the “One-School Pathfinder” programme. Three of these schools will be demonstration projects to reflect the principles of sustainable development.

These demonstration projects will:

- achieve a BREEAM school rating of “excellent” for their design and construction;
- incorporate a number of sustainable features that have widespread scope for replication in future school buildings, eg wind turbines, microgeneration, etc; and
- Make use of sustainable technologies to develop the curriculum.

Case studies, whether built or desk-based are a valuable means of demonstrating good design. The Department has organised a number of such projects recently including:

- *Classrooms of the Future*: 12 LAs were funded to build 26 pilot projects that create innovative learning environments, with the aim of inspiring children to achieve more. Round 2, Teaching Environments for the Future, involved 18 LAs developing 25 further projects, with the emphasis on how building design can help resolve school workforce issues. Most of these are now finished.
- *Exemplar Designs: concepts and Ideas*: 11 leading architects were chosen by competition to develop design solutions for schools for the future (5 primary, 5 secondary and one all-age). The resulting designs were inspiring and we understand that two are already being built.
- *Open House*: The Department sponsored a publication to showcase London’s newly designed schools, to be linked to the annual “Open House” event in 2005. It will be extended this year to the whole of England.
- *Standard specifications, layouts and dimensions for schools (SSLD)*: In support of the huge school building programmes over the next 10–15 years, we are working with designers, manufacturers, suppliers and research groups to develop more standardised approaches to school building design and to encourage more off-site fabrication where appropriate. The aim is to provide consistent high quality design and supply-side efficiencies through developing clear output specifications and reducing waste and unnecessary effort in both manufacture and specification of components. Areas currently being developed include: classroom dimensions, doorsets, floor coverings, modular WC design, partitions, staircases and lighting systems.

TOOLS

- *Design Quality Indicators*: The DfES has worked with the Construction Industry Council (CIC) to develop a Design Quality Indicator (DQI) for schools. Through facilitated workshops, it helps raise aspirations and manage expectations of all stakeholders involved in the project. It can be used at four stages:
 - At briefing stage—to capture and prioritise all the stakeholders’ aspirations.
 - At mid-design stage—to check how the design is progressing and to measure against the original aspirations.
 - At “ready for occupation” stage—to check how well the building has met the stakeholders aspirations before occupation.
 - When the building has been completed for a year or more—as a post-occupancy evaluation tool.
- *The Building Research Establishment Assessment method for schools (BREEAM)*: assesses the environmental performance of buildings in terms of management, energy use, health and wellbeing, pollution, transport, land use, ecology, materials and water.
- *ClassVent and ClassCool tools to enable the design of classroom ventilation strategies and strategies to avoid summertime overheating to be used with BB101*.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

The Department funds 10 days support from a CABE enabler for every BSF project and four days support for every One School Pathfinder project.

PARTICIPATION

The Department has supported a number of projects that aim to improve school design by encouraging stronger links between school designers and their “real” clients—school staff and pupils. Projects include:

Joinedupdesignforschools: The Sorrell Foundation arranged for designers to work with pupils in over sixty schools, identifying what concerns them and finding solutions. Many of the projects ranging from improving a dining space to redesigning a school uniform have been realised.

School Works: have developed a toolkit to facilitate the consultation process at briefing stage and carried out a series of post-occupancy evaluations with schools and their authorities.

Designmyschool.com: developed by the Design Council, a website providing practical tools, ideas and resources to enable staff, pupils and parents to participate in the design of their school.

The range of design advice, demonstration projects and design tools that is available is huge. But these are not enough in themselves. Exciting new classrooms and inspiring projects with small groups of pupils can lead the way but the real challenge for BSF is to ensure that these innovative designs and ways of working (especially consultation) are mainstreamed into the whole BSF programme. We aim to do this through our key delivery partners—PFS for liaison with the private sector, CABE and others in the design community, the LGA and 4ps for local government contacts and our own education networks. Our aim is not just to demonstrate what can be done, but also to impress upon the market what high expectations we have for contractors to deliver good design and to help schools and local authorities really understand what best practice looks like and support them in demanding it from their contractor.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

OVERVIEW

Historic approaches to construction are unsustainable. Some progress has recently been made in improving sustainability of buildings as a result of government initiatives. Building Regulations require that today’s buildings are 40% more energy efficient than those built five years ago. The DfES has its own set of policies to reflect government policy on sustainable development. The Department’s Sustainable Development Action Plan was launched in March 2006 and will be followed up with a variety of tools including a sustainable development schools website and means of self [en rule]evaluation.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy, set out in *Securing the Future*¹, aims “to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.” It sets out five principles that provide a basis for sustainable development policy in the UK:

- living within environmental limits—ensuring the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so in the future;
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society—meeting diverse needs and creating opportunity for all;
- achieving a sustainable economy—with efficient resource use incentivised;
- using sound science responsibly—strong scientific evidence, taking into account scientific uncertainty and public attitudes and values; and
- promoting good governance—effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society.

The design and construction of school buildings can support these principles through a wide range of features which:

- conserve energy and water
- minimise waste
- avoid pollutants and potential pollutants
- protect or enhance biodiversity
- respect people and their environment

The DfES Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) describes a number of actions we are committed to undertake in order to deliver sustainable school buildings. We expect all new schools to reach these standards, and encourage existing schools to adopt sustainable targets as quickly as possible.

¹ *Securing the Future*, UK government sustainable development strategy, March 2005, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/>

BUILDING RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT EVALUATION METHOD FOR SCHOOLS (BREEAM)

BREEAM schools is a tool to allow us to set robust achievable and cost effective environmental targets for new buildings and refurbishment projects. It was commissioned from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) by the Department to enable standards to be set without prescribing specific design solutions to client and design teams. It was guided by a sector advisory group comprising designers, local authority representatives, Non Government Organisations and DfES experts and officials.

HOW BREEAM WORKS

The basis of the scheme is a certificate awarded on the basis of credits for a set of performance criteria. The certificate provides recognition for the building environmental performance and allows claims to be verified.

The method considers a wide range of sustainability issues within a single assessment. These cover the impact of buildings on the environment at global regional, local and indoor levels. For example, there are up to 10 credits available depending on the level of emissions of carbon dioxide relating to operational energy consumption. Overall more than 100 credits are available. BREEAM provides a means of balancing these against each other as decisions are made. The number of credits attained are translated into a single score using a consensus[en rule]based weighting system. This score is then interpreted in the form of an overall rating of Excellent, Very Good, Good and Pass.

THE STANDARD

BREEAM credits are only available when proposed design and construction solutions exceed minimum standards. The Department has set standards for school buildings that are more onerous than those that apply to many other building types (eg offices). This means that in order to achieve the standard of “very good”, a school will have to meet higher standards than those required for an equivalent rating for other types of building. In April 2006 all versions of BREEAM were comprehensively revised following major revisions to building regulations, and now represent a higher standard than ever.

The Department considers that a BREEAM for Schools rating of “very good” is a challenging but achievable target. We recognise that there is more to do, particularly in the light of suggestions that BREEAM “very good” is too low a target. We commissioned a study to investigate the potential cost implications of raising the target to “excellent”. This study confirms that a rating of “very good” is achievable for new buildings within existing levels of funding. Additional funding, of between £40–£160/m² (approximately 3–12% of current funding levels) depending on the location and the scale of the development, may be required to achieve “excellent”. Further research is required before the findings can be published.

Other than cost, there are some significant barriers to raising the BREEAM hurdle. The location of a school building can have a major effect on its BREEAM rating, and on the cost of improving its rating. For school refurbishments where many facets of the design are already established, it may not be technically possible to achieve a rating of “excellent”. Schools need to be sited to some specific catchment areas, and it may not be possible to place them close to major public transport hubs. Similarly, for rural schools on green field sites it may be more difficult to achieve a target rating. It has not been established with certainty that a BREEAM rating of “excellent” is technically possible for all school buildings, but research into other building types² has shown that it may not be possible to adapt the design of a building to achieve “excellent” where the building’s location is constrained.

In order to gain a better understanding of the challenges presented by raising the target to “excellent”, we are funding a number of demonstration projects within BSF. A selection of school’s within the One School Offer pathfinder programme will be demonstrations of sustainability. These will be funded to achieve a BREEAM rating of “excellent”, and the buildings will contain renewable energy systems which contribute towards more than 20% of each schools energy needs. We will work in partnership with the LAs and their design teams on these projects so that the practical and financial issues surrounding environmental sustainability are addressed and understood.

More than 250 schools are currently registered for BREEAM assessments. Construction timescales are such that only a few completed schools (Academies) have received a certified BREEAM rating. Of these, the most recently certified have met the current target of “very good”.

ENVIRONMENTAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

We have developed a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the performance of Local Education Partnerships’ (LEPs) delivery of new school buildings within BSF and other capital funding programmes. These include the following indicators of environmental performance:

- Percentage of designs achieving the BREEAM “very good” target.

² FB10, Putting a Price on Sustainability, BRE & Cyril Sweett, BRE Trust, 2005.

- Tonnes of construction waste relative to project value.
- Energy efficiency of school buildings in operation.

The KPIs that have been developed are consistent with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) plans to develop a Code for Sustainable Building (CSB). A consultation draft for a CSB has been developed using a subset of the BREEAM categories which could be applied to housing (eg carbon emissions, water use, etc). A review of responses to this consultation is currently underway. The code would result in a more narrowly focussed and less flexible target-setting code than BREEAM for Schools. However, DCLG do not intend to apply the CSB to other sectors before it has been tried in the housing sector..

The Sustainable Buildings Task Group (which was tasked with identifying short and long term improvements in the environmental performance of buildings) has identified that significant improvements are required, within the construction industry as a whole, for energy, water, construction waste, timber and other construction materials. The Sustainable Buildings Task Group is due to publish their recommendations in June 2006, and DfES will incorporate these recommendations within their requirements for school buildings. DfES officials are also liaising with DTI and other government departments on establishing a vision and setting long term targets for more sustainable construction.

ENERGY USE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Energy targets for school projects within BSF are set within Part L Building Regulations³ which require that buildings that are constructed to today's standards are 40% more energy efficient (ie emit 40% less carbon through energy use) than those built five years ago.

Part L Building Regulations also require that renewable energy sources and other low carbon technologies are considered, and implemented where technically, practically and economically feasible. The regulations set an overall target for carbon emissions which implies that 10% of a building's energy demand is met using renewable energy technologies—where renewable energy technologies are not adopted then the overall carbon reduction target must be met in other ways (eg through improved energy efficiency). Many planning authorities have also introduced a specific requirement for renewable energy which is typically set at 10% of predicted energy demand, and new schools must satisfy these local planning requirements.

We have recently appointed a specialist adviser on renewable energy and is currently developing policy guidance on the installation of renewable energy technologies. The guidance will draw on other material, including Departmental and inter-departmental initiatives such as the Biomass Task Force and the DTI's Micro-generation Strategy.

A scoping study has been completed into the carbon footprint of schools. This has established that schools account for approximately 15% of public sector carbon emissions. Almost half of these emissions are produced as a result of energy use, approximately one third are released through transport, and the remainder represents energy that is used in the manufacture and supply of equipment and consumables.

We are currently in the process of gathering detailed data on energy (and water) consumption in schools to gain an understanding of the links between energy use and factors such as ICT provision and building age. This exercise will enable us to set realistic benchmarks and will inform future targets for energy and water in BSF. It will also help to determine the scale of renewable energy systems that will be required to reduce carbon emissions by 10%.

GUIDANCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Several aspects of environmental sustainability have been addressed in previous DfES guidance, eg the Teachernet web-site contains advice on school design together with guidance on operational issues such as energy management. Building bulletins describe requirements for acoustic performance and ventilation, and other publications contain exemplar designs and examples of good practice.

We are now working closely with a range of authors and organisations to develop advice on all practical measures which can be taken to encourage and enhance sustainable development within a co-ordinated set of documents. Published guidance on the sustainable design of schools will be available in June 2006. This will take the form of two printed publications: a volume of case studies supported by a companion guide which describes the wide ranging features of a sustainable school.

³ Conservation of Fuel and Power, Approved Documents Part 2A and 2B, effective from April 2006.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS—THE NEXT GENERATION

It is the children and young people in our schools and colleges who have the most to lose if we as adults do not tackle climate change. The clock is ticking and we need to act now. That includes making sure that care for the environment is second nature to all of the pupils in our schools.

Sustainable features that are established during the design and construction of school buildings and grounds can contribute to learning about the environment and prepare young people for a lifetime of sustainable living. For example, small scale renewable energy installations have proven to be a valuable teaching resource in some schools and are also useful in raising the awareness of the local community. Some schools have been constructed so that elements such as walls are fitted with vision panels allowing pupils to see thermal insulation and structural features. Grounds play a vital role in every child's learning and development and BB85, the outdoor classroom, describes the educational uses of school grounds and how this resource can be created or adapted and managed, and these principles are being continually developed by learning through landscapes (<http://www.ltl.org.uk/>).

The DfES launched its Sustainable Schools Strategy in May 2006. This leads schools to consider how they can commit to sustainable development through eight key areas—or “doorways”. Each of these doorways present an opportunity for learning, and many of this can be enhanced through the design of the schools building and grounds.

Food & Drink—through the availability of healthy food and drink prepared (or grown) on school premises.

Energy & Water—provision of metering to allow pupils to monitor use, small scale renewable energy systems provide further opportunities.

Travel & Traffic—encouraging pupils to participate in surveying transport arrangements, developing travel plans, and walking and cycling.

Purchasing & Waste—adopting measures to encourage pupils to sort and recycle waste and minimise packaging.

Buildings & Grounds—through the use of school grounds as outdoor classrooms, and the use of a schools building/construction as a teaching resource.

Inclusion & Participation—providing school facilities which enable and involve all students.

Local Wellbeing—measures that allow schools to develop links with local communities.

Global Dimension—eg by comparing the environmental impacts of a UK school with those in other parts of the world through twinning and joint projects.

THINGS TO SEE IN A SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

- Good control systems which are easy to understand to enable the school to manage energy and water appropriately and hence reduce the amount of these resources used.
- Renewable energy sources, for example solar panels, wind turbines, biomass heating, and ground source heat pumps (but only if the school has tried, where possible, to reduce their energy use by good controls, rather than the view “well if we produce our own we can use as much as we like”).
- The provision for pupils and staff to use alternative forms of transport safely. For example cycle racks and pedestrians and cyclists protected from traffic whilst entering the school grounds.
- Low water using WCs, urinals and taps within the school building to reduce the amount of water needlessly wasted. Rainwater harvesting systems (but only if the school has tried, where possible, to reduce their water use by good controls and low water using appliances, rather than the view “well if we produce our own we can use as much as we like”). Also, a good provision of drinking water and good design of toilet facilities can often improve the ambiance of the school.
- The use of recycled materials for the building or those that have a low environmental impact, for example timber from sustainable sources.
- Recycling facilities in schools, including storage for materials collected. This could include a number of materials, not just paper, including batteries, plastics aluminium, and possibly glass. The school could become the point for community recycling. There is a lot of information available from other northern European countries.

It is important to remember that you may be unable to see all the aspects that make a new school sustainable. For example:

- Good ventilation and indoor air quality, acoustics, natural lighting, and reducing the use of volatile organic compounds all effect the general ambiance of the building and make working conditions better (the social point of sustainability) but it would be hard to physically see anything.
- Commissioning and making the building easy to maintain means that the building can be managed more efficiently and hence reduce the amount of resources used (and frustration).

- Community and pupil consultation makes the community feel that it “owns” the building which can often reduce vandalism as pupils and the community feel as though the building belongs to them, this will increase the life span of the building.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by 4ps

SUMMARY

There are two key points which 4ps, local government’s project delivery specialist body, wishes to make to the Inquiry, as follows:

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

1. *How well is the BSF delivery and procurement model working to deliver sustainable schools and best value, including through Partnerships for Schools and Local Education Partnerships?*

The original intention of the BSF programme was to have a clear split between new build schools which would be created and maintained under PFI contracts, and refurbished schools which would be the subject of DBOM contracts (Design, Build, Operate and Maintain- in other words PFI without the private sector investment). This would have meant that all BSF schools would be properly looked-after under long-term facilities management contracts integrated with the risk transferred to the private sector.⁴

The reality is that DBOM has become just “Design and Build”, with possible non-mandatory and quite separate facilities management (FM) contracts. In addition, many of the schools that were expected to be procured under PFI are now to be conventional capital projects using Design and Build contracts.⁵

The consequence of this is that BSF is going to produce a generation of schools that are split into—on the one hand- those that are procured through lifecycle contracts (PFI) where the contractor has the responsibility of maintaining the school as well as designing and constructing it, and—on the other hand—those that are procured without any requirement for the design/build contractor to look after the facilities. This may be the responsibility of a separate FM contractor where funds permit, but even where they do the term of such contracts will be much shorter than the 25–30 years typical of PFI.

One of the best features of PFI as a procurement route is that it requires clients (local authority and schools) to budget to look after the facilities over the long-term, and incentivises the private sector to invest in reducing running costs. Less than half of the BSF programme will now benefit from this, whereas the majority of BSF schools will now be returned to the pre-PFI world of uncertain levels of care, with a likely result that schools in poorer areas will deteriorate in much the way that they used to do. This is not considered to be an overstatement, as both local authorities and schools find themselves increasingly unable and unwilling to fund long-term contracts where they have the choice not to.

Partnerships for Schools, with whom we are working as partners on the national programme, are of the view that LEPs can solve this problem, through an expectation that they will enter into FM contracts for all the schools, but there is no certainty of this and in any case LEPs are not universal.⁶ BSF is intrinsically weaker at delivering lifecycle provision for English schools than the “pure” PFI programme which it has replaced. The Audit Commission and NAO have warned of this ‘maintenance time-bomb’, and this lack of sustainability could turn out to be a most unfortunate consequence of the “mixed economy” approach which BSF espouses.

A suggested solution is for DfES and PfS to require the Authority and schools to sign-up to a pre-funding agreement over repairs and maintenance, involving an agreed funding stream going into a Sinking Fund, to be applied to future maintenance. The Sinking Fund funding streams need to be protected, rather like the income streams for a PFI contract. The amount to be put in sinking funds can be calculated within a framework (on rates per sq m) or by such other method as the schools and Authority may determine.

⁴ Schools PFI projects have successfully demonstrated that such risk transfer works well, and that facilities of schools already 6 years into their operational period of 25 years are better looked-after than equivalent non-PFI schools: Treasury and Partnerships UK reports on PFI published 2006, and 4ps publication on Operational PFI projects, 2005.

⁵ London Boroughs of Lewisham, Lambeth and Hackney, amongst others, have been told by PfS that the schools in their BSF programme for which they had expected to receive PFI credits, will now instead be funded by conventional capital, and therefore procured through Design and Build contracts.

⁶ At the present time, out of 38 BSF projects, it has been agreed that 8 will not have LEPs; 20 of those remaining are definitely on course to form LEPs, leaving a number yet to decide.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

2. *How are the strategic needs of Local Authorities balanced with the needs of schools communities and learners within BSF?*

Transformation has a chance of succeeding in some Authorities, but the inclusion of Academies is already getting in the way of a strategic approach to BSF for some Authorities. This is particularly so where Academies were not originally part of the strategy but have become mandatory. The impact of Academies, and in the future of schools that choose to become Trust/Foundation schools, on the success and overall pattern of the local secondary sector may in some cases be adverse, because of the unpredictability of their effect on the popularity of the other schools.

As a result, we believe that Government should suppress any further major educational initiatives while Authorities are developing and implementing their strategic approach to secondary school transformation through BSF. Sustainable solutions, whilst recognising the need for future flexibility, need to be grounded on clear and stable objectives, for a defined group of schools whose status is not in doubt.

ABOUT 4PS

4ps is local government's project delivery specialist organisation, a central body of the Local Government Association. 4ps works in partnership with all local authorities to secure funding and accelerate the development, procurement and implementation of PFI schemes, public private partnerships, complex projects and programmes. 4ps' multi-disciplinary team provides hands-on support, gateway reviews, skills development and best practice know-how. DfES has provided funding for 4ps to provide an "Expert Client Programme" in support of BSF Authorities, and the schools team is heavily engaged in this alongside Partnerships for Schools.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by Partnerships for Schools (PFS)

INTRODUCTION

PfS is the NDPB and central delivery vehicle set up by the DfES to deliver the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. PfS's role is to manage delivery of the BSF programme, ensuring that the outcomes required by DfES, are achieved. PfS's role is to both act as a facilitator, to support Local Authorities (LA) in delivering individual BSF projects, and at the same time act as a gatekeeper to ensure that the objectives of the programme and maximum value for money are achieved for the public purse. In working with LAs to achieve the programme objectives, PfS's role includes seeking to ensure efficiencies are achieved and establishing best practice consistent with a national strategic programme.

At an individual LA level, PfS works with the authorities to establish their educational and estates strategies and local business cases, prior to running a rigorous competition; the outcome of which is the establishment of a Local Education Partnership (LEP). LEPs, which will be created for the vast majority of Local Authorities, are local delivery vehicles, partnerships between the local authority (10%), the successful private sector partner (80%) and PfS (10%). Each LEP has a clearly specified long term partnering contract with the LA as strategic commissioner, and then individual contracts will be agreed between the LEP and LA for individual school projects over the life of the long term partnership. The individual school contracts are either PFI or conventional, depending on which offers best value for money. The presence of the local authority and PfS as shareholders in the LEP ensures a degree of transparency and alignment of interests in the delivery of the long term local investment programme which has not been present in other forms of procurement. This procurement and delivery approach was specifically designed to meet the long term educational and efficiency objectives of the BSF programme.

The large majority of local authorities have embraced the LEP structure as an innovative way forward for schools procurement in their local authority areas. Many see further benefits beyond schools by creating procurement mechanisms that could become major drivers of other investment or regeneration activity. Some have questioned the need for a LEP and in most cases, PfS has been able to evidence that the LEP does indeed offer material advantages over traditional procurement, whilst in other cases it has been agreed that alternative approaches will be followed—either because the LA does not have the type of long term local investment programme that underpins the value of a LEP for BSF, or because it has been agreed that suitable existing arrangements are already in place.

Once the LEP is set-up the selected private sector partner is granted exclusivity over all investment in the secondary school estate for that particular LEP area for a period of up to 10 years, subject both to tough and contractually binding continuous improvement benchmarks, and demonstrating that its proposals for future schemes offer good value for money. The overall result is a win:win. It is a win for the local authority because they can contract with certainty and evidence real value through long term arrangements. The private sector on the other hand can see a longer term relationship that provides certainty for them and

therefore an ability to price keenly whilst investing for the future. Finally, central government secures the confidence of a national programme managed on a strategic basis with considerable learning that can be recycled into future schemes with commensurate efficiency benefits to the public purse.

A key part of the LEP's role once established is to ensure that the educational estate is used to its maximum education and community advantage, whether through extended schools or, at the most practical level, ensuring that any development is not a short-term fix but a sustainable and flexible resource based on whole life costings and value for money.

ROLE OF PFS

When interacting with local authorities, PFS has the following core roles:

- As national programme manager approving the scope of a local authority's scheme and allocating it funds;
- Providing guidance on and challenging local authorities to meet the education policy objectives set down by DfES;
- Ensuring local authorities agree and keep to a project timetable for the delivery of BSF consistent with predetermined policy guidelines;
- Providing benchmarking data to ensure value for money; and
- Embedding continuous improvement into the programme by communicating best practice.

SUSTAINABILITY

PfS's main focus in relation to sustainability is environmental. PfS has to ensure that BREEAM for Schools "very good", and—in London—10% renewable energy across the carbon footprint, are achieved. These are embedded within our standard documentation (at <http://www.p4s.org.uk/StandardDocuments.htm>) and evidence to date from the earliest schemes suggest that these are manageable within the funding available. We continue to keep affordability under review on behalf of the DfES, especially in light of new regulatory requirements for energy, acoustics and ventilation.

A Design Quality Indicator (DQI) for Schools assessment also needs to be carried out for every BSF school. This identifies various environmental issues, like energy efficiency and operation, and percentage of construction waste, that must be considered, and that the LEPs have to annually report on, against the standards as set out in the programme's Key Performance Indicators. Contractors also have to demonstrate when bidding, how they will deal with the likes of: environmental assessment; water and energy conservation; reducing waste during construction; and renewable energy.

We push hard for whole life solutions. The whole life costing approach inherent in PFI naturally encourages this, so much effort is spent ensuring that LAs ring-fence budgets to ensure that Design and Build solutions are built and maintained to comparable standards, independent of their funding route.

PfS also indirectly plays a role in wider socio-economic sustainability. Local authority visions have to cover the extent to which schools will be encouraged to work together and with other local partners, including the local Learning and Skills Council, to deliver a broad based 14–19 learning and skills curriculum. We also encourage and endeavour to facilitate joined-up funding and services to create extended schools, keeping up frequent contacts with for example Sport England or local regeneration bodies. When scoping and specifying their estate strategy, we challenge all schools to be designed to be inclusive and easily available to the community outside the school day. Key to this is that the DQI process and the standard Output Specification (which we continuously keep under review) that encourages contractors to create flexible buildings, sourced from sustainable materials, to ensure future adaptability to changing educational and organisational needs.

STRUCTURED TO DELIVER

PfS is organised to ensure our resources are best placed to deliver. The PfS organisation reflects the two distinct phases of any major capital programme which is no different for BSF; specification and delivery. The specification phase, managed by an Education and Planning Team, runs the programme up to the point at which the local authority has developed an approved Education vision and has secured the necessary business case approvals to be ready to go to the market for competitive tendering. The Transaction and Finance Team then runs the programme through the procurement stage through selection of Preferred Bidder, financial close and setting up, and operation of, the LEP. These teams are supported by National Programme and Communications Teams.

Throughout this programme, the DfES ensures that policy objectives are specified and secured by approving each project at various stages in its development. Most notably, the Education Vision itself, now captured under an overarching process called Strategy for Change of which the vision is an important component, is approved by Ministers.

PROGRAMME PROGRESS

The programme has now reached considerable momentum. We are presently working with all 38 local authorities in waves 1–3. Six projects are at Preferred Bidder—Bradford, Bristol, Lancashire, Greenwich, Sheffield and Newcastle—with Bristol expecting to reach financial close and set up its LEP very shortly. An additional project, Solihull, has nominated its preferred ICT supplier and will shortly nominate its overall private sector partner for construction related work. A further six wave 1 projects have short-listed their bidders. The first wave 2 projects have entered procurement with most of the remainder likely to follow over the next two quarters. All but one of Wave 3 LAs have had their Education Vision approved and the first schemes are due to come to market within the next few months. More detail is provided at <http://www.p4s.org.uk/current—projects.htm>

LEARNING LESSONS

Getting the specification right is only one part of the equation. How the successful private sector partners work in partnership with the local authority and PfS in the future to deliver is also equally key. The advantages of a long-term programme and the LEP model is that we can continuously improve. While we have learnt many lessons with regard to the development, specification and procurement processes to date, the first batch of BSF schools are not due to open until September 2007. We do not expect to get everything right first time, but we do expect to see significant improvements from previous schools procurement. We should be mindful of making comparisons with past outcomes since BSF represents a step change in approach, moving to long term strategic programmes of local investment, rather than ad hoc individual school projects being delivered as in the past. Learning from repeat business will ensure that the less good performers learn the lessons of the best. Overall, the objective is to drive through continuous improvement and value for money for the public sector, including capturing and disseminating all aspects of sustainability, whether environmental, economic, social, technological or educational, that a long programme of this type promotes.

CONCLUSION

The BSF programme is an ambitious programme. It was established with ambitious timescales and programme objectives. It is right that this was done; although there have been many challenges faced in the last 2 years, they have all been met and solutions developed. The first projects are close to fruition and the first schools close to starting work on site. The programme is now gaining an unstoppable momentum and it is clear that 2006–07 will be a year of considerable delivery. Throughout all of this however, we are very clear that we cannot just invest billions of pounds of taxpayers money without clear and demanding objectives with respect to sustainability in all its forms. Sustainability is an objective that runs hand in hand with ensuring that we use the money wisely and efficiently to create transformational learning environments for all children.

June 2006

Witnesses: Ms Sally Brooks, Divisional Manager, Schools Capital (Policy and Delivery), Department for Education and Skills, Mr Martin Lipson, Programme Director, 4ps, and Mr Tim Byles, Chief Executive, Partnership for Schools, gave evidence.

Q613 Chairman: Can I welcome Martin Lipson, Sally Brooks and Tim Byles to this session of the Committee. As I think you will know, because I know that some of you have been here before, not sitting in the hot seat but listening to some of our deliberations, the Sustainable Schools Inquiry is a very important one for us. It has, we understand, £45 billion of tax-payers' money. That is a lot of money and a lot of commitment, and we are very keen to see, in the fullest sense, that this programme does deliver sustainable schools into the 21st century. I understand that Tim Byles has only just come in post five weeks ago. We will not give you any allowance for that, Tim. We will expect you to know everything!

Mr Byles: Thank you, Chairman.

Q614 Chairman: Can I ask which of you wants to lead off. I will give you two or three minutes just to say where you think we are with Building Schools for

the Future and how that links to the Sustainable Schools, and then we will ask you some questions. Would you like to start?

Ms Brooks: Can I start?

Q615 Chairman: I am calling on you first, Sally, because at the last session we had you did a lot of nodding and shaking your head, and this gives you the opportunity to tell us why.

Ms Brooks: I was in the audience and I knew some of the answers, so that is why. I am Sally Brooks, I am Head of Schools Capital, so I have the six billion pounds capital spend as part of my remit and within that is the two billion a year BSF. I think where we are on Sustainable Schools through the whole capital programme is we are getting there but we are not there yet. I think we have moved on a lot from where we were a few years ago when we were just using the capital that we had for repairs and maintenance because we had such a backlog. At that

point we had two or three billion a year which we were giving to schools and local authorities just for mending leaking roofs and repairing boilers. We moved on from that to be more strategic and targeted, in terms of looking at some kind of educational transformation in a small way around science laboratories, technology blocks, that kind of thing, and then, with Building Schools for the Future and now the Primary Programme, we are looking much more at strategic transformation of the whole school estate, and I think that that strategic transformation is what gives us the opportunity to be truly sustainable, because it allows you, first and most obviously, to build 50% new schools and that allows you to be much more sustainable in energy use terms but also in other areas. With the other 50%, you still have got a significant amount of money to deal with issues like energy management, but because it is strategic and across the whole estate it allows local authorities and schools and their partners to think about whether schools are in the right place, whether they are the right size, whether they are serving the right communities, whether they have the right extended school links with the community, whether they are delivering long-term personalised learning, whether their IT is right. It allows people to be strategic, and that gives you the most bangs for your bucks, if you like; that allows you to think radically. If by “sustainable” we mean schools that are rooted in their communities, that serve the long-term needs of their communities, that have had the possibility of delivering 21st century learning with 21st century teaching methods (and we do not necessarily know what they are going to be in 50 years’ time, so the flexibility to do that well), and I think the strategic nature of BSF allows us to do that, but we have only just started on that journey and we are learning as we are going. So we are on the way, we have not reached it yet, but I think we are generally agreed on the direction of travel.

Mr Byles: As you have said, this is a very ambitious programme and it represents a considerable commitment from central and local government as well as the private sector. The more structured approach that Sally has just been talking about is starting to evidence a much more positive way forward in contributing to educational transformation and locating that within more broadly based and owned strategies which are held locally as well as contributing to the national programme. The task here is to try and get the best of what the private and public sector can do together for a public good outcome, and that involves taking a view about how education in secondary schools, in my case, is delivered, not just in terms of today but into the future, and so pupil place planning and new development in a local authority area are all key components as well as where we are starting from now. A further challenge is to balance targeted investment through Academies, for example, with an approach for a whole area and balancing the needs for a targeted intervention, where there is particular need, here and now against the needs of the whole estate, and every child in that local

authority area is in itself an interesting challenge. My impression, and it is early days for me, is that there are a number of issues which need further development. The capacity of local authorities and the way in which they are preparing for what is a major procurement for many of them (and I speak as an ex-local authority chief executive) is something which needs attention and is something which we are working on hard, and balancing the needs and expectations of private sector partners with the public sector is also a dialogue which we are learning from and will continue to learn from through time.

Mr Lipson: Picking up from what Tim has just said about the capacity of local authorities, I am very interested in that because my organisation provides support to local authorities in the skills and the capacity they need to run these projects as clients, and I think it is important to look at what has happened perhaps over the last eight to 10 years. We have moved from procuring one school at a time to procuring large groups of schools together, and that brings a considerable need for new and extra resources and skills into the client organisation. Procuring is no longer a simple matter, because we are not often just procuring a group of schools, we are also procuring the life-cycle for those schools in that there are services bundled in with the building contracts, and so a great deal of upfront work has to be done by the client organisation, with all its support advisers and organisations lending support, to make sure that risks are properly evaluated. So you have very large teams working in the client organisation procuring these projects. This is all to the good, because you do get, as both Sally and Tim have said, a strategic approach, you get more bangs for the buck, you actually do get value for money from these big projects, but they take longer to procure than a single school would have done, considerably longer, and our view, I think, in our organisation is that that time needs to be used well to make sure that the risks are properly dealt with, that the contract that is finally entered into is a really good contract for both parties, and then you will have a long-term success.

Q616 Chairman: Martin, why was your organisation set up and by whom?

Mr Lipson: 4ps is 10-years-old, we are actually in our 11th year now, and it was set up by the predecessors of the Local Government Association.

Q617 Chairman: Your funding comes from where?

Mr Lipson: Our funding comes from top-slicing of revenue support from Government to local authorities.

Q618 Chairman: How do you describe your organisation, the state of it?

Mr Lipson: How do I describe the organisation?

Q619 Chairman: Yes. What is it? Is it a not-for-profit company, or what is it?

Mr Lipson: We are a local government central body. We are constituted as a non-profit company.

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Q620 Chairman: I wanted to get my head round that. Sally, can I ask you: this all sounds very exciting and interesting, but your Department and Government in general tend to make mistakes when doing new things. This Committee has looked at new things that the Department has done, much smaller than this, and mistakes can be made. If there is a major project in the private sector, a massive project, it is a feeling that I sometimes get, listening to you and others describing the challenge, that you are learning as you are going along, and there is a bit of me that thinks that, if this was a commercial organisation, you would get all the ducks in a row first and then say: we have got our team together, we have got a programme and now we start moving it forward, rather than this perception I am getting from what you, Tim and Martin have said that you get started and hope it will all turn out right on the night.

Ms Brooks: Yes, that is a fair point. There is a temptation to sit for two years in a department trying to work out how it is going to work and get it all right, then start and then discover all the problems, but until you start you do not really know what some of those problems are going to be. I think the Department, before I arrived, set this up and did recruit people externally, like me, who have got a construction and school development background, and we set up Partnerships for Schools to be the real experts in delivering the programme because we acknowledged that central government departments do not have a terribly good record with delivering major capital projects. So, I think we did a lot of the work but we did not do everything because you will only learn by doing. You will understand the basics about cost control, programming, capacity and project management but you will not understand all the issues around local authority funding processes. We have had seven, eight, nine big issues around VAT, around supported borrowing funding, around levels of investment which would not have been spotted until you started. It was a very ambitious timescale, and we have slipped from that and we need to acknowledge that, but I think we got as much as we could do ready, and we did set up PfS, which was crucial in terms of giving a very hard-nosed delivery focus to the programme that was not swayed by ministerial decisions every five minutes. I think we have done okay. I think there were things we could have spotted before we started that we did not, but I do not think there were many. I think most of what we have learnt since we started are things we would only have learnt by doing.

Q621 Chairman: This whole programme has come for the Department as a great shock. Basically, the Treasury said: "Look, this is a very ambitious programme and it has got to be delivered through the Department for Education and Skills."

Ms Brooks: I was not there.

Q622 Chairman: You were not there?

Ms Brooks: No.

Q623 Chairman: How do people work with the Treasury? Surely the Treasury are peering over your shoulder all the time?

Ms Brooks: We have worked very well with the Treasury. I think they are keeping a close eye on it. We talk to them regularly about all the funding issues. They are aware of our slippage. In fact, the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit is, as we speak, doing an assessment of where we have got to on delivery of BSF so that we can take those lessons learned forward, but I think the Treasury generally have accepted that it was an incredibly ambitious programme. I think we are all agreed that targeting it on the most deprived and low-achieving areas of the country was always going to be a very, very big task, because those local authorities are under extraordinary pressure, and the decision was made that that was the right place to start because of raising standards. Within that come extra challenges. I think, generally speaking, the Treasury has acknowledged those extra challenges were there, and we are working together on making sure that we learn the lessons going forward.

Q624 Chairman: What bit of the Treasury are you talking to most of the time?

Ms Brooks: The education spending team we talk to a lot, and the PFI team. Those are the two main bits we talk to.

Q625 Chairman: You talk to them more than you talk to Number Ten and the delivery unit?

Ms Brooks: Yes, we talk to them as well, but the delivery unit is a one-off, intense two-month evaluation programme which we are going through at the moment.

Q626 Chairman: In terms of the way that you told us the history, that was interesting, because if you take an authority like mine, Kirklees, where Huddersfield sits, of course, being an early PFI authority, we have rebuilt a lot of our school estate. You sort of left that out as though all you have been doing is mending the roofs and building a few laboratories over a period of time. Actually a big PFI programme has been going on in the country. Why did you leave that out?

Ms Brooks: I forgot it. I think the PFI programme was the next step, if you like, from the early repair and maintenance, but I think what we have done with BSF is on the strength of PFI, because all of our PFI is now in BSF. We have taken it all and put it into BSF—half of the funding in BSF is PFI the other half is convention—but we have built on the strengths of PFI. Also there are some weaknesses to PFI, there are some things that could be improved. One of the things that BSF does is, because it sets up a long-term Local Education Partnership, which is to deliver wave after wave after wave of Building Schools for the Future in one local authority, we have looked at how we could improve PFI, and one of the criticisms of PFI is that it is fairly computational and that there are huge bidding costs for one-off projects. We now have a one-off bidding round at the end of which we now have a long-term programme which can be up to half a billion pounds, if not more in some big local authorities, with partners within a Local Education Partnership who are incentivised to deliver improvements year on

year and to work with the local authority and, importantly, to work with the local authority and the schools around educational transformation, around integration of ITC and personalised learning as well as buildings and maintenance. We have moved on from a situation where the PFI contractors were, I think, talking about looking at, “We are there to build a building and then maintain it, clean it”, and so on, to a situation where most of our BSF bidders are coming in with educational advisers, with ICT people, with a kind of hopefully integrated team prepared to address more than just the building, prepared to understand they are in a long-term relationship with the local authority and the schools to deliver buildings and educational transformation. So we had the PFI; we have moved on from that now.

Q627 Chairman: When you talk to people on the ground, and we have been visiting schools, as you know, there does not seem to be that amount of expertise available to some schools in terms of the rush that they have in order to meet a BSF deadline. I wondered who brings in the expertise. I can understand where the construction expertise comes from—it is well established—you expect a major construction company to know about buildings and running them and maintaining them. When we listen to ministers they talk about personalisation of learning. If you say, “What is going to be in this 21st century school that is different than 30 children with a teacher, throw in a couple of white boards and computers?”, and they say, “Oh, it is all going to be personalisation”, where is the expertise around what is going to be in there? What is this personalisation in a sustainable school?

Ms Brooks: Where is the expertise? It is a challenge, because what we have at the moment is schools that are getting on with their day job who are not necessarily understanding how you can get involved in a major transformational design, and the support is not necessarily there at the moment. We are working on that with the National College for School Leadership and others to work with the end users to help make a bridge between the educational thinking that is happening at the moment and how they are going to have their new building designed. So, when you talk about things like personalised learning and you talk about access for pupils from anywhere so they can access from home, they can access from libraries, they can access from their own schools, they can work at their own pace—

Q628 Chairman: It is all about IT, is it?

Ms Brooks: A lot of it is about IT.

Q629 Chairman: Personalisation is IT really?

Ms Brooks: No. I think personalisation, in as far as it affects Building Schools for the Future, a lot of that is about making sure, not just that the ICT allows pupils to have access wherever and whenever but that the spaces that you are designing into a school allow small, quiet work spaces that individual pupils can access, that they allow group spaces where a group of people can sit together and work

around a single white board on a project, that they allow places where 60, 90 people can sit together in a lecture hall and see what is happening and where, in fact, schools can link with other schools so that you can have experts coming into one school to give what would be a very valuable lecture at secondary level and schools in the area can link in through their IT and appreciate it.

Q630 Chairman: That is interesting, but who has got the expertise on this personalisation in the Department?

Ms Brooks: We talk to our curriculum people. The curriculum people tend to have the expertise.

Q631 Chairman: So the curriculum people, if they came in here, would be able to tell us what personalised learning is all about?

Ms Brooks: They would probably be able to tell you better than me.

Q632 Chairman: But you do have a regular dialogue with them?

Ms Brooks: Yes, we talk to all our curriculum people. We talk to our Extended Schools people, we talk to the curriculum people, we talk to specialist schools, we talk to almost every single bit of the Department.

Q633 Chairman: So a whole group of you get together in the Department and say: “This is a school for the future, this is the way it will be built.” You have got experts coming in saying: “This is how you make it sustainable environmentally”, do you?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q634 Chairman: Then you have another group saying: “This is what the school of the future will be like in terms of IT and personalisation”, and all that?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q635 Chairman: So the full set is there?

Ms Brooks: The full set is there, but also the full set is in PfS because the PfS education team are the ones that work with the local authorities and the schools on their early education provision, which comes into their BSF strategy for change. So, if you like, the Department sets the overall policies and the overall expectations around personalised learning, around Extended Schools around workforce reform, around almost every area, and we then work with PfS and their education team are the ones that work with the local authorities to help them.

Q636 Chairman: Let us ask Tim what he thinks.

Mr Byles: I think that is a key point. The linking between what we know best at the moment at a national level in terms of all the areas you have just been discussing—sustainability, personalisation and so on—does need to be translated into the real world in which teachers are delivering in local communities and expressed in terms, starting from where they are, that can allow that process to develop through time. One of the key things that I think Building Schools for the Future delivers is flexibility to adapt to

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changing circumstances, to build on the best of what we know already and for that to have resonance with what local people want and the way in which people delivering these services locally can see it benefiting them.

Q637 Chairman: How does that work out for someone in a school in Bristol? When we went down there they said, “Look, we are in this wave. We have got to do it in a hurry.” Where do they get the support? They did not seem to be thinking they had all this expertise coming from you or anyone else?

Mr Byles: I certainly would not want to say that everything is perfect now. I do not pretend that. It is a process. If I can comment on the point you made earlier on: does the private sector get all their ducks in a row before they start something? I can tell you, that is absolutely not the case. What we are seeing with the public and the private sector in relation to this programme is doing our very best to set this in the best practice of what we know and what we see coming but recognising that this procurement process, the nature of the partnership between central, local government and the private sector, is something which we are all learning from, public and private, and I make no apology, in fact I celebrate that learning in moving the process forward and delivering efficiencies and effective investment through time.

Q638 Chairman: Before you got involved in this and worked out how many schools and how many ways over how much time (and, as Sally has said, it is not just simple building, this is a very complex delivery of the building: the delivery, the maintenance, what goes in it is a multi-faceted skill-set) did you do an evaluation of whether there was the capacity in the system to do this?

Mr Byles: If I can, with my recent history and look forward more than back, what I can say is that, in terms of the wave which is just about to be announced, each local authority has gone through a readiness-to-deliver assessment. So we have looked at the capacity of the authorities and the scale of their ambition and tried to reach a sensible judgment about the ability to move forward in it.

Q639 Chairman: But some of the most deprived local authorities are least able to—

Mr Byles: Absolutely correct. That is why the support needs to vary according to their capability. The project support from Partnership for Schools, for example, or, indeed, from 4ps, which is very important in boosting capacity in local government, needs to be tuned to a sensible assessment of what their local authority capacity is and what the capacity of the local partnership is to deliver this. That process has developed through time and it has got to the point I have just described to you. The very early projects, I am quite sure, did not have that degree of preparation. That is part of the learning which we have all found very helpful and I expect to get better for the future, and, as Sally mentioned

earlier on, this programme did begin with some of the most challenged authorities in the most challenging areas.

Q640 Chairman: You have not answered me about the private sector. Is there the capacity in the construction industry and are there the specialists in these things to do what needs to be done?

Mr Byles: If you are asking me a question about the capacity of the construction industry, the answer is, yes, there is that capacity, and we are looking very carefully at the impact of large-scale investments and the known impact on the construction industry around the country as we look at the judgments going forward of the effects of BSF, which is a very large programme but, in terms of the overall scale of the construction industry in this country, is not predominant, but those things do need to balance. Where there is a particular skill shortage is to do with project management expertise to local government, and that is why we are particularly looking at ways of drawing in the people who have that kind of expertise perhaps in other sectors who could apply it into this one, we are looking at capacity building programmes in the public sector to manage these programmes, but I am not seeing the kind of constraint that I think you are asking about in the private sector delivery perhaps.

Q641 Chairman: I remember very well that when PFI really got started in the educational sector the very people you are talking about were the scarce resource; you could not get them for love nor money. We are talking about a situation in this country where we already have scarce skills in this area, and you have got the Olympics in 2012 with an enormous draw on that kind of capacity. Are you still sure that you are going to have the right quality of people to deliver on this?

Mr Byles: In terms of private sector construction capacity to deliver, I am feeling much more reassured now. There has been some recent modelling by the Office of Government Commerce, in fact, on exactly this question, and I believe their work is going to be published soon; and that goes exactly to the point about which you are asking, and that is why I am feeling more reassured about that point. I am actually more concerned about the project management capacity in local government.

Q642 Chairman: Let me bring in Martin.

Mr Lipson: Before I comment on this, perhaps I could try and answer a question you asked earlier about the origins of Building Schools for the Future, because I was around then and my colleagues were not. In fact, it did not get started in a rush at all. There was about 18 months of preparation going on in the Department when they set up the shadow organisation, which then became Partnerships for Schools, and we in the Local Government Organisation were—

Q643 Chairman: What year was that?

Mr Lipson: That was 2003. We started work on it in 2003. It did not get launched, effectively, until—

Q644 Chairman: The historian in me (and I am sure Gordon shares this) wants to know when did you know there was going to be a Building Schools for the Future programme?

Mr Lipson: I think at the end of 2002, early 2003.

Q645 Chairman: Who told you?

Mr Lipson: The Department. We have close working relationships with the Department because we have been supporting the PFI programme that you mentioned, including Kirklees, for over eight years previous to this, so we know a great deal about this area and the local authorities involved.

Q646 Chairman: You understood that this was a Treasury-led initiative, did you?

Mr Lipson: No, I am not quite sure that is where it came from.

Q647 Chairman: Where do you think it came from then?

Mr Lipson: My impression is it came from the Department. It probably came from various parts of government, but it emerged as a very strong concept.

Ms Brooks: It came from David Miliband in January 2003. He was the Schools Minister and it was his baby, his project. When I arrived I worked closely with David Miliband and he was passionate about it. The basis of it was, in fact, the LIFT model in the NHS, which was the first of this kind of global partnership.

Q648 Chairman: The Minister for Schools, who is a middle ranking minister, you are saying it was his idea, with a £45 billion spend, and he had not had long conversations with the Treasury before?

Ms Brooks: He had had long conversations with the Treasury, yes?

Mr Lipson: I think a lot of the work in working out the detail of how this would be done was done by another organisation called Partnerships UK, which had put together the ideas and is the half owner of Tim's organisation, Partnership for Schools. There has been quite a lot of work done to put that idea together. I just wanted to correct any impression that it was done in a rush, and we were very pleased with the extent to which local government was involved in the discussions in that early stage. Turning to the point that we have been discussing more recently, I completely endorse my colleague's concerns about the capacity in the local government sector because I think what we have here is a huge programme, which is very exciting, and a lot of the local authorities involved in the programme are, indeed, very excited about the possibility of transforming secondary education and they are very bought into the ideas, but they are finding it difficult in the relatively limited market, which you have referred to, of experts and professionals. With lots of projects going on at the same time nationally, there is a limited pool of really good experts. So that is, I think, one point. One point that perhaps has not come out very clearly is that it is the local authority that has to assemble the procurement team. It is they that employ all the advisers. They use in-house

expertise when they have got it. The larger authorities do have sustainability experts, they do have procurement experts, but smaller authorities have to buy that expertise in, and I would say that it is a limited pool that they are fishing in to get the really good people to help them with their projects, and that is critical for the success of the future generation of schools. If they do not get the right expertise, then you will not get a very good result, and we have seen some evidence of that.

Q649 Fiona Mactaggart: I wanted to come in on the point that Tim was making. He was talking about the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) doing a further report. I was quite struck when I looked at the OGC report on construction, demand and capacity that it did not, I thought, really consider Building Schools for the Future as a kind of big elephant in this pot. It talked a lot about Crossrail and about the Olympics, and so on. One of the things that I was anxious about was that this programme has almost been a ghost creeping into this thing. Are you saying the OGC has now really recognised the size of Building Schools for the Future and its impact, because it has not really shown that yet?

Mr Byles: I am not aware of the history you are just describing. All I can tell you about is the discussions I had last week with the people in OGC who are producing this analysis (and I believe have produced, but I am not sure if it is going to be published) which does take into account the impact of BSF in this wider world.

Q650 Mr Marsden: I wonder if I could start with you, Tim Byles. I want to try and get clearer in my mind the precise nature and remit of Partnership for Schools. Certainly, if I look at your background before coming to it, it is a very solid and a very impressive one in the procurement sector, is it not?

Mr Byles: Thank you.

Q651 Mr Marsden: What about the skills that Partnership for Schools has to be an adviser as opposed to a procurer?

Mr Byles: There are a range of skills in the organisation. Some are to do with helping local authorities establish their educational vision, as Sally has told you about, so we have people drawn from that sector in the organisation, and it is their job to work alongside local authorities to produce this strategy for change. There is a team of people who are experts in procurement and in the establishment and closure of deals such as private finance type transactions, and they provide very specialist advice at the back end of this process on putting those things together. We have a legal team who are specialists in documentation (in particular the use of standard documentation that can be used as a basis for these transactions) that can help with training and development of all participants in working that through, and we also have a design team who are working very closely with colleagues in CAFE, for example, to make sure that the design inputs are appropriate and tested appropriately at the early stage. So, we have expertise that goes from

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the visioning process to the closure process, and we try to tune our intervention alongside the capacity of the local authority in question, in particular to carry these things forward, because there is enormous variation in the knowledge, skills and ability of individual local authorities.

Q652 Mr Marsden: As we have already heard. Structurally that sounds fine, but in the reality of pressured projects, particularly the ones we are talking about, particularly the examples the Chairman has given, how are you going to make sure that the holistic concept of what you are trying to do does not get lost in the pressures to deliver? Your position, as I say, is key to that. How are you going to make sure that you are not just Mr Power Driver and you remain Mr Motivator.

Mr Byles: Thank you. I will memorise both of those two things. Vigilance is an example of it and so is assessment. I have mentioned this readiness to deliver assessment, and, as we move forward into wave four, what we are establishing with each local authority is a memorandum of understanding between Partnerships for Schools and the local authority in question where we are all very clear about what we all think the starting point is and confident in the knowledge that through time circumstances will change.

Q653 Mr Marsden: Can I interrupt you there because we have had this before. Do you see your principal client in this context as the local authority or as the school?

Mr Byles: I am not sure I would describe it as a principal client. I certainly see us having a key relationship with the local authority and also with individual schools, but much of our work is centred through the local authority and with various schools, in some cases a very large number of schools, that make up a wave area within a local authority, but that means that as we are getting the vision part right, if I go back to the beginning of the process, we are sitting down with people from each of those schools as well as the director of children's services trying to take a view across the whole estate so that we can reach a common view about what educational transformation actually means across the board.

Q654 Mr Marsden: I was going to come on to educational transformation and come to you, if I may, Sally. It is a lovely phrase "educational transformation", and you have given some examples of what you think it means, but does it actually reflect also a differing approach within the Department to types of education? What I mean by that is, is it based on the provision of different sorts of schools rather than some of the rather vaguer concepts that we are talking about in terms of personalised learning which you yourself have already said is something still to be defined?

Ms Brooks: Yes, I think it is based on departmental policy, which includes provision of a range of different kinds of schools, provision of choice and diversity. I think (to go back to the question: "Who

is the client?") under the White Paper the local authority is the strategic commissioner of education in its area but not necessarily the direct provider. So, as strategic commissioner, we would expect a local authority, through BSF, to commission a range of diverse providers of education. That is what we expect, including, where appropriate, Academies, including the expansion of successful schools, including bringing new faith providers and others into that area.

Q655 Mr Marsden: That is very much at the heart of this educational transformation as well as the practical things about having broader multi-use spaces and the personalised learning agenda and all the rest of it?

Ms Brooks: Yes, as well as extended schools, extended hours, community use—as well as all those things.

Q656 Mr Marsden: I am glad you mentioned that because I would like, if we get a chance, to return to how far this programme is embedded in extended hours and community use. I want to pick you up on this point about educational transformation and also perhaps to ask Martin Lipson to comment. I have been looking at the two written submissions that you have given. I will be kind and say there is a degree of creative tension between you and local government on this. In your paper you talk about BSF, including Academies and BSF plans, and you are very bold about it. You say, "Projects that contain innovative Academy proposals within their plans are likely to progress more rapidly to approval", but in the paper that has been submitted from 4ps they say, again fairly boldly, "Transformation has a chance of succeeding in some authorities, but the inclusion of Academies is already getting in the way of a strategic approach to BSF for some authorities. As a result, we believe Government should suppress any further major educational initiatives while authorities are developing and implementing their strategic approach through BSF." How do you reconcile that? To the outsider it looks like you have got horns locked there.

Ms Brooks: I think in the early days of Academies, when BSF was just starting and Academies were being delivered separately, there was tension, I accept that absolutely. What we have done (and again this is about learning as we go along) is we have now integrated the delivery of Academies into the Building Schools for the Future programme and PFS are now delivering that; so I think it has got a lot better. In the early days the Department was dealing directly with sponsors delivering the buildings through the Department, which is never going to be a long-term success because it is not what our core business is, and there was some tension. What we have done in the last year to 18 months is integrated Academies into the BSF programme. Sponsors now occupy a similar role to the governors of voluntary aided schools in BSF in that they are consulted and

they are very involved in the design of the buildings, and so on, but the local authority is the commissioner. I think it is working a lot better.

Q657 Mr Marsden: Do you share that assessment, Martin Lipson, and, if you do, why did you say the rather sharp things that you did in your written submission?

Mr Lipson: I think it is the view of a number of local authorities and the Local Government Association that Academies are quite a challenging thing for some authorities to deal with where they have strategies for dealing with underachievement. In schools that did not start going in that direction, federating schools and other solutions exist as sometimes quite effective means of dealing with underperformance. I think (and this is perhaps only for a minority of authorities) when they have to consider the appropriateness of Academies as part of their strategy, it is not necessarily the direction they will choose to go in. This is difficult because Building Schools for the Future requires authorities to set their strategy for many years in the future, and Academies are not governed by the authority in the same way that community schools are, which means that there could be elements of the way that education is delivered locally that are outside their control in the future. That is a change. The new Education Act takes that further: it allows for schools to be outside the authority's control in a number of respects. So, I think authorities are saying to us it is more difficult now to plan future strategies than it used to be.

Q658 Mr Marsden: Tim Byles, I am not going to ask you to comment on the ideological issues there, but I am going to ask you to comment on the practical issues. If in particularly difficult areas, low achieving areas, we are in for a lengthy period of creative tension between the Departments and local authorities over how you include Academies in BSF, is that not going to impact rather tightly on what are already tight deadlines for you to deliver?

Mr Byles: I find that tension point more historic than actual today. Having been, until five weeks ago, a local authority chief executive, I have been very much involved in the debate of how that discussion has matured through time.

Q659 Mr Marsden: Do you think Martin's assessment, or, to be more accurate, the assessment given in the paper, is pessimistic?

Mr Byles: I think it was true at the time it was written.

Q660 Chairman: When was it written?

Mr Lipson: I think it was submitted in June or July.

Q661 Chairman: So it is fairly recent.

Mr Byles: Yes, but what I am trying to describe to you is I have seen a very significant move in local authorities, some of whom took a very particular view about the utility of Academies when they were first announced, and Martin has reflected some of that feeling. I am engaged every week in discussing

with local authorities, with ministers in the Department, the squaring of this circle between the strategic approach for an area and the utility of an Academy.

Q662 Mr Marsden: I will move you on from being Mr Motivator to Mr Conciliator. You are there to try and smooth out some of the sharp edges between DfES and local authorities, are you?

Mr Byles: I think these are great titles. I look forward to reading them later! What I am trying to do is to get a process which does deliver an outcome that is coherent across a whole area but also allows for a targeted intervention where that is appropriate. The issue of governance is a much more complex one as it relates to local authorities' relationships with schools. This is not a command and control relationship, and it has not been for many years. The whole way of establishing a strategy which is owned locally depends on influence, persuasion, encouragement and leadership, and that is delivered through different skills than historical, control mechanisms, but it is a much more powerful set of arrangements when it works effectively, and we are seeing that increasingly across the country and I do see that as a contribution we can help in, yes.

Q663 Mr Marsden: Can I come back, finally, to you, Sally. You are trying to say to us that there were tensions but they have been smoothed out. That is to be seen. More specifically perhaps, given that some of the local authorities who you have got in the future waves of BSF, and certainly some of the schools, will share some of the forebodings that they have expressed to us in the Select Committee visits about how they are going to do this, how are you going to keep the people who are going to come on stream informed of the progress that you have made in waves one to three? If you have got local authorities, for example, who are particularly exercised about the Academies and how that fits into Building Schools for the Future, how are you going to sell this to them and reduce some of the tensions? We have not seen at the moment much evidence that the Department is informing those people who are going to come into the programme of the progress that you have made so far?

Ms Brooks: We have a lot of information on our progress so far, like putting things on our websites and producing reports, but we tend to work mostly with the local authorities who are coming into the next couple of waves, because those are the ones who are starting to focus on where they are going to be in Building Schools for the Future. The Department as a whole has six-monthly meets with almost every local authority's capital investment teams in the country, and conferences, which keep them up to date in terms of our general progress, but really it is only the local authorities that are coming in, in the next two or three years, that really become focused on what that means. We are shortly announcing wave four. Six months ago we had a day long conference for all those local authorities that are in wave four, five and six to talk through with them, in a great deal of detail, exactly what we expected them

to do, and, as Tim mentioned earlier, we are prioritising in wave four in terms of ability to deliver. Nonetheless, waves four, five and six are all thinking about BSF now. So, we talked through with them what it meant, we talked through with them what we mean by educational transformation and we talked through with them, in a lot of detail, what we saw from our early learning in waves one, two and three, what the key issues were that they had to demonstrate they were dealing with and they had a process for dealing with, and we then asked those local authorities themselves to assess whether they should be in waves four, five or six in terms of how complex it was.

Q664 Mr Marsden: So there is some choice in the process?

Ms Brooks: There is some choice in the process and actually good, high performing local authorities came back to us and said they wanted to be in wave five because they had new schools that they wanted to build on land they had not yet acquired, they were thinking of having Academies or they knew they had to have a competition and they were taking responsibility for programming that into their BSF project.

Mr Marsden: I hope that the extended school and particularly the co-operation with the PFE sector will be key ingredients in what you talk about in the future.

Q665 Mr Chaytor: Where does Ofsted fit into the process of approval of local authority bids? Is there any formal role?

Ms Brooks: No, there is no formal role. Interestingly, we have been discussing recently whether or not, when Ofsted are going to local authorities to evaluate their performance, their ability to deliver should be part of that evaluation, but we are in early discussions with them about that. In general, Ofsted goes down a parallel track rather than being involved in the evaluation of their bids.

Q666 Mr Chaytor: More widely, in terms of teaching and learning strategies and development of the curriculum, how prominently does that feature in the bids that local authorities are required to submit? What value, what weighting is given to the teaching and learning strategies as against other things such as the potential for extended schools and liaison with the local authority?

Ms Brooks: In fact, local authorities do not bid because we more or less tell them where they are in the process in terms that they are prioritised in terms of deprivation and exam results. With waves four to six we ask them where they think they should be, but, in fact, it is not a bidding process. The evaluation takes place when the local authorities produce their strategy for change, and the strategy for change has to cover all those things. The way it works is that you have to know what you want to deliver in educational terms first, you then have to link that with your buildings strategy. To put the history on how we have changed things, in the first two waves of BSF we said, "We want your education vision, we

will improve your education vision and then you can go on and sort out your building strategy." So we got some very good education visions which covered personalised learning, curriculum, science teaching, extended schools, sports, everything. They have to cover almost every single policy which we have in their vision, but what we found was that we had almost two separate documents. We had the educationalists in local government doing the education vision and then we had the property people, who may well have been in a different bid, doing the property bit. We have now brought them together, and we have said we need an integrated strategy for change which takes all those education issues, cut curriculum, everything. It gives their plan and then shows how they will use BSF to implement those strategies.

Q667 Mr Chaytor: But what happens in the strategy? What happens when the educational vision is at odds with the amount of capital available, and do they know what the capital available is before they draw up their strategy?

Ms Brooks: I think Tim might be better placed to answer the bit about how much money they know about and when.

Mr Byles: We are not just told there is this amount of money, but the process does tend to come from our indicative figures available, but it is a function of the number of schools and what they want to achieve through them. It becomes a discussion. It is not an entirely formulaic approach, but neither is it a blank sheet of paper. That is as much as I can help you with today, I am afraid.

Q668 Mr Chaytor: The ultimate allocation to each local authority's programme is absolutely dependent on the quality of the strategy they have produced?

Mr Byles: And what is contained within it. What makes sense, as Sally mentioned—. Take the Kent example, for example. There were three waves of activity, very large waves, each £500 million at a time with large numbers of schools contained within them, but there are others that are areas simply dealing with two or three schools and are coming back to other parts of the estate through time, and part of that is to do with capacity in the authority, with where the whole investment strategy sits with other things that they are trying to achieve in the education world and across the community as a whole. That is why I was trying to make the point earlier on. It has to be coherent in terms of what they are trying to achieve locally. There is not some centrally driven answer that they must fit this to.

Q669 Mr Chaytor: In the process that you are describing is there not a risk that the local authority may produce a strategy that is completely out of line with any realistic concept of what this is meant to be about?

Mr Byles: That is the reason for the facilitation, for the educational planning team, Partnerships for Schools sitting alongside them working out what is the aspiration, what is practical and deliverable and

how can that be matched with the likely resources available, whether that is from PFI or from conventional funding.

Q670 Mr Chaytor: Where a local authority comes at the end of the line (i.e. they are not going to be fully involved in the programme until 2015), they are now given an element of specific capital for one school. Is there a danger that the focus on the single school approach as a kind of consolation prize is not going to be fully integrated into what the eventual strategy might be, or are there processes in place to ensure that what is done in terms of the redevelopment of one school is consistent with what is likely to be the redevelopment of another school?

Ms Brooks: Yes. We were very clear that the one school offer, as we call it, is a down payment on BSF, if you like, it is not separate. So local authorities have been required to tell us how it fits into their overall strategy. Obviously, a local authority that is going to be in wave 14 will not have fully worked out a strategic plan for its whole school estate in 10 years' time, but they should have an overview of what they intend to do and they need to demonstrate to us, if they are rebuilding a new school in that area, that they have their pupil place planning which says it is going to be needed, that they have integrated it into where they want to put the new school when they do get BSF, that, for example, if they are focusing a certain specialism on that school, the facilities are going to be available to the other schools in the area. That is absolutely part of what they have got to tell us before they get the money.

Mr Byles: Can I add a point to that. You could imagine that everyone would be rushing to have the maximum investment as soon as possible. I can think of one very good example where a one-school investment is going to be the centre-piece of a major regeneration, and that requires land assembly, it requires the planning process to be put in place, and for that whole very long-term rejuvenation of an area to take effect it actually makes sense to deliver the school down the track rather than right up here and now. So one of the challenges we need to manage is the long-term benefit for whole communities alongside large-scale investment and the timing of that investment. That is one of the interesting parts of this programme.

Q671 Mr Chaytor: Finally, Chairman, in terms of the use of other streams of capital, if the local authority strategy had linked the redevelopment of secondary schools with primary schools or with FE, are they completely free to use the other capital funding streams relevant to FE in primary, or not?

Ms Brooks: We are working towards it.

Q672 Mr Chaytor: Can you aggregate the use of devolved capital for primary schools into the whole pot?

Ms Brooks: Yes, we are working towards it. It is where we want to get to.

Q673 Mr Chaytor: It does not apply now.

Ms Brooks: It applies with a lot of it, yes, because most of it goes into the single capital pot, and once it is in the single capital pot they can use it in accordance with their local priorities, so they can actually take money that is given them for other things and put it into education and vice versa. We have not completely got there yet, but it is a very high priority for us. Whenever I go out to local authorities with Martin (and I am sure we will say the same thing), it is one of the things they say to us over and over again: "Please, help us join up our funding more and be more flexible."

Mr Lipson: The issue is not whether authorities want to do that, but whether they are able to in terms of timing. The difficulty sometimes is that funding does not come on stream at the right moment to incorporate into the complex contract which they are entering into, and so sometimes they have to be added on later or procured in some other way.

Q674 Mr Chaytor: But in terms of the further education sector, for example, the way in which their capital projects are developed, there is considerably more freedom for individual colleges to use capital creatively than perhaps there is with primary and secondary schools. Given, the emergence of the 14–19 curriculum and the links between schools and colleges, are you confident that the various forms of capital available to the further education sector is fully integrated into the BSF strategy?

Ms Brooks: I think there is still more work to do. I think FE colleges have more freedom because they have the freedom to borrow, and that is a big advantage for them. That freedom is not something that is available to the rest of the school sector.

Q675 Mr Chaytor: The borrowing approvals can be part of the future BSF strategy?

Ms Brooks: Yes. Local authorities have freedom to borrow; individual schools do not in the sort of way that individual FE colleges do.

Q676 Mr Chaytor: If the local authority wanted to put forward a BSF strategy that involved redevelopment of its further education strategy as well, the further education college's capacity or freedom to borrow would not be inhibited in any way, that could be part of the overall package.

Mr Byles: Yes, that is right. Sally is describing a process that could become more structured and we are working towards that.

Q677 Fiona Mactaggart: We talked about future waves, but let us for the moment think of the first three waves of BSF. The DfEs has identified "lack of capacity or experience in delivering large projects in local authorities" and "insufficient corporate support and leadership" amongst the common factors in those delays. Could you not have written that before it happened? Was that not absolutely predictable?

Ms Brooks: I think it was partially predictable. The size of it and the transformational nature of it together were much more of a challenge than we may

necessarily have predicted. We could have predicted that the size of it was something that local authorities would find some difficulties in getting to grips with; we could not necessarily have predicted the fact that it would be so transformational and the fact that it involves rethinking the whole school estate, with all those individual conversations with schools and local communities and so on, was going to make it even more of an issue. But, yes, I think we could. It still surprises me that the size and complexity of it was not fully grasped. We could have predicted it. When we had all our meetings and we introduced the new local authorities to BSF, we said over and over again: this is high priority; it should be dealt with at chief executive level and your members need to be closely involved with it. To be honest, it surprised me how long it took some local authorities to accept that. One of the biggest issues that slowed down the programme was that some local authorities did not see it as central to their corporate direction. They saw it either as an education programme or as a building programme and therefore that it should have been dealt with either by the education people or the building people. In fact, I do not think there is any local authority in the country for which BSF is not a hugely significant element of their corporate strategy. It has taken some time in some local authorities to accept that.

Q678 Fiona Mactaggart: What is each of your organisations doing about this problem? Having said that it was a highly predictable problem, what are you doing about it?

Mr Lipson: The DfES gives us funding to run a team supporting local authorities in the BSF programme. Our remit is to provide training to the project team in the local authority, to help them get best practice into the way they run the whole procurement exercise. Do not let us underestimate this: it is two years of extremely hard work by a large team which requires a good understanding of the governance of the project, the accountability processes for within the local authorities for how the project will report and be monitored, really good management skills for a large team, good leadership and so on. We give training and support in all these things. We are starting to do that in advance of authorities entering the programme, so we are now helping to try to get the authorities fit so they can say, "We're ready." I think that makes a big difference. In the first three waves, there was not really much of a chance to do that. We did not start giving the support until the first wave was already well under way. We have seen difficulties as a result, especially, as has already been pointed out, by definition the most needy authorities have often been the ones that have most difficulty with the capacity and skills. That is certainly something we have all acknowledged, if you like. I think we are now heading that problem off in the next few waves that are coming because we have done lots of work in advance and the authorities have been given the choice to say whether they are ready or not. That makes a big difference.

Mr Byles: We have *Readiness to Deliver*, so we have that assessment taking place. We are signing a memorandum of understanding with each local authority, which I was describing earlier on, which makes it clear what is expected on both sides, and we are using conferences and seminars/workshops to share experience, with those local authorities who have learned from this process telling their colleagues exactly how best to link to it. I am visiting a number of authorities and having conversations at leader and chief executive level. In a large local authority, there is a great deal to do, and this is not always going to be at the top of the pile, but it is capable of disrupting the budgeting and resource planning process very significantly if the centre of the authority is not well tuned to the demands of this process. That is an adjustment we want to make sure everyone fully understands and we are doing that at a personal as well as a more general level.

Q679 Fiona Mactaggart: Sally, I suppose you have partly answered me at the beginning.

Ms Brooks: I asked these two people to do those things they have just described. Apart from, absolutely, from wave 4 onwards, prioritising those local authorities that are ready to deliver and not making it easy for them to demonstrate they are ready, we are evaluating wave 4 at the moment and who should be in it. We are ringing up people who the local authorities are putting forward to us, saying, "This is the member who is leading on this, who knows exactly what is happening in BSF now." For waves 1 and 2 we would have said, "Jolly good, there is a lead member with responsibility for it." We are now ringing them up and saying, "Okay, what do you know about it?" to check that they really have that corporate leadership. We are looking at making more things mandatory. 4ps very much gives the early support to local authorities at the corporate level before they are in BSF. Once they become active, PfS to some extent takes over that relationship, although 4ps are still involved. Before they are in a wave, all that capacity building, all that knowledge and awareness at officer, chief officer and member level is from 4ps. At the moment, it is not mandatory that local authorities talk to 4ps. Most of them do but, sadly, some of those which need the most do not talk to them. The ones which I know are very, very good competent local authorities, were in there years ago talking to them, and the ones that need them were not. I think it is certainly reasonable to make it mandatory that local authorities do engage early on and we require them to get that. Rather than just recommending that they get support and help on capacity building and understanding, we require it.

Q680 Fiona Mactaggart: It sounds to me as though we have this massive national programme and we forgot to tell people at the beginning—let us be honest—that it was a massive national building programme.

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q681 Fiona Mactaggart: We treated it as though it was a bit of capital renewal. That is one of the reasons why it has ended up in this problem. Is it practical to have 150 or however many different projects doing it here, doing it there, when we know there is a lack of capacity in procurement expertise, project management and of turning the vision into reality? Would it not be more sensible perhaps for *Partnership for Schools* or whatever to have a centralised team, with experience from previous projects, which is going into places and providing that kind of spine of support?

Ms Brooks: They do provide that support. We have had lots of discussions about how we can support local authorities: Could we get highly paid professional project managers and send them in? But it is all about knowing the area, knowing the schools, knowing the challenges. It is something that has to be driven locally. Most of the problems that arise, which I see slow things down—around pupil place planning, relationships between the schools, schools that do not want to be closed and maybe the local authority is proposing to close them because they are failing—are all about that local context. It is not at the moment particularly about managing major building projects, because most of them have not started, but a lot of the slowdown, a lot of the delays are around things that only those local partners can deal with, because they are the only people who know them and understand them in detail and have relationships set up. I think PfS can and do support with a great deal of support, but sending somebody in . . . ? We all know how sensitive local authority relationships are. A load of schools in a local authority area, with that diverse set of stakeholders, is always complex and difficult to manage, even before you get into closing schools, buying land, opening new schools and so on. Really, in my experience, it is the local authority and the local schools and governors who are the only people who can manage that.

Mr Byles: We want to tune the level of our support to the capacity to deliver locally. Sometimes that is more hands on and sometimes it is more facilitative, as it can be with the role of 4ps. If we have a judgment about capacity and we can judge through the life of a project when that is rolling, that is fine, but the more difficult question is what happens when it all starts to fall over and then—which I think is behind part of your question—how best do we intervene in order to make sure that the thing stays on track? That is one of the challenges. We are overcoming that at the moment by having a recognised role for having access to local government's own sponsored support mechanism in order to make sure the thing delivers.

Mr Lipson: I mentioned earlier that in the early days of planning BSF local government had been very involved, and I do not think it would have been acceptable to local government to pursue the idea that there was an organisation that ran the projects from the centre. That would never have been agreed. So we have a very sensible acknowledgement of the

role of the local authority—and I would like to answer the question that was answered earlier—as the principal client, because I think it is. It is the local authority that signs the contracts with the LEP, with various advisors and so forth. We have here a multiple client programme. We have the Department and PfS and local government and schools all working together. It has to be that way to get the thing to work properly with the ambitions that we all have.

Q682 Fiona Mactaggart: Is that local economic partnerships' model working properly? Does it succeed?

Mr Lipson: I think it takes some years to bed in something like this. Because it is a long-term programme, we have the chance to get this right. It does not work perfectly to start with. It cannot do. Three years in, it is starting to work very well. There is a lot of creative discussion going on between all the parties now about how to improve it and embed those changes.

Mr Byles: The Local Education Partnership needs to be seen in the context of the range of partnership delivery mechanisms that a local authority is used to having within that community strategy for its whole area. This is recognisable language in local terms. We are adding to it, though, a determination which is quite hard technically to make sure that this programme delivers in a very commercial sense. I have a good degree of confidence that this is recognisable territory for local communities. It is taking it into a new area, and that needs to be proved through time, but I am quite sure it is a very effective mechanism to draw things together.

Q683 Fiona Mactaggart: Do you have a central mechanism which makes sure you can count the benefits' realisation? You say you have an educational vision. How are you going to account for benefits' realisation from this programme for every local authority?

Mr Byles: We are looking at the plan of what they want to achieve in overall education terms. We are framing that very specifically in terms of a programme of investment in relation to individual schools. Progress against that is monitored and measured at each stage of that procurement process, from the issue of an official journal notification, through to the selection of preferred bidder, to a financial close and delivery of the schools, and will then be monitored. You have to understand that we are in the process of all of those. A school has not yet opened under Building Schools for the Future, but, once it is open, how it is satisfied against key performance indicators, including educational attainment, will be a key part of the measure. At this moment we are concentrating on the agreed vision and strategy for delivering a range of finite, quite specific investment outcomes, and we are judging that process through time against expectations in terms of cost, budget and delivery.

Ms Brooks: We do also have an evaluation programme. We have let a contract to do a more long-term evaluation of educational outcomes

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which is, of course, as always, the most difficult thing to evaluate. It is a major government capital programme, so we have an evaluation programme in place, but that almost cannot start until the first schools are built. Then we will be looking closely at whether there is a real impact on educational attainment.

Q684 Chairman: Just before we move on to talk more about sustainability, from the way you have been answering the questions Fiona has been asking, does that mean that waves 1, 2 and 3 are going to get a really bad deal? I still have the scars of Jarvis, because we were one of the eager, first PFI schemes. Does that mean that waves 1, 2 and 3 are going to be the rather poor relations? In the future, will people look back and say, "What a great pity they went first. Look at what they have"?

Mr Lipson: I was referring earlier on to the difficulties and delays that might have occurred for some of the early projects. I do not think this is necessarily reflected in the outcome. There is one authority in the North West which is closing pretty well all its secondary schools and building new ones, a very dramatic vision change. The fact that they may have experienced some delays because they are an early project does not mean that that outcome is not going to be superb.

Q685 Chairman: If they are all much less sustainable than the buildings they replace, that would not be too good.

Mr Lipson: I was not answering that in terms of sustainability but in terms of the discussion we have just had.

Q686 Mr Carswell: Sustainability is basically a centrally driven agenda, is it not? You in Whitehall are determining the shape of the very buildings and the classrooms. It is not very localised, is it? You talked about the facilitation of the process; you talked about the education planning team. Whatever language you used, this is the centre basically deciding the shape of classrooms locally, is it not?

Mr Byles: No.

Ms Brooks: Not at all. We very much do not. We produce guidance, we produce minimum standards, we produce exemplar designs and we produce a lot of forward-thinking designs for local authorities and schools to learn from, but there is no way that we from the centre say what size or shape the classrooms have to be.

Q687 Mr Carswell: Were there centrally approved designs and minimum standards before this?

Ms Brooks: No, we do not approve designs. We create guidance notes. We create minimum standards which prevent local authorities, schools' architects and whatever from doing something which is dreadfully bad, but they do not constrain local authorities or architects, who can have a lot of freedom within them. They are minimum standards guidance.

Q688 Mr Carswell: Within that centrally defined framework.

Ms Brooks: Yes. We have a framework of how many square metres a pupil needs for their day: a certain number of square metres for classroom, for circulation, for dining and so on. We fund within overall space standards, which have gone up about 25% in the last two years. Within that, there is tremendous flexibility for architects to do what they want locally and we certainly do not approve their designs.

Q689 Mr Carswell: I wondered to what extent the origins of the sustainability policy initiative were with ministers. I know in theory all policies are driven by ministers, but could you talk me through the origins of the policy. Did Mr Miliband walk in one day and say, "Hey, guys, we need sustainable schools" or was there a corporate departmental view about it beforehand? Were there recommendations and suggestions from the Department maybe put to ministers about sustainability?

Ms Brooks: Originally, I do not know, because I was not here. When I arrived, sustainability was an element of what we were expecting out of Building Schools for the Future. With BREEAM, which I am sure you have spoken about, the "very good" and "excellent" guidelines were being brought in and we were expecting all BSF schools to meet BREEAM "very good". I have to say I do not know whether that came originally from ministers. I am assuming it did. I certainly know that in the last couple of years, with sustainability becoming higher and higher profile, we are being asked by ministers to look at higher and higher standards for these schools in terms of sustainability. That is a combination of the fact that, in life, sustainability has a much higher profile now than it did three years ago. When BSF was originally set up, I do not think most people were talking that much about sustainability as of the highest priority, whereas now it is very high on everyone's agenda and we are adapting BSF accordingly.

Mr Byles: It is important to see sustainability in its broader context. In my previous life, I chaired for five years a local government construction taskforce, and Martin was and is an active member of that group, where the whole issue of sustainability from a local perspective as well as a national one had a very significant profile. I cannot agree with the proposition that sustainability is something that solely emanates from the minds of ministers. It has several dimensions: environmental, social and economic. The power of sustainability in local communities, when you talk to head teachers or local schools about what sustainability means: yes, it does mean whole life costing and the whole approach to the maintenance and management of buildings but it also means the siting of those buildings so that there is ready, safe access to them in terms of transport, walking and cycling.

Q690 Mr Carswell: You are arguing that it was not exclusively the initiative of ministers; that it came from maybe the DfES.

Mr Byles: I am describing that there is a groundswell of support across the country for sustainability in its broad environmental, economic and social context, and this initiative has achieved a significant resonance across local government because of that desire in local communities and local participants to deliver in those terms. It makes sense to local communities to have safe places for children to get to school, to reduce the use of the private car, to see that as part of a broader public transport strategy, because that is good for the whole community as well as good for the investment programme that is BSF.

Mr Lipson: You are asking the question: Did sustainability come in with Building Schools for the Future? The answer is no. It was already embedded in the PFI schools programme before. If you use BREEAM as a measure, it was a requirement in the standard contract between 2001 and 2003, so the latter stages of the PFI programme had BREEAM “very good” as a basic requirement for all schools in that programme.

Q691 Mr Carswell: It is deeply embedded within the educational, professional civil servants, rather than elected ministers.

Mr Lipson: It was already there. BSF has taken it further.

Ms Brooks: I have received helpful advice from behind, from people who were there when it started, which I had forgotten. Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State at the time when BSF was being set up, was quite passionate about sustainability and so it was always high on the agenda of DfES ministers. It is now more broadly rising up the agenda across the whole of government.

Q692 Mr Carswell: I wondered, at a personal level in my constituency, if you are aware of Bishop’s Park School in Clacton as a model of sustainability.

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q693 Mr Carswell: You are aware of it.

Ms Brooks: I have been there.

Q694 Mr Carswell: Is it a sustainable school?

Mr Lipson: Yes, it is an award winning PFI school.

Q695 Mr Carswell: Is that to say it will not close?

Mr Lipson: I do not think so. It is part of a very good will procured package by the county there. I think it is a very good example of how these things can be done really well.

Q696 Mr Carswell: It definitely will not be shut down.

Mr Lipson: I cannot answer that.

Ms Brooks: I went to see it and spoke to the head teacher and it has, as I am sure you now, an interesting arrangement of three blocks that meet together. I said to him: “Is this sustainable? This obviously reflects the way you choose to teach but what about when you have left and there is a new head teacher, because it is a fairly specific way of teaching?” He talked me through the way those

blocks could either be used for year groups or subject groups or houses. The design specifically looked at various different ways you could use that. Somebody asked: “Who is the client? Is it the local authority or the school?” You have to have a balance there, because if you have a very forceful head teacher in a school who has very passionate ideas about something, they may leave in five years time, and if the building has been designed to fit what they particularly wanted that could cause a problem. With this school, very clearly it is sustainable because the form in which it is designed can help any different number of ways of teaching.

Q697 Mr Carswell: But you would agree that it would be richly ironic if, having ticked all the boxes for what constitutes sustainability, it then closed or was turned over to an alternative purpose.

Mr Lipson: It might be ironic, but this is part of the discussion we were having earlier about the difficulty of planning long-term future in education. We do not know what may happen to the popularity of a whole range of schools in the area, to changes in policy that might make the popularity of schools vary.

Q698 Mr Carswell: Would that not indicate that sustainability is not purely a question of architecture and design but it is about educational ethics, about what you teach, about school discipline, about things like that.

Mr Lipson: I would agree with that.

Q699 Chairman: I think we would all agree with that, would we not?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q700 Mr Chaytor: The Committee’s impression from previous evidence is that waves 1, 2 and 3 were pushed forward pretty quickly and the priority given to the whole range of sustainability issues was not as high as it could have been. Is there some evaluation of the sustainability impacts in the first three waves? Or will there be an evaluation when these schools are up and running in terms of the carbon footprint, the changing travel patterns or biodiversity? That is not a point that has been raised at all. Are there plans to formally evaluate the impact of the first three waves of schools?

Ms Brooks: Yes, we have plans to formally evaluate almost everything about the early waves of BSF. We are currently looking at how we evaluate the energy use and the carbon footprint. Whether we evaluate that whole sustainability thing is really dependent on a lot of things but we do need as a priority to look at how we can deliver a reduction in carbon emissions and the cost of that—and not just the cost but how it works. If you look at the book we have just published on sustainable schools, one of the things that appears to happen when you design a sustainable school with low energy use is that, in the first two or three years, the energy use seems to be extremely high compared with what we expect it to be.

Q701 Chairman: Why?

Ms Brooks: We are looking into that now. We are learning by our mistakes. We had the most sustainable school, trying to go for the lowest possible energy use; everybody said it was an example of best practice. It has opened, and the energy use is much higher than was expected. The architects are in there, the BRE are doing an evaluation, they are all doing evaluations of why this is happening. It is coming down, but, again, it is a case of learning by doing. Nobody could have predicted that was going to happen. They are now trying to find out why it is going to happen, to make sure it does not happen again.

Chairman: Perhaps you could consult with the Blue School down in Wells. We went there and they energised the students to bring down their energy use very successfully.

Q702 Mr Chaytor: That seems astonishing. This is now in a document.

Ms Brooks: This is in the sustainability green book which we just published. We have taken case studies. I do not know the details of what is happening there but I think it is tremendously good that the architect and the school and the local authority who did this have acknowledged there is a problem and have said, “We are going to go and look at exactly why this is not working. We are going to drill down into the detail and we are going to make it work and then we are going to spread that good practice so that nobody else gets it.” They have not got it completely wrong but it has to be worked in. We cannot just say we designed these schools in BSF waves 1, 2 and 3 to be low carbon without evaluating whether that is happening. Absolutely, we would have to do that, and we would have to use that information to feed into our expectations for future schools built—and not just through BSF but all the new schools we build—because we will be expecting higher standards in terms of carbon usage and we need to know how it works.

Q703 Mr Chaytor: In future waves, beyond wave 3, you have now specified that there should be an architectural champion involved in the partnership. Is that right?

Ms Brooks: No, we have always had a design champion.

Q704 Mr Chaytor: So there is no change?

Ms Brooks: There is a change in how we are evaluating design, yes. One of the issues that has come up—and, again, it is how we learn from doing—is that often at the end of the outline design period when a preferred bidder is chosen, when we looked at the designs of that preferred bidder they were not always as good as we would like them to be. We were using CABB to do that looking at. We realised that that is too late. There is no point saying at that point, “The designs aren’t very good,” so we are now working with CABB. We have not quite got there yet, but we hope to announce next month a new way of evaluating design to the short-listed bidders, where CABB is involved right from the

beginning; looks at, in week 1, if you like, the early outline designs; reports back both to the local authority and to PfS and to DfES on what they consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of those short-listed designers; and, most importantly, talks to the designers about what they consider to be their strengths and weaknesses early on, to give those designers a chance to improve, so that, by the end of that design period, when the preferred bidder is appointed, they have already had to demonstrate that they are good at design.

Q705 Mr Chaytor: In terms of guidelines over the range of sustainability issues, what has been the impact of the action plan on sustainable procurement? This was not in place for the further wave 1 schools, but it is now in place, I understand. Is that starting to have an impact or not? Or is that irrelevant to the whole issue?

Ms Brooks: I am afraid we do not know the answer to that, so we will have to come back to you on that one.

Mr Lipson: Are you thinking of the OGC guidance?

Q706 Mr Chaytor: Presumably, yes.

Mr Lipson: I am not sure of the answer.

Mr Chaytor: Obviously it has not had an impact. It exists but it has not had an impact.

Q707 Chairman: Would you write to the Committee on that.

Ms Brooks: Yes, we will.¹ Perhaps I could correct something I said earlier, because I do not want to mislead you, on the issue about freedom of schools to borrow. Apparently schools are legally able to borrow but the Department limits the circumstances, but we do not allow them, for example, to mortgage their buildings because of the risk of that. In practice, therefore, very few schools do borrow but they are able to.

Q708 Mr Marsden: I would like to press you on the environmental considerations and how you validate them. BREEAM on previous occasions has been used as a bit of a mantra for that. I do not want to carp but I do want to ask you very specifically about some of the criticisms we have had. We had one consultant before the Committee from Arup who was very vividly sceptical about BREEAM. Other people have said that it is possible to score highly on one indicator, like a brown-field site, and the others get neglected. Are you reviewing the efficacy of BREEAM?

Ms Brooks: Yes. BREEAM balances out, as I am sure you have been told. It has eight areas that it covers and you have to have a certain score. You can have a high score in some areas and a low score in other areas and still meet BREEAM “very good”. You can score very highly in every other area and not that highly in terms of your carbon use and still get BREEAM “very good”. It is not easy to do but it is possible. BREEAM “very good” is very good.

¹ Ev 203 [DfES]

Q709 Mr Marsden: I have to say that the gentleman from Arup who came before us said that “very good” in his view meant just about passable.

Ms Brooks: I am sorry, the BREEAM approach—

Q710 Mr Marsden: You used the words “very good”.

Ms Brooks: Yes, I should not have used the words “very good”. BREEAM is a good approach to an overall evaluation of sustainability across the piece. It is about the level at which you set it. We set it at something like 65% is very good and 75% is excellent. You can ratchet that up to 80% or 90%.

Q711 Mr Marsden: You are saying, basically, that you think the goalposts need to be lifted a bit.

Ms Brooks: But you can lift the goalposts across BREEAM and it still will not necessarily get you carbon neutral or low carbon scores. We will set up something separate which is just about carbon use, which says, “This is a stand-alone expectation that carbon reduction of $x\%$ ” or “Within BREEAM the carbon bit is mandatory and you cannot offset the carbon against the others.” I think we are looking at mandatory expectations around reductions in carbon emissions.

Mr Byles: I think BREEAM is a very helpful starting point but you do have to look at an assessment in the context of a particular site you are talking about. It would be a very difficult world if you had no objective measure to set, but, as Sally has said, the characteristics of a site can influence very significantly the scoring that can be achieved.

Q712 Mr Marsden: Sally, you say you are doing a review. How quickly will you come up with conclusions from that review? How quickly will they be incorporated into the next wave?

Ms Brooks: We are looking at the moment at technically the ability to reach certain reductions in carbon emissions and the costs of that; that is, how much does it cost to get your 40/50/60/70/80% reduction? It is quite a complicated thing.

Q713 Mr Marsden: That sounds to me like you are saying we are not going to get a revision of BREEAM any time soon but you are saying you are not happy with it at the moment.

Ms Brooks: We do not need to do a revision of BREEAM in order to change our expectations on carbon reductions.

Q714 Mr Marsden: When I asked you earlier, you said you were not happy with BREEAM. I asked, “Are you proposing to revise it?” and you said yes. You are now saying that you are not.

Ms Brooks: No, I am not saying I am not. I am saying that we can revise BREEAM; it may take quite a while to do that; we do not need to wait for that revision in order to say, if ministers so choose, that we want to reduce carbon emissions.

Mr Marsden: I think it would be really helpful if you could come back to the Committee with some written details on progress on that.²

Q715 Chairman: Is BREEAM not becoming a bit of a fig leaf, though?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q716 Chairman: We are talking about sustainable schools. I was involved in discussing a new Academy in Peterborough. The building of the new Academy, which I think everyone locally celebrates—I think it is a science and engineering Academy—is going to do the most awful things in terms of the transportation of people in Peterborough. If there is not a transport plan built into any new development like this, it is a disaster for sustainability. How far do those broader aspects of sustainability come in when anyone is looking at the sustainability of a school?

Ms Brooks: We have sustainability model which has what we call eight doorways, which include travel, waste and a lot of things outside the remit of BREEAM. In any BSF strategy for change, we expect the local authority will cover those. However, to some extent you have to build schools where the pupils are.

Q717 Chairman: It still does not mean you should not have a transport policy.

Ms Brooks: No, obviously not. We are providing some extra capital to schools to provide sustainable transport plans for them. All schools are going to be expected to have sustainable travel plans.

Q718 Chairman: At your conference earlier this week, on Monday, many local authorities apparently said that when you were thinking about sustainability driving the selection of a preferred bidder by the local authority, it weighed as little as 2% of the total consideration. What do you say about that?

Ms Brooks: There are two separate issues here.

Q719 Chairman: It worries me that you have these really clever construction companies and they come along and they nudge the local authority and say, “Yeah, we’ve got to do something about sustainability, but we’ll fix that for you.”

Ms Brooks: No. The evaluation, design and sustainability is separate from the fact that schools have to meet a certain level. It is a condition of the funding that schools have. All new schools have to meet that BREEAM “very good” level. That is separate. That is already a given. You are not evaluating bidders and saying, “Which of you is going to deliver BREEAM “very good”.” It is a given that all those bidders are required to deliver that as part of the funding. It is not evaluating how good they are in that term. They have to do that as a requirement of being a short-listed bidder. They have to already have committed to deliver BREEAM “very good”. Within that you can then choose between them, in terms of a lot of things

² Ev 204 [DfES]

around their design, including sustainability. The balance is up to the local authorities to some extent. We give guidance but the balance is down to them. The bar they all have to cover is BREEAM “very good”. If we were to up our requirements on carbon neutral schools/low carbon schools, that would be a bar for all of them to jump before they were short-listed.

Q720 Mr Marsden: Will there be any penalties on local education plans that do not achieve key performance indicators? We are told all the time about PFI contractors who promise various things and then do not deliver and they are fined. Will you be able to penalise an LEP if it does not work, in practice?

Mr Lipson: Perhaps I could help here. The contract between the local authority and the LEP when it is set up does include key performance indicators of that kind. The LEP is paid by performance. If it fails to deliver some of these KPIs, like educational transformation and sustainability indicators, it will get paid less. There is a serious incentive in there for the LEP to recognise these important issues and to deliver them.

Q721 Chairman: We must move on. I would like to talk a little bit about user participation. On one of our school visits they said they had heard they were in the next wave of Building Schools for the Future and they were not able to have the time to consult with the users. This Committee has a lot of experience of visiting schools and it is our belief—it may be prejudicial but it may be based on visiting an awful lot of schools—that where you build a new school and you consult the students, the staff, the dinner ladies, everyone involved in that school, it ends up as a better school than a non-consulted school. Why is it that the school we visited said, “We don’t have time for that”?

Ms Brooks: I do not know the answer to that. A local authority will have 12 months, whilst it is drawing up all its plans and proposals, where it is required, as part of its strategy for change, to consult schools. Once it knows where it is and the wave it is in and it is moving forward, it has every opportunity—there is plenty of time—to consult the schools and their users. I cannot say—not knowing the individual situation—why that happened. I can say that we are working with organisations like the Sorrell Foundation to set up a centre where every school in BSF can bring its pupils in to talk through how they want to design their school. We are supporting a lot of organisations that work with the users and we are offering all that to local authorities and to individual schools and we are funding the NCSL to work with head teachers and school leadership teams. Part of what they will be saying very clearly is that, in order to get the best possible school, you must consult your users. We have all the right processes in place, the right time scales.

Q722 Chairman: There is a worry, is there not? The research shows that a head will be involved in probably only one new school development in their professional career.

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q723 Chairman: Although there is no BSF school you can visit yet, there are Academies you can visit to get some experience of a new-build school that is attempting to be more sustainable. What facilities are offered to allow people to go to schools where there seems to have been a sustainability element?

Mr Lipson: In working with the local authorities that are procuring these projects, we always encourage them, at officer and member level, and school governors and head teachers to organise visits to recently completed schools, both good and bad, so they can see for themselves how this works. There are lots of visits that are going on and there are many schools that are running tours for this reason, because they are very popular venues for showing off ideas.

Q724 Chairman: Is there a cross-fertilisation? BSF is being informed.

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Mr Lipson: There is a great deal of it. We have just established the regional network groups for the local authorities in the Building Schools for the Future programme, where they are now going to start sharing lots of best practice. That will help the programme a great deal.

Q725 Chairman: Let us try to nail one thing that does worry me. I have always had a great prejudice when someone says “This is an off-the-shelf design.” I am not sure about that any longer. The more we have listened to evidence, I would rather have a package that made sense environmentally in terms of sustainability than have a jumble of buildings all individually. Actually, I would like a synthesis of the two. Where are you in terms of how the Department sees it? Do you see each individual school having Richard Rogers or someone designing it or do you see it off-the-shelf?

Ms Brooks: We are at pretty much the same place as you. I will tell you one thing: if we knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that we had a design that was right, then we might be tempted to roll that out, but I think that is what they thought in the 1960s and they were wrong. I do not think any of us would be arrogant enough to say, “We’ve got a way of building and designing that is right.”

Q726 Mr Marsden: It did not bother the Victorians.

Ms Brooks: No, and funnily enough they probably got the nearest to being right.

Q727 Chairman: We have the Victorians over here but we have Tesco over here. I hope you are not having any discussion with Tesco’s architects.

Ms Brooks: We are certainly not, no. In practical terms, if you went to a head teacher, who had a one and only chance to design their school, and said “You cannot design it, we’ve got an off-the-shelf

design” . . . One of the early issues when I arrived, when we had exemplar designs, was that at every conference I went to and in every conversation I had with local government in schools they were saying, “We do not want you imposing designs on us.” We were never proposing to impose designs. They were, as we said, exemplars. I do not think you would ever, even if you wanted to, get through an individual head teacher’s passion about how they wanted their school to be. We are not proposing to do that. There are two areas where we are looking for some movement and one is around basic principles. For example, if you are designing public spaces to be used by the community, they should be accessible by the community easily. We want some fairly basic principles which say, “Put your ICT areas, your drama, your sports facilities where the community can get in and use them easily”. So on simple basic principles I think we are looking for standardisation, but I think it is about components really. Every head teacher will want to design their classrooms and their social spaces but they will not necessarily want to design their toilets and they certainly will not want to design their door handles and their components.

Q728 Chairman: Who will not want to design their toilets?

Ms Brooks: Head teachers do not necessarily want to design their own toilets. They just want good toilets, that work, that do not get broken, where people do not get bullied.

Q729 Chairman: Our experience is that the toilets are almost the most important thing in the school.

Ms Brooks: They are the most important thing in the school. I know you know about joinedupdesignforschools, but we have been talking to joinedupdesignforschools in terms of: if you could get a toilet block that was designed to work, that we knew—because we had done a lot of them—did work, did not get trashed, was very robust, yet at the same time did not feel like it was a high security area but was one where people did not get bullied, head teachers would love it and would not want to design their own. They would say, “Thank you very much. Let’s bolt it onto the building.” It is about what works and what does not. Components work—and PfS and our design people are doing some work on that. Elements work—but I do not think we would be looking for the whole thing to work in that way.

Mr Lipson: There is a connection between your previous question and this one in my mind. To get a really successful school, you have to have ownership at the most local level by the governors and the head and the school community. Their involvement in the design is very critical. If they were handed a standard school, they would not be involved. They would not feel they needed to own it; it would not be their project. So there is something about individualising schools at the most local level that is very important for their success.

Q730 Mr Carswell: Going back to a point I raised earlier, you say that, but then you have prescriptive standards and an assumption that there are certain

things that head teachers are going to want to buy in. What are you leaving local people to decide? The colour of the classroom paints?

Mr Lipson: No, these things are not at odds at all. The standards they have to meet, as Sally said earlier, have built within them a great deal of flexibility as to how designers respond.

Q731 Mr Carswell: Top-down prescribed flexibility.

Mr Lipson: No, I think it ought to be bottom-up, bearing in mind a whole set of standards.

Q732 Mr Marsden: This Committee is just completing an inquiry on citizenship education and it occurs to me that a good role for school children might be to be well involved in their schools. But, given that you are looking at extended schools, the broader use of schools and that, what are you doing to involve the broader local community—you know, the area forums and maybe the FE college up the road—in that process of designing that school? Because that school is not just going to be used by the teachers and the children, is it?

Ms Brooks: No. When we look at a local authority’s strategy for change, we expect, as part of that, for them to tell us what they have done to consult the wider community: the local people, the users out of hours, the FE community. It is an expectation that, unless they have done that, their strategy for change will not be passed.

Q733 Mr Marsden: You will be able to monitor that, will you?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q734 Mr Marsden: Fine. We have been told that there is no funding made available to subsidise the efforts which are required to plan, develop and manage the delivery of the capital programme. Is that correct?

Mr Lipson: Are you referring to the procurement costs that the authority incurs in getting the project?

Q735 Mr Marsden: That is my understanding, yes.

Mr Lipson: There is a small amount of support that Tim’s organisation makes available to local authorities to help with the cost of employing a project manager.

Q736 Mr Marsden: Is it enough?

Mr Lipson: It is not the whole of the cost of that one individual, and the rest of the cost of the large team does fall to the authority.

Q737 Mr Marsden: What percentage of it would be covered in a typical local authority?

Mr Lipson: By the PfS grant? Less than 10%, I should think.

Q738 Mr Marsden: It is a token rather than a solution. If that is the case, Sally, given that we have already talked about the problems with the lack of expertise, would it not make sense for the Department to be looking to up that proportion slightly?

Ms Brooks: We would expect an average procurement cost on a £200 million project to be 1 to 1.5 to 2% and we would expect the local authority to fund that. The local authority do have access to other funds.

Q739 Mr Marsden: We all know that if you do not prescribe something, the local authorities, given the other pressures on them, tend to drop out by the back door. Are we not going to run the risk that we are going to have these major procurement policies taken forward with a very small amount of input into planning and development?

Ms Brooks: I do not know. I am sure Tim would like to answer this, but evidence suggests it is not a lack of willingness on the part of the local authority to appoint people; it is lack of capacity. There are just not enough good people around. Local authorities are very prepared now to pay quite a lot of money but they just cannot get the people. It is not that they are not prepared to pay.

Q740 Mr Marsden: Tim, are you worried about this? You are partially the motivator.

Mr Byles: Part of wanting to be clear about the resources that are required, to set that out clearly between the local authority and ourselves through the memorandum of understanding that I mentioned, is about committing who is going to commit what resources to make this occur. Although there are problems in the process, we do apply additional resources in order to try to make sure—

Q741 Mr Marsden: You have the ability.

Mr Byles: We do have the ability to do so. We do not routinely say, “Tell us you have a problem and we will give you some extra money,” but, if there is an issue, we have on several occasions over the last five weeks looked at providing some additional resource to make sure that it is adequately dealt with. But that should not take away from the joint responsibility to resource this process adequately, set at the beginning of the process.

Q742 Mr Marsden: Martin, can I ask you briefly about the 4ps expert client programme which is referred to in the DfES memo. I wonder if you could tell me, first of all, how many authorities and schools have taken advantage of this. If it is proving to be successful, is there a danger that you will not have enough capacity to deal with it?

Mr Lipson: I think we have supported 32 of the 39 authorities in waves 1 to 3. We have supported all the authorities that are hoping to come into the programme in the next three waves that are new to the programme. It is a large number of authorities we are trying to support with a modest sized team.

Q743 Mr Marsden: That underlines my second question, does it not?

Mr Lipson: We are reaching the point where we are going to have to look very carefully at how we apply our resources to supporting the authorities that need us most. It does mean that some authorities that

could benefit from this sort of continuing help right through the procurement stage may get less, but on a programme of this scale we have to face the realities of the kind of support that can be offered and it is not limitless.

Q744 Mr Marsden: I appreciate you have to ration things, but how are you going to make sure that the people who get left out are not the people who most need it as opposed to those who are best at lobbying for it?

Mr Lipson: I think that is because we have got to know the authorities pretty well. We have been part of the process that you have heard described of *Readiness to Deliver*, so I think we can identify the authorities that really have been able to assemble high quality teams, that have their governance arrangements in place, that understand about best practice. We can afford to keep them at arm’s length and just touch base occasionally to make sure that they are in touch with best practice. We will apply our resources to those we know are not in that category.

Mr Byles: We are also taking an assessment through the process of procurement. If there is a need for resource, we identify it through that. We are not just taking a snap shot at the beginning of the process. One of the important things about this way forward and following is that, where we have authorities that are ready to deliver, we are going to be using the local government community itself to share best practice and to help the sector generally through the boosted capacity in the sector for those who are already engaged in the process. So it is not just something that specialist organisations are going to be doing. We want to engage and local government itself is very keen to do this.

Q745 Mr Marsden: This is an issue for Sally. There need to be the structures there to facilitate that because my experience is that local government sometimes is good at that but sometimes they need a bit of a shove.

Mr Byles: That is why we are taking the assessment through the process.

Ms Brooks: I am sorry, I did not hear what you said.

Q746 Mr Marsden: It is my experience, that, although there is often a willingness in local government to exchange best practice, they do need to be given a little bit of infrastructure support and occasionally a little bit of a shove to do it.

Ms Brooks: Yes. In the conferences, meetings and events that we run, and the one we are doing for the wave 4 launch in January, we make sure that we get the local authorities that are experienced to talk to the new ones coming in because that is how local authorities are most likely to learn. They will listen to each other more than they will listen to me—quite rightly.

Q747 Chairman: We are getting some very valuable information here, but when we touch on capacity you are at your most defensive. Every time we talk about the highly skilled professionals that you need,

both at local level and at national level, it seems to me there is a concern and worry that you are expressing.

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q748 Chairman: If that is the case, should the Building Schools for the Future programme be slowed down? Why gallop towards it if there is going to be this problem? Surely it is always better to invest in public sector building when the private sector is languishing. Perhaps we should all wait for a downturn in the housing market. Do you get my drift?

Ms Brooks: Yes, I think you are right to say—and I hope we are not being defensive—that it is our biggest concern. Probably all three of us would agree that our biggest concern is that the capacity, the skills and the experience is a limited pool. That said, I do not think if you said to any local authority coming into BSF, “We would like to slow you down, we are going to slow the process down,” they would be very happy about it. A 15-year (at the very least) programme is quite a long programme for those at the end of it, and for us to say we are going to slow it down further would slightly jeopardise confidence in BSF. We have worked hard with the private sector to gain confidence, and with local governments later on in the process to gain their confidence to make them believe that it is coming eventually, and if we started to slow it down and say it is not working properly, it would not help the process of BSF rolling through with the private sector with the existing local government.

Q749 Chairman: Is there a natural slowdown process in it anyway in that you have already got lags in it because the planning takes time and all that takes longer than you will ever think?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Mr Byles: It does take time but I would not want the Committee to get the impression that this is a show-stopping area of major concern. It is an issue which we think is significant and needs to be properly managed through time. In terms of our overall confidence levels on the deliverability of this programme, that is increasing. It is not getting worse, it is getting better. This is a key issue, however, that needs to be got right through time and we are applying resources in order to deliver that. I think it is important to understand the balance of the point.

Chairman: I want to deal very briefly before we finish—and we have had a long and good session—with something about the primary capital programme.

Q750 Mr Carswell: Why are local authorities being given this when we know that they are already stretched to deliver on BSF and why are they using a different framework and approach? Surely that is just going to create more bureaucracy and make it more difficult for them?

Ms Brooks: The primary programme is going to all local authorities so most of them will not be stretched on BSF because they are not actually in BSF yet. The thinking, as I outlined earlier, was that we started

with repairs and maintenance and we got targets and now we are doing a strategic secondary level. The next step is really to do a strategic primary programme. The primary programme is about looking strategically at your primary estate and applying the same approach as BSF but not in such an intense way. So it is saying look at what you are doing with the secondary schools estate; look at what we have said about re-thinking where your schools are, what size they are, who delivers them, whether they are in the right, place whether you have got extended schools. It is being rolled out quite slowly and it is not a lumpy programme so it does not go as £150 million to a few local authorities every year. It is a slow burn, if you like and local authorities have got three years to plan for it. It comes in in 2009–10—and I am sure my colleagues will tell me if I am wrong—and it is several million a year. To most local authorities it is not a big project that they need to mobilise very skilled procurement people for. It more or less fits in with what they are doing already in their primary programme. It fits in with the existing framework. Most local authorities have existing frameworks for design and build and doing the work. It is basically taking what they are already doing in their primary programme and building on that, making it more strategic, and making it match to some extent the strategic approach of BSF, but without having that big lumpy “it is coming into town and everything has to be thrown into it.” This is a slower approach.

Q751 Chairman: I was worried when you said it is a different programme with different authorities because surely you will be targeting similar authorities because the criterion will be that those schools in the primary sector in more challenging circumstances will be prioritised?

Ms Brooks: Within a local authority we would expect them to reflect that in their strategic programme but no, we are rolling it out across all 150 local authorities every year. It is not like BSF in that it is not a small number each year focused on deprivation and standards. It is rolled out across all of them.

Mr Lipson: The authorities that are already in the BSF programme have been thinking about their primary estate and their primary transformation as well. You cannot actually plan the secondary sector without thinking about what is happening to the primary sector. To an extent, this is simply recognising what is already happening in many authorities and providing them with some additional funds to address some of the issues there.

Q752 Chairman: Is it not a bit murky as to where the money is coming from? The evidence we have got suggests that the DfES is not going to provide all the capital funding; it is going to come from other departments. Which other departments and how much?

Ms Brooks: I do not recognise that. What we are saying is that we are giving another £0.5 billion a year. We expect local authorities to match their own funding to that.

6 December 2006 Ms Sally Brooks, Mr Martin Lipson and Mr Tim Byles

Q753 Chairman: I have got here the DfES says, “It will be essential that authorities use capital from other sources—other government departments, local government and the private sector—in order to create the greatest impact.” That is what I am referring to.

Ms Brooks: What we are saying is that we are going to give an extra £0.5 billion a year to this programme. We already give local authorities and schools between them about £2–£2.5 billion a year in devolved capital, which so far they have been using on repairs and maintenance. They have done 10 years of repairs and maintenance so we are expecting them to put some of that capital into the more strategic programme. We are expecting them to use their Sure Start capital to be more strategic and we are expecting them to join up with other funds that they get around sports, health centres and so on, to have a truly strategic approach. That is what we mean by that. You cannot look at the £0.5 billion in isolation. They have already got a lot of other money that we expect them to put into it.

Q754 Chairman: As I heard you talking I have been making note of all the different people that will impinge on Building Schools for the Future, there is not just the National Strategy but the School Improvement Partners, the Training Development Agency, the National College for School Leadership, let alone our friends in the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. They all have purchase on this, do they not?

Ms Brooks: Yes.

Q755 Chairman: How do you balance all this cacophony of sound and pressure?

Ms Brooks: With some difficulty.

Q756 Chairman: Where do you try and do it?

Ms Brooks: We do a lot of it within the Department, and with the BSF education advisers particularly. We have got all these people in the DfES dealing with such a wide range of different issues all of which BSF has got to address. Within the Department we try to channel those to get them together through our work and, as I said, then we work with the BSF education people so there is a good crossover there. We send the BSF education people out to the local authorities to distil the information that we have all got together and the requirements and expectations. You are absolutely right, they are very complex, and

because BSF is transformational it does have to hit all those things. Within the Department we have to keep all these balls in the air and make sure that my team and schools capital is talking to everybody, and is ensuring that our strategic approach to BSF covers all those areas.

Q757 Chairman: What would you say if I said towards the end of listening to your very good responses there were two concerns that seemed to me to keep coming out of this session. First is the bit that sustainability is being squeezed between getting this programme up and running, getting the construction, building the partnership and sustainability, and it really seems to be a bit squeezed here. Would you say that that would be fair?

Ms Brooks: No.

Mr Byles: No.

Q758 Chairman: No?

Ms Brooks: No, I do not think so.

Q759 Chairman: It comes through from some of your responses when we pushed you on, “Okay, what about the early ones seeming less sustainable than you thought?”

Ms Brooks: I think everything is on an upward curve. One thing about BSF is that we are constantly trying to balance transformational change on every aspect of what it is delivering with meeting a programme, so I do not think anything in particular is being squeezed. I think there is always a flex between how transformational you want to be—whether it is in extended schools, whether it is in ITC, whether it is in sustainability—and how long that takes. I do not think anything is being particularly squeezed more than anything else. There is always a tension, there is always a compromise between we could sit here forever and get it perfect but we have got to drive the programme forward. I think that is both the challenge and also the fascination of it.

Chairman: Okay, that was the squeeze. The other bit was were you fully engaged with the other bit of sustainability, what was going in that classroom in the 21st century? Were you pulling that? You did say yes, we are having that engagement, we are doing that. That is not a question; I will leave it in your minds. It has been a very good session and thank you for your attendance. There were two or three things that came up where we would like a written response. Thank you very much.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

1. Tim Byles, Martin Lipson and I gave evidence to the Education and Skills Select Committee on 6 December 2006. There are two issues on which the Committee asked me to write with further information.

IMPACT OF THE ACTION PLAN ON SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

2. Mr David Chaytor MP asked about the impact of the “action plan on sustainable procurement” on guidelines over the range of sustainability issues for schools. Our understanding is that this is a reference to the recommendations set out in the report to Government (June 2006) of the Sustainable Procurement Task Force: *Procuring the Future*. The Task Force is an independent body, led by Sir Neville Simms, and the

report includes a range of recommendations for central Government and the wider public sector, including recommendation (A5.4)—Treasury and DfES must work with Building Schools for the Future programme to ensure that it is meeting high sustainability standards and to learn lessons for other capital projects.

3. The Government is preparing a formal response to the Task Force report and recommendations, which will include its own Sustainable Procurement Action Plan. The response will be published shortly. Until then, though there is no formal sustainable procurement action plan for government departments, all departments (including DfES and HM Treasury) continue to work on a range of measures to improve sustainable procurement throughout the public sector, including Building Schools for the Future.

BREEAM SCHOOLS

4. Mr Gordon Marsden MP asked for details of options for using BREEAM Schools to deliver carbon reductions in schools. BREEAM Schools was developed specifically for schools in 2005 and provides a tool which sets robust, achievable and cost-effective environmental targets for new buildings and refurbishment projects. Its development was guided by a sector advisory group comprising designers, local authority representatives, non-government organisations and DfES officials.

5. The Department considers that a BREEAM for Schools rating of “very good” is a challenging but achievable target within existing resources. DfES has therefore set as a condition of government funding, “very good” as the minimum standard. All new schools will meet this, compared with 17% of government buildings which met their target BREEAM rating during 2005 as reported in *“Procuring the Future”*.

6. However, we recognise that there is more to do if schools are to achieve carbon neutrality and we are investigating a range of options such as:

- Raising the BREEAM Schools threshold;
- Mandating within BREEAM Schools by giving, for example, greater emphasis to targets relating to energy use; and
- Introducing a separate scheme which focuses on energy use.

7. There are some significant barriers to raising the BREEAM Schools hurdle. It has not been established with certainty that a BREEAM Schools rating of “excellent” is technically possible or value for money for all school buildings. In order to gain a better understanding of the challenges presented by raising the target to “excellent”, we are funding three demonstration sustainability projects. These schools have committed to achieve a BREEAM Schools rating of “excellent”, and will include further measures to improve sustainability. Two of the schools are aiming to be “carbon neutral” with respect to energy use.

8. In addition to raising the target BREEAM Schools rating, we also have the option to introduce complementary standards on specific issues such as energy use/carbon emissions. In support of this approach we have commissioned a team of designers to research the options for reducing carbon emissions for a sample of schools types in different locations. This will examine the technical possibilities for reducing school carbon emissions by varying amounts, together with associated costs and benefits.

9. These are significant issue for Ministers to consider. Ministers expect to be able to give a clear lead on these matters when the Comprehensive Spending Review Capital programmes are announced in late 2007.

Sally Brooks, Divisional Manager, Schools Capital (Policy and Delivery)

January 2007

Supplementary memorandum submitted by Tim Byles, Chief Executive, Partnerships for Schools

Ensuring local authorities are sufficiently prepared for BSF

One of the key lessons we have learned from early days of the programme is that many local authorities were not sufficiently prepared to embark on BSF. You will know that local authorities have been prioritised for BSF according to two key criteria: deprivation (measured by free school meals); and academic attainment (measured by GCSEs A—C).

While this is an entirely appropriate and sensible approach to prioritisation, local authorities with schools that meet these criteria (not surprisingly) have typically had a number of other challenging issues to tackle in their area. As a consequence, the degree to which these authorities were sufficiently prepared and resourced for BSF was not always ideal.

To address this, we have put in place a number of measures. In particular, in addition to the criteria on deprivation and attainment, we have added a third which relates directly to an authority’s preparedness for BSF. All local authorities entering the programme must now pass a “readiness to deliver” test. In addition, the Chief Executive of the local authority must also sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Partnerships for Schools, which I personally countersign. This document sets out very clearly the roles and responsibilities of both PfS and the local authority so that expectations are clearly defined from the outset.

Over the past month, I have visited all 15 local authorities who entered the BSF programme in January for remit meetings with the Chief Executives and their senior teams and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. And so, although it is still early days, these measures look set to make a significant difference to the efficiency of the programme and ultimately, the quality of the schools delivered in local areas.

Learning from Experience

It is only right that for a programme of this vision and magnitude that we take time to reflect on what has worked well and what has worked less well. As such, since taking up post last November, I have been very keen to stress the importance of all partners and stakeholders learning from experience. Continuous improvement and an openness of approach to the fact that we are all learning from the programme is to my mind essential to the success of BSF; this is particularly important in terms of giving feedback and practical pointers to local authorities that are due to join the programme in later waves.

To help start this process of learning from experience, earlier in the year, we commissioned an independent piece of research to pin down and quantify the key lessons that both local authorities and private sector providers had learned from the early days of BSF.

Overall, we were encouraged to see there is genuine enthusiasm for BSF amongst both local authorities and private bidders. The research also identified a broad consensus of opinion amongst local authorities and private sector providers about the most important lessons learned, including the need for sufficient resourcing and corporate buy-in within the local authority.

Detailed findings of the research (enclosed) have now been published on our website and in the next week or so we will also be launching a dedicated “lessons learned” area on our website which will include research, such as this, along with case studies and practical pointers for local authorities and private sector providers.

In addition, we have also recently established a Chief Executives Advisory Group (CEAG), comprising key individuals from the local government community. The CEAG has been tasked with exploring and advising me and my team on further ways in which we can identify and disseminate best practice more widely. At its first meeting last month, discussions focused on the formation of a new National Learning Network which will provide a mechanism to draw up lessons learned from local areas—both good and bad—and to share these with key individuals in the wider BSF community.

Flexibility of the LEP model

One of the issues that we sought views on in the “lessons learned” research related to the Local Education Partnership Model. While we recognise there was some reticence towards this procurement model in the very early days of BSF, it is encouraging to see that there is a far greater appreciation of the value and benefits that the LEP model can deliver.

As you know, this is the first time that local authorities and their partners have been asked to look at the entire schools estate in their area and decide what infrastructure is needed as a whole, as opposed to a piecemeal school by school approach. We believe that the LEP model is the most effective mechanism for this and delivers efficiencies in time and costs.

These long-term partnerships which have been forged in around half a dozen local authorities help ensure that stakeholders are firmly focused on delivering world class learning environments that will engage and inspire young people and their teachers, as well as the wider communities in which the schools serve.

Interestingly, as well as recognising the benefits that the LEP model brings to BSF, many are now thinking much more broadly about how these 10-year partnerships can develop and deliver wider investments to local areas, covering primary schools, healthcare, as well as complete regeneration strategies alongside their secondary schools. This move away from procuring services in silos, not only reflects the way that people live their lives bringing real and tangible benefits to the whole community, but also incentivises the private sector to help the public sector deliver value for money, high quality services that reflect the wishes and aspirations of the community

Sustainability

Finally, with regards sustainability, I have been very clear about PFS’ commitment that we will continue to explore ways in which our new schools can move ever closer to becoming carbon neutral. You will be aware of the Secretary of State’s recent announcement of additional funding to help secure this aim, and I am confident that while there remain challenging issues around the cost of carbon neutrality, we are nonetheless making some significant strides towards reducing the carbon footprint of our schools.

This is an issue which I personally feel passionate about. Not only do we have an opportunity here to introduce new schools which have an environmental conscience, but in doing so and by bringing sustainability as an issue into the classroom, BSF can also be seen to making a powerful contribution to the understanding that our young people have about the environmental impact of their actions.

May 2007

Wednesday 24 January 2007

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor
Jeff Ennis
Helen Jones

Fiona Mactaggart
Mr Gordon Marsden
Mr Andrew Pelling
Stephen Williams

Witnesses: **Jim Knight**, a Member of the House, Minister of State for Schools and 14–19 Learning, and **Parmjit Dhanda**, a Member of the House, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Skills, gave evidence.

Q760 Chairman: Ministers, could I welcome you to this session of the Select Committee and say that it is a pleasure to have both of you here because you share responsibility for these particular issues on sustainability and bullying. We are well aware, and you will be aware, that they are both very important inquiries for us, but the one on sustainability involves an enormous investment of taxpayers' money into schools for the future, and to get those right is of paramount importance. I am going to give the chance to you, Minister Jim Knight, to say something to open up if you wish.

Jim Knight: Thank you very much, Chairman. I am delighted that we have got the opportunity to come and discuss, as you say, what is a really important programme. I have not prepared an opening statement; I know you have got a lot of ground that you want to cover and I am happy to maximise the time rather than going on at some length with something, having already submitted written evidence which I am sure you have enjoyed reading.

Q761 Chairman: What a refreshing change that is! Let us get straight into questions. Could you tell us, Minister, first of all, how many new schools has this Government built or totally refurbished since 1997?

Jim Knight: The estimate that we make which we can be confident about is a figure of around 800. I would confess to you I have a degree of frustration about being able to pin that down more accurately but, where, for example, local authorities use a targeted capital fund to rebuild schools or fully refurbish them, as they have in my constituency—I have got a number of different examples of new schools that are opening at the moment—we do not collect that information from local authorities, such is the spirit of delegation. That is something which I am looking to address with officials so that we can give a more accurate figure, but the figure which we can be absolutely confident about is the 800 one that we are using at the moment.

Q762 Chairman: That is a lot of new schools.

Jim Knight: That is a lot of new schools, yes.

Q763 Chairman: If you can give us an estimate of how many schools were built in the 10 years running up to 1997 and how many since 1997 that would be quite good to get on the record.

Jim Knight: What I said last week in a speech in north London was that we have built more schools in the last five years than the preceding 25 years.

Q764 Chairman: Those schools that were built at that time, were they just new versions of the old?

Jim Knight: You mean in the last 10 years?

Q765 Chairman: Yes.

Jim Knight: There is a range of different circumstances, but principally you would have circumstances where schools were crumbling and just needed replacing for their own sake; you would also have a number of other circumstances where for organisational reasons, for example, there would be a number that would be a merging of infant and junior schools which would form a single primary, then a new school results. In my own constituency, the first BSF to open using the quick win process was in Birmingham. I opened that in June, which was two new special schools moving on to a mainstream site, so there are good educational reasons as well as organisational reasons to make that change.

Q766 Chairman: How many BSF schools have been built already?

Jim Knight: In terms of the quick wins, literally just a handful. The first full BSF that has gone through the whole process will open in the middle of this year.

Q767 Chairman: Where will that be?

Jim Knight: In Bristol.

Q768 Chairman: Could you tell us, looking back over the last 10 years, when was it that the Department became aware that there was more of a challenge than just building new schools, that there was a challenge around the sustainability of that design and build?

Jim Knight: I think when David Miliband had my job as Schools Minister, when a lot of the detailed work was done around putting together BSF, that would be the moment when agreement was forged across Whitehall that we needed to do more than just the substantial increases we were making in the schools capital fund, that we needed a much bolder statement of purpose and a commitment that moves beyond CSR processes across Government.

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It is quite a remarkable commitment that we have been able to make to refurbish or rebuild every secondary school by 2020 because it cuts right the way through the CSR processes for years to come.

Q769 Chairman: Help us forensically, who first committed us, the Labour Government, to do that, to set that challenge of rebuilding every school? There is some debate about who first said that in public, was it the Prime Minister, was it David Miliband? When did it come about?

Jim Knight: To be honest, Chairman, I cannot give you a categorical answer. I have been somewhat focused on the slightly scary prospect of how to ensure that this money is well spent and spent on time rather than thinking about who first thought of it, because it seemed such a good idea, why would I question whose idea it was in the first place? I will just get on with the job.

Q770 Chairman: It is quite important, is it not, to know when this all started? What you have just described is 800 new schools being built, so we were well on to building schools and suddenly this vision of Building Schools for the Future, it was a watershed, was it not? Whoever said it, it is different.

Jim Knight: There was a realisation when the Labour Party was in opposition that we had a big problem in terms of our school estate. We would make some estimation around the state of the school estate which says that currently schools are spending about £1.5 billion of revenue per year on building, grounds maintenance and cleaning when in order to just maintain a steady state on schools you would need around £2 billion a year to be spent on the school estate. That is current figures, but back 10 years ago the overall schools capital budget was only £700 million, so we were woefully underspending and allowing the school estate to deteriorate when we came into power and that is why there has been that steady increase in funding which has been coming in. I have got the figures year on year in front of me and we are now up to a budget of £6.4 billion. In terms of significant leaps, which perhaps would be the implication as to exactly when there was a crushing realisation we had to do more, I would say it has been a steady improvement over time.

Q771 Chairman: Minister, you did mark out David Miliband. As a Committee, it is important to ask and forensically to know where this came from and, of course, he was a very significant policy person in Number 10 before he was elected as a Member of Parliament. In a sense, that is what we are tracking, but we also want to track when was this decision made that Building Schools for the Future was not going to be like the schools for the future that had been built already, that they were going to be different. You were the Sustainability Minister in your previous job, were you not?

Jim Knight: Elliot Morley was really leading on sustainability in Defra when I was on the Defra team.

Q772 Chairman: I do not want to flatter you, but you were known to have a real and genuine interest in sustainability.

Jim Knight: Absolutely. I think that the conceptual change to properly integrate education, design, ICT, as well as building into the schools capital projects, which is the hallmark of BSF and the way it is designed to include sustainability as well, would have come with David Miliband in 2003–04 when he looked at some of the experience of NHS LIFT and the way you could design procurement in that way but also looked at how you integrate all of the outputs that we are after to transform education through a capital investment.

Q773 Chairman: This is what was fascinating when we visited Merseyside in this respect only last week, that word you just mentioned, “transform”, and this is why forensically I am trying to get you to go back with this. When did the transformation of quality of this process creep in because, as we see it, from the evidence we have taken and the visits we have paid, there was some stage at which something in the Department happened. We were not building schools just to replace the old schools because modern schools are nicer than old crumbling schools, but suddenly there was this change that they should not only be sustainable in terms of being greener, better designed and having less of a carbon footprint, but that they should also transform two things, the quality and nature of teaching and learning in the future to a different kind of teaching and learning, so it would be appropriate, and they should be at the heart of the transformation process in communities in terms of regeneration. That is why we are interested, that is the evidence. What I am trying to get out of you is, when do you think that happened and who was responsible? You think it was Miliband.

Jim Knight: And Charles Clarke, Secretary of State at the time. He would have informed some of the sustainable development end of it, in particular, and that element, I think, has been building steadily as we have gone on, so in 2005 the BREEAM “very good” standard was applied to schools.

Q774 Chairman: What date was that?

Jim Knight: I have got 2005, but I do not know what date in 2005 but I can let you know.

Q775 Chairman: It was not until 2005 we got a BREEAM standard?

Jim Knight: That was when the “very good” standard applied, as I recall, but equally we continue to work on this area to see whether we can go further and do better. March 2005, was the date.

Q776 Chairman: That is comparatively recent.

Jim Knight: Yes.

Q777 Chairman: So when Miliband, or whoever it was, changed the nature of the discussion around that policy—You are getting bits of paper passed to you, I have had one passed to me which points out that the original prospectus for Building

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Schools for the Future did not have the mention of energy, carbon or sustainability in it. Why do you think that was?

Jim Knight: I think when you listen to the Prime Minister, when you listen to a number of ministers, talk about the environment, carbon neutrality, carbon emissions and climate change, the way those issues have risen up the political agenda has been marked over the last few years. The Prime Minister says that when he was elected in 1997 the environment was not a doorstep issue, it was not a priority issue with the electorate. It is now and we reflect that along with everybody else.

Q778 Chairman: I see. That is the history of the programme. I think most of us in questioning you this morning will not be hung up too much about the lag in the programme of BSF, let us clear that out of the way. I think all members of this Committee would rather see a good programme of Building Schools for the Future rather than a deficient one that was delivered on time. Why do you think there has been this lag in building schools?

Jim Knight: I think there are a number of reasons that can be summarised around that, that we underestimated the complexity and the ambition. It would be easy for my comments to be interpreted as a criticism of local authorities for not having the capacity, and that has been at the heart of a lot of the difficulty, but I do not think that they should be blamed for that because there will be very few people in local authorities who have got experience of procuring this size of project and something as transformational as this. I think it would make a lot of people quite nervous, the responsibility of having to do so, because it will be the biggest thing they will do in their working lives and to get them to be in turn imaginative and to take some risks in order to achieve the transformation that we talked about earlier has proved quite a challenge. We use people like the LGA's 4ps to try and build that capacity and there is more we need to do there. We are now asking the National College of School Leadership to build capacity amongst school leaders themselves, to understand how to go through the design process and to achieve the maximum for their own school. We are looking to involve CABE, the design advisers for us, at earlier stages and more thoroughly and strategically in the process so that we can get around some of those problems of capacity, ensuring that all of our policies are aligned properly. That is where we have to take some responsibility in the Department so our policies around structures are properly aligned with BSF, that is something we are trying to sort out now, and making sure that best practice is properly being spread and we have certainly started. The nature of the prioritisation of the waves of BSF was those areas that needed it most, both in terms of the state of their school buildings but also in terms of the level of deprivation and educational need, because this is a transformational project in educational terms so it makes sense in my mind to have started in those areas where

educational performance has been struggling the most and where they can gain quickly from that transformation, but those are simultaneously some of the most challenging areas to do that work.

Q779 Chairman: You chose those not because they were Labour seats but because of deprivation.

Jim Knight: That really is a nonsense story. We have had quite a few nonsense stories recently about BSF but that probably takes the prize. It is done fairly and squarely on the basis of need. What we did not do and what we have now done with wave 4 and the announcements of the wave 4 authorities that we made at the end of last year was also adding to that their deliverability and their ability to deliver on time and on budget and those later in that block of three will be those that need more work on capacity and all the reasons why we have the delay at the moment.

Q780 Chairman: Was there a design fault in the sense that if the Department was choosing areas of highest deprivation and schools in the worst state, in a strange sense whereas most people would applaud that, and I certainly would, is there a bit of the Department's policy that would lead to some local authorities with the most problems struggling with quite a demanding set of tasks? We had the NUT in evidence, so many schools are struggling with a number of high priority, quite significant changes, particularly in deprived areas with local authorities that have a great deal on their plates. In a sense you have got all the deprived local authorities working on these schemes, perhaps if you had a spread of different kinds of areas you would have got some more interesting good practice early on.

Jim Knight: I am sure we would but I think it was the right decision. As a Dorset MP, I would have loved Dorset to be in one of the first waves but 10 years ago, the performance, let us say, at GCSE of five A*-C in Dorset was 50% and in Manchester it was 30%. They have got closer now as a result of the improvement we have seen across the board, but particularly in those inner city areas. It would have been much easier to build in places like Dorset, we would have got the quick wins, we would have made everyone feel happy and confident about it, but we would not have been making the right decision for young people who really need it. The young people of Manchester, as an example, need that transformation and it was perfectly right that would be in wave 1, even though just in terms of the construction side working in more cramped and difficult sites, you do not have the space to decant as easily onto sites and then re-develop the sites that they are leaving behind. There are all sorts of constraints that make it much more difficult.

Q781 Chairman: If the people in Dorset or Yorkshire were given a choice of this vast public expenditure going on a new build or an amazing number of new teachers and support staff, do you

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think they would have all gone for the option of taxpayers' money flowing into one rather than the other, or more into one rather than the other?

Jim Knight: I think they are quite happy that we are trying to do both. They are very happy to see 36,000 more teachers in this country, they are very happy to see 150,000 more teaching assistants in this country. We have addressed the issue of class sizes for five, six and seven-year-olds as we promised in 1997 but, alongside that, we have seen that six-fold increase in real terms in investment in schools' capital and they are very pleased to see the end of outside toilets, they are very pleased to see a huge reduction in the number of temporary classrooms and all the other results of that extra investment in capital.

Q782 Chairman: Thank you very much for that, Minister. Parmjit, you have been listening to all this, is there anything that you would like to bring to the party in terms of questions I have asked Jim Knight?

Mr Dhanda: Good morning, Chairman. It is nice to be before the Committee. I have only ever sat on the other side as a member of a select committee so this is a new experience for me. Just to add to what Jim has already said around the BREEAM "very good" standard coming into place from March 2005. It is a minimum standard and we are also doing work with three pilot schools where we are trying to achieve BREEAM "excellent" as well. I agree entirely with what Jim says around BSF, we have not actually targeted Labour seats because you have got two Labour MPs sat here and I do not get BSF for some time in my patch either, for understandable reasons, but the fact that we will get it before 2020, we are delighted about that.

Q783 Mr Chaytor: Accepting that you are not blaming local authorities' lack of capacity for the delays, does it not imply a lack of capacity within the Department for not being aware of the state of readiness of local authorities?

Jim Knight: I guess you could say the fact that I have acknowledged, and when my officials gave oral evidence, and I think Tim Byles from Partnership for Schools said, that we underestimated the scale of the challenge initially but now we are learning the lessons and rolling them out, we are confident about the timetable from now on in, that implicitly we are saying, as a Department, we underestimated. You could take that as a criticism of officials. I do not think any individual official should be to blame for that. For us as well a £45 billion programme is kind of unusual and to seek to integrate things, to transform things and to get things right rather than knock up buildings and hope for the best has just been more work than we thought.

Q784 Mr Chaytor: You are clear that you are not passing the buck to the local authorities?

Jim Knight: No, not at all.

Q785 Mr Chaytor: There have been delays in establishing the timescale. Have you now established new timescales and target dates with Partnerships for Schools?

Jim Knight: Yes, we have been making some adjustments. When Tim, the new Chief Executive of PfS, had a chance to have a look at things, we made some adjustments with local authorities according to their ability to deliver. I was very conscious when I first had a look at this that we had within the early wave authorities a whole number of authorities within the traffic light scheme on red with no real ability of getting them back to amber or green and then all of the motivations around performance management become very difficult if you are just saying, "Well, sorry, you are too late and you are not going to get back on track". We have had some adjustment of the timing to something that we all agree is realistic, but also we have had some improvement as a result of some of the streamlining of the process that has gone alongside it. There has been a genuine improvement in terms of the speed with which we can get schools open.

Q786 Mr Chaytor: Is there now a document that spells out the timescales for each wave and which authorities are in each wave?

Jim Knight: Internally, we have our documents around that and they are very much live documents, so when I have my monthly meetings with PfS, with Tim and some of his team, we run through how each of the authorities in the early waves are doing and we pay particular attention to those authorities where the trend is in the wrong direction and what intervention I should be making, as a Minister, and what intervention the Department and PfS in turn should be making. We have had examples of one or two authorities where I have had to get involved and others where things have turned around thanks to maybe better engagement between PfS and the authority.

Q787 Mr Chaytor: But this is not public information?

Jim Knight: It is not public information. I can discuss with the various parties to that information whether or not we can let you have more information than we have already sent you in terms of what the timetable is now looking like.¹

Q788 Mr Chaytor: Is the Number 10 Delivery Unit involved in this, and what is the nature of the dialogue between the Department and the Number 10 Delivery Unit?

Jim Knight: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit has done a piece of work, which I will be receiving very soon, on Building Schools for the Future and the slippage which they have been doing alongside the Treasury, which obviously takes a close interest in this as well. That will be advice to ministers and, therefore, will not be published, but what I will do is look at whether or not we can publish the

¹ Ev 221 [DfES]

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recommendations that come out of that so that you and the rest of the public who is interested can see what they are suggesting. I would anticipate that it will be some discussion and recommendations around how we streamline elements of the process, which we have been doing, for example, with the new strategy for change stage which merges two previous stages in the procurement process; it will be around the sharing of best practice and what more we can do through the various agencies that we use to achieve that; and whether there is more we can do in terms of capacity-building and ensuring readiness to deliver before we make a commitment.

Q789 Mr Chaytor: Finally, in respect of the 800 schools that have been re-built or refurbished through PFI, what would you say are the most important lessons that could be applied to the BSF programme?

Jim Knight: I think in terms of PFI, you have got the fundamental, which is the management of risk and being able to place risk in the private sector which motivates them to build on time and to budget, which is a feature of most of the PFIs. Not all of them, but most of the PFIs have been able to do that. They are also able to look more easily at the whole-life cost of a building. I think one of the other lessons that we might want to look at is ensuring that we have sufficient flexibility in the contracting because we have seen changes in policy around extended schools, for example looking at more community use of buildings and multi-agency approaches and having to locate practitioners from other services in school buildings. If the initial contracting has not allowed for that, then that has to be re-negotiated and we have got to make sure that we have got some flexibility to do that. I am confident on that, but that is something we need to ensure we have got.

Q790 Mr Chaytor: The 25-year contract is a dual-edged sword because it locks you into a set of rigid terms and conditions, which is a problem, but, on the other hand, it allows whole-life costing to be built in which is an advantage.

Jim Knight: Absolutely, and so on conventional procurement, and most of our procurement is still conventional, the more we can learn on the whole-life costing the better. It is quite difficult because we are delegating the revenue funding to schools, so they make the savings if we have put more capital investment in, and obviously we have a modest level of delegated capital funding. But in terms of these big construction-type projects that money is not delegated to schools so the motivations are separated through conventional procurement. It is not the same with PFI, the more we can work that one through with conventional procurement the better, but, as you say, where we look to develop and extend the service that is being offered by schools, however it is managed, be it PFI or conventionally, you still have to find extra costs and you still have to negotiate with someone to provide that extra service. If you have got a 25-year

facilities management contract, you have got to make sure that you can do that successfully with your contractor, the partnership is strong enough and you are working closely enough together.

Q791 Fiona Mactaggart: Minister, in that rather telling phrase, you said: "We must be smarter about sharing experience". How are you being smarter about sharing experience with the future waves, or onwards, of Building Schools for the Future?

Jim Knight: That works on a number of different levels. We have our own officials working from the Department, we have the Partnership for Schools staff working with the local authorities as well and then we have got the use of other agencies, like the 4ps and, as I have mentioned, NCSL and CABE. All of those have a role to play in building on their experience working in local authorities that have been through this process or are going through this process to then apply as we hold the hand of the local authorities going through the later waves. Equally, for example, agreeing the first LEP—Local Education Partnership—the procurement model, in Bristol was quite a major milestone for us to get over last year, because you got the first legal agreement there and there are not that many solicitors working in this field. People will look at what has already been done and already been agreed and then will be able to apply that practice elsewhere, so, as we build experience there are all sorts of people, both in the commercial sector and in the public sector, who will be able to learn from each other.

Q792 Fiona Mactaggart: That is an interesting model where you talk about your central resources going out to the frontline. One of the things that I am struck by is there is not enough across-sharing at the frontline from the teacher in the home economics classroom who felt that the way the ovens had been put in would have been done differently if someone had cast themselves into her position, to Knowsley who said that there should be a kind of forum to interchange ideas. What are you doing to help people who have been through it at the frontline to make sure other people do not make the mistakes they have made?

Jim Knight: That is where I think the NCSL work is really important in bringing head teachers together who are going through this process, so at the individual school leadership level we have that mechanism, the use of that agency. For young people who are going to use the building, we have got some really interesting and strong work being done by the Sorrell Foundation. I was at an event this week over at Somerset House, and from April they will be opening at Somerset House to work with young people to help them with the design brief and to develop practice.

Q793 Chairman: We are very fond of the Sorrell Foundation on this Committee.

Jim Knight: Good, I am glad that I have touched the right button, Chairman.

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Mr Chaytor: Chairman, I should declare an interest, I am a member of the Sorrell Foundation.

Q794 Chairman: That is why we are even more fond of it.

Jim Knight: Obviously the 4ps have an absolutely critical role, they are an arm of Local Government Association so they are working with the local authorities, they are an offshoot of the local authorities themselves and we pay them in order to do exactly this work of spreading best practice of local authorities. At local authority level the 4ps, at the school leadership level the NCSL, and that is not just head teachers but that would be senior management teams as a whole, and then for the pupils themselves people like the Sorrell Foundation.

Q795 Fiona Mactaggart: That is an account of you thinking you are being smart. Are you telling me that you do not think that people in future waves will be able to fall through the net of this knowledge?

Jim Knight: I am not saying that we complacently sit back and think we have got everything right and it is all perfect. I will continue to look at how we can spread best practice more thoroughly and the use of the 4ps and there are a number around Ty Goddard's organisation—the British Council for School Environments—which is another and we need to use all those various forums to ensure that we are offering to anyone who is going through this process the opportunity to learn from each other without forcing them to go to all sorts of expensive conferences when they could be spending their time better in school.

Q796 Fiona Mactaggart: You referred earlier to the LEP model for delivery and that is how authorities are expected to enact their BSF plans. Is it proving effective? Is it going to be the usual way you deliver these?

Jim Knight: Yes. It is very early days, so I think it would be difficult for me to say that it is absolutely brilliant already because we only signed up the first one in September last year in Bristol, but we are optimistic about our progress in the early part of this year in signing up the rest. We had discussions with one or two authorities who were resistant to the LEP model and wanted to use their existing procurement partnerships that they had already set up, but they simply were not at a scale for the markets to have confidence that they had the experience necessary to do this through their existing frameworks. That is really where I have every confidence in the LEP as a model, that it is bringing in the educational vision, it is bringing in the ICT high quality design and the constructors with confidence from the market because the management of the construction market is quite a big aspect of this because it is such a big building project in national terms.

Q797 Fiona Mactaggart: Do you think that the people at the frontline, the local education authorities and the schools are effective contractors in such a big project?

Jim Knight: Our job is to make sure that they are and that is where some of the slippage lies in terms of the capacity. Again, I do not want to pin blame on the local authorities themselves, it is everyone coming to bear on local authorities to ensure that we have built up their capacity. Partnership for Schools was explicitly set up by ourselves and the Treasury through the Office of Government Commerce to ensure that we had a vehicle that could broker things properly and ensure that this whole project went through smoothly achieving good value for money.

Q798 Chairman: This is a bonanza for the service sector, they do not call themselves the construction industry anymore, but the people who provide the buildings and the service. These contractors see it as a unique opportunity because they see a pipeline of money rather than contracting. If they are good at this, if they place themselves in a range of contracts, they have got at the end of the pipeline £45 billion or more for a very long time. Are you asking for high enough standards from them? As it is such a bonanza, should we not be imposing very, very high standards on them?

Jim Knight: I am confident that we are. I am confident that the way the procurement has been designed has created a market within which those various organisations operate and that level of competition within the market, and there is good competition, is not just about price, it is also about quality. We have a responsibility to ensure that quality is right up there at best value for money and I am very happy that the procurement model set up does just that.

Q799 Chairman: It sounds wonderful, except when you know a bit about the construction industry and know the people who built the new Wembley Stadium littered half of the building waste all over the South of England, dumping it illegally. If you understand that, you then think what is happening in real construction on the ground because that was a prestige project and in terms of sustainability that one element was a disaster and one wonders how many other things were covered up at that time.

Jim Knight: I better not comment on Wembley Stadium because that would lead me inevitably to talk about how wonderful the Emirates Stadium is and then I would have to declare an interest as an Arsenal fan, so I will steer off that, particularly as I am sitting next to a Liverpool fan and we beat them 6–3 the other week. More importantly, we can also learn from our experience in building Academies and we have some really good examples of some fantastic buildings, one of which won the construction industry award.

Q800 Chairman: What about learning from the ones that have not been so successful?

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Jim Knight: We need to do that too.

Q801 Chairman: Do you?

Jim Knight: Yes.

Q802 Chairman: There is a system in the Department that says, “Look, something has gone wrong with that Academy in that part of the country”. How many Academies have now been established roughly?

Jim Knight: I do not do the Academies Programme in detail. It is 38 [. . .]²

Q803 Chairman: We saw that when we visited Academies because we see them as a laboratory to learn from. You say Academies are not your programme, that sets alarm bells off in this Committee. Is there a process saying, “Here is new build, here is supposed to be a very high standard, are we learning from them, day-on-day and week-on-week”?

Jim Knight: One of the important integrations to smooth this whole process has been to bring the Academies Programme into BSF and through that mechanism we are able to learn from the experience of those who have been working on the Academies Programme within the BSF programme. That also means that Lord Adonis and myself are working more closely. In his case, he is working more closely with the capital side; in my case, I am working more closely with the Academy side.

Q804 Mr Carswell: Minister, there have been these delays in delivery and one may or may not blame local authorities. I want to ask is there not a danger that when you have got a project of this scale and a project that is top down and centralist, it is going to run into this sort of problem. Are these problems, delays and bottlenecks almost inevitable when you have got this huge level of public expenditure being allocated prescriptively, you have got this huge degree of what is, in effect, state planning?

Jim Knight: I would disagree with your premise completely that it is top down and centralist.

Chairman: Localism is the problem, is it?

Q805 Mr Carswell: It is local authorities who have made a mess of it, is it?

Jim Knight: I hesitate because the buzzword “partnership” becomes a little bit tired. That is what we are seeking to do between ourselves and obviously we are accountable for a huge sum of money and the local authority and the strategic commissioner needs to ensure that we produce something that is sensitive and works for them. When you look through the procurement process the local authority needs to come forward with a strategy for change and that works with them setting out in principle how they want it to work, the number of schools, the number of secondary schools that they would have, some indication of how the educational vision would work, how they

will deliver on diversity and choice, how they will integrate it with 14–19. All those local decisions that they will be making—

Q806 Mr Carswell: They are dancing to a different tune.

Jim Knight: Obviously they fit, and they need to fit, with government policy that we were elected on a manifesto to do. It is a perfectly reasonable principle that we set standards and requirements essentially, but ask local authorities to work out on the ground how they are going to deliver on those, who their delivery bodies will be, how many schools will be delivering education, for example, how they will configure them geographically and how they will configure them in terms of their decision around three or two tier. You have been to Knowsley, you have seen them looking for quite a radical change in the way that they want to deliver things. All of that is up to them locally to decide what they want to do and put the case to us to release the funds. It is not us sitting in Whitehall saying, “Right, we are going to have a single contract, make all of those savings, we are going to have three designs of schools that we will use nationally and that will be it, you just choose one of them”. There is no kind of Stalinist centralised construction programme, this is something that we agree locally and we continue to give the local authority ownership of through the educational vision and then delivery of that vision through the whole process.

Chairman: I am sure that gladdens your heart, Douglas.

Q807 Mr Pelling: I apologise for not having been here at the beginning. Chairman, I wanted to ask in the context of this ambitious programme about the risks to do with best value. The taxation system is about redistribution of wealth. Quite reasonably, I was a little bit worried that if best value is not secured that we will see a redistribution of wealth from the hard-pressed taxpayers to shareholders. I know that one provider has had a very tough time as a result of getting involved in schools’ programmes, amongst others, but what is it in the work that the Department does at national level to ensure that we are getting best value for money because if you do not it could be potentially a huge transfer of resource from taxpayer to shareholder.

Jim Knight: First of all, we have got a balance between conventional funding and PFI and there have been those who argue that we should do the whole thing as PFI for all the reasons that we have discussed with David around whole-life cost, for example. We ensure that there is a balance and then within that balance that there is a market and my guess is you probably would agree with me that if you can get competition within a market then you get a certain amount of confidence around getting a good price as well as competition on the basis of quality and we seek to balance all of that up so that local authorities can then decide from a number of different high quality options the solution that is going to work best for them.

² Ev 221 [DfES]

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Q808 Mr Pelling: So there is a spike in terms of expenditure at a time when the economy is already very strong. Do you feel that in terms of scheduling of work there is a danger that you might be paying too much by having such an ambitious programme?

Jim Knight: To some extent that is why we have spread it as we have. Obviously there may be one or two Treasury implications if we decide to build them all in a five-year period, but the construction price inflation and the lack of value for money we would get as a result would not make that worth thinking about. You do have to spread it because of the scale of the projects and the ambition of the project. That is tough for some areas. There are one or two members of the House who come to me on a fairly regular basis arguing about the dilapidation of schools in their area and can I not accelerate them in the BSF programme.

Q809 Mr Pelling: I am sure I will try and catch you as you walk down the corridor afterwards.

Jim Knight: That is a tough one.

Q810 Chairman: We are going to move on, but not before I ask you whether these post-occupancy evaluations that are considered by most of the experts we have talked to, to be extremely valuable, are you going to use those and will they be used in order to evaluate the quality of the finished product and to inform other builders?

Jim Knight: It is a mechanism that we are using and we are using it not just within BSF but the Children's Centre programme in the Department uses the post-occupancy notion. As I have said, it is very important that we should continue to learn lessons and disseminate best practice and the use of that kind of mechanism is an important part of that.

Q811 Chairman: Minister, you reeled off a lot of organisations that were spreading good practice, you mentioned the Sorrell Foundation and all sorts of people, why is it then in Knowsley where we were very impressed by the team, Professor Stephen Hepburn and Professor Tom Cannon and some extremely good people, they are the senior management in Knowsley Council, they thought that they were not part of an organisation and there was not an organisation spreading good practice, not just good practice but how you get started and who do you consult and how do you get the visioning right and who pays for that visioning. They still feel that there is room for more sharing, if you like.

Jim Knight: There may be room for more and, again, I am not complacent. I am meeting Knowsley tomorrow and I will discuss with them their experience along with everything else we have got to discuss to see whether or not there is more that we can do. Obviously for those that were in the very first waves, as Knowsley were, it is more difficult to learn from best practice.

Q812 Chairman: You would be open to it?

Jim Knight: I am certainly open to it and the conference that we had last week brought together all of the wave 4 authorities, those that we have already assessed are the most ready to deliver from waves 4, 5 and 6, but deliberately bringing them together so that they have a chance to compare notes and to talk to people who have experience of going through this process. We are very conscious of the need to continue that but we are not complacent.

Q813 Chairman: We would very much have liked to have been invited to that conference because we would have liked to share best practice as we conduct a new inquiry.

Jim Knight: I will bear in mind the need to invite you in future.

Chairman: We like to be in the loop, Minister. Let us move on to transforming education.

Helen Jones: Minister, to get this kind of project right requires an awful lot of preparatory work, we have seen some very good practice and some bad practice in this inquiry. What support is being given to authorities through that visioning process on how to conduct it? Given the fact that we are spending so much money on this re-build, why is there no money to support that visioning process to make sure that we get it right?

Q814 Chairman: I will call both Ministers on this one.

Jim Knight: Within the Department we have a series of officials who work directly with local authorities through the process but obviously have a particularly strong role through the visioning process and they might have four or five authorities that they are working with at any given time and there is a bit of fluidity around that according to those that finish and those that start in broad terms. We would also have the Partnership for Schools project directors who equally will be working with the authorities on their educational visioning as well as the very real educational expertise and experience that the local authorities have in-house. We may not be applying financial resource for them to go out and hire consultants but they do have the support of both ourselves from the Department and PfS in that. One of the changes that we have made by merging the strategic business case and the educational vision stage as part of the streamlining of the process has been to bring together all of those people who working are on the educational vision side with the people who are more traditionally the construction side to make sure that what previously were two separate conversations going on become a single conversation and that will strengthen things considerably. Later on as the LEP will be constructed, for example, at that point you may well be bringing in consultants as part of the bidding process who in turn will add further resource in working through the application of the educational vision that has been agreed.

Q815 Helen Jones: Can I make it clear I was not necessarily talking about consultants. To do this properly a local authority has to have a real vision for the future of its schools. It also has to carry out an awful lot of local consultation with the community and with the schools. Knowsley, with whom we were very impressed, estimated that cost them between £3 million and £5 million over three years. That is a lot of money but we are spending a lot of money on capital. Why is there not some money at the beginning of the process to ensure that local authorities get this right because it is fair to say that we have seen some who we think are not getting this right and who are building schools for the 20th century rather than the 21st? They are new schools but they do not fit the vision of education for the 21st century. Would it not be wise for the Department to have allowed some money upfront to make sure that we are not wasting money further down the line?

Jim Knight: I am sure you can always put an argument for more money. We are confident about the way that the challenge and the support that we offer from the Department and from PfS works. I have not had any feedback from authorities or others that the consultation process is burdensome and that it needs—

Q816 Helen Jones: That is because they do not always do it.

Jim Knight: Possibly, but, as I say, people have not made representations to me on that point and so I have been focused on making sure that we give them the support that we can and that we continue to challenge them until they get their educational vision right rather than thinking about the need to resource them in order to carry out a consultation.

Q817 Helen Jones: What is the Department's view of how the future teaching in schools and how the development of personalised learning should be integrated with the new design? We have seen some schools, for instance, that do this very well. We have also seen some that are very green but ones that we believe will not be fit for purpose even when they have got their full complement of pupils inside let alone in a few years time when education is changing rapidly. What are you doing in the Department to make sure that these two strands of the programme are integrated?

Jim Knight: I think we need to ensure that the designs—I have talked about involving CABE more strategically in the whole process to ensure that we get the best quality design, but, obviously, we are also developing better expertise amongst the architects that are out there bidding for this work. As they get more experienced in doing it, they will understand the educational vision and the transformational end of this better, but we need to make sure that we have got more flexible buildings, that we are understanding the way that personalisation needs to work, that we are understanding the way that technology will transform some of the way that we teach and we learn, that there is a proper understanding of the

changes in teaching and learning that were brought about by the introduction of the diplomas for those that choose those. In my own mind that needs more flexible spaces. I visited a school yesterday in Basingstoke and some of the classrooms there, that were 15-years-old, were built on the premise that you would only get A level classes of a dozen or so, and they are much too small and they have not got the flexibility to move walls. A lot of the new schools that we are seeing being built now have got much more flexibility to change the classroom setting and expand or contract it, there are one or two slightly more avant-garde who are doing away with walls altogether, and it will be interesting to see how that works, but I think that flexibility is absolutely key, and then basic things like making sure we do not concrete in cabling and that we have created the infrastructure for ICT, and so on.

Q818 Helen Jones: To do that a lot of work needs to be done with, not only school leaders, but school staff, so that they have a vision of how education will develop before they get too far down the road of the design process.

Jim Knight: Yes.

Q819 Helen Jones: In some of the experience I have had, that has been a difficulty. When you ask heads, "What do your staff say about how education will develop?", it is very hard for staff to get the time out to think through that process. What is being done to aid that?

Jim Knight: It is a big challenge. It is a challenge attached to the transformation of technology that we have generally. When I hosted 62 education ministers from around the world at the beginning of this month here in London for the Moving Minds seminar attached to the BETT Exhibition at Olympia, whether you are in Afghanistan spending \$25 a year on average per pupil or here in this country spending four and a half thousand pounds a year per pupil, the challenge remains the same: getting the workforce to appreciate the cultural change and the change in their pedagogy, for example, that the new forms of technology and the new ideas around personalisation will bring is quite a battle, and that is something that we address through TDA and it is also something that, on an individual basis, we will be able to address more easily with the introduction of performance management from September.

Q820 Helen Jones: What is the Department's view of what educational transformation means? Is it about teaching and learning, or is it about having lots of different types of schools: faith schools, Trusts, Academies, or whatever. What is it?

Jim Knight: It is fundamentally about teaching and learning and a focus on standards. There is a role for diversity and choice in terms of accountability and ensuring that we do not have complacency in the system, but fundamentally it is about the development of teaching and learning, the personalisation. We are working through our response to Christine Gilbert's review on teaching

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and learning for 2020, but one of the interesting aspects to that is the notion of learners learning from each other more, of teachers facilitating learning and teaching people how to learn, the skills to learn, as much as teaching the knowledge itself. That sort of development is, I think, at the core of it alongside giving learners choice over curriculum, choice over qualifications, which is part of the 14–19 changes, for example.

Helen Jones: I am very pleased to hear you say that, but does that then mean if there is local consultation—for instance, Knowsley, who we were very impressed with, have a very clear vision of where they want to go, they have carried out a lot of consultation locally, but they told us they were then pressurised by the Department to have an Academy in their plans, which did not fit the structure that they wanted and that they had consulted on locally. Are you saying to this Committee that that should not happen, or are local authorities going to be pressed to have an Academy as they go through a BSF programme whether the local people want one or not?

Q821 Chairman: That rather takes us back to the centralism and localism point, does it not?

Jim Knight: Part of the strategy for change discussion will include what the structures will look like, what diversity of choices there will be. If you are in an authority like Knowsley that has historic low levels of performance and low levels of standards and still remains one of the poorest performing authorities in terms of both value added and result—

Q822 Helen Jones: It is fascinating.

Jim Knight: Again, I am looking forward to meeting Knowsley and having a discussion with them tomorrow about continuing that improvement in standards, which they should be proud of but they should not be complacent about. We believe that structures can play a role in forming standards. It was fundamental to the Act that was passed last year and the debate that we were all a part of around that, and I do not know that we need to re-rehearse that debate.

Q823 Helen Jones: But there were also assurances given that these would not be forced on local authorities?

Jim Knight: Yes. In Knowsley's case, they were going to have an Academy. They are now not going to have an Academy. They are proposing moving from 11 to seven. The previous agreement was eight, which included an Academy. We will be discussing tomorrow their proposals for seven and whether or not we exempt them from competition, but I am not going to prejudge that discussion now.

Q824 Helen Jones: I am still not sure what the answer is, Minister. Was it that authorities must have an Academy or they need not have one if they have other plans and there is no local pressure for one?

Jim Knight: By implication, what I am saying in respect of Knowsley is that I am not saying that you got have to have an Academy or you have got to have a trust school or you have got to have whatever else. What I am saying is that you have got to demonstrate that you will see a radical improvement of standards.

Q825 Chairman: Helen is asking you also the general principle. Is it the general principle that under the BSF programme, when you are dealing with the local authority, you use that opportunity to press them to have an Academy?

Jim Knight: No, we would not dogmatically press them to have an Academy. We would say, have you looked properly at the standards that your school is producing? Have you looked properly at how you are going to configure schools post-BSF to ensure that standards continue to rise, and have you looked at all of the options to achieve that? If you have an historic record of underperformance by managing and delivering your own schools as an authority's community schools, then we would probably challenge them to use some of the other forms that we know are working. Academies will be one of them which we know are producing excellent improvements in results, trust schools, equally, maybe others, but it is not a question of saying every authority must have an Academy, it is a question of saying every authority must be driving forward standards for their young people.

Q826 Helen Jones: If an authority like mine, where over 97% of parents get their first choice of secondary school, submitted a BSF plan that did not have Academies in it—I am not particularly referring to my own, there are lots of them—where the schools, even those in challenging circumstances, are improving schools, would your officials still go to them and say, “Have you thought of having an Academy?”, because what we are getting from local authorities is that there is lots of pressure from your Department to have an Academy as part of BSF even when the authority has carefully consulted and worked out a plan to tackle the problems it faces?

Jim Knight: We would look at the authority, be it Warrington or elsewhere, look at the trend in standards for the schools and ensure that the vision is going to improve standards, is going to continue to challenge schools to do better, and if an Academy was going to be part of the solution, if we thought that the local authority was complacent about that or dogmatic in the opposite direction, then we may well challenge them.

Q827 Helen Jones: My question is a bit more specific. Are you going to say that to local authorities even when there is no demand locally for that?

Jim Knight: We may do if the standards still were not good enough. Just because there is no demand for an Academy, there might even be no demand in improvement, that does not necessarily mean that improvement should not happen. It might mean

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that there is a lack of ambition in that community or a lack of aspiration in that community, but that still might be something that the authority should address.

Q828 Chairman: Parmjit, you are not catching my eye very well.

Mr Dhanda: I was going to give my colleague an opportunity to have a sip of water actually. Obviously, Jim leads on capital and BSF and that has been the broad remit of the questions so far, but, Helen, you did mention at the very outset a vision process of schools and I think vision process and sustainability very much go hand in hand in terms of the work that we are trying to do in the Department at the moment. I thought I would mention within that context some of the work that obviously I am involved in around the classroom and sustainability. We launched the Sustainable Schools Consultation Process last May. I believe it was actually the first government carbon neutral consultation document that we had had, and within that context—I think you mentioned build—big capital projects and obviously BSF are very important, but amongst the eight doorways within that consultation process buildings and grounds, certainly at a local level, are a very important element. I thought it would be worth mentioning, something that the Department has produced is a self-evaluation tool for schools in terms of how they ensure that sustainability as a key part of that. You also mentioned, Helen, staff training and the learning process. I think sustainability is important there as well in terms of the context of what we have been doing in terms of this consultation, and we will be producing an action plan in the coming weeks which will refer again to the TDA and the National College of School Leadership and will discuss just how we can do that within a sustainability context and those doorways which are very important in the classroom. That is slightly separate to what we have been talking about in terms of new-build, BSF and capital build, I just thought we ought to get that on the record and allow Jim to have a glass of water.

Q829 Mr Marsden: Minister, just to pursue these issues of flexibility, you have already referred to the fact that you think the planning process needs to have flexibility. You referred specifically to 14–19 Diplomas as having an impact on that and you also mentioned the 2020 Vision Report. I wonder how you think specifically the 2020 Vision Report is going to affect what your Department changes about its recommendations and thoughts on design?

Jim Knight: I think, principally, it would be around ensuring that we have flexible learning spaces and ensuring that we are—. It is already clear, and has always been clear, that ICT should be properly integrated into the programme, but I am currently discussing with Becta and looking to bring them into the process more completely so that we can ensure that we are properly anticipating the future technology need and building that into the design

at a stronger level. I have one or two concerns. They are not major concerns, and it is very difficult with technology to anticipate where it is going to go, but there are issues around ICT and sustainability, there are issues also around ICT and future proofing and we have got to make sure that we get that right.

Q830 Mr Marsden: I am very pleased to hear that. Presumably implicit in that is the suggestion that the Department has not been doing enough of it already?

Jim Knight: It is just the nature of technology and the way it changes and the various directions in which that industry goes. I have been having quite a few discussions over the last couple of months, and I will also, next month, be going to visit a number of the leading technology companies in the United States to try and properly anticipate where we are going. It is actually more about that side of things, about making sure that we can properly understand where things might go and predict those and offer some vision of that to schools than it is about criticism of where we have been today.

Mr Dhanda: I think it is a very personal question, because as we see a greater roll-out of technology and more computers, we do have the difficulty of dealing with emissions and issues around technology. It is very natural, but I think it is quite heartening, some of the advances and changes, and you will have seen it on your journeys around schools, the more sustainable ones in particular, where we are doing work around intelligent buildings where the lights switch-off as you walk out of a room, but also specifically in this area around ICT computers and thin client devices, where there is a great deal of work that can be done. We can ensure that battery lives for these machines last a whole day without a need for charging. I think Jim is probably more of a technical expert on this than I am, but there are ways of ensuring that with these thin client devices that power is used up not by a terminal but by the server. I think we need to look into this, and I think there are some very exciting opportunities out there around that.

Q831 Mr Marsden: The technical things, as you refer to them, Parmjit, are something that will always challenge all of us, some of us perhaps more than others, but the challenge that faces us in terms of transformation is also the challenge of usage, is it not, Minister?

Jim Knight: Yes.

Q832 Mr Marsden: One of the things that we are concerned about, and I hate to keep going back to Knowsley, but Knowsley seemed to have a very clear idea of how their future buildings would serve the whole community?

Jim Knight: Yes.

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Q833 Mr Marsden: We do not see that, I think, in all of the BSF bids so far. How are you going to ensure, without being Stalinist, state'ist or top-down, as my colleague Douglas Carswell might put it, that that sort of broader community vision is communicated to local authorities and is taken on board by your own officials in assessing these bids?

Jim Knight: We quoted and held up Knowsley as an example of best practice in the White Paper, I think, and I regularly refer people to Knowsley as an authority that has been particularly imaginative, particularly creative and how much we welcome that level of creativity, and so, at a personal level, I am trying to do my bit and as a Department we are not shy in using that example; but, again, it is the same sort of issue that we have been talking about again and again in terms of best practice and how we spread that and the various agencies that are involved in BSF and making sure that they are involved. In particular, I am keen to get Becta more firmly integrated into this as part of the sharing of best practice in terms of technology.

Q834 Mr Marsden: Minister, I understand that, and the examples that you gave earlier of the NCSL involvement, and you mentioned the Sorrell Foundation, and all the rest of it, those are things that we would share and agree with but the reality is that good or innovative local authorities and schools will take those things forward anyway. What I am concerned about is what template you have in the Department for encouraging the spread of that best practice. Can I raise one very specific issue with you? My colleague, Helen Jones, has already talked about the way in which Academies fit into BSF, but I want to ask you about how you see BSF affecting sixth form colleges and the FE sector. I have been talking to a number of FE principals who are concerned, not, incidentally, in the Knowsley case, but who are concerned that BSF may go ahead in their areas and these great plans for community involvement across the age ranges and all the of rest of it, and yet there is not a structural way of involving them, or they do not think so, in the local authority's plans. Is that a concern that you share?

Jim Knight: It is a concern that I have had, because it stands to reason that we have an ambitious 14–19 programme that I believe we will be talking about next week and yet we have structures that begin and end at 16. Clearly it must be a concern to ensure that that runs smoothly together. That is why I am pleased that, as part of the changes that we have made in the process, with the introduction of the Strategy for Change, we have a requirement that we look at very closely, that the local authority is properly consulting with the Learning and Skills Council locally to ensure that there is proper alignment between their educational vision for schools and the post-16 offer and the delivery of the 14–19 agenda. Similarly, the LSC have a requirement that, when they put capital projects up to their board, they show what consultation they have had with the local authority to ensure that at their end it is properly integrated; and when we

look at the gateways and the use of the 40 million capital fund for the delivery of the diploma gateways, certainly we will be looking to ensure that there is proper integration with BSF.

Q835 Mr Marsden: In terms of your own Department, what are you doing to make sure that people who cover the FE sector are liaising closely and properly with the officials who are overseeing BSF?

Jim Knight: The 14–19 reforms and agenda are critical to that and bring the two directorates together. Coles, the official who is responsible for the 14–19 curriculum changes and the diplomas and so on, sits within the FE directorate, Stephen Marston's directorate, but he is working very closely with the schools directorate, and I am the lead minister on 14–19, I spend most of my time working with officials in schools, so I think we have got a reasonable structural set-up which says that the lead official is coming from the FE, HE directorate, the lead minister is coming from the schools directorate, and that will, I hope, ensure that we have got good integration across the Department.

Q836 Mr Marsden: A final point. You have talked, Minister, about the problems of tightness in inner city areas. One of the problems at the moment within your own frameworks of costing is that there is very little allowance made for increased costs of rebuilding on inner city or inner town sites and, as we generate more and more towns and cities, ironically land value goes up and that is going to be a problem. Is that something you can look at in the context of BSF?

Jim Knight: It is something that we have been looking at with the Academies that are also in those sorts of areas.

Q837 Mr Marsden: I mention it, in particular, for obvious reasons, because I have had two examples in my own constituency.

Jim Knight: Yes, that is something we can look at. It is something that I will reflect on and discuss with officials and, if it is useful for me to send you a note on the outcome of that discussion, then I can hopefully do so.³

Chairman: Perhaps you ought to be talking to Tesco; they seem to own half of England!

Q838 Fiona Mactaggart: Minister, do you remain committed to the approach of integrating the ICT funding on contracts within the LEP? We have heard from some ICT providers that this approach ties them into the wider construction process and consortium and therefore limits innovation?

Jim Knight: Yes, when I was at the BETT fair there were some ICT companies who made similar points to me about their worries around how they are being integrated. To some extent we will improve that through practice and through building up trust between the various partners, but I think there is

³ Ev 221 [DfES]

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gain in letting the ICT contracts as long-term managed services, because, as always with these long-term contracts, what you are dealing with is risk and you are placing risk, quite deliberately, outside the public sector. Again, by having long-term ICT contracts you are placing the risk around technological change elsewhere, which is a gain but in some ways it is the most difficult aspect of the integration just because predicting where technology will be in 25 years time is kind of a challenge.

Q839 Fiona Mactaggart: You have a fantastic record on that. I also wanted to ask you about regeneration. I was struck in the evidence from the Department that, in the part of the evidence about the school being at the heart of the community, there was a vision of schools offering stuff to the community rather than engaging the wider community in creating it. In fact, it was only in the *Early Years* section and *Every Child Matters* section that there was a reference to the kind of participation of other forces within the community in developing things. I am concerned that BSF, which is a fantastic investment in some of the most deprived communities in the country, is not being conceived as part of a regeneration process which in the process involves the whole community. Why is it not and what are you doing about it?

Jim Knight: What we would want to achieve, by announcing well in advance which authorities are in which waves, by having quite significant design periods as part of the process, is the ability for local authorities, who, as we have discussed with Douglas, have the key role locally in ensuring that this strategically works, that they are using their local strategic partnerships to ensure that we have got any gains that we can make by linking through with other services, and at a school level obviously we have got the development of extended schools with every school being an extended school by 2010, which is very much about them engaging externally with their community and ensuring that the gains we make with BSF, alongside everything else we are doing schools, is something that the community can have access to, particularly parents but also the wider community as well. Again, in terms, we have got the development of the 14–19 curriculum and the engagement with employers locally that we will need to see as part of that, and the development of trust schools which, by definition, are looking for external partners in a locality to make the whole culture of the school much more outward looking and less inwardly focused.

Chairman: Can ask everyone to be very fast, because we are going to squeeze bullying out of today's session if we are not very careful.

Q840 Fiona Mactaggart: Can I ask my supplementary and point it at you, Parmjit, partly so you can respond to them both. I still think that your response is a vision of schools making an offer to the community as part of regeneration, and one of the things we have learned about regeneration is

that it works when it is from the bottom up on its own out there. I thought that that was clearer in the *Every Child Matters* part of the evidence than the rest of it rather than an offer from the centre to the community, and I wondered if Parmjit, as the Minister responsible for *Every Child Matters*, thinks there is a tension in the Department and whether other bits of the Department can learn from some of the stuff you are doing?

Mr Dhanda: I do not disagree with what you are saying. I do not feel that there is a tension from some of the visits that I have made myself recently. I entirely agree with you that this has to be about schools getting out of the old culture of 9.00 to 3.30 and actually being hubs of their local communities, the communities being part of the school rather than the other way around, just as you say. Part of what we are trying to do with the sustainable schools strategy, but also with eco-schools as well, is trying to help change that culture, and I am seeing more and more people, and I am sure, Fiona, you are in your own constituency as well, for whom English is not their first language coming in and learning and working, often outside of school hours in extended schools, with pupils in schools. I think this is a model we are seeing more and more of but it is something that we need to change over a period of time because we are looking at a real culture change and within the whole sustainable schools framework we really do want to ensure that schools are a hub for those local communities.

Fiona Mactaggart: At the same time we have guidelines determining capital funding allocated against pupil places which significantly limit the funding available for building spaces that can be used by the community. So can we really say that Building Schools for the Future is committed to supporting regeneration when there is a funding limit? It is a bit on top. It is not actually at the heart of it.

Q841 Chairman: Minister, this is a fair point, is it not? We still pick up, everywhere we go, that you still have not resolved with the Treasury the problems with VAT if the community use goes over 15%, and we also pick up that one of the down sides of PFI is that they do not let you in the school until eight o'clock and they throw you out at five. There are some pressures here, are there not?

Mr Dhanda: There are. The discussions with the Treasury are going reasonably well, they going apace, but I had better not dwell too much on those. As we were discussing earlier, I think with David, on PFIs, it is very important that we have the capacity to renegotiate the extended use of those facilities, and, in terms of the specification that we recommend, there is still considerable room within that. A note here tells me, which is very helpful because it gives me the figure, that there is an allocation of 500 square metres to each school for flexible community use. That is quite a considerable lump of space. It is up to them as to how they choose to use it, but the allocation is certainly there to ensure that we have got

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community facilities in these new schools as well as the community being able to use facilities that are built for educational reasons but are still very valid for them to use otherwise.

Q842 Mr Carswell: When we talk about sustainable schools, there is an idea that we have a 21st century vision of what education should be like and what schools should be like. How can we trust national politicians to be able to know the shape of education in two, three decades to come? If, for example, the Minister for telecommunications of either party had sat before a parliamentary committee several decades ago, they could not possibly have understood the innovations that were about to happen in telecoms.

Mr Dhanda: Yes.

Q843 Mr Carswell: How can we be sure that today officials in your Department know what is best, and what is going to be best, and what the shape of education is going to be in decades to come?

Mr Dhanda: I guess I would say to you that the public sector is not going to be the first to anticipate where things might go, that it is probably going to be in the commercial sector where that lies where they are spending huge amounts of money on R&D internationally to project forward, and that is why we have pretty active conversations with those companies. That is why I am taking the Director General for Schools with me to California and Seattle next month to discuss with the likes of Apple, Microsoft, Google, not only to see what is good practice in terms of the use of technology in schools, but also to have direct discussion with the commercial sector to understand what they think the future might be like and where they are spending their R&D. Are they, in terms of devices, spending it on smart-phone technology or are they spending it on PDA technology? We see excellent use of the handheld devices in Wolverhampton in their "Learning to go" scheme, for example, which is the use of PDAs, but if there is not any R&D being spent in that sort of device, should we be promoting that device universally, which we can see at the moment is working well, or should we look at something that is less device specific and based more on platforms having understood where the commercial industry is going.

Q844 Chairman: Let us hear a quick word from Jim.

Jim Knight: Very briefly, as I said, we are preparing the State Schools Action Plan as a consequence of the consultation that we have had over the past year, and young people have actually played a very big role in that. You are quite right, in 20 years' time when we are older and greyer it really does have to reflect the views and the needs of another generation; so we shall send you a copy of it and the proof of the pudding.

Q845 Chairman: I am sure you will learn a lot on the West Coast of the United States, but perhaps to talk to people like Professor Stephen Heppell here and the Futures Laboratory here, as we have, might also be useful.

Jim Knight: Stephen is a fantastic guru who we use a lot, but we need to make sure we have diversity in gurus along with everything else.

Q846 Stephen Williams: In the Minister of State's answer to your initial questions you said that 800 schools have been built since 1997 by the Government. Have you made any assessment as to how important environmental sustainability was in those schools before we got to BSF?

Jim Knight: I guess I have not seen any detailed assessment of the impact. What I have seen is some examples, and we have got some pathfinders at the moment, some modern schools. There are three in the one school pathfinders of BSF that are being developed at the moment, there is one in Devon and one in Dorset as examples that we are looking at that are going to the BREEAM excellent standard or beyond; I think a couple of them are looking at carbon neutrality. I can confirm this in writing to the Committee, but if we have not made a thorough assessment of the environmental impact in the past it is certainly something we are conscious of the need to do now, particularly as we develop these pathfinders and see how much further we can go in respect of carbon emissions.

Q847 Stephen Williams: It would be fair to say that prior to the current BSF programme the Department did not press upon schools or local authorities that were rebuilding schools the need to have environmental sustainability as part of the building plan.

Jim Knight: I am not aware of it, but I can make sure that I give a proper answer to the Committee in writing.⁴

Q848 Stephen Williams: Under BSF itself how important is environmental sustainability? How much emphasis is given to it by your Department?

Jim Knight: It is a very important element, that is why we have set the BREEAM standard, but that is also why we are looking at whether or not we should be going further than that standard, whether, for example, we should be looking at what the LSC have been doing with their Sustainability Fund where they have been able to add some extra funding in order to improve sustainability. That is something that is in an option that I am looking at, at the moment, to see whether we can go further in respect of reducing carbon emissions from schools. Bearing in mind that 2% of the UK's carbon emissions come from schools, we clearly have an important responsibility of our own.

Mr Dhanda: Also, taking on board what the Committee has said in its own discussions around BREEAM and whether it effectively takes into consideration carbon emissions. Obviously there

⁴ Ev 221 [DfES]

24 January 2007 Jim Knight MP and Parmjit Dhanda MP

are several different criteria within BREEAM and whether we need to look specifically at energy and emissions separately or whether we need to actually look at the structure of BREEAM within that, as has been discussed within this Committee.

Q849 Stephen Williams: Chairman, we have been given a different figure for carbon emissions and an estimate from the public sector is 15%. Given that carbon emissions obviously do come from schools, how confident are you that by the time we get to the end of this BSF programme the carbon footprint for state education will be reduced?

Jim Knight: I am very confident that through the use of Building Regulation Part L and the changes that are still being implemented in some of the retrospective change to regulation we are securing a 40% reduction in emissions through the use of the new regulation which came in last year. So, that is applying not only to new but there is also some regulation on existing buildings. As I say, I am ambitious for us to go further but that is subject to negotiation within the Department and then within government as to how we resource that: because whilst over the long-term we might find that money stacks up, as a responsible government you cannot make promises willy-nilly, we have got to make sure that we have costed out whatever proposals we make to go further.

Q850 Mr Chaytor: The Carbon Trust estimates that the cost of improving the rating from “BREEAM very good” to “BREEAM excellent” would be 10% over the existing allocation. Your Department’s research estimates that that would be between three and 12%, and there is going to be further examination. If there is a definitive figure somewhere between five and 10, would you increase the capital allocation to individual schools to enable that higher BREEAM rating to be achieved?

Mr Dhanda: For example, secondary schools, we think it is around 400–5,000 and I think, you are right, it does fall within that three to 12%. Around 4%, I think we are saying. Through part of the work that we are doing with the three pilots and trying to find ways and effective means of doing this through studies that are on-going, I hope that we can find an efficient and effective way to enhance the standards. We say “BREEAM very good”, but at the moment “BREEAM very good” is a minimum standard rather than the height of our hopes and expectations.

Jim Knight: What Parmjit said earlier about looking very carefully at what is the best use of any extra resource we might be able to find to throw at sustainability, is it excellence in BREEAM terms or is it doing more specifically on emissions? Because, as Parmjit has explained, BREEAM covers a whole number of different outlets, not just emissions.

Q851 Mr Chaytor: Would doing more on the emissions be setting targets for emissions for individual schools?

Jim Knight: It might be. It might be that we are able to allocate a specific sum per secondary school that we would want to see in exchange—a reduction in

the energy usage, an increase in energy efficiency, a certain proportion produced by renewables and, possibly, the use of offset. Those are the three tools for carbon neutrality. It may be that, if we were to be able to allocate more resource, we would set targets on all three of those.

Q852 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the process for formulating the Department’s guidelines, Parmjit referred to the Sustainable Schools Consultation in May 2006. How long was the consultation and when was the deadline for a response?

Mr Dhanda: It ended in September of last year and we have produced a response document and an action plan. A detailed action plan will be ready very soon indeed, in the coming weeks. Another thing that I think is worth mentioning on this in terms of finance and support, David, is the £375 million advanced capital investment that we are providing for 2007–08 for sustainable initiatives that were encouraging local authorities to actually consider, whether it is microgeneration or ways and means to save energy and water and the like.

Q853 Mr Chaytor: But the action plan will have been produced before publication of the Stern Report into the economics of climate change, which really has shifted the whole debate up a gear or at least a gear. Are you considering revising your action plan in the light of the information and the economic costs proposed or suggested?

Mr Dhanda: The action plan is not quite complete. We are in the process of completing it at the moment. The consultation, as I say, ended in September, and we have done a response to the consultation, but we are now in the process of finishing off that action plan. I will not go into the details of the draft of what is in it.

Q854 Mr Chaytor: When can we expect the publication of the action plan?

Mr Dhanda: Within the coming weeks.⁵

Q855 Chairman: One thing that has not been touched on today, something which we are picking up and we should have asked you questions on, and perhaps you will respond to us in writing, is skills. We are picking up, with the Olympics in parallel with this building programme and other public sector building programmes, that the availability of skills to build the schools for the future are going to be very tight.

Jim Knight: It is an active part of what we are doing on the Olympics legacy as well, so I will drop you a line.⁶

Q856 Chairman: The other one is that most of us who have been to a lot of schools recently know that if you have not got the skills in there, the students, the staff and the management of the building, you can have all the wonderful gimmicks in the world in terms of sustainability, but they will not be working properly.

⁵ Ev 222 [DFES]

⁶ Ev 222 [DFES]

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Jim Knight: I would agree. We have work to do to ensure that buildings are managed properly. You can design sustainable schools, but if they still leave the lights on—

Chairman: We saw a dramatic energy reduction when the students were energised! Let us move on to bullying.

**Supplementary memorandum submitted by Jim Knight MP, Minister of State for Schools,
Department for Education and Skills**

1. Parmjit Dhanda and I gave evidence to the Education and Skills Select Committee on 24 January 2007. There were a number of issues about which the Committee requested further information.

NUMBER OF ACADEMIES

2. There are 46 open Academies. Twenty six of these are housed in new and refurbished completed buildings. The remainder have building programmes on going.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITHIN EACH WAVE OF BSF

3. Mr David Chaytor MP asked if there was a document that included a timetable of waves within BSF, identifying which authorities are in each wave. This is available from Teachernet. The hyperlink is <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=8144>

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR INNER CITY SITES

4. Mr Gordon Marsden MP asked if allowances were made for increased costs associated with rebuilding on inner city sites where the value of land is particularly high. Whilst land is more expensive in inner cities, most school projects do not involve the acquisition of land. New schools are usually built on land already owned by authorities.

5. Costs arising from the characteristics and environments of particular sites (abnormal costs) can be higher in inner cities. For example, projects may involve:

- working around existing buildings or infrastructure;
- restricted site access for contractors and suppliers;
- removing hazardous materials from land or existing structures; and
- more expensive multi-storey construction owing to small site areas.

6. The BSF programme provides for additional funding of these abnormal costs in exceptional cases.

7. The allocation of funding within BSF varies regionally, being adjusted on the basis of published location factors to allow for differences in building unit prices from one authority to another.

ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS PRIOR TO BSF

8. Mr Stephen Williams MP asked how important environmental sustainability was in those schools before BSF. The DfES has published guidance on energy efficiency for over 30 years and developed a comprehensive environmental assessment method more than 10 years ago.

9. Building Bulletin 87: Guidelines for Environmental Design in Schools contains standards for design including acoustics, heating, lighting, ventilation, and carbon emissions. Building Bulletin 87 was first published in 1997 and was revised in 2003. Meeting its target for carbon emissions was a method of complying with Part L Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) between 2002 and 2006.

10. Building Bulletin 87 replaced Design Note 17: Guidelines for Environmental Design and Fuel Conservation in Educational Buildings which set out the principles of energy efficient school design in the context of primary energy use. Design Note 17 was first published in 1976. The second edition in 1981 was tied to School Premises Regulations and mandated minimum environmental standards for all schools.

11. The DfES first developed an environmental assessment method for new and existing schools in 1996. The method has similarities with BREEAM and is described in detail in Building Bulletin 83: Schools' Environmental Assessment Method (SEAM). It was developed to promote sustainable development, to support local environmental policies, and to complement the inclusion of sustainability within the National Curriculum.

THE DFES ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING THE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS CONSULTATION

12. Mr David Chaytor MP asked when the Select Committee could receive a copy of the Action Plan following the DfES consultation on Sustainable Schools. A copy of the Action Plan will be made available to Select Committee shortly.

INVITATION TO KEY BSF EVENTS

13. You also commented that Select Committee members would have liked to have had the opportunity to attend the launch of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) wave 4 in January. We will ensure that you are included on the invitation list for similar events in future.

BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION SKILLS SHORTAGE AS RESULT OF THE OLYMPICS LEGACY

14. You raised the issue of the availability of skilled workers in the construction industry, as a result of the demand created by the building programme for the 2012 Games. Construction is the UK's biggest industry, and even before we knew that we had won the Olympic bid the industry required 88,000 new recruits every year. The Games will create in total approximately 33,500 additional construction jobs, and one of the ways that this is being addressed is through the Construction National Skills Academy which was launched on 27 November 2006. The Academy was developed by Construction Skills, the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, and led by employers to bring all those involved in building projects to deliver project-specific on-site training, development and business support.

15. Over the next five years the Academy will establish a network of work-based learning centres at all significant construction projects in the UK. Regional partnerships are already in place in London, the North West, the South West and the South East.

16. An East London Construction Employers Forum is proposed, to provide a coordinated response to the unprecedented level of construction work planned for East London and the Thames Gateway. Its activities will include the provision of updated information on proposed projects, and advice on tendering procedures, funding bids and resource planning for FE. Also, the Five Borough Partnership Board will hold a construction summit in April to discuss the alignment of activity on construction and the built environment.

March 2007

Written evidence

Memorandum submitted by the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR)

INTRODUCTION

The CCPR is the representative body for 270 national governing bodies of sport and other national sporting organisations. Its mission is to promote the role of sport and recreation in creating a healthy nation, to protect the interests of sport and recreation, and to provide for the needs of sport and recreation organisations.

CCPR welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to this inquiry.

GENERAL COMMENTS

CCPR welcomes and supports the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. CCPR is very encouraged that the BSF investment is the largest single investment stream for over 50 years, with the aim to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England over a 10–15 year period. However, CCPR does have a few concerns on the impact BSF will have on sport and recreation facilities within the school environment. This response therefore focuses on this issue.

CCPR believes that BSF is a once in a lifetime opportunity to integrate quality PE and sports facilities into schools for both school and community use. CCPR believes this is imperative if the Government's participation targets for physical activity are to be reached. However, in order to achieve this there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed:

1. The protection of existing PE and sports facilities. CCPR is very concerned that relatively new facilities which have been funded by New Opportunities Fund—Physical Education Sport funding or by National Governing Bodies (NGB's) and charitable foundations may be removed from the school site as part of the BSF programme. CCPR believes that facilities that are of a suitable standard should be protected within the BSF rebuilds. CCPR would therefore strongly recommend that a framework to protect such facilities is incorporated within the BSF strategy, as this would prevent significant resources from being wasted.
2. The relatively low profile of PE, school sport and community access in the development of BSF programmes. Although CCPR understands why key policy areas such as underperforming schools, the 14–19 reform and special education needs have such high priority, CCPR believes that PE and school sport should be given equal weighting within the development and policy of BSF. CCPR suggests that such equal weighting is vital and will have benefits for pupils. Research by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has shown that standards and achievements in PE and school sport have risen across schools investigated, with improvements seen in national curriculum test and GCSE results. This is also vital to achieve Government's aims on halting childhood obesity.
3. To ensure a consistent approach for community use of the school and in particular the sport and recreation facilities, with all BSF schools being encouraged to follow the extended school policy.
4. Appropriate consultation is required at an early stage for each BSF programme wave that involves co-ordination between Partnerships for Schools, local authorities and relevant sporting groups, including Sport England and National Governing Bodies at a local level. CCPR strongly believes that such consultation will allow the creation of sport and recreation facilities that meet local school and community needs. CCPR believes that simple design principles such as a separate entrance to the sports facilities for community use should be adopted.

CONCLUSION

CCPR welcomes and supports the BSF programme, as we believe this will be a great opportunity for secondary school and has the potential to improve PE and sports facilities for both school and community use. However, CCPR would strongly recommend that a framework for protecting existing suitable sports facilities is incorporated within the BSF programme. CCPR would welcome PE and school sport being given equal weighting in the development of the BSF programme, which involves consulting with local communities and sport organisations to ensure that the future facilities at BSF schools meet local and school needs.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)

1. The RSC is the largest organisation in Europe for advancing the chemical sciences. Supported by a network of over 43,000 members worldwide and an internationally acclaimed publishing business, our activities span education and training, conferences and science policy, and the promotion of the chemical sciences to the public. The RSC, either on its own or with others, commissions research projects into aspects of education where evidence is apparently not available from Government, but is, in the RSC's view, in the public interest.

2. This evidence concentrates on two particular aspects of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme:

- (a) the provision of new school science laboratories (and the refurbishment of current laboratories to an acceptable or good state); and
- (b) school science laboratory design.

3. In April 2004 the RSC published a report "Laboratories, Resources and Budgets" (<http://www.rsc.org/EducationPolicy/laboratories2004.asp>) which it commissioned from the CLEAPSS School Science Service. This report concluded that, for the laboratories in maintained schools in England, 5% were excellent, 30% were good, 41% were basic (uninspiring) and 25% were unsafe/unsatisfactory. These standards are defined in the report and a conservative estimate of the finance required through both new build and refurbishment to upgrade accommodation to a good (not excellent) standard was £1,380,000,000.

4. In April 2005 a promise was made by Patricia Hewitt (then Trade and Industry Secretary), later confirmed by the Prime Minister, that an extra £200 million funding would be provided, made up of £75,000 for every secondary school, to pay for a new science laboratory over the subsequent three years. Subsequently the Association for School and College Leaders (ASCSL) received a letter from the DTI that no further money was to be made available.

5. In an attempt to monitor the state of laboratory refurbishment, in late 2005 the RSC asked the DfES if it was able to provide any information as to the amount and cost of refurbishment and/or new build of school science laboratories. The response was that the Department did not keep this data. Thus the RSC and the Royal Society commissioned the CLEAPSS School Science Service to undertake a survey to establish the picture for the years 2000–05 in order to set a base-line.

6. "The Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004–2014: next steps" document (March 2006), p46, reports that "the policy priority is to improve the state of school science accommodation by making school science labs a priority", and in Box 6.4, p47, it reports that "the Government will review the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) exemplar designs for school labs to ensure they reflect the latest thinking on what is required to ensure effective interactive teaching".

7. The initial findings of the survey by CLEAPSS are not heartening, are summarised below, and further detail included at Appendix A.

In brief:

- (i) The research was conducted by questionnaire, with a good return rate. Over the years 2000–05, an average of 4.7% of school science laboratories have been refurbished per year and 2.2% newly built per year.
- (ii) Teaching and learning. The majority of teachers are satisfied with the range of styles made possible, but there are concerns about restricted, dated designs and lack of space, problems with services, and lack of ICT.
- (iii) Consultation with end-users. In about one third of schools, teachers and technicians had real involvement with the design and build process. Others were ignored or even alienated.
- (iv) Quality of works, furniture and fittings. About two thirds of schools thought that quality was good, leaving one third concerned about cupboards falling to bits, bad workmanship, etc.
- (v) Maintenance. About two thirds of schools have maintenance problems with refurbished or newly built laboratories, including health and safety issues.
- (vi) ICT. This is not automatically part of the contract process. About one third of science departments have unsatisfactory or no provision in their new labs.
- (vii) Prep Rooms. Well over half of preparation areas are not improved or are actually made worse when laboratories are improved.
- (viii) Partnership for Schools. Area data sheets are an essential part of guidance to local authorities and architects. The sheets for science areas need further development.

8. This work calls into question whether BSF will "deliver schools that meet the needs of learners [. . .] now and in the future", whether the tools currently used by BSF are effective and whether all stakeholders are involved in the planning and delivery process.

9. It further indicates the magnitude of the task in making school science labs a priority and the importance of the Government involving the science education community, in particular the Institute of Biology, the Institute of Physics, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Royal Society, the Association for Science Education and CLEAPSS in reviewing the exemplar designs for laboratories.

APPENDIX A

An advance summary, by Andy Piggott, of research currently being carried out by the CLEAPSS School Science Service for the Royal Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry: 18 May 2006.

CLEAPSS School Science Service—is a national advisory service supporting practical science and technology in schools and colleges. Services include health and safety, together with advice on laboratory design, facilities and fittings.

Note that this is in the nature of an incomplete first draft and has not yet been subject to the rigorous checking process which will be carried out prior to publication of the final report. Hence some of the figures may be subject to adjustment and some of the conclusions subject to change.

In brief:

- (i) The research was conducted by questionnaire, with a good return rate. Over the years 2000–05, an average of 4.7% of school science laboratories have been refurbished per year and 2.2% newly built per year.
- (ii) Teaching and learning. The majority of teachers are satisfied with the range of styles made possible, but there are concerns about restricted, dated designs and lack of space, problems with services, and lack of ICT.
- (iii) Consultation with end-users. In about one third of schools, teachers and technicians had real involvement with the design and build process. Others were ignored or even alienated.
- (iv) Quality of works, furniture and fittings. About two thirds of schools thought that quality was good, leaving one third concerned about cupboards falling to bits, bad workmanship, etc.
- (v) Maintenance. About two thirds of schools have maintenance problems with refurbished or newly built laboratories; including health and safety issues.
- (vi) ICT. This is not automatically part of the contract process. About one third of science departments have unsatisfactory or no provision in their new labs.
- (vii) Prep Rooms. Well over half of preparation areas are not improved or are actually made worse when laboratories are improved.
- (viii) Partnership for Schools. Area data sheets are an essential part of guidance to local authorities and architects. The sheets for science areas need further development.

1. BASIC FINDINGS

1(a) This research was carried out by questionnaires sent to half of all English secondary schools (1,636 schools), with a good return rate of 22.5%. Validation of this data is being accomplished by contributions from science advisers and design and manufacturing firms in this sector.

1(b) The research shows that, over the period 2000–05, for secondary schools in England, a total of 4.7% of all school science laboratories have been refurbished per year and a total of 2.2% have been newly built; 31% of schools have had no laboratories refurbished or newly built in that time.

1(c) Of these laboratories, approximately 54% appear to have been funded by LAs, 17.5% under PF1 or other direct government funding, 15.2% by schools directly, and 7.5% under the SSAT schemes.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

2(a) When asked about the level of satisfaction with the range of teaching and learning styles made possible by new laboratories, 23.8% were *Very Satisfied*, 63.8% were *Satisfied*, while 10.8% were *Unsatisfied* and 1.6% *Very unsatisfied*.

2(b) The main aspects that teachers thought contributed to good teaching and learning were in flexibility of arrangements for pupils, increased ICT provision, larger spaces to work in and more attractive environments. Comments about unsatisfactory or poor provision were numerous and concentrated on lack of space, problems with services (gas, water, electricity), lack of ICT provision, and inflexible design. One terse comment, “Good teaching is down to staff”, clearly indicates that good design can help modify pupil behaviour, but only effective teachers can succeed with discipline.

2(c) The high level of *Satisfactory* should be treated with some caution because a large number of comments revealed that respondents were settling for restricted designs, a problem increasingly commented on by science advisers and consultants. One science adviser comments that some schools in his area have ignored advice and “simply replaced 1950–1960 designs with new furniture and not thought creatively about possible future learning needs [. . .]” and that “I have also had to put a health and safety limit on some refurbishments [. . .] because they have broken the rules on safe circulation requirements.”

3. CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF END-USERS

3(a) The extent of involvement of teachers and technicians in the design process and subsequent works was explored. Replies showed 35.4% had *A great deal* of involvement, 31.8% *Some* and, worryingly, 24.8% only *A little* and 7.9% *Not at all*.

3(b) Anecdotal evidence shows that good involvement means good design, “ownership” of the final product and good staff morale. Even *Some* involvement can result in alienation of end users, for example:

“We had extensive consultations with architects and planners to ensure our needs were fulfilled. Unfortunately when the actual building was being done a great deal of this was just ignored [. . .] The school as a whole has had a lot of problems with (*a large private consortium*) [. . .]”

“(We) had meetings with architects [. . .] to discuss options and requirements [. . .] It makes you wonder whether architects/designers have any idea what goes on in a school science department [. . .]”

“No notice was taken of our recommendations prior to the build being planned (despite providing a copy of CLEAPSS booklet L14*), resulting in bad design and extra expense as things had to be altered (*for health and safety reasons*) [. . .]” (*L14—*Designing and Planning Laboratories*)

4. QUALITY OF BUILDING WORKS, FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

4(a) Respondents put this as 11.5% *Very good*, 60.5% *Good*, while 22.7% was put at *Unsatisfactory* and 5.3% *Poor*.

4(b) Teachers and technicians who felt quality was good, praised the actual quality of furniture and fittings along with the standards of workmanship shown by contractors. They also appreciate good quality work surfaces to experimental benches. Those schools that judged quality unsatisfactory or poor provided a great number of comments. The biggest complaint was of poor quality furniture and fittings, especially of cupboards, their doors and locks; which are often said to fall to pieces very quickly under normal usage. Poor standards of workmanship and design were also mentioned, along with a host of other concerns; including services, flooring, bench surfaces, fume cupboards and so on.

5. MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS

5(a) The question was “Have there been any maintenance problems with this lab”, which may well have been a leading question as 70.9% of respondents answered *Yes* and 29.1% answered *No*. Many teachers and technicians, faced with building work for the first time, are also unaware of the issue of “snagging”, where minor items are attended to toward the end of the contract.

5(b) Screening out comments on minor items that any science build might face, still leaves a great deal of concern. At the top of the list is the repairs needed to cupboards that are falling apart, but this is closely followed by problems with services that have real health and safety issues. Plumbing and drainage are mentioned frequently as are problems with gas supplies (even with faulty cut-offs, or no cut-offs at all). Some structural problems are reported, even down to holes in walls and leaking roofs, in refurbished or newly built laboratories!

6. ICT PROVISION

6(a) 20.2% of respondents are *Very satisfied* with their ICT provision, 43.3% are *Satisfied*, but far too many are *Unsatisfied*, 23.7%, or *Very unsatisfied*, 12.8%.

6(b) In 73.5% of refurbished or newly built labs there is a fixed data-projector and screen, but there remains 26.5% without. Internet access is available, by cable and/or wireless, in 91.5% of such labs, but not all in the other 8.5%.

6(c) From the comments sent in, the trend seems to be toward laptops for pupils. However, ICT provision for labs appears to be an afterthought which is funded by the school, sometimes well after the lab is first in use, rather than included in the overall contract for a forward-looking design and build.

7. SUPPORT OF PRACTICAL CURRICULUM—PREP ROOMS

7(a) There appears to be a major problem with regard to the upgrading or provision of preparation areas when refurbishments or new builds of labs are undertaken. Without good provision in these areas the science practical curriculum is hamstrung.

7(b) In only 43.0% of cases have the prep rooms also been *Improved*. In 41.4% of cases, provision has *Stayed the same*, although numbers and qualities of laboratories have increased. In 15.7% of cases, prep room provision has actually *Deteriorated*.

7(c) Respondents are very clear about the problems encountered by technicians where things have not improved. Sometimes no prep rooms are included in new builds at all, rooms are removed for other purposes (often offices), storage areas are reduced, health and safety is ignored and experienced staff's input also ignored. For example:

“Centralised, one room, but not enough storage, only one sink! [. . .] weird design features and definitely different from what we were insisting on. That's PFI folks!”

8. PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOLS—AREA DATA SHEETS

8(a) The Area Data Sheets aim to provide guidance to local authorities and hence to architects and project managers as to what is required for each space within a school. Guidance such as this is vital to the whole process of design and build.

8(b) Examination of the Draft for Consultation Vol 2, shows that the sheets for science areas need some development. References to current DfES guidance could be increased, as could references to national guidance from the Association for Science Education (ASE) and the CLEAPSS School Science Service. There are some items included that are not in accordance with best practice, others that are a little out-of-date, and some health and safety items are missing.

8(c) The Science Education community should contribute to Partnership for Schools in order to make the best advice and guidance available as widely as possible. CLEAPSS advice is already available to members; www.cleapss.org.uk. The ASE hosts the results of the Laboratory Design for Teaching and Learning project; free access on www.ase.org.uk/ldtl.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by Zurich Municipal

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Zurich Municipal welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into Sustainable Schools.

1.2 Zurich Municipal is the UK's leading education insurer and risk management provider, which gives us a unique insight into the sector, and the sustainability issues it faces. We have extensive experience of some of the key risk-management issues facing schools, particularly in relation to fire safety and tackling arson, and publish annual figures tracking the number of incidents across the country. We also hold a considerable central database of more than 13,000 schools which looks at the risk ranking of schools.

1.3 Zurich Municipal has a long history of working with local and national education departments and schools to try to combat arson. Recently we've worked with stakeholders to develop a range of educational materials under the *Arson Combated Together* umbrella, and published a free design guide for schools with the aim of encouraging resilient building materials, security features and the use of fire sprinkler systems.

1.4 We would welcome the opportunity to share our understanding and give oral evidence to the Select Committee.

SUMMARY

2.1 The inquiry is wide-ranging and deals with a number of areas which it would not be relevant for us to comment on. However, we would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the importance of appropriate design for schools in order to ensure that they are truly “sustainable”.

2.2 In summary, we believe that sustainable construction needs to place much greater emphasis on the fire risk associated with modern construction methods.

2.3 Additional funding and a firm commitment must be introduced to ensure sprinkler provision in all new schools, and wherever possible, in those undergoing major refurbishment.

2.4 The mandatory installation of sprinklers in new and refurbished schools would massively reduce exposure and vulnerability to fire, and therefore reduce the potential of pupils studying, often for a number of years, in uninspiring mobile units on play areas, whilst the school is being rebuilt.

2.5 Zurich Municipal are keen to offer best practice to all those involved in the construction of new schools, either through Building Schools for the Future or more conventional procurement methods.

SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Zurich Municipal welcomes the increasing use of environmentally friendly design concepts, which often incorporate the most innovative products and techniques. From what our customers tell us, the use of such techniques can have a positive impact on education provision, the community and, of course, the environment.

3.2 However, the good work done in this regard also needs to consider the likely impact a fire would have on such structures. It is commonly the case that many of the more environmentally friendly products used have a limited performance in the event of a fire. Lightweight structures with combustible elements generally offer little resistance to the development and spread of fire.

3.3 We believe that sustainable construction needs to place much greater emphasis on the fire risk associated with modern construction methods.

3.4 It is estimated that around 100,000 pupils are affected by large school fires as a result of the destruction or damage of classrooms and school property. Our recently published figures show that school fires cost an estimated £67 million in 2005—a £16 million reduction from the previous year. However, early indications show that this is not the start of a downward trend. In March this year alone, school fires cost an estimated £22 million, compared to a monthly average of £5.5 million last year.

3.5 The limited performance of many of the more environmentally friendly products is further compounded by the fact that many school fires are started with malicious intent, and in a number of cases it is evident that the perpetrators go to extreme lengths to find ways of causing fires.

3.6 In terms of the design process, the creation of inspirational, flexible and creative spaces is in many cases limited due to the requirements that legislation imposes, for example through Building Regulations for compartmentation and travel distances to facilitate safe evacuation.

3.7 Design freedom and future flexibility are important factors in the realisation of sustainable school construction, in ensuring the buildings offer the optimum service provision to the users.

3.8 This is something the provision of sprinklers can afford, in allowing the necessary flexibility in design. The issues around the degree of fire separation and compartmentation become much less of a concern, and legislators and enforcing bodies can play a key part in the sustainable approach. We believe that sprinkler systems should be mandatory in all new schools, and wherever possible, in those undergoing major refurbishment.

3.9 As far as can be ascertained, there is no reference in the BSF guidance to resistance to fire in terms of the sustainability of a project. This is considered a major oversight and omission, which has a severe detrimental effect on the true degree of sustainability being achieved on any project.

3.10 As an example of sustainable elements within a new school, the provision of a sprinkler system can see dramatic reductions in conventional fire precautions. For example, the installation of sprinklers can result in reduced fire alarm provision, lesser degrees of fire resistance to the structure, fewer internal fire doors, larger fire compartments allowing greater flexibility in layout, and potential for phased evacuation or stay-put policies in terms of partial evacuation. These, plus many other design freedoms, can assist in improving the overall sustainability of the project.

3.11 It is currently understood that the issue of sprinkler provision in new schools forming part of the BSF programme is left to the LA to consider and pursue. Should particular LAs choose to install sprinklers, specific funding provision is not provided through the BSF process. In considering the commitment to sustainability of these new schools, this indicates a weak link in ensuring a sustainable future for the children, communities and users of the schools.

3.12 Additional funding and a firm commitment must be introduced to ensure sprinkler provision in all new schools, and wherever possible, in those undergoing major refurbishment.

3.13 At Zurich Municipal we actively encourage the installation of sprinklers in schools by rewarding those customers who have installed sprinklers with lower premiums. The installation of sprinklers can help schools meet sustainability objectives, with sprinkler systems paying for themselves through reduced premiums in eight to 15 years.

3.14 With exciting proposals utilising Modern Methods of Construction becoming increasingly common, the insurance industry is faced with greater challenges in considering, and in many cases accepting, posed risks. Whilst the industry does not wish to hinder such innovation in construction and sustainable materials, acceptable terms need to be agreed appropriate to the perceived risk of fire.

3.15 The potential survival and longevity of a school following a fire, even one of relatively small magnitude, is largely overlooked in terms of sustainable school design. With three schools suffering from arson attacks every day, the likely behaviour and resilience to fire offered by newly constructed schools requires major consideration if schools are to achieve truly “sustainable” status.

3.16 Whilst insurance companies carry an obligation to fund the replacement schools following losses from fires as part of their agreed terms, it remains public money that funds such cover. The opinions that insurers will pay and the school will be replaced is a direct conflict in terms of Best Value, and contradicts any element of sustainable intention.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

4.1 Sustainable buildings are essential elements in the delivery of initiatives such as *Every Child Matters*, *Extended Schools* and *Lifelong Learning*. Lightweight, modular, temporary classroom units brought on to a school site following a fire offer little towards the delivery of such initiatives. These “temporary classrooms” can offer little more than a shelter from external elements and a degree of containment, and in reality offer nothing in terms of inspirational learning environments.

4.2 The mandatory installation of sprinklers in new and refurbished schools would massively reduce exposure and vulnerability to fire, and therefore reduce the number of pupils studying, often for a number of years, in uninspiring mobile units.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

5.1 From an insurance perspective, there is greatly varying stakeholder involvement, although generally it is somewhat limited. Given the procurement methodology of the BSF programme, the process is generally not adaptable to “wider stakeholder participation”.

5.2 In contrast, the designs prior to the preferred bidder stage are often only available to the designers, LAs and the school’s senior management team. Whilst we appreciate that such commercial confidentiality needs to be observed, in many cases by the time the designs are made available to wider stakeholders they are beyond the point of change. This could lead to the poor acceptance of risks by some stakeholders.

5.3 From a major insurer’s perspective, Zurich Municipal is keen to offer best practice to all those involved in the construction of new schools, either through Building Schools for the Future or more conventional procurement methods.

5.4 To assist those involved in such schemes, a recently revised guide entitled “*The design and protection of new school buildings and sites*” has been made freely available on our website, offering guidance on key issues around school design:

http://www.zurich.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/11D1A19B-D88A-4569-B36A-DBCA90C27138/0/School_Design_Guide_Nov05_SC.pdf

June 2006

Further memorandum submitted by Zurich Municipal

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Zurich Municipal welcomes the opportunity to submit an additional memorandum to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into Sustainable Schools. This document contains additional information and statistics on school fires caused by arson, the number of daytime fires, the total cost of school fires, the benefits of sprinklers and Zurich Municipal’s design guide for schools. It is in addition to the original memorandum submitted in June.

1.2 Zurich Municipal is the UK’s leading education insurer and risk management provider, giving us a unique insight into the sector, and the sustainability issues it faces. We have extensive experience of some of the key risk-management issues facing schools, particularly in relation to fire safety and tackling arson, and publish annual figures tracking the number of incidents across the country. We also hold a considerable central database of more than 13,000 schools which looks at the risk ranking of schools.

1.3 Zurich Municipal has a long history of working with local and national education departments and schools to try to combat arson. Recently we’ve worked with stakeholders to develop a range of educational materials under the *Arson Combated Together* umbrella, and published a free design guide for schools with the aim of encouraging the use of fire sprinkler systems.

SUMMARY

2.1 In this memorandum, we have provided additional information on:

- The total number of school fires.
- The number of school fires caused by arson.
- The number of daytime fires.
- The total cost of school fires.
- The benefits of sprinklers.
- Zurich Municipal's design guide for schools.

2.2 The current unprecedented level of funding currently made available for school building projects provides an excellent opportunity for the Government to review its policy over the installation of sprinklers.

2.3 As our figures below show, the number of school fires in the UK is unacceptably high, and the high proportion of fires that are the result of a deliberate arson attack raises important questions about how Government, and other stakeholders, can tackle this problem.

2.4 The lack of adequate fire prevention measures in our schools poses a serious safety risk, and the increasing number of school fires taking place during daytime hours increases the risks posed to pupils and staff. The increasing use of schools by the community, by visitors unfamiliar with the layout of the school, is also a potential risk factor that needs to be considered.

2.5 We believe that reducing the number and severity of fires can be achieved by:

- Additional funding and a firm commitment to ensure sprinkler provision in all new schools, and wherever possible, in those undergoing major refurbishment. The mandatory installation of sprinklers in new schools will result in dramatic cost savings for schools across the UK, and minimise the social impact that large school fires have on communities.
- Educating pupils about the consequences of arson. For this reason Zurich Municipal has worked with stakeholders to develop a range of educational materials under the *Arson Combated Together (ACT)* umbrella.

TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOL FIRES

3.1 The total number of school fires in the UK includes fires of varying degrees, from small fires that are caught early and extinguished, to large fires that destroy whole schools. Despite increasing public awareness of fire safety issues, better security and a reduction in the use of combustible materials in school design, the UK has not seen a marked reduction in the number of school fires.

3.2 The figures below show the total number of reported school fires. However, a 2006 survey of schools, which was commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government and undertaken by BMRB,¹ shows that 43% of secondary schools have had a school fire in the last three years, and half of school fires are not reported to the Fire and Rescue Service.

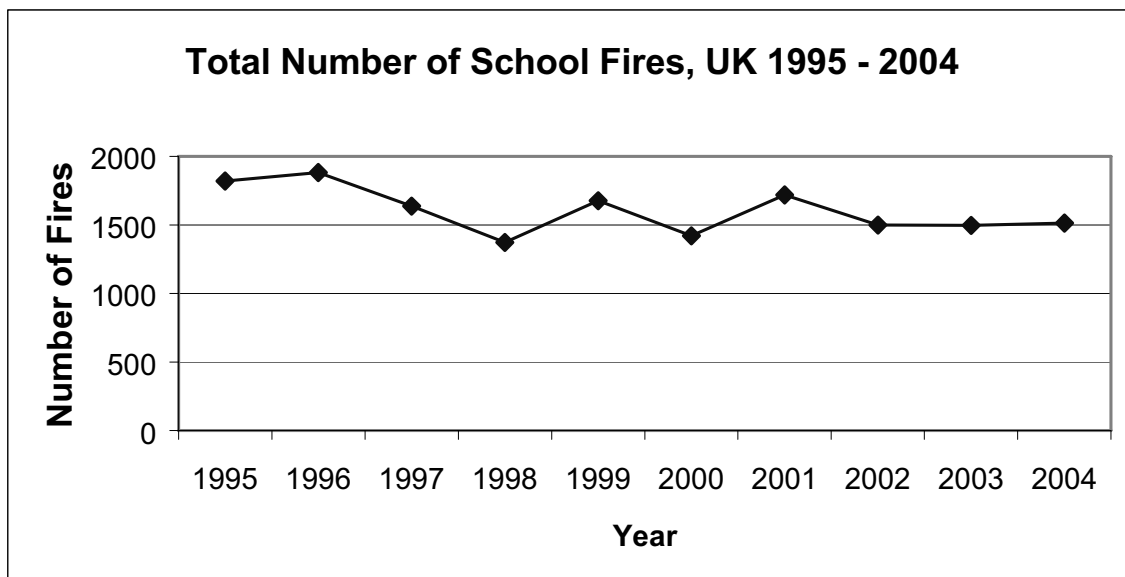
Table 1²

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total Number of Fires	1,821	1,882	1,636	1,372	1,675	1,421	1,719	1,498	1,496	1,512

¹ Survey undertaken by BMRB on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government. Summary of results circulated at Arson Control Forum meeting, 11 July 2006.

² Department for Communities and Local Government, Fire Statistics, United Kingdom 2004 (breakdown by type of building available on request).

Graph 1



3.3 The survey also found that:

- Over a quarter (28%) of secondary schools that reported having had a fire said their most recent fire led to a claim for financial assistance being made. The cost of fires varied enormously: six fires resulted in over £1 million worth of damage, although the median cost of fires that caused any damage was £300.
- 72% of secondary school fires said the fire was internal to a school building, rather than on playing fields/car parks etc.
- Nearly 80% of secondary school fires were considered to be suspicious or deliberate.
- 36% of schools said their most recent fire led to the temporary closure of at least one school facility.

SCHOOL FIRES CAUSED BY ARSON

4.1 Schools are prime targets for arson attacks because the perpetrators are often past or present pupils of the school who are familiar with the site, and the level of intruder protection and detection in schools has, traditionally, been low.

4.2 At Zurich Municipal we realise that education of young people is at the heart of the solution. Once pupils understand the impact of their actions, the likelihood of an arson incident is much reduced. For this reason, we have worked with stakeholders to develop a range of educational materials under the *Arson Combated Together (ACT)* umbrella. *ACT* is a theatre education programme, aimed at reducing the number of arson attacks in UK schools. We have also recently developed the *ACT Fire Service Toolkit*, a practical education aid designed to teach children about the danger and risk of arson attacks, provided free of charge to Fire Services around the UK.

4.3 The figures below show that in most cases, school fires occur as a result of arson. However, the true number of arson cases is likely to be far higher than this due to the number of suspected cases that are not categorised as “deliberate”. A 2006 survey of schools commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government shows that nearly 80% of secondary school fires were considered to be “suspicious” or “deliberate”.³

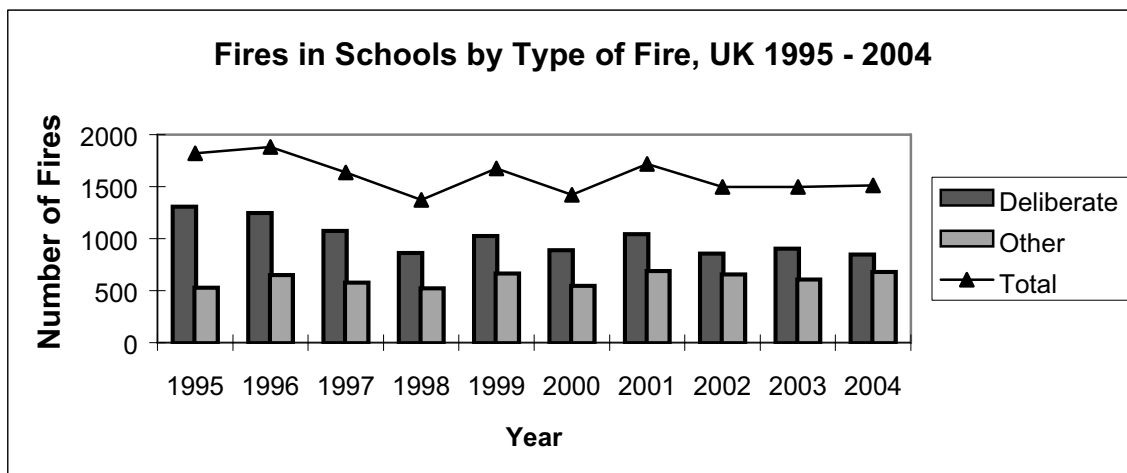
Table 2⁴

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Deliberate	1,301	1,239	1,066	856	1,018	882	1,037	849	896	840
Other	520	643	570	516	657	539	682	649	600	672

³ Survey undertaken by BMRB on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government. Summary of results circulated at Arson Control Forum meeting, 11 July 2006.

⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government, *op cit*.

Graph 2



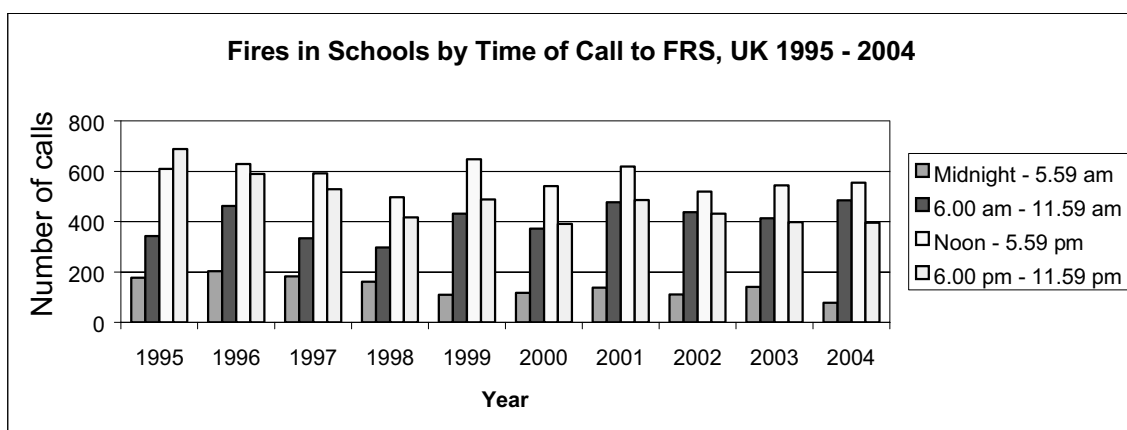
DAYTIME SCHOOL FIRES

5.1 A particularly worrying trend over recent years is the increasing number of daytime fires in schools. Daytime fires present a far greater risk to the safety of both pupils and staff, and make the role of the Fire and Rescue Service incredibly difficult due to the number of people on a school site at any one time. Since 2002, almost twice as many school fires have taken place during daytime hours compared with night-time hours.⁵

Table 3⁶

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Midnight–5.59 am	177	203	182	161	109	117	138	110	141	78
6.00 am–11.59 am	343	462	334	297	431	372	477	437	414	485
Noon–5.59 pm	610	629	591	497	648	541	619	519	544	554
6.00 pm–11.59 pm	689	589	529	417	488	391	486	432	398	395

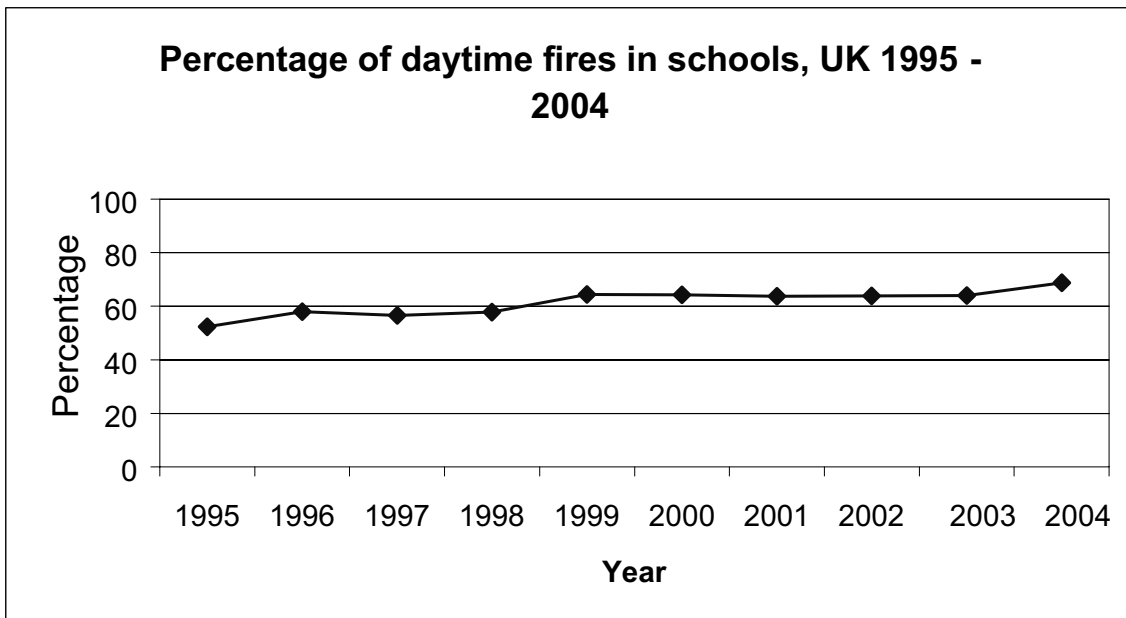
Graph 3



5.2 Graph 4 below shows that the proportion of daytime fires has risen relatively steadily over the past 10 years, with 52% of fires taking place during daytime hours in 1995 compared with 69% in 2004. With this trend looking set to continue, it is, only a matter of time before a fatality occurs directly as a result of a school fire.

⁵ For the purposes of this document, daytime hours will be defined as 6 am to 5.59 pm, and night-time hours defined as 6 pm to 5.59 am.
⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government, *op cit*.

Graph 4



COST OF SCHOOL FIRES

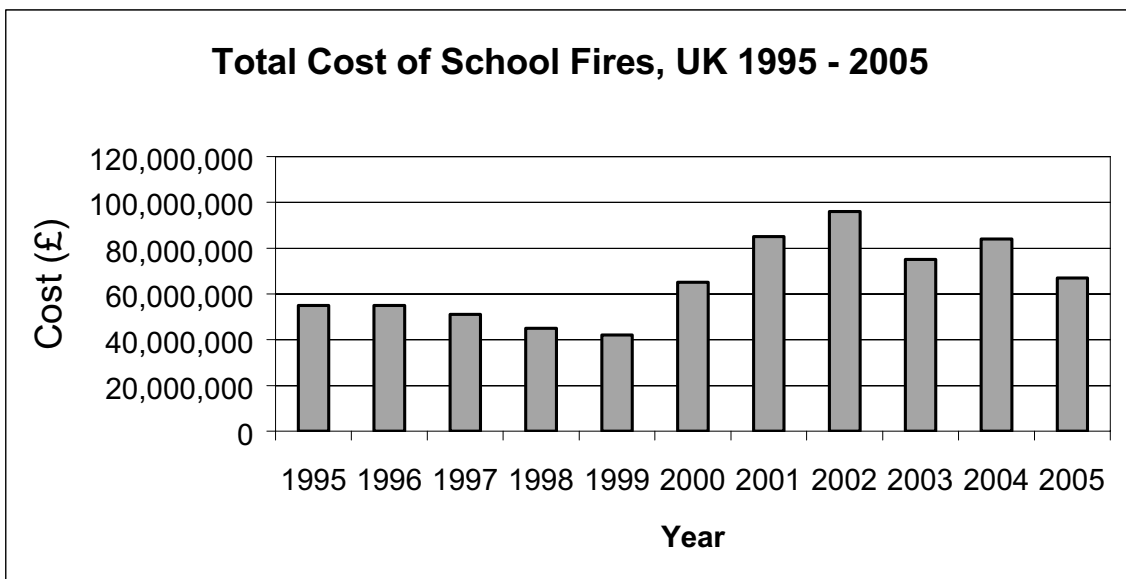
6.1 The cost of school fires has remained consistently high over recent years, and shows no sign of decreasing. As table 4 below shows, between 2000 and 2005 school fires in the UK cost a total of £472 million.

6.2 Our figures show that school fires cost an estimated £67 million in 2005—a £16 million reduction from the previous year. However, early indications show that this is not the start of a downward trend. In the first six months of this year alone the cost of school fires in the UK reached £52 million.

Table 4⁷

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total Cost (£ million)	55	55	51	45	42	65	85	96	75	84	67

Graph 5



⁷ This is an extrapolation of data held by Zurich Municipal to reflect their market share, and the existence of large deductibles (average £100,000 each and every loss) for individual LAs.

6.3 However, the financial expense of school fires is only one of the costs associated with school fires. The social costs of a large school fire are far-reaching and can have a long lasting impact on those involved. School fires disrupt pupil's education (particularly during examination periods), destroy coursework and schoolwork, as well as irreplaceable teaching notes and aid, force schools to teach in sub-standard temporary accommodation and increase stress levels and reduce morale amongst staff. Schools are also a valuable community resource that are often used for activities out of school hours, such as local events, night classes and weddings, meaning that a school fire can have an impact on a greater number of people than is initially apparent.

6.4 Sprinklered schools that experience a fire are back in action the same day, rather than the typical two years that it takes to rebuild a school after a major fire. This minimises disruption to children's education, and reduces the stress experienced by school staff who have to teach in substandard temporary accommodation, as well as technical staff at the local authority who are taken away from normal duties to deal with the aftermath of a large fire.

THE BENEFITS OF SPRINKLERS

7.1 Sprinklers have a proven track record and are effective in controlling fires, normally with fewer than five sprinkler heads operating. There have been no fire deaths in the UK in a building fitted with a fully maintained sprinkler system. Despite the clear benefits of sprinklers, there are less than 200 systems fitted in 30,000 UK schools, and in 2004 not one of the schools suffering a large fire was fitted with a sprinkler system.

7.2 Schools are becoming more difficult to insure because of the worsening loss record. A sprinklered school is a far more attractive proposition to a wider insurance market. In recognition of the effectiveness of sprinkler systems, Zurich Municipal offers up to a 75% reduction in fire insurance premiums for schools that have sprinklers installed, and will remove the mandatory deductible/excess.

7.3 The cost of fitting a sprinkler system in a new school is typically less than 2% of the total build cost. For an Academy school, the reductions in premiums alone can pay for the sprinkler system in seven to 10 years. This will typically take 10 years for a school in an LA that is poorly performing in terms of the number of fires, 25 years for a school in an LA that is performing well, and 10–15 years for a PFI school.

7.4 A sprinkler system can reduce building costs on new-build or extensions by virtue of a trade-off with partition walls and protection on escape routes. In addition, with such innovative and contemporary design concepts being adopted in the new schools, there is the potential with sprinkler protection to explore much greater flexibility in designs that can ultimately satisfy and often exceed the end user requirements. The provision of sprinkler protection has the potential to release this level of design freedom and should receive careful consideration.

7.5 The provision of sprinklers in schools also minimises disruption to children's education, keeping the social costs of large school fires to a minimum.

7.6 The mandatory installation of sprinkler systems in all new schools will not only result in efficiency savings for schools in the long term, but also the Fire and Rescue Service. Extinguishing a large school fire can take between two and five tenders with a fire crew up to 12 hours. Sprinklers are also considerably more water efficient, with an average sprinkler using 5% of the water used by a single fire service hose.

THE DESIGN AND PROTECTION OF NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SITES

8.1 In order to assist those involved in the design, building and maintenance of schools, Zurich Municipal has produced a design guide for schools, which gives practical advice to help design schools that are less susceptible to arson attack, as well as theft and vandalism. This includes further information on the use of sprinklers and suitable construction materials in the design of schools, and is appended to this memorandum.⁸

CONCLUSION

9.1 Zurich Municipal believe that sustainable construction needs to place much greater emphasis on the fire risk associated with modern construction methods.

9.2 Additional funding and a firm commitment must be introduced to ensure sprinkler provision in all new schools and, wherever possible, in those undergoing major refurbishment.

9.3 The mandatory installation of sprinklers in new and refurbished schools would massively reduce exposure and vulnerability to fire, and therefore reduce the number of pupils studying, often for a number of years, in uninspiring mobile units.

⁸ Not printed.

9.4 Zurich Municipal is keen to share best practice with all those involved in the construction of new schools, either through Building Schools for the Future or more conventional procurement methods.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by Ofsted

1. SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS CONTEXT

1.1 The revision of the National Curriculum in 2000 raised the profile of education for sustainable development (ESD) and schools are expected to promote pupils' commitment to sustainability. This is defined in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) publication *National Curriculum Handbook for Teachers* as enabling pupils to: "[. . .] develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way that we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future." In essence this identified the context for Sustainable Schools and the need to educate pupils about sustainability.

1.2 The DfES has reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development with the launch of the Sustainable Development Action Plan, by the then Secretary of State, Charles Clarke in 2003. At that time, he stressed the need "to ensure that people engaged in learning are given the opportunities and inspiration to think about and really appreciate their role as world citizens." This has recently been updated into a new two year action plan with schools as the key player in the process. Schools are encouraged and invited to become models of sustainable development for their communities.

1.3 In addition, the Government has earmarked £45 billion for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme to ensure that "schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially". This includes high environmental criteria for school building projects.

1.4 In May 2006, the Secretary of State launched the Sustainable Schools consultation which set out the government approach to Sustainable Schools. This highlighted that the Government would like every school to be a Sustainable School. In practice this means "integrating high standards of achievement and behaviour with the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community involvement and citizenship many of the aspirations set forth in *Every Child Matters* (2005)." It identifies a Sustainable School as one which is "guided by the principle of care—care for oneself, care for each other and care for the environment." The National Curriculum and building standards are seen as providing the bare minimum with children at the core in terms of developing positive attitudes and values to themselves, each other and their environment.

2. OFSTED'S ESD MONITORING PROGRAMME

2.1 In response to the need to identify effective practice in schools and to promote the Sustainable Schools agenda, Ofsted produced a report "*Taking the first step forward . . . towards an education for sustainable development*" 2003 which identified effective practice and provided outline guidance for school self-evaluation. This was seen as a definitive document and the survey was commented on positively by the Environmental Audit Committee.

2.2 Currently, Ofsted is monitoring ESD in schools through two ongoing surveys. A longitudinal three year survey of 13 schools, supported by university research, to determine whether schools that practice a whole school, inclusive and participatory approach to *Learning for Sustainability*:

- improve the overall effectiveness of the school;
- improve performance on standardized measures of academic achievement;
- reduce discipline and classroom management problems;
- increase engagement and enthusiasm for learning;
- develop greater pride and ownership in accomplishments; and
- enable and empower pupils' and the school community to make positive contributions to sustainable development.

In addition, a random sample of forty schools is to be visited over this current year to provide evidence of the extent to which schools are promoting and engaging with the ESD agenda.

2.3 The role of Ofsted is to report on standards and raise relevant issues based on the evidence provided by inspection. It would be inappropriate, therefore, for Ofsted to comment on some of the aspects relating to new build and regulations as Ofsted does not have current inspection evidence. In the areas in which Ofsted is able to comment, we would like to draw to the attention of the Committee the following points:

3. MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THIS INQUIRY

3.1 Despite the raising of the profile of education for sustainable development through the revision of the National Curriculum in 2000 and the launch of the Sustainable Development Action Plan, ESD is not easily identifiable in the majority of schools in England. It is more evident and better organised in primary schools, where teachers are more used to working across a range of subjects. In secondary schools work on ESD is limited because individual departments have not fully explored the wide range of opportunities open to them.

3.2 The Ofsted report *Taking the first step forward . . . towards an education for sustainable development (2003)* concluded that “while good practice exists there is much still to do, even in these successful schools, before they can claim to have met their own aspirations for ESD or, indeed, implemented their policies in full”. That situation remains unaltered today and in the majority of schools there is a genuine lack of understanding about what this concept actually means and how it can be used to promote a positive ethos to support learning, personal development and the Every Child Matters agenda. Generally, ESD is not seen as a priority in the drive towards school improvement. Much of the current guidance and information being provided to schools has no, or at best, very little reference to ESD.

3.3 There is a great deal of confusion about what the term “Sustainable Schools” means. The current DfES consultation on “Sustainable Schools” recognises “that schools will require clear and straightforward guidance”. The Government’s vision of a sustainable school is surprisingly simple:

A sustainable school sets out to prepare young people for a lifetime of sustainable working and living. It integrates high standards of achievement and good behaviour with the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community involvement and global citizenship. It achieves this through its full curriculum and through the living example of its own practice.

3.4 This current Education and Skills Committee inquiry is focusing primarily on the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, which concentrates on schools meeting Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). There is a danger that, if the message is more about the buildings rather than the learning, this will add to the mixed messages schools are receiving. The construction techniques and technology applications of the ideal school building provide an important and transparent message to pupils about the benefits of sustainability driven designs. However, unless this is linked to the learning and life of the school we may be in danger of creating “shells without souls”.

3.5 Pupils should be at the centre of sustainable schools. A “building which teaches” needs to be linked to an ongoing programme of learning which reinforces the sustainability message to ensure that pupils develop the positive attitudes and values promoted by the sustainability agenda. A recent HMI visit to a “new build” school concluded that “unless a clear plan of action (to promote learning for sustainability) is established the forward momentum provided by the new build will easily be lost”. Unless improvements in building are clearly linked to learning about sustainability, unless schools actively engage in and promote care and respect for the environment we will continue to visit “new build” schools in the future where litter, graffiti etc reflect a culture which shows a lack of understanding about living sustainable lives. The vision for “Sustainable Schools” cannot be delivered through buildings alone. Schools also need to be given the clear message that education for sustainability needs to be a partner to this process.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN)

INTRODUCTION

1. This response is based on a number of research publications on sustainable development and education and training commissioned by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA).¹ It also draws on a national survey of how sustainable development is being embedded into the sector. This survey will be published later in June 2006.²

2. The LSN welcomes the new emphasis placed by the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative on a “strategic investment” in more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable education and training facilities to support the new 14–19 arrangements. The learning and skills sector has overlapping interests with schools as the 14–19 pathways become stronger. It also welcomes the influence and impact such investment can have on current and future needs of learners and communities.

3. Learners absorb explicit and implicit attitudes and behaviours from their educational environment. The surroundings in which learning takes place do influence the messages about sustainability that schools and colleges transmit to their learners.

4. As well as having an impact on specific education and training programmes, educational environment can help promote and provide models for the need to live more sustainable lifestyles. But this can only be achieved if design, planning and construction standards are raised so that the benefits of sustainable buildings in sustainable locations are clearly evident to everyone.

5. Our research indicates a wide-range of opportunities and challenges if the objectives of the BSF initiative are to be realised.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) ESTATE

Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?

6. The answer to this question is broadly no because there is currently little independent guidance available to governors and executives on what a sustainable school or college might look like and how such an institution might influence the education and training provision offered. The BSF initiative needs to address this gap urgently, setting out broad sustainability decision frameworks, management tools and techniques and national and international exemplars.

7. The use of tools such as BREEAM is still in its infancy in the learning and skills sector. They only measure aspects of environmental sustainability and there is a need to develop a more integrated approach to all dimensions of sustainable development possibly based on the principles of The Natural Step.

8. The FE estate is huge, comprising millions of square metres of building and land,³ whose quality and sustainability vary greatly. The buildings range from excellent purpose built accommodation to aging and unsuitable permanent and temporary annexes. Most FE colleges also operate on a number of sites, often over some considerable distances. Consolidating, refurbishing and even integrating some of these disparate facilities is a major sustainability issue for the executives of many colleges. Defects in insulation, leakiness, sound proofing and heating are commonplace.

9. The carbon footprint of this vast estate has not been measured. A study carried out in 2001 at a small specialist agricultural college with about 500 students and 60 academic staff showed that it produced nearly 900 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year—75% of which came from heating and lighting, transport and waste generation.⁴

10. Contributing to the UK's carbon reduction targets must be one of the over-riding objectives of the BSF initiative. Yet to date few colleges have built such targets into current and future estate management programmes. Management is understandably more concerned with the rising cost of oil and gas and less on carbon reduction *per se*, although clearly the two are linked.

11. The LSDA's national survey revealed that 69% of respondents had undertaken an audit of their energy, water and other resource use. Most of them have increasingly focused on the environmental sustainability of their operations. For most providers any new build, for example, under the Government's Centres for Vocational Excellence (CoVE) programme and refurbishment programmes are scrutinised for environmental performance, but much less emphasis is placed on other dimensions of sustainability.

12. Current funding regimes do not permit more innovative technologies to be adopted, such as alternative energy generating systems—solar PV, wind or ground heat exchange systems and more sustainable construction materials and techniques. (The embodied energy of current building materials is high.) The BSF initiative must offer greater opportunities for FE colleges to install alternative energy systems to reduce their carbon footprint and to ameliorate the impact of rising fuel costs.

13. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) sustainable development strategy "From here to sustainability" expects providers to adopt Environmental Management Systems and promote sustainable practice in all design, new build and refurbishment and well as other issues relating to buildings and estates by 2010. Government will need to identify appropriate funds if these developments are to take place. A strategy must be devised that underpins the transformation of the FE estate so that not only can the footprint be monitored, but these changes can be used as learning opportunities for students in all vocational sectors.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

How effective is BSF at defining and responding to learners' current and future needs?

14. The answer to these questions is complex because as far as FE colleges are concerned they are at an early stage in their thinking on the sustainability agenda.

15. The 400 or so FE colleges are pivotal to much of our skills needs and have been identified as such in the recent Skills White Paper, *Further education: Raising skills, improving life chances* (DfES, 2006). They provide a wide-range of vocational programmes in areas such as management and administration, retailing, leisure and tourism, catering, construction, engineering, etc.

16. In some specific areas such as plumbing, electrical installations and construction our survey revealed that few colleges were able to provide practical facilities which target the installation and maintenance of micro-generation technologies such as solar water heating, mini wind turbines, ground source heat pumps, or grey and rainwater harvesting.

17. The Sustainable Development Roundtable is convinced “that significant and sustained progress will not be made towards the UK’s carbon reduction targets without actively harnessing consumer concern and converting it into action”.⁵ It follows that concerned consumers will be unable to action their concerns if there are no skilled technicians (plumbers and electricians) able to install and maintain alternative energy generating systems. Similar arguments exist for waste management as well as sustainable farming, construction, tourism and motor vehicle engineering and many other sectors of the economy.

18. The Government’s policy on sustainable development, *Securing the Future—delivering UK sustainable development strategy* (2005) argues for a greater emphasis on developing “sustainable literacy” in all education and training programmes in support of the strategic goal of achieving sustainable production and consumption in the UK. We strongly support this emphasis in the learning and skills sector.

19. It is only through creating sustainable organisations, whether they be in the public or private sector, that we will deliver more sustainable consumption and production. However, there is a huge “economy wide” gap in skills needed to deliver this strategic priority and the current FE college curriculum, facilities and estates are no where near appropriate in technical terms to meet the sustainability literacy skills gap. There are also many new jobs being created by the environmental technologies sector of the economy. In the EU alone goods and services in this sector was estimated to be worth €180 billion/year and growing at about 10% per annum.⁶ On a global scale it is comparable with the international aerospace and pharmaceutical industries.

20. This is a growing and dynamic market and yet few of the schools, FE colleges and careers advisory services are giving it the priority it deserves. The BSF initiative should seek ways of prompting the development of education and training facilities which provide opportunities for young people to explore the knowledge and skills requirements of this sector and to develop the technical skills which will support growth, innovation and commercialisation of the environmental industries in the UK.

21. There is also a need to promote social enterprise through more innovative approaches to the built environment in FE colleges. Many colleges have excellent community links within their geographic areas, yet there is more that could be achieved through social enterprises aimed at supporting the creation of sustainable communities (examples include setting up enterprises to tackle fuel poverty, promoting better resource utilisation and waste management in local communities). The obvious links of the learning and skills sector to the work of the Academy for Sustainable Communities should also be developed.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

We believe that we have given our response to these questions in the sections above and below.

CONCLUSION

22. The BSF programme and its aim to stimulate innovation of school building and timetabling to support workforce reform as well as greater involvement of the community offers a significant opportunity for a step-change in our approach to creating a sustainability literate workforce.

23. Linking BSF with the FE capital programme to support the new 14–19 arrangements could also provide a greater opportunity to influence the consumption patterns of young people in a direction which is more sustainable in the longer term. However, as usual, the devil is in the detail, the design, planning and construction of these new structures needs to achieve exacting standards, not just in environmental terms, but which meet social and economic criteria as well.

24. The LSN would welcome working in partnership with Partnership for Schools and others to develop a clear set of sustainability guidelines. The BSF building programme should at the very least, be required to meet the proposed sustainable building code and criteria being developed by the ODPM.

REFERENCES

- ¹ The LSDA has evolved into two separate agencies, the Learning and Skills Network and the Quality Improvement Agency. Specific reports include: Martin S, Cohen J and Martin M (2004) *Opportunities for Sustainable Development in the learning and skills sector: a policy analysis*; and Martin S, Martin M, Cohen J, Aitken L (2004) *Contributing to sustainable development: Centres of Vocational Excellence*.
- ² Martin S, Martin M, Cohen J, Correa R (2006) *Sustainable Development in the Learning and Skills Sector*.
- ³ There are no official figures available which estimate the total area, largely because of the significant changes taking place, including mergers, closures and new build. The higher education estate, by comparison, has been measured at 246 million sq metres. The FE estate has more than double the number of institutions compared with universities.

⁴ Dawe G F M, Vetter A, Martin S (2001) An overview of ecological footprinting and other tools and their application to the development of sustainability process: audit and methodology at Holme Lacy College, UK International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education 5, 340–371.

⁵ This is a joint initiative between the Sustainable Development Commission and National Consumer Council.

⁶ Ecotec (2002) Analysis of the EU Eco-Industries—their employment and export potential.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by Magnified Learning

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

Magnified Learning is a consultancy working in education for sustainable development [ESD] and work- and enterprise-related learning [WERL]. It is centrally concerned with effective change management, and provides CPD/INSET and develops and delivers integrated curriculum activities. The consultancy has played a key role in the delivery of the Treasury/DfES funded Enterprise Advisor Service in London Central, South and West, a body charged with embedding enterprise learning in over 160 secondary schools. Many of these schools have been either recently, or currently are involved in BSF initiatives. Magnified Learning is also involved in research projects looking at policy and practice around sustainable development in the learning and skills sector.

The following comments are based upon observations made in both contexts.

1. *Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?*

No. Sustainability should be read as an adaptive process, not a final destination, and requires the acquisition and application of a complex suite of knowledge and reflexive competencies. The BSF programme has potential to contribute to the development of these, but only in the context of schools and colleges which develop their capabilities to integrate ESD with Work and Enterprise Related Learning, Citizenship and other key strands.

2. *How effective is BSF at defining and responding to learners' current and future needs? What role can and do school users play in this process?*

“Defining [. . .] future needs” is a perilous business, a point emphasised by Professor William Scott in his keynote speech at the UK launch of UNESCO’s Decade for Education for Sustainable Development [<http://www.learning2last.org/>]. In an era of exponentially changing economic, social and environmental circumstances, the role of education should not be to play soothsayer, but to equip learners [and that includes teachers] with the capacity to make reasonable risk analyses, and to adapt behaviours in response to unpredictable, emergent circumstances.

2.1 In order to survive businesses are having to manifest increasing levels of reflexive capability. Design and construction are good examples of industries which are responding to this challenge, and BSF provides fertile opportunities for schools to develop their own capacity through engaging with business professionals involved in the delivery of their new-build projects. However, evidence from schools working with the Enterprise Advisor Service in London Central, South and West suggests that opportunities to involve these companies in any strand of student learning is limited.

3. *How effectively is BSF working with schools to develop educational and organisational change that complements the new buildings?*

Within the learning and skills sector responsibility and concern for new-build is too often confined to finance and estates departments. A key challenge for senior leaders is to ensure user groups and other stakeholders are genuinely consulted and subsequently enabled to share diverse learning from such projects. To contribute effectively to sustainable development, this will involve more than implementing enhanced structures of democracy; it will require institutional capacity to embrace borderless learning, both in terms of curriculum areas and those defined as learners. In the absence of this, building initiatives, sustainable or otherwise, will continue to be interpreted as the province of specialists, and their full potential to impact upon learning, lost.

4. *How successfully does BSF integrate with other policy and funding areas (such as Every Child Matters and Extended Schools) to deliver joined up solutions to educational and community needs?*

Integration represents a huge challenge to secondary schools, where interdisciplinary thinking is far from the norm. Many are preoccupied with GCSE points and a National Curriculum that does nothing to address the dogged adherence to reductive silo mentalities. This fragmentation is reinforced by the apparently piecemeal process by which initiatives and fresh educational policies are introduced, and results in many opportunities for joined-up solutions to be missed by practitioners who already feel overwhelmed by their day-to-day activities.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by Learning Through Landscapes (LTL)

Learning through Landscapes is the national school grounds charity. As the school grounds experts we have 16 years experience of supporting schools so that young people can enjoy their entitlement to the unique opportunities which well designed, well managed and well used school grounds can provide. LTL undertakes research, gives advice, encourages action and supports schools communities and all those who care about improving these important environments.

Learning through Landscapes works in partnership with government, local authorities, the private sector and school communities themselves to improve the use, design and management of school grounds.

Since it was established in 1990, LTL has worked directly with over 10,000 schools, raised over £20 million for grounds improvement and contributed substantially to school grounds research and to new legislation and good practice.

1. This submission from Learning through Landscapes is put forward to support the case that investment in school grounds within the Government's Building Schools for the Future Programme and the Academies building programme will assist schools to meet the needs of learners and their communities now and in the future; will assist schools to become sustainable and deliver value and achieve the aim of educational transformation within the curriculum and the campus.

2. School grounds are an environment designed and managed primarily for children and young people. They can be readily accessed by all pupils on a daily basis without significant additional costs and there is ample research and practical evidence to show that they are of great value for teaching and learning for all Key Stages including Work Related Learning.

3. There are, however, significant issues of quality, suitability and sustainability indicating that the majority of school grounds are used at only 30% of their true educational and social value. LTL has no evidence that suggests the Academies and Building Schools for the Future programme is improving on this performance.

4. LTL's observation is that some of the new schools, and particularly some of the Academies are coming on stream with school grounds that are still substantially below the standard that would be expected of a modern educational establishment. We suggest the factors contributing to this are:

- External works budgets on capital projects (particularly the soft landscape element) are well known to be vulnerable to cost culling when building costs overrun because they are "last in line".
- Educational investment in the outdoors often comes within the definition of "exceptional costs".
- There appears to be a significant presumption in favour of high tech indoor learning provision that leaves little scope for investment outdoors.
- Architects and private education contractors seem unaware of the possibilities from a whole site development which includes quality outdoor learning provision.
- PPP consortia often appear to have a poor understanding of the teaching and learning potential of school grounds and there is a tendency for them to design expensive aesthetic landscapes of little educational value.

5. Learning through Landscapes was commissioned by the DfES to write the *Designing School Grounds* publication in the DfES Schools for the Future series, and anticipate there will be an opportunity to launch this later in the summer. In this publication and through its many years of practice, LTL has demonstrated that the development and use of school grounds makes a significant contribution to the transformation of young people's learning and development, across the curriculum.

6. The outdoor classroom is a perfect vehicle for the delivery of Education for Sustainable Development, as well as other topics related to sustainable development such as Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education, geography, science and the 14–19 vocational education. Through their grounds, schools can teach young people about many aspects of sustainable living and working, for example; growing fruit and vegetables and healthy eating; making their own energy from wind turbines and solar panels; setting

up wildlife areas and studying biodiversity; collecting rainwater for use in the school and grounds; providing safe cycle storage to encourage travelling by bike; recycling paper and composting food; setting up a weather station to monitor the impact of climate change.

7. In addition to the formal curriculum, school grounds can be used as exemplars of sustainable design and management to embed sustainable thinking and practice into the school culture. For example; designing for minimal environmental impact; re-using materials on site and sourcing recycled materials; constructing with minimum energy use; designing, building and planting for minimal energy use; respecting locally distinctive crafts and skills; maximising the positive capacity of the natural environment to provide light, shade, shelter, ventilation, making optimal use of green technologies such as reed bed filtration, renewable energy.

8. LTL research also demonstrates the impact that decent school grounds can have on the behaviour and well being of pupils and staff. The National School Grounds Survey looked at 700 schools that had improved their grounds in the past four years. It found that:

- 65% of schools reported an improved attitude to learning;
- 52% reported improved academic achievement;
- 73% said behaviour had improved;
- 64% reported reduced bullying;
- 84% reported improved social interaction; and
- 85% said that healthy active play had increased.

9. School grounds changes and developments offer significant potential for school users to practice real, socially sustainable models that can transform their learning and development. Active participation grows a culture of ownership and responsibility, working together and belonging; unlike other areas of the campus, the outdoor arena offers practical opportunities for the whole school community to impact on their environment through hands-on, experiential learning. With schools at the heart of the local community, the grounds can become a shop-front for the school to promote the importance of sustainable design and management practices among their stakeholders.

10. The Education and Select Committee Report of Session 2004–05 stated that, “School grounds are a vital resource, but our evidence suggests they are sometimes poorly designed. The DfES should ensure that its capital projects, for example, the Building Schools for the Future and Academy programmes, devote as much attention to the “outdoor classroom” as to the innovative design of buildings and indoor space”. LTL has no evidence to give us confidence that this recommendation is being acted upon. The output specification (PFI) for external requirements states, “that the design should demonstrate how the potential of the school grounds can be exploited for learning”, but this statement is highlighted as an option rather an obligation.

11. School grounds remain vulnerable to financial pressures within the education system, particularly in respect of BSF and the Academies Programme, and remain an area of relatively low quality associated with low investment.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Institute of British Architects welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the inquiry by the Education and Skills Committee into Sustainable Schools.

The Royal Institute of British Architects is one of the most influential architectural institutions in the world, and has been promoting architecture and architects since being awarded its Royal Charter in 1837. The 30,000-strong professional institute is committed to serving the public interest through good design. It also represents 85% of registered architects in the UK through its regional structure as well as a significant number of international members. Our mission statement is simple—to advance architecture by demonstrating benefit to society and promoting excellence in the profession.

THE BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF), ACADEMIES AND FE COLLEGES CAPITAL PROGRAMMES

The RIBA considers that the quality of education is inextricably linked to the quality of education buildings. This linkage results not only from the ability of buildings and facilities to provide good learning environments, but also from the respect that good surroundings show both students and staff, the lessons that can be learned directly from observing and interacting with the built and natural environment, and the social and civic aspirations that good buildings and environments can produce.

The combined programmes for renewal and rebuilding of the schools estate, represented by Building Schools for the Future (BSF), the Academies programme, the investment in Further Education (FE) colleges as well as the promised programme for upgrading primary schools, is welcomed by the RIBA as being vital for the future health and prosperity of the UK.

The RIBA seeks to support these programmes through practical assistance and, where necessary, constructive criticism. We do this through our activities including the Education, LSC and Higher Education Client Forums, the Client Design Advisor register, RIBA Client Services and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme. We also continue to engage with the many public and private bodies involved in the provision of high quality educational facilities.

SUSTAINABILITY

While the school design and building programme in the UK largely stagnated in the latter part of the last century, the world moved on. There is an unfortunately out-dated consensus on what makes a school, comprising a mixture of classrooms, assembly and/or dining halls, sports and arts spaces and staff facilities. But we face very different environmental, economic, social as well as technological and educational conditions from the last significant school building programme and a daunting challenge in finding the appropriate response.

We are investing again for the future—not only for the future of the students who will use the educational facilities—but also by planning and constructing buildings and other resources with a long and lasting life. Society and the environment will continue to change significantly in the decades ahead and it is essential that educational and school facilities are flexible and adaptable for future needs and in particular remain comfortable and usable in the face of climate change.

(a) *Environmental sustainability*

The RIBA has long championed the importance of environmental sustainability in buildings and the built environment in general, but this has now become a matter of pressing national and international concern in the face of the combined effect of rising atmospheric carbon levels, climate change and reduction in the availability of both natural and man-made resources. The UK Government has committed itself to a series of targets to reduce carbon emissions and to improve the energy performance of buildings as well as their impact in use. It is inevitable that the schools building programme should meet increasingly high standards in order to play their part in achieving these targets. But the RIBA believes that new and refurbished education buildings should also achieve standards significantly above the requirements of the building regulations and become beacons of best practice across the whole country:

- To show, in all areas and communities of the UK, the Government’s commitment to developing and putting low carbon approaches and technologies into action.
- To provide the economies of scale that will allow British industry to develop robust, low-energy and cost effective approaches and technologies that can reduce both the onset and impact of climate change.
- To assist the education of students and communities in the principles of energy generation and usage and low-energy means of achieving environmental comfort.

At present BSF projects are required to be rated by the Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). This long-standing method is respected and rigorously covers a wide range of the factors (management, health, wellbeing, energy transport, water, materials, land use, energy and pollution) that add up to a rounded sustainable solution. The RIBA notes that BSF requires a “very good” BREEAM rating. But as this only requires a minimum score of only 55 out of 100 we propose that the “excellent” rating (70 out of 100) should be a target for new build projects.

The RIBA also strongly recommends that schools and colleges should be designed to be as close as possible to carbon neutral with the express intention to move towards full carbon neutrality as building technology and facilities management improve. Local communities should also be engaged, for example to develop green travel plans to and from schools and colleges (which in turn requires sufficient investment by local authorities to prevent unnecessary car use by parents and students).

In addition to being energy efficient, schools and colleges should be designed to cope with anticipated climate change. Educational premises must be able to maintain temperatures and an air quality that are supportive to learning, even while the weather outside is uncomfortable and unstable. This is likely to require the use of substantial thermal mass to balance out temperature fluctuations as well as appropriate building management systems. The RIBA recommends that building specifications include the requirement that facilities are designed to operate effectively in climate conditions predicted by the Met Office for 2030 and beyond.

(b) Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability demands that schools and colleges are located in thriving communities that can support and sustain them. The local economy should also and as far as possible provide them with locally produced resources (from food to energy supplies and building materials). Schools and colleges also have a clear role to play in ensuring that they support that local economy by sharing facilities and working with local businesses and others. It follows that education buildings should be designed as part of and with the involvement of their community.

A separate aspect of economic sustainability is the ongoing cost of running and maintaining the premises themselves. The UK has a history of under-spending on the maintenance of its building stock and it is now crucial that the current large capital spend is not squandered by subsequent poor maintenance and upkeep. Lifetime costs must be considered from the start of all building programmes and long-term funding streams identified to support them. It is possible that higher capital spending at the outset to provide facilities that are robust and low-maintenance in the face of a demanding set of users will produce lower whole-life costs.

Similarly, buildings need to be adaptable over a long life and should have a degree of generosity of space and structure to allow them to be modified from one use to another. Designing and constructing buildings to a very tight fit and a very specific usage means a short life. Such buildings become rapidly redundant and therefore are essentially wasteful.

Although the briefing materials provided for BSF and other schools projects are predicated on a flexible approach there is considerable concern that they are often interpreted in a rigid and inflexible way by inexperienced public sector clients, who may not have commissioned a school previously and by bidding consortia who have no interest in delivering a building that meets more than current requirements. Clients need expert advice and assistance to help them demand more from the process and to persuade consortia to provide it. The RIBA provides such help through its Client Design Advisor scheme. The use of a client design advisor has been made obligatory on all BSF projects by the DfES. The use of an RIBA accredited Client Design Advisor (CDA) with expertise in education buildings is strongly recommended by the RIBA.

(c) Social sustainability

Schools have educational, civic, and cultural roles. Newer “extended” schools provide a range of other services to the community including learning, library, sports and arts facilities. Schools are frequently the major public building in an area and need to behave as such, and in order for them to become a focus for the community it is important that the community is involved in the decision-making process when new schools are being planned.

The use of the school specific version of the Design Quality Indicator (DQI) is required on all BSF projects, and should be used to consult and gain input from a wide range of stakeholders at the earliest stage and throughout any school building project. An actively involved Client Design Advisor can assist this process.

Schools should be physically and socially inclusive, and easily accessible to all. Accommodating often conflicting requirements requires skilled briefing and design development, with input from all those who will be needed to make them work successfully. Briefing and specification materials provided by the schools and colleges programmes need to ensure that such requirements are made explicit and that the time and access to stakeholders is available to develop successful designs that will be successful and stand the test of time.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS/EDUCATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Educational styles and methods have changed greatly in the past 30 years and will do so again in the next 30 years. Technology, in particular, has entered every classroom in the country and will be developing and changing at a furious pace. Our most appropriate action will be to ensure that education facilities are adaptable and can easily accommodate physical and technological change.

At a simple level this means buildings with a variety of room sizes, re-locatable walls and easily accessible and replaceable services and infrastructure. It also means over-provision in certain areas and spaces that can effectively perform several different functions. Over-prescriptive and mono-functional facilities should be avoided. In the further education sector, strict space utilisation criteria should be challenged. In practice this requires both imaginative design and imaginative use of facilities and the ability to reconfigure them as use requirements change.

The BSF programme is predicated on the notion of transformational change of education through the investment that is going into schools. It is not yet clear what transformations are expected and whether the measure of success can or will shift from the current test and exam results. There are certainly many areas that high quality facilities would assist with, including sustainability, ICT, citizenship and development of specialist skills in areas such as business, the arts and sports. But the implications of such an approach have yet to be seriously tackled. How many schools with a performance specialism are planning to have or already have access to theatre spaces that are near professional level? How many new, competition level swimming pools are planned or can be funded in BSF schools or Academies?

 DELIVERY AND FUNDING
Procurement

The delivery model developed for BSF is to be applauded for its vision and willingness to improve many of the failings of previous methodologies. The Local Education Partnership (LEP) model, if managed well, will reduce the amount of wasted work in comparison with the standard PFI model and offer a certainty of workflow to selected Private Sector Partners (PSPs) with the resulting opportunity for improving delivery through the lifetime of a LEP. We raise, however, a number of issues:

- Schools in the initial sample set will still face a formidable number of different design and implementation teams, all preparing options for them, whether feasibility and reference schemes or one of the designs prepared by competing potential PSPs. The wastage implied by all this parallel production is prodigious.
- Only larger consortia will be in a position to bid for work on the BSF programme, due to the extensive bid costs. This will tend to exclude smaller (and frequently local) contractors, consultants and suppliers unless they can find niche positions in larger consortia. This raises issues both of competitive fairness and the ability of an industry (predominantly made up of SMEs) to provide the necessary overall capacity.
- The emphasis on value for money creates a tendency towards uninspiring generic solutions that have been “tried and tested”. Work will be necessary to create aspiring and demanding client bodies and to match them with creative and inspiring design and delivery teams who can create facilities of the highest standard. Again this is work that a high quality Client Design Advisor can assist with greatly.

There are concerns that the procurement of City Academies is failing to address sustainability issues adequately. 3Es Enterprises—a not for profit organisation which manages several Academy projects—reports that the design of some Academies has not particularly incorporated sustainable design or taken into account the benefit sustainable design would have on the long term running costs of the Academies. Some sustainable design features have been added at the request of local planning departments, but this has often been late in the design process and as a result the sustainable design features are more for “show” purposes than any real long term benefit. On the other hand, the Mossbourne Academy in Hackney has won praise for its high aspirations to create a sustainable environment and was shortlisted for the Prime Minister’s Better Public Building Award in 2005.

Delivery

It is too early to assess how well the BSF programme is working to deliver either schools or even sustainable schools. To date no LEPs have reached financial close and we await a completed school. In comparison there are now a significant number of new and extensively refurbished schools delivered via PFI and the Academies programme and the results appear very patchy—even accounting for the huge learning curve that has had to be negotiated by parties on all sides. The results have created very few exceptional schools that can be broadly emulated and no schools at secondary level that can be truly described as “sustainable”. Everyone involved in the delivery of the BSF and Academy programmes is going to have to try a great deal harder to achieve even the goals currently set.

Funding

Despite the overall large funding levels of the BSF programme the amounts per school are inevitably very tight. This in itself may lead to good and cost effective solutions that can be replicated across many projects but it causes significant problems for the development of sustainable school facilities. This is in part because the creation of sustainable schools is a new challenge which will require a degree of innovation and experimentation before success is achieved, but also because sustainable solutions are likely to require greater initial investment to reduce long term running and energy costs. Current funding arrangements are in part based on capital costs and do not adequately take into account the whole life costs of schools and their facilities. These should be reviewed and amended.

The Government needs to fully embrace the idea of the sustainable and carbon neutral school and fund separately the development and testing costs for a sufficient number of pilot schools. Such a study will follow on from the earlier programme of “exemplar designs” and should provide good and independently verified information on the design thinking, approaches and technologies used, including accurate information on costs and resource use. However, and importantly, such a study should in no way prevent other sustainable designs going ahead as part of BSF during the period of the study, indeed they should be encouraged as much as is possible. We are encouraged that DfES are working with three schools in the “One School Pathfinder” programme to develop sustainability demonstration projects, working towards achieving BREEAM “excellent”.

There have been cases of Academies where clear sustainability objectives have been set, only for the funding to be removed halfway through the design process. For example at the Langley Academy in Slough, the sponsor had hoped to make the Academy a completely sustainable building. Solar paneling, ground source heat pumps, reed beds and wind turbines etc were included in the design. Funding was then withdrawn and the sponsor is now trying to find alternative funding sources. We suggest that schools should be given firm sustainability targets at the beginning of projects with an equally firm commitment that funding will be made available.

The Learning and Skills Council published its strategy for sustainable development in November 2005. A key action is to “promote and deliver good sustainable practice in all design, new build and refurbishment activities.” While many in the FE college sector welcome the strategy and its objectives, they are conscious of obstacles in the learning and skills sector which stand between aspiration and delivery. Colleges undertaking capital investment programmes are forced to keep design costs down as they are currently expected to borrow up to 40% of their income alongside an average 10% contribution towards capital projects from the Learning and Skills Council. Those colleges which lack disposable land to invest in high quality and sustainable developments are hit particularly hard. Consequential limitations on design innovation—as well as a concentration on initial capital costs rather than whole life costs—inhibit colleges’ ability to deliver sustainable buildings. We propose that the LSC should follow the example of the HEFCE which specifically raises issues of sustainability in its post-occupancy assessments.

Stakeholder involvement

While provision for stakeholder involvement has been built into the BSF programme, measures need to be put into place to ensure that this takes place early enough in the process to ensure that it enters the briefing process before the preparation of the Outline Business Case and that it involves a wide group of stakeholders. Good planning and early involvement of the right people is key to a good participation process.

The RIBA Learning and Skills Client Forum is looking to work closely with the Learning and Skills Council to take design and sustainability issues forward through engagement through a wide set of stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The greatest concern to the RIBA is that the new generation of schools and colleges will not be so very different from current models, albeit newer and of a more reasonable size, and that they will not reach the standards already being achieved in schools overseas in terms of social, environmental, technical and academic provision.

The BSF, Academies and FE colleges programmes promise a rare opportunity to make a genuine change to our education system by providing a high quality educational, community and social environments. By aligning this with a determination to create sustainable schools and colleges that simultaneously deliver and demonstrate sustainability they will also achieve a wider and necessary good. The RIBA believes that the goal of sustainable schools and colleges, in every area of the country, is fully achievable and will be working hard along with many others to help to make it a reality.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by FSquared Ltd

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Our Involvement in BSF*

FSquared is a social and economic regeneration company with Chartered Building Consultancy status. We specialise in adding value to large scale regeneration programmes. We have been involved in a number of Building Schools for the Future programmes (BSF) where our role has centred on maximising the impact of this investment for the benefit of communities in a way that promotes social, economic and environmental sustainability.

1.2 *Our Experience*

We have experience in a wide variety of inward investment projects and PFI/PPP programmes we have developed a broad-based understanding of the mechanics of regeneration, and an innovative approach to driving maximum added value from development programmes. In our experience, successful regeneration is driven by a strong strategic vision which targets local economic drivers, sets clear aspirations for the programme, and creates space for innovative responses.

We have a track record of working with both the public and private sectors to understand the economic drivers within their locality, and support them in procuring and delivering developments which creatively respond to these. By ensuring that social and economic outcomes are delivered, our projects make the greatest possible impact on local people and their communities.

2. OUR EVIDENCE

SUSTAINABILITY

Q1. *Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?*

1.1 The BSF programme offers a real opportunity to ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially. This could either be through the use of sustainable technologies in design; promoting local procurement and supply chain development or delivering adult learning for local residents from the school sites. In any event, it will be extremely difficult to achieve measurable impacts unless procurers are guided to specify their wider sustainability objectives. So far, our experience shows that this is not always the case.

1.2 Our experience of BSF to date shows a number of examples where local authorities have stipulated high environmental sustainability ambitions within the tender. For instance, a key requirement of the Leicester BSF project is the design and development of zero/reduced carbon schools. This is aligned to the Office of Government Commerce’s Achieving Excellence Sustainability Guide. However, little thought has been given as to how this might impact on the initial pricing of Sample schemes and as to how such an approach might be adopted across the BSF portfolio.

1.3 In contrast to environmental sustainability, we have found that economic and social outcomes are not consistently built into BSF programmes as a core requirement. Based on our experience, these two elements are only addressed where the bidder generates the interest itself and commissions organisations such as us to identify and develop these opportunities. Whilst, in a commercial context, this may be regarded as one way of distinguishing between bidders, we feel that it represents a significant loss of opportunity. It would be far better, in our view, to promote an approach whereby all procurers are advised on the importance of including wider social and economic regeneration objectives as a core element of tender requirements. In this way, it would still be possible to distinguish between the offers made by individual bidders, but this would take place in the context of a fully exposed range of regeneration requirements.

1.4 In addition, the absence of properly constructed regeneration ambitions within tender documentation raises, almost inevitably, challenges in bid evaluation. In particular, it is impossible to know what, if any, weighting will be applied to those bids which include a focus on wider regeneration outcomes as a set against those bids which are silent on the matter. In our view, this represents an inconsistency between the Government’s notion of best value and the acceptance of the lowest tender price.

1.5 To illustrate this point, we have highlighted below some of the key economic and social sustainability issues and requirements that we believe should be core to BSF programmes:

Social

- Community Development—adding value to the extended schools agenda by supporting opportunities for wider community usage and development activity. This could include adult learning, pre and after school childcare, family support services, room hire for local voluntary sector groups.
- Connectivity—engaging key agency partnerships in BSF plans to promote community engagement and overall “joined up” thinking.

Economic

- Employment—the creation of employment opportunities for local people linked to construction and long term maintenance of the schools.
- Local procurement and supply development—supporting local businesses to access contracts and creating skills and training opportunities.

1.6 A more robust and deep-seated approach to embedding all three interdependent elements of sustainability should be implemented throughout the BSF programme. We have identified a number ways in which this can be achieved:

- A firm commitment to environmental, economic and social sustainability within the outline business and strategic business cases.
- The development of an outcomes, evaluation and KPI framework to measure the sustainability benefits that flow from BSF investment.
- The inclusion of sustainability criteria in prequalification questionnaires and ITN documentation.

Q2. Will schools built under BSF satisfy the Government's definition of sustainable development as being that "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"?

2.1 The framing of the question does not allow it to be easily answered. In general terms, we understand this question to principally be concerned with future proofing. In this context, there are a number of concerns.

2.2 First, regardless of the developments in the design of schools, overall price remains a significant barrier. This has particular significance in terms of viewing schools as having a role beyond the delivery of the curriculum. If schools are to serve as the major community resource of a neighbourhood, then it is essential that some scope is allowed to incorporate additional facilities and to produce flexible designs that will enable schools to respond to changing community needs and circumstances. Although there is much creative thinking around this subject, our experience of BSF to date suggests that price and current curriculum requirements will continue to dominate.

Q3. How effective are the tools currently used in BSF to secure sustainable school design, including the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)?

3.1 We have not responded to this question as it is not within our area of expertise.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

Q4. How effective is BSF at defining and responding to learners' current and future needs? What role can and do school users play in this process?

4.1 It should be stated from the outset that BSF in itself does not define learner's needs, but it is seen as a way of providing the facilities that will promote effective teaching and learning. Inevitably, the perceived learning needs of pupils are driven by the demands of the curriculum in the first instance and also by other considerations such as pastoral care requirements. BSF can serve as an effective tool to respond to the current and future needs of learners, but only in the context of the provision and management of facilities at this stage. We have seen little evidence that schools and local authorities are using the opportunity offered by BSF to rethink their teaching, learning and curriculum strategies. Rather, most schools use BSF as a way of a consolidating their existing practices and behaviours through the design of appropriate facilities.

4.2 In terms of the involvement of school users, it is important to recognise that there are several distinct constituencies. In terms of pupils engagement, we understand that most schools do make efforts to engage young people, particularly at the outset of the process. However, and by the time the formal bidding process has been reached, pupil involvement is generally not significant. There is a similar picture with regard to staff input. Almost inevitably, as the bidding process becomes more focused, the principal contributions are drawn from the head teacher, and in some cases, other senior staff. Concerning other users, or indeed potential strategic partners, we have found little evidence to suggest that they have any direct involvement, both in terms of consultation and partnering.

4.3 In our view, whilst we understand the importance and indeed the primacy of the school community, we feel that real opportunities are being missed to fully engage local people and agencies. As a result, much of this work falls to bidders to carry out, but this is often too late to affect the outcome in any significant way.

4.4 Therefore, we think that there is considerable merit in adopting a much more structured approach to the development of outline and strategic business cases. In particular, we would urge that more emphasis is placed upon the generation of wider partnership arrangements with other key strategic agencies, such as urban regeneration companies, primary care trusts, neighbourhood organisations, providers of further and higher education and sports and arts bodies.

4.5 If this were made a requirement from the outset of the BSF process, then local alliances could be put into place that would help to shape the wider outcomes that ought to be specified with in the bid documentation and bidders would have a clear understanding of their broader obligations to the localities within which the BSF project is based. This will produce the double benefit of clearly laid out objectives and existing partnership frameworks within which they can be pursued.

Q5. How effectively is BSF working with schools to develop educational and organisational change that complements the new buildings?

5.1 Although the replacement and improvement of the educational facilities should provide some impetus for change, our experience is that, in general, this opportunity is not always fully exploited. As we have said earlier, many schools regard BSF as a way of acquiring new facilities that will consolidate existing patterns of curriculum delivery and school organisation. Although it is understandable that head teachers and senior staff wish to preserve what they feel works well, there is a need to encourage a greater sense of experimentation and innovation. Without this, although the buildings themselves will be significantly better, we are likely to see present patterns of organisation continue, regardless of their effectiveness.

5.2 Having said this, there is no doubt that in some curriculum areas, such as information technology, BSF provides a genuine impetus for change. However, it is somewhat disappointing to realise that the needs of learners of other pupils are not given particular attention. This is another missed opportunity, and may result in a number of adult learners not being able to benefit from computer-based learning.

Q6. How actively does BSF foster transformation in school learning and design?

6.1 Again, the wording of the question does not easily suggest an answer. Overall, we think that the BSF process has not yet been developed sufficiently to form a coherent view. However, unless some of the issue to which we have previously alluded are addressed, the capacity of BSF to act as an agent of the transformation will be severely limited.

6.2 In terms of school design, there is some reason for optimism. Bidders are developing creative responses to a vast range of physical and organisational challenges, not to mention financial limits. However, as design requirements are ultimately driven by each school, there are limitations as to the levels of innovation that will be accepted

Q7. How successfully does BSF integrate with other policy and funding areas (such as Every Child Matters and Extended Schools) to deliver joined up solutions to educational and community needs?

7.1 In general terms, most local authorities have been reasonably efficient in connecting what might be termed as standard funding streams. However, as we have described earlier, there is insufficient attention paid to connecting BSF to other major regeneration policies and funding sources. There are significant benefits to be gained from considering these wider opportunities much earlier than is presently the case. This is not only important in terms of achieving best value, but is also essential in securing the full and active commitment of key strategic partners.

7.2 We are of the view that more needs to be done by local authorities to ensure that BSF is placed at the centre of regeneration strategies within a given area and that in so doing, many more resources could be brought to bear that will help to achieve and support the wider social and economic aspirations of the programme.

Q8. How are the strategic needs of local authorities balanced with the needs of schools communities and learners within BSF?

8.1 It is not unrealistic to expect that BSF can be flexible enough to meet the needs of local authorities, schools communities and learners. BSF was set up with high ambitions for education reform and required local authorities, from the outset of the BSF process to identify key stakeholders and develop a vision that reflects the aspirations and needs of all. However, during the course of the BSF development process, the wider needs of schools' communities and learners are at risk of being subordinated to financial considerations. This can potentially drive out added value opportunities that could not only improve education outcomes for pupils and other learners but can also put at risk the wider benefits that ought to flow from a significant capital programme.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

Q9. How well is the BSF delivery and procurement model working to deliver sustainable schools and best value, including through Partnerships for Schools and Local Education Partnerships?

9.1 In general terms, the process is not yet sufficiently advanced to be able to form a definitive view. As with all procurements, sometimes of the model of procurement works reasonably well, while on other occasions, processes are too complex and poorly administered.

9.2 Clearly, it is also not possible to form any judgment on the role of Local Education Partnerships. With regard to Partnerships for Schools, they are clearly driven by their primary task of securing significant capital investment into the secondary school estate. However, this understandable preoccupation can lead to missed opportunities and we are surprised that no strategic or structural connection has yet been drawn between BSF and other similar initiatives such as LIFT. As a result, it is likely that the benefits of synergy are not being fully exploited.

Q10. How successfully are Private Sector Providers working within the BSF framework to deliver sustainable schools and best value?

10.1 We believe it is too early to say whether the BSF programme delivers sustainable schools and Best Value, as the initiative is still in its relative infancy. However, there are emerging concerns regarding the cost of bid development and the time taken by some procurers to determine outcomes. We are sure that this point will have been made by other respondents with more than direct involvement than ourselves, so will confine our views accordingly.

Q11. *Are BSF funding levels sufficient to deliver sustainable transformation?*

11.1 There is a pressing need to fully and coherently define phrases such as sustainable transformation in order to ensure a common understanding of meaning and intent. In terms of education transformation, inevitably there will never be enough money to fund everything that is required. However, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic about the impact of BSF, particularly in terms of raising morale and aspiration. Nevertheless, there is a danger that this will be short lived unless genuine curriculum reform is placed alongside facilities improvement strategies.

11.2 In terms of the wider impact of BSF and its potential to contribute towards local regeneration agendas, the potential is enormous but has not yet been fully understood. New schools have a major part to play in reviving local economies, delivering lifelong learning and leisure and in promoting community cohesion. These objectives should not be peripheral, as they appear to be at the moment, but should be at the heart of BSF.

11.3 Measuring sustainability is something that the NHS is developing through the good corporate citizenship guide. This aims to identify the key opportunities for NHS organisations to deliver sustainability. Something similar or a framework for sustainable schools should be developed.

Q12. *Are all stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery process?*

12.1 It is essential to define what is meant by stakeholders. As we have said earlier, the school constituency, comprising staff, pupils, parents and governors will always be central to the process. Also, the role of the local authority is crucial. Beyond this, however, much more work is required to identify and engage local strategic agencies and local communities and to define the roles that they might play. A starting point might be to require local authorities and the participating schools to map their key local partnerships at the outline business case stage. This would provide the triple benefits of early engagement and discussion about role and function, the alignment of capital and revenue resources and the establishment of a context within which the bidders will be required to work.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by WWF-UK

SUMMARY OF POINTS

1. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme is the largest construction programme for schools for 50 years, involving a projected £14 billion spend over 10 years. This, though, could be a wasted opportunity as standards have been set according to short-term cost considerations rather than according to the schools' long-term maintenance costs and environmental impact.
2. Mandatory BREEAM standards have not been set at the highest possible level and this will impact on running costs.
3. Whole-life costings for the proposed new BSF schools and buildings are essential to determine what sustainable design features should be included at the outset.
4. There is a lack of joined up thinking across DfES on how BSF interacts with other policies and the sustainability agenda.
5. The first schools that are currently involved in the BSF are from the most deprived areas and hence will benefit the least over the long-term if standards are raised and better advice provided later in the BSF programme.
6. The consultation process for BSF schools needs to be much longer and broader in its scope.

INTRODUCTION

WWF-UK welcomes the Education and Skills Committee inquiry into Sustainable Schools. WWF-UK views schools as a key driver of learning for sustainability—both for the pupils and the communities which schools serve.

WWF-UK has been working with schools and teachers for more than a decade. Our approach has been to understand their needs, and to support and learn from their efforts to build sustainable schools through teaching and learning, school estate development and management, and through their links with communities—both local and around the world.

On 9 June 2006, we convened our fourth sustainable schools teachers' conference, attracting more than 240 participants from around the UK. About a third of them completed sustainable schools questionnaires. The survey results are reported in several parts of this response and full details can be found in the annex accompanying this submission (*not printed*).

WWF-UK actively supports the sustainable schools agendas at the Sustainable Development Commission and the Department for Education and Skills. We offer this response as a further demonstration of our commitment to support the development of an education system that meets the current and future needs of learners, while respecting environmental limits.

SUSTAINABILITY

Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?

It is important to note that the original aim of the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme was to improve the environmental performance of schools, not to deliver sustainable schools.

Regrettably, even the environmental performance standards are not as high as they should be, with a required BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) rating of "very good" instead of "excellent". There is some evidence to suggest that the decision to require a "very good" rating was based on what could be achieved with the budget allocated, rather than the actual cost difference between achieving a "very good" and "excellent" rating. In fact, this cost analysis has not yet been done by BRE, the developers of BREEAM for Schools. Therefore, the standards have been determined not by the environmental improvements they would deliver but by their perceived cost. As such, the BSF programme is limited in its ambition. Given that the Government is projected to spend £14 billion over the next decade, making this the most significant rebuilding scheme for schools for 50 years, a great opportunity to deliver sustainability may be missed.

The narrow purpose of the BSF has also led to a lack of joined-up thinking across the DfES, as other initiatives to improve the sustainability of schools have not been properly integrated within BSF. The DfES has developed a wide range of education initiatives that independently address the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability but cohesion of these ideas is lacking with regards to school buildings. The DfES, for example, has produced separate design guidance for extended schools, sustainable schools, and school grounds rather than one overall document.

Importantly, the BSF is being implemented before the DfES has finalised its Sustainable Schools National Framework, under which schools are to become models of sustainable development for their communities. The simple fact that this initiative is currently under public consultation (the closing date is 31 August 2006) precludes it from informing the BSF programme at present and, hence, from impacting on the sustainable designs of schools currently engaged in the process.

Furthermore, WWF is concerned that a whole-life costing approach has not been adopted for the BSF. While sustainable building design features, such as passive solar design, higher energy efficiency and micro-generation, may add to the upfront design and construction costs of a building, in the long-term they provide energy savings over the lifetime of the building. Therefore, by not integrating the lifetime maintenance costs of running the new buildings into the design decisions (whole-life costing), false economies are likely to be made.

Will schools built under BSF satisfy the Government's definition of sustainable development as being that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?

The extent to which schools built under the BSF programme will go far enough to contribute to the Government's carbon emissions reduction targets and aspirations is questionable, primarily as the BREEAM standards were not decided upon on the basis on their environmental impact. Indeed, the analysis required to determine how the new BREEAM standards will affect the environmental performance of each school has not yet been undertaken, so vital information is lacking on what the environmental impact of the new buildings will be.

In addition, there is some question as to the life expectancy of these buildings. Some sources suggest that these buildings are planned to be obsolete in as little as 25 years. WWF's has conducted research into both demolition waste and new building materials (that includes the total energy and emissions involved) which reveals their true ecological footprint. WWF, therefore, is concerned that if the new BSF buildings are not built and designed to last well into the 21st century, then their replacement in 25 years time will unnecessarily require further environmental resources.

How effective are the tools currently used in BSF to secure sustainable school design, including the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)?

The "tools" that WWF-UK is aware of, and which relate to sustainable school design, are limited to BREEAM for Schools and the yet-to-be-published Sustainable Schools design guidance. In the case of BREEAM for Schools, WWF maintains that if sustainable schools are the aspiration, then a rating of "excellent" is a basic requirement.

Our survey of teachers found that 70% or more ranked the following BREEAM criteria as "important" or "most important":

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- consultation with the school community;
 - natural and energy efficient lighting;
 - energy use;
 - water use;
 - safe pedestrian routes;
 - use of low environmental impact materials;
 - energy efficient windows;
 - on-site recycling; and
 - school grounds that support biodiversity.

While an “excellent” rating does not constitute a perfectly sustainable building (ie a carbon neutral building) it does mean schools are closer to meeting currently accepted sustainability criteria.

The Sustainable Schools design guidance will likely amount to “too little, too late”. This publication is still not available and design and construction of the first waves of BSF schools are already underway. Ultimately, it is only guidance (unlike the mandatory BREEAM standards) and, consequently, individual schools will need sufficient capacity to properly understand the necessity and implications of this guidance to make it a success. Otherwise, the guidance will not achieve its goal.

A further implication of this delayed product, and the current “very good” BREEAM rating requirement, is that the very first waves of BSF schools, those operating in the most deprived areas of the country, are likely to suffer from the programme’s “teething problems”. These schools, which will have high demands on operating budgets, are being designed and built without the potential benefits of the cost savings that could be realised through higher environmental standards, ie stricter energy efficiency standards.

To be most effective, these first waves of schools need to aspire to the higher BREEAM rating, and appropriate funding needs to be provided to kick-start the BSF programme. The experience in other parts of the world is that this investment, at the front end of a long-term building programme, reduces costs of buildings built at the end of the programme, and provides industry incentives that “normalise” these new designs and construction methods. Ultimately, the first schools to use BSF may not benefit in the long run as much as others later on and this should be addressed.

Finally, without the research into how the mandatory standards and guidance will improve the environmental performance of individual schools (which has as yet to be conducted on the “very good” BREEAM rating), there is no baseline data with which a future assessment can be made on the effectiveness of these tools.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

How effective is BSF at defining and responding to learners’ current and future needs? What role can and do school users play in this process?

BSF currently places emphasis on inspirational design, creating Information & Communication Technology (ICT) rich learning environments, and inclusion as learning needs. While these certainly contribute to the learning experience, they do not arise from an understanding of learners’ current or future learning needs regarding sustainability.

In addition, it is unlikely that the same types of learning that currently are contributing to unsustainability will foster the understanding and behavioural changes that are fundamental to sustainability. In this regard, WWF-UK recommends that the Government undertakes an inquiry into the current and future needs of learners with regards to sustainability. The views of teachers and staff would be an important component to this inquiry.

Our survey of 70 teachers on sustainability issues found that 92% of respondents considered including sustainability within the BSF new buildings and refurbishments to be “very important”. A further 7% considered this to “quite important”. 96% stated that a sustainable building was important for the teaching and learning of sustainability. The survey also found that the top three benefits of a sustainable school for teaching would be (a) the school building provides an example of sustainability; (b) the building offers opportunities for pupils to monitor its performance; and (c) the building offers opportunities for students to design and test sustainable solutions.

The BSF buildings, therefore, need to be designed to be as flexible as possible in order to enhance their future relevance to learning and ultimately to extend their lifespan. Furthermore, integrated sustainable features in the new BSF schools would benefit the teaching of sustainability in the classroom which is strongly supported by teachers.

How effectively is BSF working with schools to develop educational and organisational change that complements the new buildings?

The BSF programme should be responding to and not leading educational and organisational change. When it comes to sustainability there are questions about what kinds of educational and organisational change are most appropriate. At present, the dominant educational and organisational models within DfES are not focused on sustainability.

The current focus on standards, inclusion and extended school services, for example, does not recognise complimentary connections with the Sustainable Schools National Framework. This will inevitably lead to missed opportunities, namely school buildings which could have joined up these agendas for the benefit of learners, the community and the environment.

How successfully does BSF integrate with other policy and funding areas (such as Every Child Matters and Extended Schools) to deliver joined up solutions to educational and community needs?

Without proper whole-life costings (which includes maintenance costs) to inform the design of the new schools and refurbished buildings, the BSF is in danger of missing a great opportunity to meet the increased future policy demands on school buildings.

There is probably no greater incentive to achieve the highest possible levels of resource use efficiency than the emerging Extended Schools agenda. Schools that offer wrap-around child care, after school, weekend and holiday period services will extend their open hours by as much as 70%. As much of this will be at night and during times of day with lower air temperatures, the use of heating, water and artificial lighting will increase dramatically. Similarly, the schools CO₂ emissions, supply use and waste production will also increase. A school designed to meet the highest sustainable schools standards will be better prepared to extend their school services while minimising running costs.

As mentioned, the BREEAM standards are not set at the highest possible level and the Sustainable Schools design guidance will only be voluntary. At the very least, schools need to be made aware of the extra demands on their resources that other policies will entail and how the BSF could alleviate some of this financial burden through the highest environmental and efficiency standards.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

Are BSF funding levels sufficient to deliver sustainable transformation?

The transformation of schools from unsustainable to sustainable is more than just a matter of capital funding. Whole-life costs must be at the centre of any funding initiative. It is well documented that what appears as a cost savings at the design and construction stage may have added operating costs. Invest to save strategies have been used in other areas of government funding and a similar approach is needed here.

Furthermore, it is likely that the funding levels are not sufficient for schools to include the highest BREEAM features that will best support their pupils' learning needs. Instead, school designs are engineered to achieve the required BREEAM rating at the lowest cost. In the end, this will prove to be a false economy as schools are forced to "bolt on" sustainability design features at a greater expense in the post-construction phase.

In addition, once the building has been constructed it will be impossible to implement many cost minimising options such as passive design (ie the positioning of windows to maximise incoming sunlight), hence an opportunity will have passed.

Are all stakeholders engaged in the planning and delivery process?

WWF is aware that BSF has a requirement for stakeholder involvement, but we believe that this is insufficient in both scope and length. Currently, the design consultation phase lasts six weeks. Importantly, 66% of respondents to our survey called for the consultation period to be extended to cover the life of the project.

There are levels of stakeholder involvement that range from manipulation—where the aim of the design consultation is to achieve stakeholder support by public relations—to participant control. We believe that the latter end of this spectrum represents the level of stakeholder engagement required for the delivery and successful subsequent management of a sustainable school. Our survey of teachers found that 42.3% believed that teachers should be involved in the process and 39.4% said pupils should have an input. In addition, 35.2% said the local community should be involved.

Fundamental to stakeholders participating in the planning and delivery process is building their capacity to participate effectively. There are two points to make here regarding sustainable schools. First, design professionals generally assume that schools stakeholders do not have the capacity to engage in sustainable school design processes. Second, in many schools communities there are keen individuals, who have the capacity and motivation to engage in sustainable school design processes.

BSF must work harder to build stakeholders' capacity to participate, where necessary, and must also recognise and engage those individuals who already have the capacity to participate. This participation must be over the length of the project, not limited to tokenistic input during the pre-design phase. BSF should also be held to account and required to demonstrate that they have taken action based on stakeholder involvement.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Business Services Association (BSA)

INTRODUCTION

The Business Services Association (BSA) is a policy group for major companies providing outsourced services to companies, public bodies, local authorities and government departments and agencies. The combined annual turnover in the United Kingdom of its 19 member companies is around £16 billion. Member companies employ directly and indirectly more than 600,000 people.

BSA welcomes the opportunity to respond to this inquiry, which touches on issues of great concern to the private sector. BSA recognises that the BSF programme has not been without its troubles. Nevertheless the programme provides an exciting opportunity to rejuvenate secondary school education facilities and make an effective contribution to raising the standards of education across the nation. Many BSA members are heavily involved in the programme and one of our members, VT Group, was named in April as being the first preferred bidder for the "pathfinder" wave.

SUMMARY

Three main areas need to be addressed to ensure that the programme is, and remains, sustainable in its approach. First, the cost of incorporating sustainable features needs to be an integral part of the budgeting and bidding stage. The equation in this area is quite simple; if more money is allocated for sustainable design features, then more sustainable design features will be part of the design.

Second, there needs to be a greater awareness of the role that well funded and effective facilities management can provide in maintaining and furthering the sustainability of a school. This is linked to the first point and consideration needs to be given to this factor during the procurement of facilities management. This has been referred to in recent years as "The Performance Gap"; the gap between sustainable design intent and the operational performance of the facilities being maintained. The programme needs to ensure that there is not a "financial divergence" between capital and revenue budgets.

Third, BSF needs to integrate facilities management more closely into the whole process of the construction of schools. The programme should move away from the traditional scenario of a school being built and then simply handed over to a facilities management contractor. Instead local authorities should provide a brief to architects and construction groups that has sustainable facilities management in mind. Increased involvement would also mean better consideration of the impact of crucial design upon long term maintenance and an additional level of understanding of how the building was designed to work.

In the remainder of this paper, we will deal in detail with those aspects of the inquiry document which are of particular concern to our members as providers of facilities services.

BSA RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED IN THE INQUIRY

Sustainability

1. BSF provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that schools are sustainable environmentally, economically and socially so long as these factors are incorporated into the process behind the programme. This means that the need for the allocation of sufficient funding for these areas has to be understood and made explicit in the bid process on both sides—both public and private sector. Sustainability can be delivered by the programme but there needs to be sufficient attention to the additional cost that will be incurred.

2. *Building Bulletin 98* provides the framework for secondary school projects, such as those involved in the BSF programme. That Bulletin states:

"The [design] brief should specify sustainable and environmental design such that a BREEAM rating of good, very good or excellent is achieved. The choice will have cost implications, both in the short and long term, so the rating set in the brief should be considered carefully".

This is crucial. Because of the BREEAM standard BSF will ensure that schools are sustainable but, as the quote above states, it is necessary to incorporate the cost of delivering that standard to ensure this. This is also the case with the requirement for BSF to satisfy the Government's definition of sustainable development.

3. BSA believes that in order to ensure that the BSF programme is truly sustainable then certain key issues must be addressed. The affordability of sustainable design must be taken into account when budgeting is considered. Using certain materials and designing schools in a specific manner in order to achieve the most sustainable design possible may result in higher costs. If these costs are not factored into the bid process then sustainability will not ultimately be seen as an important factor in the design of the school. Cost constraints will reduce the incentive to use more sustainable (and therefore expensive) materials and lead to a greater inclination to use cheaper (and therefore less sustainable) materials. It is therefore essential that the requirements for sustainable design should be taken into account during the development of the building specification in order to ensure both affordability and the integration of those requirements within the project as a whole.

Equally important is the need to factor in the life cycle costs of maintaining a sustainable building to ensure that that level of sustainability is maintained throughout its life span. There is a need to ensure that the “Performance Gap” between buildings constructed to a high sustainable standard and the performance of facilities to maintain that standard is narrowed. Life cycle costs and facilities management practice need to be included from the very first stage when the initial brief is produced, through the design phase involving architects and the construction phase involving builders. This will ensure that the schools built can be maintained to a high sustainable standard in a practical manner. Effective facilities management is therefore vital in order to achieve the greatest level of sustainability possible—the greater the level of funding for that facilities management, the greater the likelihood that a higher level of sustainability is achieved.

Future learning needs

4. BSA believes that an overall judgement over how effective BSF has been in addressing future learning needs should be reserved until the process is fully under way. At present, the most advanced wave (wave 1/ Pathfinders) of local authorities has only reached the Preferred Bidder Stage.

5. The process up until this point has reflected to some degree the educational and organisational change that complements the new buildings. Each local authority is required to produce an “Educational Vision” which describes how the LA will integrate the design of new schools built under BSF with the development of new learning arrangements. In recent consultations with BSA, Partnerships for Schools highlighted how, in order for each BSF project to progress, it was necessary for the LA to show that the Educational Vision was a driving force that stimulated a culture change in the school learning environment.

6. Future regulations will increase the emphasis on Educational Vision in the procurement process in order to ensure that the delivery of school buildings is more than simply a “bricks and mortar” process. BSA welcomes these proposals and recognises the need for some legal compulsion in this area. In the experience of BSA members, LAs still view BSF projects as simply building projects rather than something beyond that, thus stifling the scope for the development of an Educational Vision.

This is part of the wider problem of needing to break down attitudinal barriers between the public and private sectors which are based on misconceptions. Those barriers prevent the public sector from fully understanding the benefits that the LEP model (with the private sector) can bring and the potential that it has to deliver not only “bricks and mortar” but also an Educational Vision throughout the duration of a contract. If sustainability is to be at the heart of that Vision, then the necessary funding needs to be available to ensure that the Vision is maintained through the means described above.

Delivery and Funding

7. With the most advanced stage of the BSF programme only now reaching the Preferred Bidder Stage, BSA believes that judgement over the delivery of the programme should be reserved until a later stage.

8. In terms of potential, BSF and the LEP procurement model provide an excellent means of delivering sustainable schools through the partnership of the public and private sectors over a long period of time. That partnership means that sustainable development can be delivered not only through design and specification in the initial stages (provided adequate funding is allocated) but also through the contribution that effective facilities management can make to the upkeep and therefore the life cycles of the buildings involved. Once again, BSA would like to highlight how essential it is for adequate costing to be factored into bids in order for sustainable development targets to be achieved. The role of whole life costing is essential to sustainability in terms of ensuring that high quality facilities management services can be provided to maintain the original state of the school buildings over the course of a lengthy period of time.

The aim of the LEP is to connect businesses with local authorities in order to provide better solutions for the provision of schools. It is an effective mechanism for doing so and evidence suggests that the strength of this relationship is breaking down misconceptions between the public and private sectors as a result. It is key to continued private sector involvement in the programme that the LEP remains commercially viable and an attractive business proposition. However, the LEP’s failure to reflect a level of proportionality with regard to the number of schools that it provides for gives cause to some concern. Regardless of the number of schools involved, a set bureaucratic cost is involved, so that in order to ensure best value for money is achieved a greater number of schools per LEP is preferable.

9. BSA believes that private sector providers are doing all they can to ensure, within the BSF framework, that sustainability and best value is delivered to the fullest extent. The best means of ensuring this is through factoring the cost of building a sustainable school into the bid process, along with sufficient expenditure on facilities management to maintain a further level of sustainability. BSA members have highlighted on a frequent basis that in order for sustainability targets and standards to be achieved and maintained both the private sector and the public sector need to be aware of this throughout the bid process.

10. The BREEAM standard specified in *Building Bulletin 98*, requiring BSF schools to be constructed to a certain sustainable standard, means that some degree of sustainable transformation must be integral to the design of schools. Whilst BSF funding levels are adequate to deliver the required level of transformation, increased provision for sustainable design and a greater allocation of funding in this area would allow a still greater degree of sustainability to be achieved. The importance of adequate funding for the provision of service delivery should also be recognised. The principle remains the same for facilities management as it does for the building and specification of a project in the first place; if more money is provided for more effective facilities management, particularly at a “hard FM” level, then the contribution to sustainability through the resultant life span of the building is obvious. In the same way that it is imperative that sustainable design is factored into the project specification as early as possible, so too the funding costs of enhanced facilities management should be recognised at this stage.

In summary, the BSA welcomes the steps which have already been taken within the BSF programme towards promoting the recognition of sustainability issues and their contribution to an improved educational environment. As we have highlighted in this response, the role of the long-term FM service providers will be central to the success of this initiative and it is crucial that this is recognised from the earliest stages of procurement. Sustainable design, high quality services and adequate long-term funding will be the keys to success.

BSA and its members are already working with Government to achieve these aims. The association would welcome the opportunity for further involvement in this important area and is happy to provide further evidence, whether written or oral, to supplement this initial statement if required.

June 2006

**Memorandum submitted by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
(NASUWT)**

1. NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Parliamentary Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into Sustainable Schools including the Building Schools for the Future Programme and the Academies building programme.

2. NASUWT is the largest union representing teachers and head teachers throughout the UK.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. NASUWT welcomes acknowledgement by the Government of the need to upgrade school building stock in England, and a commitment to deliver this through long-term funding.

4. NASUWT recognises the ambition of the DfES to rebuild or renew England's 3,500 state secondary schools. The Union also welcomes the recognition that there is a need to have local debate and discussion about how these initiatives will be introduced and where funding will be targeted. It is the view of NASUWT that there is clearly a need for the involvement of school workforce trade unions in this process.

5. NASUWT believes that school buildings and facilities should support and meet the educational needs of all pupils. Buildings that are well designed will have a positive impact on teaching and learning, which contributes to the raising of educational standards and lifts the morale of teachers and pupils.

6. NASUWT notes that the programmes the Committee is investigating are very new. Many of the BSF projects are still in the early stages of procurement. The Union has commissioned a report by Catalyst and Public World concerning Academies, which is due to be published in July 2006. NASUWT will submit this report to the Committee once it becomes available. However, it is difficult to assess conclusively whether the PFI funding mechanism and the BSF and Academy building programmes are meeting their objectives at this point in time. NASUWT awaits with interest the findings of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) five-year evaluation of the Academies initiative in this regard.

7. NASUWT agrees with the findings of the Education and Skills Committee's Fifth Report that “the Government could have limited the number of Academies to 30 or 50 and carried out an assessment of their effectiveness before expanding the programme so significantly”. The Union also welcomes the Government's desire to invest resources in areas of educational underachievement, and agrees with the findings of the Education and Skills Committee's Fifth Report that the rapid expansion of the Academy policy comes at the expense of rigorous evaluation.

8. NASUWT has already received an initial presentation from the architect leading the “Building Schools for the Future” programme and there are undoubtedly some impressive schemes being considered. NASUWT’s major concern about this programme is the heavy reliance on private finance (PFI).

9. In the NASUWT report to Annual Conference 2006, *The Private Sector and State Education*, the Union reiterates its commitment to maintain the public service ethos and to protect the interests of members, which must be NASUWT’s overriding priority. In this report the Union applied the following tests to provision and strategies which involve the private sector:

- (i) *Pay and other conditions of service*—does private sector involvement compromise in any way the national pay and conditions of teachers?
- (ii) *Equality of opportunity*—does private sector involvement adversely affect equality in the workplace, lead to discriminatory effects or undermine wider social cohesion?
- (iii) *Union recognition*—does private sector involvement result in problems for trade unions in terms of recognition and legitimate access in support of members?
- (iv) *Democratic accountability*—does private sector involvement prohibit democratic participation and undermine or remove accountability?
- (v) *Value for public money*—does private sector involvement lead to increased burdens on, and risks for, the public purse in the short, medium or long term?
- (vi) *Raising standards of education*—does private sector involvement result in better standards of educational provision?

10. NASUWT recognises that issues relating to the involvement of private sector companies in education are complex. The Union’s six tests provide a critical framework for interrogating the nature and impact of private sector companies’ involvement in state education and in determining whether such involvement constitutes privatisation.

11. *The Private Sector and State Education* report concludes that in a number of instances the involvement of private companies has led to detrimental outcomes for schools, the workforce, pupils and local communities. For example, where an Academy directly replaces an existing school, the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations apply to those employees who transfer over. However, since Academies are not bound by national agreements on pay and working conditions, a two-tier workforce is created where the Academy does not agree to apply these agreements, which in the view of the Union will undoubtedly create tensions amongst staff, resulting in low morale amongst the school workforce and inferior working conditions. Parity of pay and conditions of service must be established in law for teachers in Academies with their colleagues in state schools to remedy this situation.

12. The Union will continue its campaign to highlight the impact the PFI funding methodology has on school budgets and asset management. NASUWT will apply the Union’s six tests to all current and new initiatives and oppose those which fail to meet them.

13. Specific comments relating to the questions asked by the Committee’s inquiry follow the chapters as outlined in the inquiry document.

NASUWT recommends that:

- current BSF guidance from the DfES should be amended to explicitly include an obligation to consult with the recognised school workforce trade unions within the local area on all BSF and Academy building projects;
- the Union’s six tests, which provide a critical framework for interrogating the nature and impact of private sector companies’ involvement in state education and in determining whether such involvement constitutes privatisation, are adapted by the Committee in assessing the success of PFI mechanisms and BSF builds;
- parity of pay and conditions of service be established in law for teachers in Academies with their colleagues in state schools; and
- no new Academy builds and BSF projects are undertaken until detailed analysis is available from the PricewaterhouseCooper five-year study of whether PFI is delivering on public sector PFI procurement within the BSF and Academies building projects.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

SUSTAINABILITY

Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable environmentally, economically and socially?

14. Having considered the opinions of members, as well as reports by PwC, the Treasury and others, NASUWT has concerns about the ability of the BSF programme, as it is currently configured, to ensure that schools are sustainable environmentally, economically and socially. In particular, NASUWT notes that the Treasury’s March 2006 report, *PFI: strengthening long-term partnerships* concluded that PFI is not delivering value for money in all areas and needs to be improved in this and in allowing greater flexibilities

to be built into contracts to undertake necessary variations that allow schools to adapt to evolving educational needs, thus casting doubt on the ability of PFI-led BSF projects to deliver economically sustainable schools.

15. NASUWT believes that the Government has a vital role to play in ensuring that schools are sustainable by creating a regulatory framework for contracts for new build and refurbishment of school buildings within the programme.

Will schools built under BSF satisfy the Government's definition of sustainable development as being that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?

16. NASUWT welcomes the recognition that good, sustainable design is an important factor in ensuring schools meet the needs of the school and local community. Because the BSF programme is still in its early stages, it is not yet possible to assess whether BSF will meet the sustainable development targets. However, the Union has concerns about whether other PFI-led projects in schools and Academies have delivered in terms of facilitating constructive learning environments that meet both the current and future educational needs of all pupils. For example, concerns have been raised about Academy buildings and whether they are suitable learning environments to replace existing schools. In the case of Unity Academy in Middlesbrough, no staff room was included in the original build and other design defects were also identified. Further, NASUWT members continue to highlight cases where schools have incurred additional costs as a result of the need to renegotiate contracts with private sector parties in order to fulfil commitments to *Every Child Matters* and extended schools as well as legal commitments.

How effective are the tools currently used in BSF to secure sustainable school design, including the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)?

17. NASUWT welcomes the commitment to creating environmentally sustainable buildings and believes that the Government can play a very important role in leading the way in the creation of a more environmentally sustainable learning environment.

18. In 2004, the European Commission published a helpful handbook on environmental public procurement entitled "Buying Green". The guidance is designed to assist public bodies launch green purchasing policies whilst acting within the confines and requirements of EU procurement law. The handbook suggests simple and effective approaches to be adopted as standard in procurement and contains examples of green purchasing by public bodies across the EU. NASUWT recommends that the "Buying Green" handbook is distributed to all BSF and Academy building project groups to assist them in creating environmentally sustainable buildings.

19. NASUWT welcomes the requirements set out in the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method. It is important to ensure that all developments are monitored and evaluated throughout the procurement, planning, construction and commissioning phases, as well as during the lifetime use of the buildings to ensure that compliance with the BREEAM requirements is met.

NASUWT recommends that:

- the European Commission "Buying Green" handbook is distributed to all BSF and Academy building project groups to assist them in creating environmentally sustainable buildings;
- an analysis is undertaken of whether the BSF and Academies building programmes have delivered good, sustainable designs that facilitate constructive learning environments that meet the educational needs of all pupils in secondary schools and Academies; and
- a programme of monitoring and evaluation is put in place to ensure that the BREEAM requirements are met throughout the lifetime of school buildings.

FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS

20. The effectiveness of BSF in defining and responding to learners' current and future needs, developing educational and organisational change that complements new buildings, transforming school learning and design, integrating with other policy and funding areas and producing a balance between the strategic needs of local authorities and the needs of schools, communities and learners is a matter for future determination, since the Union believes that the programme is not sufficiently advanced to allow conclusions to be drawn.

21. NASUWT welcomes the duties which were imposed on schools and local authorities under the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), to ensure the accessibility of buildings for pupils, staff, parents and other visitors. NASUWT believes that these duties should apply, even within schools where there are no, or few, pupils or staff with disabilities.

22. The preparation of plans relating to the sufficiency and suitability of school buildings, as reflected in the production of such documents as the Education Development Plans and the Asset Management Plans, provides a mechanism for assuring disability access to meet future learning needs. NASUWT believes that

local authorities have a particularly vital role to play in the conduct of accessibility audits. The Union regards it as imperative that the contribution of local authorities must be extended to include co-ordination of accessibility audits across all provisions, including Academies, to safeguard against the emergence of a two-tier system.

23. The Union believes that much of the success of the planning duty will rest on the capacity of schools to deliver the changes needed. This is not simply a question of financial resources, although the Union believes that this is an area which requires review. The question of staff time is also critical. NASUWT does not believe that it should be regarded as part of the teacher's or head teacher's job to undertake accessibility audits and evaluations. Neither should the content of such audits across the education estate be left to the differential interpretations applied by individual schools. The conduct of high-quality accessibility audits requires the recruitment of specialist personnel at the local authority level.

24. The Government is rightly committed to an inclusive education system. Given this, BSF programmes should include an explicit requirement for all new build and refurbishment projects to demonstrate how the needs of pupils with SEN and disabilities will be met. This should be supported by clear criteria for judging how effectively this is addressed in contract specifications, invitations to tender, the awarding of contracts, the monitoring, managing and enforcing of contracts, and so on.

25. There is also the issue of design of extended schools and whether they are fit for purpose for teaching and learning. NASUWT believes that the Government's extended schools agenda will provide opportunities for public bodies to work jointly on the delivery of effective and accessible services for disabled service users. For example, schools and local authorities are able to undertake collaborative work with local social services to provide support to disabled employees and service users. However, NASUWT regards it as essential that the appropriate trade unions are consulted on any proposals to undertake joint working in this area.

26. NASUWT believes that extended schools have the potential to play a positive role in enhancing the provision of children's services in local communities, especially where there is evidence of poverty and social exclusion. The Union welcomes the Government's commitment that extended schools will not mean extended hours for teachers and head teachers. However, NASUWT is wary about the co-location of services alongside education detracting from the core function of the school building as an educational establishment. The Union believes that the Government's policy on extended schools will lead to a deterioration of the working environment as a result of the extended use of the school accommodation, and that this should be taken into account in all BSF projects concerning extended schools.

NASUWT recommends that:

- the Government requires public bodies to include employment function activities within equality impact assessments of its services;
- DfES guidance on the BSF building programmes should include an explicit requirement for all educational building and refurbishment projects to identify how the needs of pupils with SEN and disabilities will be met;
- the Government should earmark adequate and appropriate funding for the recruitment of specialist personnel at the local authority level to undertake access audits and to prepare and review accessibility plans on behalf of individual schools and Academies;
- the content of such audits across the education estate should not be left to the differential interpretations applied by individual schools;
- relevant trade unions are consulted on any proposals to undertake joint working on the delivery of effective and accessible services for disabled service users; and
- in all BSF projects concerning extended schools, the additional deterioration of the working environment due to the extended use of the school accommodation should be taken into account and factored into costs.

DELIVERY AND FUNDING

How well is the BSF delivery and procurement model working to deliver sustainable schools and best value, including through Partnerships for Schools and Local Education Partnerships?

27. There has been a long period of underinvestment in school buildings which has resulted in a degenerated school building stock leading to a need to repair and rebuild schools. Options for funding these repairs are often limited.

28. Local authorities in England can use devolved capital formula, modernisation funding, the targeted capital fund or, for secondary or all-age schools, Building Schools for the Future if they are successful in bidding into the initiative. Other options include applying for national grants such as the national lottery, seeking specialist school status, becoming an Academy or a voluntary aided school. The Government's solution has been to use the private sector to carry out improvements quickly and cheaply. NASUWT believes that there is too much reliance on PFI as a funding mechanism and not enough evidence to suggest it delivers value for money in the long run.

29. Local authorities have engaged with PFI and PPP in some cases with enthusiasm. Other local authorities have felt pressurised to use PFI and PPP in order to improve and modernise public buildings because they have felt that this was the only way to unlock access to further funding. PFI schemes involve a private sector consortium signing a contract with the LA to design, build, finance and operate school buildings. The PFI provider may also provide facility management as part of the contract. Local authorities then pay a monthly charge to use the buildings subject to the terms of the contract. PFI contracts typically last for 25–35 years. At the end of the contract, control of the buildings would normally revert back to the LA. However, as noted in the Treasury’s March 2006 report, *PFI: strengthening long-term partnerships*, public sector managers consider there to be too little flexibility within many of these contracts to allow schools to make minor variations to adapt to changing public sector priorities and evolving educational requirements.

30. Although the BSF project is in its infancy, it is clear that questions need to be raised as to whether the current PFI funding methodology adopted by the Government in the BSF project is delivering value for money. NASUWT shares the concerns the Audit Commission has raised about whether PFI is delivering best value and agrees that there is a need to make changes to the procurement process to resolve these concerns.

How successfully are private sector providers working within the BSF framework to deliver sustainable schools and best value?

31. NASUWT shares concerns raised in the Audit Commission’s 2003 report concerning whether BSF and Academy building projects represent best value for money. In particular, NASUWT shares concerns mirrored in the Treasury’s 2006 report about the inflexibility and cost associated with negotiating changes to contracts within these schemes. It has become clear that guidance needs to be issued to local authorities on how to negotiate contracts which include the potential to negotiate variations.

32. Concerns were also raised in the Treasury and Audit Commission reports about the quality of the current builds and whether they represent best value for money or indeed meet the needs of schools. In the Treasury’s March 2006 report, *PFI: strengthening long-term partnerships*, research commissioned by the Treasury reported that 20% of users of PFI projects were satisfied by the services delivered only half the time. The Audit Commission’s 2003 report includes the findings of experienced construction professionals from BRE, who assessed schools against five “design quality matches” specific to school buildings. The Union is alarmed that BRE found the quality of the PFI sample of schools was significantly worse than that of the traditionally funded sample schools. NASUWT calls upon the Government to address these concerns through consultation with social partners.

33. NASUWT agrees with the finding of the Audit Commission’s 2003 report into PFI in schools that PFI has yet to come of age and prove its potential for improving value for money and providing better schools. Consistent with the Government’s current moves to free up local decision making from central control, the Union agrees that there is a strong case for changing capital funding incentives to enable options other than PFI to be pursued equally advantageously. This would open up the PFI mechanism itself to competition. Further hard work is needed to ensure that new schools meet the Prime Minister’s call for a lasting legacy of fine civic buildings that play their part in improving educational attainment.

34. NASUWT is concerned that the Audit Commission’s report found that by the end of 2001 PFI had not yet delivered some of the most important benefits expected of it, and that the Treasury’s 2006 report noted that “the Government’s view is that the evidence on satisfaction with soft services does not demonstrate value for money as consistently as other elements of the framework”. For example, the early PFI schools identified in the Commission’s sample were found not to be better designed, and were not achieving efficiency savings in terms of the cost and quality of facilities management services.

35. NASUWT is alarmed that the Treasury’s March 2006 report, *PFI: strengthening long-term partnerships*, shows that PFI is not delivering value for money in all areas and needs to be improved in this and in allowing greater flexibilities to be built into contracts to undertake necessary variations that allow schools to adapt to evolving educational needs. In this report, research commissioned by the Treasury reported that the approvals process within PFI for large variations to contracts can be complex and 45% of public sector respondents regarded the PFI payment mechanism as quite difficult or very difficult to use. Additionally, 45% of users of PFI found the flexibilities within the PFI service delivery mechanism to be less flexible than with non-PFI arrangements. Clearly, these are areas where PFI needs to be improved.

36. NASUWT questions the Government’s obsession with PFI for the reasons cited above. NASUWT demands the end of ill-advised schemes that threaten the future of the national education service.

Are BSF funding levels sufficient to deliver sustainable transformation?

37. The Union can make no comment on this at the present time. NASUWT awaits with interest the outcomes of project reviews which will inform the Union’s view as to whether BSF funding levels are sufficient to deliver sustainable transformation.

Are all stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery process?

38. At present, there is no specific obligation to consult with the recognised school workforce trade unions. NASUWT believes that it is important that trade unions are made aware of any proposals at the earliest possible stage to ensure they are fully involved in the consultation process. The Union therefore seeks assurances that DfES BSF guidance will be amended to explicitly include an obligation to consult with the recognised school workforce trade unions within the local area on all BSF and Academy building projects.

NASUWT recommends that:

- guidance be issued to local authorities on how to negotiate contracts which include the potential to negotiate variations;
- the regulations should contain specific reference to consultation with the recognised school workforce trade unions as part of the process of establishing new schools and Academies; and
- the social partnership model of working act as a template for working with school workforce trade unions.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Association of Colleges (AoC)

INTRODUCTION

AoC (Association of Colleges) is the representative body for colleges of further education, including general FE colleges, sixth form colleges and specialist colleges in England, Wales (through our association with fforwm) and Northern Ireland (through our association with ANIC). AoC was established in 1996 by the colleges themselves to provide a voice for further education at national and regional levels. Some 98% of the 425 general FE colleges, sixth form colleges and specialist colleges in the three countries are in membership. These colleges are the largest providers of post-16 general and vocational education and training in the UK. They serve over 4 million of the 6 million learners participating in post-statutory education and training, offering lifelong learning opportunities for school leavers and adults over a vast range of academic and vocational qualifications. Levels of study range from the basic skills needed to remedy disadvantage, through to professional qualifications and higher education degrees. In 2003, Ofsted reported that over 90% of lessons were satisfactory or better and the LSC's Learner Satisfaction Survey showed that 94% of learners were at least satisfied with their teaching experience at college.

The key role played by the sector and its 250,000 staff in raising the level of skills and competitiveness of the nation's workforce make colleges central to the Government's national and regional agenda for economic prosperity and social inclusion. AoC services to member college corporations include information, professional development and support in all aspects of institutional management, governance, curriculum development, quality, employment, business development and funding. AoC also works in close partnership with the Government and all other key national and regional agencies to assist policy development, continuously to improve quality and to secure the best possible provision for post-16 education and training.

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. The Association of Colleges welcomes the opportunity to comment on school and college capital funding. We are pleased that the Select Committee has recognised the importance of the subject. Although the title of the request for evidence is "sustainable schools", we understand that the inquiry will cover colleges and have provided evidence on that basis.

AoC would like to draw particular attention to the following issues:

- The successes of the FE capital programme.
- The opportunities over the next decade.
- Specific problems that need to be overcome.
- Issues arising out of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

SECTION ONE

The successes of the FE capital programme

2. Colleges run their courses from more than 5,000 buildings and learning centres across England; their main buildings with large industry-standard facilities are major community assets. Smaller learning centres in remote locations are often one of the few accessible public services for over-16 learners. The college estate

is a genuine asset to the nation. Over the years, the Government has been able to launch initiatives like Skills for Life and the 14–19 curriculum reforms confident in the existence of facilities across the country which could support expansion.

3. Over the last 13 years, colleges have transformed their buildings to make them fit for the 21st century. When colleges were incorporated in 1993, the state of their buildings was far from adequate. A national survey commissioned by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) from Hunter and Partners reported that a significant part of the college estate was unsuitable, that 20% of college buildings were unsafe and that available space was poorly used. The report costed necessary improvements at £800 million. The FEFC kick-started a capital programme that has been carried forward by college governors and managers in the years that followed. The achievements of this programme have been:

- the modernisation or renewal of more than 50% of college buildings, which started in the early years with the correction of health and safety issues;
- a 15% reduction in the space used by colleges at a time when full-time student numbers have increased;
- work to make college buildings accessible to those with disabilities;
- the wholesale redevelopment of many colleges, for example Liverpool Community College, City & Islington College, Bilborough College in Nottingham, New College Swindon and South Devon College;
- the construction of landmark buildings like South East Essex College in Southend and Matthew Boulton College in Birmingham which have contributed to local regeneration;
- the use of the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) programme to renew and create work-related teaching facilities in colleges. Grimsby Institute, Barnfield College in Luton, Cambridge Colleges and College of North West London are four examples of colleges who have used the CoVE initiative to upgrade their facilities and offer to employers; and
- large-scale investment in information technology to create a teaching resource built on 300,000 personal computers in colleges.

4. The transformation of the college estate has taken place at a time when participation, attendance, achievement and standards have all risen. Although it is difficult to prove a direct link, research commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from PricewaterhouseCoopers showed a correlation between capital investment and participation. AoC believes that it is no coincidence that the major college capital investment programme in the first half of the decade has taken place when the following improvements have been made to quality:

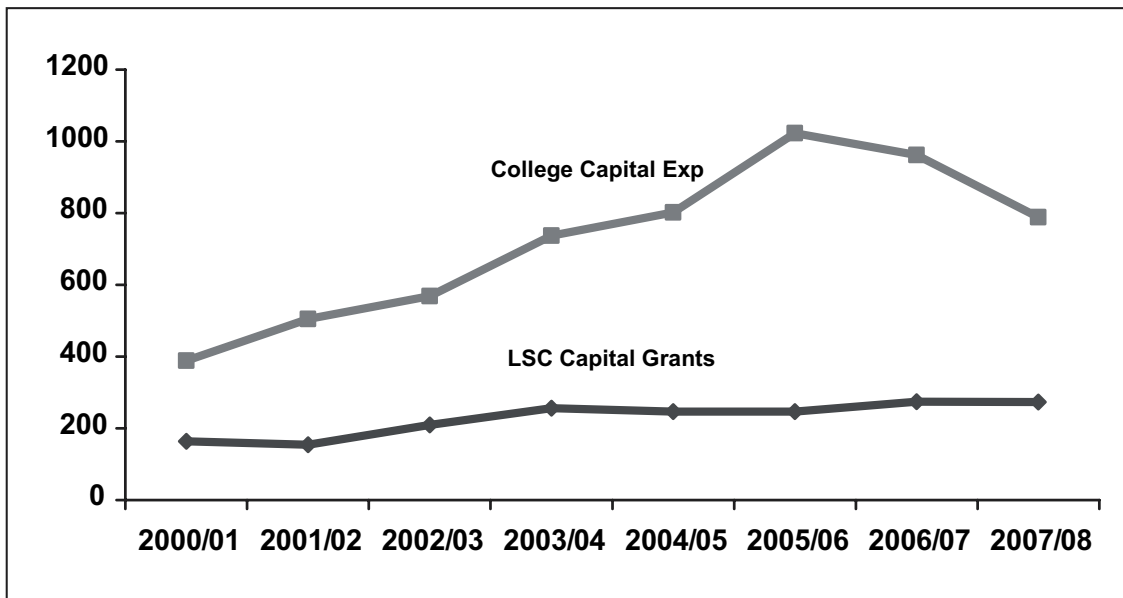
- success rates have risen from 54% in 1998–99 to 75% in 2004–05;
- independent inspections have reported improvements in all areas with less than 4% of provision described as unsatisfactory; and
- satisfaction levels of learners stated in the LSC’s national surveys are regularly above 90%.

5. The FE capital programme has also had financial successes. Although it is difficult to be precise about the figures, there is clear evidence that colleges have reduced running costs by moving to new buildings. Colleges have financed projects from their own resources and from loans because of the confidence that new buildings will be cheaper to run and will generate more income. The LSC has been rigorous in requiring colleges to limit building costs to £1,000 per square metre and running costs to £30 per square metre. Projects have only been approved if they meet stringent investment appraisals.

6. The pace of capital investment has increased since the start of the decade. Increases in capital funding have played a role in this (Chart One) but colleges have had to use accumulated reserves, sell land and take out loans to secure new buildings fit for purpose. Total college borrowing is expected to double between 2004 and 2008, reaching £1 billion by the end of the decade (Chart Two).

Chart One

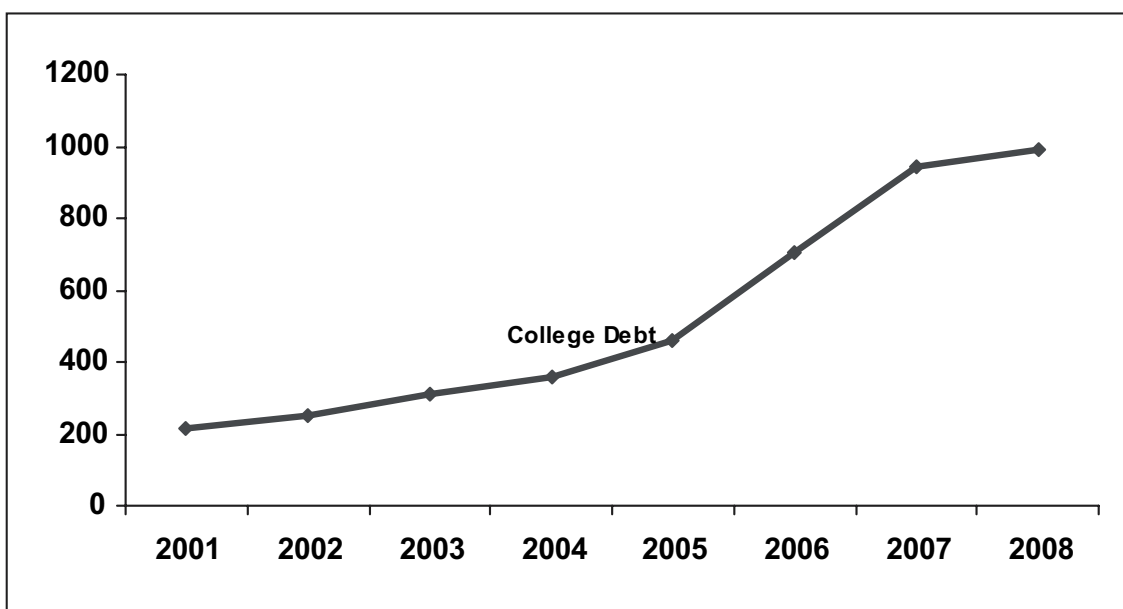
COLLEGE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND LSC CAPITAL GRANTS (£MILLIONS)



Figures up to 2004–05 are taken from consolidated college accounts with college forecast figures used for 2005–06 to 2007–08

Chart Two

COLLEGE LONG-TERM BORROWING (£ MILLIONS)



7. There have also been successes in the management of the FE capital programme. Although colleges are governed by volunteers and led, in the most part, by principals with educational backgrounds, there have been no significant failure in delivering projects. Delays have occurred because of local authority planning issues or financial problems but, once started, buildings have been delivered on time and on budget. We make comments later about the LSC processes but we acknowledge the positive impact of high LSC standards on ensuring that projects are only allowed to proceed if they are educationally and financially viable and deliverable. Although some college buildings have been constructed on a partnership basis with a private developer (for example, developers have taken land in payment), there has only been one English college building funded under a Private Finance Initiative contract.

SECTION TWO

The opportunities over the next 10 years

8. The education system in England has some major challenges in the next 10 years. These include:
- the need to raise school success rates so that more than 60% of 16-year-olds achieve the entry-level standard for adult life (5 GCSEs A–C);
 - the aspiration that, by 2015, 90% of young people should stay in education and training between the age of 16 and 19;
 - the plan to broaden and improve the curriculum for young people between the age of 14 and 19;
 - the target to increase the higher education participation ratio to 50%;
 - the need to tackle poor adult skills, including literacy, numeracy and skills for the workplace; and
 - the importance of closing the wide gaps in education performance between different areas and different groups.
9. Colleges have a central role in delivering all of these goals:
- colleges educate and train the largest number of 16–18-year-olds and have a major role in 14–16 vocational education; and
 - colleges enrol more than 3 million adult students and are responsible for more than half the vocational qualifications awarded in England and for 90% of the qualifications counting towards the Skills for Life targets.
10. The ability of colleges to meet national expectations will depend on many things, not least of which is the appropriateness of their buildings. Getting college facilities right requires a number of tasks to be completed in the next few years. These include:
- completion of the modernisation programme which LSC estimated would cost £5 billion in 2004 and which they forecast will be completed by 2014;
 - successful completion of major building projects which are in the pipeline, including, for example, developments in Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Doncaster, York, Burnley, Coventry, Canterbury, Croydon, Wandsworth (South Thames College), Bournemouth and Cornwall;
 - development of new facilities in the growth areas of the South East. South Kent and Barking Colleges are two colleges in these areas with ambitious projects;
 - reconfiguring space to meet the new demands of the 14–19 curriculum and the higher expectations of employers and individuals;
 - expansion of teaching space for higher education in certain colleges; and
 - improving the operational and energy efficiency of college facilities.
11. The benefits for the country of this work will be facilities which inspire young people to achieve their potential, which entice adults to improve their skills and which help students of all ages to learn.

SECTION THREE

Specific problems that need to be overcome

12. The college sector as a whole has the capacity to complete the programme listed above in the next decade but there are a number of problems which need to be overcome. The obstacles include:
- management capacity in some institutions;
 - insufficient capital funding levels;
 - concerns about affordability of debt needed to finance projects;
 - impact of Government policy to expand school sixth forms and Academies;
 - lack of priority for colleges in higher education capital funding;
 - unsympathetic planning environment in some local authorities;
 - lengthy approval process for some projects;
 - uneven impact of VAT; and
 - insufficient attention to sustainability issues.

Management capacity in some institutions

13. The issue of capacity in individual institutions arises because the responsibility for delivering projects rests solely with college governing bodies and management. College governors often bring vital expertise but are volunteer trustees and college managers rarely have experience of large projects. The LSC (and its predecessor, the Further Education Funding Council) have played a vital role in a number of ways, but has

a hands-off role to ensure that it does not compromise the independent status of colleges. The LSC sets high standards which are used in deciding whether to fund and approve projects but leaves colleges to take their own decisions and advice on how to proceed.

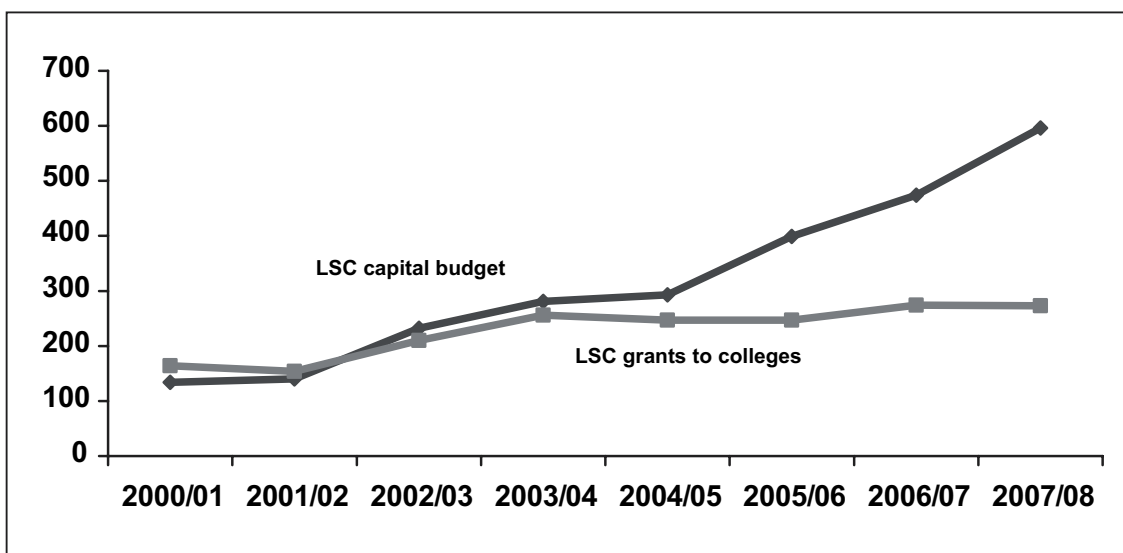
14. The successes of the last decade show that this is a model that works but there are consequences. Larger colleges find it easier to afford the professional managers and advisors needed to deliver successful projects. There is a risk that smaller colleges feel the pressure to merge simply so that they can undertake capital projects—a trend that could run counter to the vision of specialist colleges set out in the FE White Paper. This is not to say that smaller colleges cannot manage successful capital projects just that the issue needs to be recognised. The work by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), LSC and colleges to set up a client forum is helping to share information on good quality design but the need to share experience goes wider than this. Some college managers report that not enough is done to learn from the experience of previous projects. AoC is about to discuss the issue of advice for the college client-side with the LSC.

Insufficient capital funding levels

15. Government capital funding has played a key role in persuading colleges to undertake projects. LSC capital grants to colleges have risen from zero in 1998–99 to £247 million in 2004–05 and is forecast to rise further to £273 million by 2007–08. The total LSC capital budget has increased much more substantially than this, but much of the extra money is earmarked for other purposes such as new school sixth forms and skills Academies.

Chart Three

LSC CAPITAL BUDGET AND GRANTS TO COLLEGES (£ MILLIONS)



16. Between 1999 and 2003, the LSC paid a fixed 35% for most college capital projects but, since 2003, its grant rate has varied depending on colleges' resources. The LSC consulted on this policy, which is summarised in circular 03–13. The application of the policy gives colleges with weaker financial health or with few assets to sell a higher proportion of build costs in the form of a grant. One large college in the North of England is receiving a 51% grant for its project; another college in Surrey recently completed a project with a 15% grant.

17. AoC understands the reasons for the policy of variable grant rates but we note that the average LSC grant to college capital projects has fallen from 35% to less than 30%. The LSC has insisted that colleges fill this gap by taking on more borrowing. Since 2004, the LSC has required colleges to take on longer term debt of up to 40% of college turnover as a pre-condition for making a grant. This action by the LSC of reducing its grant proportion of total build costs in colleges, stretches its capital budget in a way that supports more projects but at the cost of transferring more risk to colleges.

18. At the same time as colleges are required to find more than 70% of the cost of their projects, school buildings are being entirely state-funded. The £250 million that colleges receive each year for capital projects compares to the £5 billion that the Government is making available for schools. While it is true that there are 26,000 schools compared to 380 colleges, the fact remains that school rolls are static or falling.

19. The central issue here is the DfES decision to allocate an overwhelming share of the education capital budget to schools and an insufficient share to colleges. The Treasury has already announced a £350 million increase in the LSC capital budget for the next spending review period (between 2007–08 and 2010–11), but

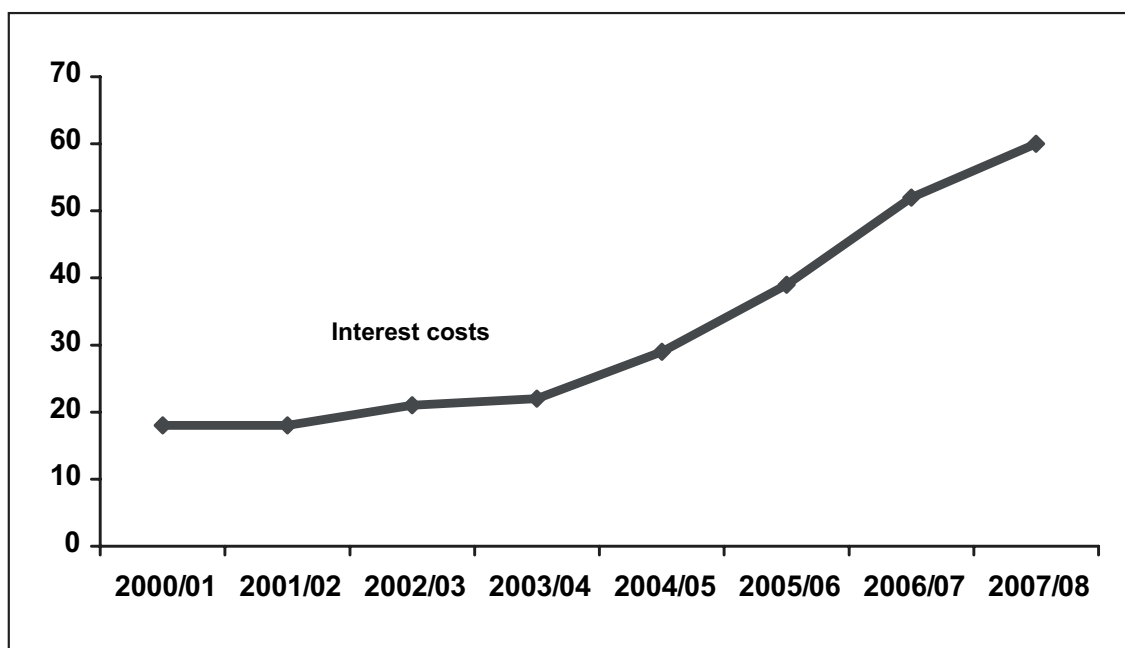
this still might not be enough, particularly as the evidence is that the new money might be used for new purposes. Furthermore, the 60% increase in the LSC capital budget in the next spending review period is likely to come at a time when the LSC revenue budget is unlikely to increase by much more than 10%. The FE White Paper signals a greater degree of competition in the allocation of public funds and a greater shift towards fees in adult learning. There is more uncertainty about the future direction of college income which inevitably induces caution in governing bodies about investment. This could delay progress towards the goals set out in paragraph 8. Students, employers and the country as a whole will be the losers.

Concerns about the use of debt to finance projects

20. Colleges are self-managing organisations with legal independence from Government. The Office of National Statistics classifies colleges in the private sector which means that their borrowing does not count against the Government's debt ceiling. Colleges are required by their financial memorandum with the LSC to obtain approval for new borrowing but more than half of the sector has taken out long-term loans. Total college debt rose to £357 million at 31 July 2005 and is expected to almost treble in the next three years to £990 million. Low interest rates and a reduction in the margins taken by the banks lending to colleges minimise the total cost to colleges but the total interest bill is still increasing as shown in Chart Four.

Chart Four

TOTAL COLLEGE INTEREST BILL (£ MILLIONS)



21. By 2007–08, the total interest bill in the college sector will be just under 1% of total income, but some colleges will be paying more. The interest on debt that colleges have to take to fund projects is an element in the funding gap with school sixth forms that was not included in the 13% figure accepted by the DfES in 2005. Furthermore, the debt taken on by individual colleges makes them vulnerable to possible interest rate rises and could make them dependent on banks if their financial position worsens. There are particular problems for colleges earning significant income from fees, overseas students or employer contracts. LSC rules require all colleges applying for capital grants to borrow up to 40% of their income whether the income comes from the Government or other sources. This penalises colleges with more diverse and volatile income sources. Nervousness about borrowing means that some college governing bodies are unwilling to proceed with capital projects.

Impact of the Government policy to expand school sixth forms and academies

22. The DfES five-year strategy published in 2004 set out a new policy to encourage high performing schools to acquire sixth forms and to create 200 Academies by 2010. 80% of the Academies already open or in development have sixth forms. Taken together, these two policies have expanded and will continue to further expand the number of school places for 16–18-year-olds and risk undermining the viability of successful colleges. The capital funds routed via the Building Schools for the Future programme will help schools expand sixth forms. Secondary school rolls will fluctuate over the next 10–15 years because of UK

demography. It is not surprising that many 11–16 secondary schools will want to limit the risk of unused space by including a sixth form in their building plans. Adding a sixth form to a school often meets with the approval of governors, teachers and parents, but it has wider consequences which may not be so desirable.

23. Many school sixth forms are small and only offer a narrow choice of subjects. Class sizes are often smaller and exam results in smaller sixth forms are worse than results in larger ones. Smaller sixth forms will find it harder to offer high quality vocational choices in the new 14–19 curriculum

24. Despite these known issues, DfES policy offers 100% capital funding to schools to expand 16–18 provision while, in effect, limiting colleges to grants of less than 30%. To take one example, Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education received a 10% grant for its new facilities at a time when a new Academy a few miles away received more than 90%. Public money is being used to widen choice but at the cost of reducing the variety and quality for young people. The policy could lead to a situation where several school sixth forms offer soft vocational options, for example in business or psychology, but where the local college can no longer afford to offer courses meeting government skills targets. The policy risks damaging the Government's goals in 14–19 education and training, while raising expectations among schools which cannot be met. There are almost 1,000 secondary schools which do not have sixth forms. Dispersing capital funds to create sixth forms where they do not currently exist will be poor value for money at a time when there is a viable, effective and high quality infrastructure of colleges.

Lack of priority for colleges in higher education capital funding

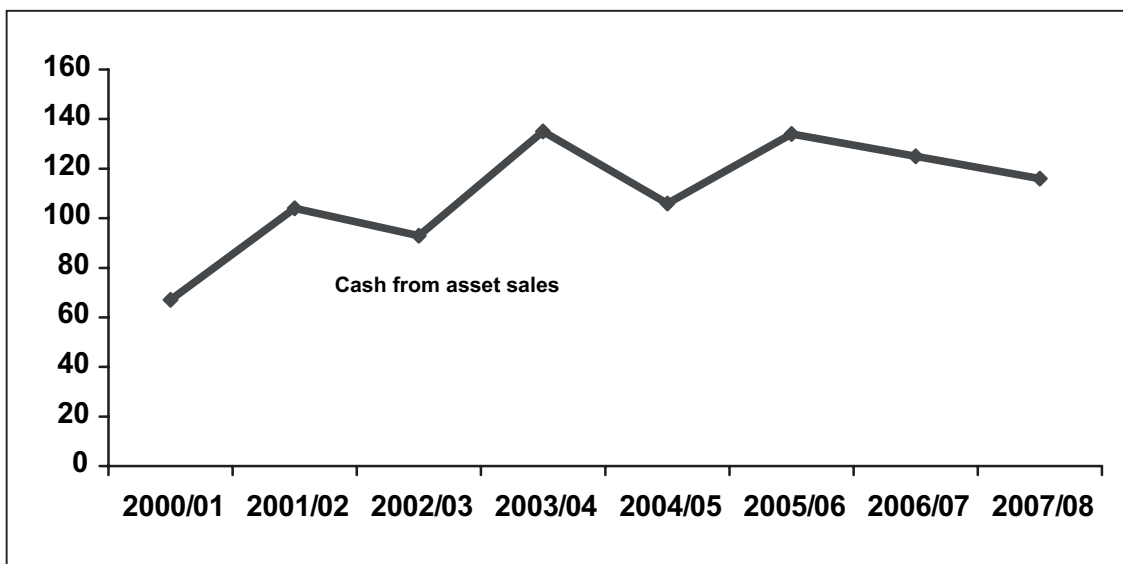
25. Colleges have an important role in higher education both as the access route for more than 40% of higher education students and as providers of courses in their own right. 11% of higher education students are in colleges, many taking part-time and foundation degree courses. College higher education students are more likely to come from disadvantaged backgrounds than university students. College courses are often geared towards the needs of national and local employers. The fact that the Secretary of State's recent grant letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for England identifies widening participation and employer engagement as priorities for higher education means that colleges clearly have a growing role in this field of activity. Given this, the lack of Government capital funding for higher education places is a problem that is long overdue for solution. The majority of new college buildings are constructed without funds from HEFCE despite current HE students or the potential that colleges have to expand. HEFCE capital funds, which are larger than LSC funds, are distributed to universities on the basis of their student numbers. In cases where universities franchise students to colleges, HEFCE encourages the universities to transfer the capital funds to the college but does not insist on this. The net effect of this under-investment is that HE students who study in a college get a poorer deal.

Unsympathetic planning environment in some local authorities

26. The planning environment is a significant issue because approval is needed both for new buildings and for the redevelopment of the sites that colleges sell to fund projects. Cash from asset sales provided just over £500 million to fund college capital expenditure between 2000–01 and 2004–05. A further £375 million is expected for the following three years (2005–06 to 2007–08).

Chart Five

CASH FROM ASSET SALES (£ MILLION)



27. Despite the contribution of new college buildings to national success and local regeneration, there have been too many cases where local authority planning has caused unnecessary delay and costs. Some colleges report to AoC that there is little recognition, by planning officers, of the community benefit from new educational buildings combined with a strong emphasis on affordable housing in the redevelopment of sites, reducing the funds available for projects. Effectively the local authority planning system delivers a cross-subsidy from the education account to the housing account. Some college projects have been held up for years by planning issues, for example projects involving City Lit in Camden, Oaklands College in Hertfordshire and Canterbury College. The City Lit's building is now complete and Canterbury College's new building will be finished in 2007. Nevertheless the process of obtaining planning permission has entailed considerable delays and cost.

Lengthy approval process for some projects

28. Colleges are required to obtain LSC approval for capital expenditure, borrowing and asset sales even where the LSC has no role in funding the project for which approval is sought. The LSC sets these limits in its financial memorandum with colleges and is planning to raise them but nevertheless there are consequences for the speed with which projects can be delivered. Colleges report to AoC that the combination of local authority planning, European Union public procurement rules and LSC approval processes can add months or even years to projects. The cost of delays is reflected in higher professional fees, particularly where advisors need to be retained to help inexperienced clients through complicated processes. While the AoC does not question the role that high LSC standards have played in delivering successful projects, we do question why universities face much easier requirements. Colleges need to get approval for capital transactions larger than 5% of their income, universities typically only need to get approval when the transaction approaches 100% of their income in size.

Uneven impact of VAT

29. Colleges pay VAT on much of their non-pay expenditure and incur an estimated £200 million a year cost of irrecoverable tax. Like universities and Academies, they are classified by HM Revenue and Customs as private sector organisations and are unable to reclaim VAT in the way that schools and local authorities can. There are certain circumstances where colleges can reclaim VAT: when colleges are constructing new buildings, they can obtain an exemption from VAT as long as the building is not for business use. The exemption rules are complicated but effectively require the college to forego the use of a new building constructed predominantly for sixth formers for activities where fees are charged. This means that colleges face unacceptably large costs should they wish to open buildings for wider community use or to run courses for local employers. For example Bilborough College in Nottingham reports that it would need to pay £2 million in VAT if it expanded the use of its new facilities for adult learning.

30. Finding a solution to the VAT penalty which faces colleges will not be easy. European Union rules constrain what the Government can do and the Treasury is keen to maintain total VAT revenues. Colleges accept that all organisations must pay a fair share of tax; what they object to is the perverse consequences of the existing rules. DfES ministers have acknowledged that these rules create difficulties for Academies and

have promised to work with the Treasury on a solution. The position of colleges is the same as Academies in this respect. A sensible solution would involve a relaxation of the exemption rules for certain institutions to allow a wider range of “business” uses in education buildings constructed with Government funding. Alternatively, the Government could reconsider whether to extend the section 33 exemption to both colleges and Academies. The Treasury reply to an adjournment debate launched by Graham Allen MP in February 2006 indicated that European Union rules allowed some flexibility on this issue. A number of years ago, the Government brought national museums under section 33 of the VAT Act which allows them to reclaim VAT on expenditure as local government does.

Insufficient attention to sustainability issues

31. The college sector has a number of good examples of sustainable development in its capital programme. Walford and North Shropshire College uses biomass, solar power, geothermal sources and methane from its cattle herd to supply energy to its new £2.5 million Harris Centre. Somerset College of Arts and Technology’s Genesis centre displays a number of sustainable construction techniques, which are being used to facilitate students’ learning. Both colleges use their new buildings to showcase new technologies to students and businesses, for example in foundation degree courses. Bournemouth and Poole College is planning to take the same approach on a larger scale in the £60 million building that it is planning.

32. These are positive examples but one college reported to the AoC that tight building cost limits imposed by the LSC in the recent past required it to eliminate solar panels and rainwater recycling from its plans. Some of the buildings constructed in the last decade lack features that would be considered desirable now. The emphasis in the LSC approval process on efficient, cost effective, construction has limited the scope for innovative design up to now, though this is something that may change under the influence of the RIBA/LSC client forum.

33. More generally, pressures placed on colleges to deliver financially-viable projects in an uncertain political and funding environment, inevitably pushes them to place a greater weight on short-term considerations. Although buildings are expected to last for 30–50 years, college governors and managers know that success or failure will be judged over a much shorter period—perhaps five years.

SECTION FOUR

Issues arising out of the Building Schools for the Future

34. The Building Schools for the Future programme developed out of the Government’s desire to improve standards in schools and to use new buildings to improve efficiency and quality. Colleges and AoC applaud the Government’s vision in this respect and hope that the central aim of the programme is realised in the form of better results and broader skills achieved by young people when they reach sixteen. Our central questions about the programme are the ones identified above:

- Is it sensible for the DfES to spend hundreds of millions of pounds of public money on the sixth form facilities in new school buildings when this will simply replicate existing facilities and undermine successful colleges?
- Is it good value for money to spend this money on buildings in schools which may lack the management capacity, staffing expertise and student demand to offer the choice and quality that is available in larger college sixth forms?

35. Our other question about BSF is about the way in which it is being planned locally. The experience of colleges in the pathfinder areas is that local authorities have had to set up complicated partnership structures to deliver the programme. These partnerships exclude colleges and therefore may end up taking a partial view of the 14–19 issues in an area and yet the DfES view of Building Schools for the Future is that the 14–19 curriculum is a central part of the BSF programme (14 June 2004, Col. 771W; 9 Sept. 2004, Col. 1362W and 1370W).

FINAL WORD

36. Should the Committee be interested, AoC is happy to facilitate a visit to a college to supplement this evidence.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As a metropolitan fire and rescue service deeply concerned about fire safety in schools, we welcome the Committee’s decision to undertake an inquiry into Sustainable Schools. We are submitting evidence

following an invitation from the Committee Chair Barry Sheerman MP to address the specific issue of fire safety and fire suppression in schools in the context of the Inquiry.

1.2 The success of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme is directly linked to this issue of fire safety. Every year around 2,000 schools in Britain are damaged by fire. For a school to be environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, any risk of potential structural damage must be minimised. Working towards guaranteeing the longevity of the school building will ensure that the premises can “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

1.3 In order to minimise the risks posed by fire, we are in favour of the mandatory fitting of automatic fire control equipment in all new build and refurbished schools. There are economic, social and environmental arguments in favour of the mandatory installation of sprinkler systems to ensure the sustainability of educational premises.

2. THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY SITUATION

2.1 Currently there is no legislative requirement for the mandatory fitting of sprinklers in school buildings and there are no plans to make their fitting mandatory.

2.2 All school buildings must comply with Approved Document B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations. These regulations, which are the responsibility of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), do not require schools to install sprinkler systems, but do not preclude local Authorities from doing so.

2.3 The installation of sprinklers is similarly dealt with in Building Bulletin 100, *Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools*. This is non-statutory guidance published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

2.4 As both the DfES and the DCLG (formerly ODPM) are involved in the fire regulations and guidance relating to schools, there has been some confusion as to which department has the lead on developing Building Bulletin 100. However, former Fire and Rescue Services Minister, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, recently clarified the situation:

“The Department for Education and Skills is in the lead in considering Building Bulletin 100 and a revision of the provision of sprinklers in schools. Its consultation will conclude later this year, and we are looking forward to that to find out whether we can move forward on this very important issue.”

Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Fire and Rescue Service Minister, response to Oral Question, (*Hansard*, Column 106, 19 April 2006)

2.5 After many months of indicating that a reviewed version of Building Bulletin 100 would be published, a draft version of the guidance finally underwent consultation, which closed on 18 November 2005.

2.6 The version of the guidance that was put out for consultation did not recommend the installation of sprinklers in all schools, and stated that a risk assessment should be undertaken before any decision was made:

“There is obviously a cost implication up to 5% of a building contract whether for new build or to upgrade existing buildings. Some school owners may decide that this is a worthwhile expenditure based on a risk assessment in their buildings in their area. Where the risk analysis highlights the fact that an ignition is probable, possibly as a result of location, the existence of certain processes or other socio-economic factors, then the fitting of automatic fire suppression systems will need serious consideration.”

NB: We estimate that the cost of installing sprinkler protection to a new school is as little as 1.8% of the total building cost. See section three.

2.7 The DfES has yet to publish an analysis of responses to the consultation, or a revised version of the guidance. However, Schools Minister Jim Knight MP recently indicated that the analysis had been completed and would be published “shortly”, whilst the Department hopes to publish the final, revised version of the guidance before the end of the year. (*Hansard*, Column 1214W, 14 June 2006).

2.8 Since the consultation concluded, the DfES has continued to indicate its support for using risk assessment and cost benefit analysis to determine whether to install sprinklers in schools. For example, Schools Minister, Jim Knight MP, gave the following response to a Written Question from Joan Walley MP:

“We work closely with colleagues in the new Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and, liaising with them, we produced new draft guidance on fire safety—Building Bulletin (BB) 100, “*Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools*”. It stresses the value of using risk assessments to determine what sort of fire detection and alarm systems should be used in each school, and whether or not sprinklers should be installed. While saying that a building designed in accordance with the guidance in Approved Document B (Fire Safety), which accompanies the Building Regulations, will achieve a satisfactory standard of life safety, it also suggests ways of improving property protection.” (*Hansard*, Column 910, 16 May 2006)

2.9 However, risk assessment or cost benefit analysis only predict the damage that would be caused by school fires in terms of the cost of material damage and the cost of the fire and rescue service attending the fire. They do not reflect the damage and disruption suffered by a local community in the aftermath of a school fire, seriously underestimating the total cost and can therefore never be accurate.

3. THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR THE MANDATORY FITTING OF SPRINKLERS

3.1 The Government is investing £2.2 billion in the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and over the next 10–15 years there will be further funds invested in this programme to upgrade or replace all secondary schools.

3.2 Since the year 2000, over £500 million has been lost in school fire costs alone, nearly a quarter of the Government's start up funding. This is because sprinkler suppression systems are not a requirement of school building programmes despite being recognised as one of the most effective means of combating the risk of fire.

3.3 The BSF programme will, at the present rate, continue to lose a minimum of £100 million in fire losses per year at 2003 prices, if there is no requirement to fit sprinklers.

3.4 Exact figures on the cost of fires to schools are difficult to ascertain. It is estimated, based on insurance claims, that the cost to schools in England and Wales stands at £100 million per year. The total year on year loss, if school fires continue to rise at the present rate, up until 2016 is estimated at 3 billion. However, the true cost is likely to be significantly higher as insurance costs cannot reflect the level of disruption, social impact, environmental damage or the effect on learning that a fire causes.

3.5 If sprinkler systems were a requirement of the BSF programme, there would be a return on the Government's initial investment in the programme in 10 years time. As more schools are fitted with suppression systems this gain will increase, as the amount of losses attributed to fire will decrease year on year.

3.6 The cost of installing sprinkler protection to a new school is as little as 1.8% of the total building cost and it is estimated that even a retrofitted system will pay for itself in savings from fire damage within eight to 10 years. (The cost of installing a sprinkler system is roughly equivalent to carpeting the same building.)

3.7 Furthermore, many insurers offer discounts for sprinkler protected school properties. These discounts are typically around 15% of the building and contents premium and would greatly assist in recouping the cost of installing a sprinkler system.

4. THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CASE FOR THE MANDATORY FITTING OF SPRINKLERS

4.1 The economic loss does not take into account the effects on the environment due to pollutants from fire, smoke and water run off, or the social loss to local communities. This is particularly significant as the BSF programme aims to make school buildings more community friendly with extended opening hours for community activities to take place in them.

4.2 Sprinklers reduce building damage and have the potential to increase the lifespan of a building. Fire statistics from the USA indicate a 90% reduction in fire damage costs where sprinklers are in place. Buildings that have a fire are usually uninhabitable afterwards and may have to be demolished. However, a sprinkler protected room can usually be back in use within a few hours and the rest of the building is usually unaffected.

4.3 The provision of sprinkler systems in a building allows greater flexibility in the building design with the effect of reducing costs. Sprinklers can save on building costs because under the building regulations larger compartment sizes may be constructed. Reduced boundary and extended travel distance to fire exits are allowed. A reduction in structural fire protection is also possible.

4.4 Sprinklers help to protect the environment by controlling a fire in its early stages, preventing airborne pollution and water run-off.

4.5 Sprinklers save water. Statistics show that the widespread use of sprinklers could save up to 96% of the 5.6 billion litres of water used annually in the UK to fight large fires.

5. CASE STUDY—SCHOOL FIRE AT A WEST MIDLANDS SCHOOL

5.1 In May 1999 West Midlands Fire Service was called to attend a school fire. The severity of the fire was such that it took 100 firefighters over 22 hours to control.

- 40,000–50,000 litres of water were used to douse the flames.
- 100–199 sq metres of school property were damaged.
- The fire caused over £80,000 worth of material damage.

The fire caused the whole school to be closed for several days and resulted in severe disruption for students and the wider community.

5.2 If the school had installed sprinklers, the fire would have been controlled immediately and no significant damage would have occurred.

5.3 After the fire, Wormald Fire Systems were invited to provide a quotation for installing a sprinkler system throughout the school.

5.4 They indicated that the cost of retro-fitting the system would be £31,071 if installation took place during school holidays.

5.5 The maintenance costs, once the system had been installed, were estimated at just £140 per annum. This is much lower than typical annual maintenance of passive fire protection measures such as fire doors and escape routes.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 It is our contention that a *sine qua non* of Sustainable Schools must be their ability to survive physical external threats such as fire and that the installation of sprinkler systems is the most cost effective way of achieving this. The Select Committee Report should advocate Government action to mandate the progressive fitting of sprinklers in school buildings.

6.2 New measures are required to reduce the risk of fires in educational buildings and to reduce the level of damage caused. DCLG figures show that school fires cost the economy £52 million in 2004 (*Hansard*, Column 1218, 14 June 2006). This figure does not reflect the disruption, loss of schoolwork, decline in educational attainment and damage to the local community that can result from school fires.

6.3 The West Midlands Fire Service believes that the Government should require the mandatory fitting of sprinklers in all new-build and refurbished schools, and should ensure that the revised version of Building Bulletin 100 recommends the use of sprinklers.

6.4 We appreciate that it is not realistic for every school to be retro-fitted with immediate effect. However, it should be mandatory to install sprinklers in all new-build schools under the BSF programme. Educational premises undergoing refurbishment should also be obliged to retrofit. Other schools should be encouraged to consider the installation of a sprinkler system at the earliest opportunity.

6.5 We should be happy to elaborate further on this issue and provide any additional information that the Committee would find helpful.

June 2006

Supplementary memorandum submitted by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service

Further to our meeting in May and the written evidence we have submitted to the Education and Skills Select Committee inquiry into Sustainable Schools, some additional information has come to our attention.

I understand that Partnership for Schools, the Government's national agency for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, has informed schools in the West Midlands that BSF funding cannot be used to meet the cost of sprinkler systems. We are aware that several schools were intending to incorporate sprinkler systems into new and remodeled school buildings. We are concerned that this decision may discourage them from doing so.

What is more, this advice would seem to run counter to departmental efforts to help schools reduce their insurance costs. Many insurance companies offer up to 65% reductions in insurance premiums for schools where sprinklers are installed, and will remove the compulsory excess, which can be as high as £100,000. There are clearly significant savings to be made if schools are fitted with sprinkler systems.

You may also be aware that the situation is markedly different in Wales. The National Assembly has permitted local authorities to use their building budgets to pay for installation of sprinkler systems in schools, and indeed encouraged them to do so.

As we discussed previously, a *sine qua non* of Sustainable Schools must be their ability to survive physical external threats such as fire. The installation of sprinkler systems is the most cost effective way of achieving this and yet, instead of making sprinkler systems mandatory in schools, the Government is effectively hindering schools which seek to install them.

November 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

INQUIRY INTO SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

1. The CBI welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Select Committee on the future of schools. Business has a strong interest in the success of the Government's programme of capital and IT investment in schools, in particular through Building Schools for the Future (BSF). As users and funders of schools, we have a stake in ensuring that the revenue from business taxation is efficiently spent and that schools are helping young people prepare for adult life, including employment. Business also has a key role to play in delivering the goals of BSF in a variety of ways including architectural and related consultancy, construction, IT provision, project management and specialist education services.

2. The CBI believes that BSF is a once in a generation opportunity, which has the potential to deliver a transformational change in educational outcomes. We support the kind of long-term investment that these programmes represent. At present, however, we are concerned that unless the programme focuses more clearly on its key goals this opportunity may be at risk. In this response, we outline:

- BSF needs to focus on educational transformation;
- local authorities need help to translate Educational Visions into reality;
- the opportunity offered by ICT must be harnessed; and
- public sector procurement capacity and bid costs must be addressed for BSF to achieve value for money.

BSF needs to focus on educational transformation

3. At the time of its inception the aims of the BSF programme were explicitly outcome-focussed. The programme envisaged using a 10–15 year programme of investment to drive up educational outcomes for children. The CBI welcomed this aim and we still support it. While BSF alone will not result in significant increases in educational attainment, it is an integral part of a wider programme to deliver a world-class education system. There is widespread enthusiasm for the goals of BSF educational transformation amongst stakeholders in central and local government, schools and businesses.

4. We share the widespread belief, however, that the core educational objectives of BSF were not sufficiently prioritised during the pathfinder stage of the programme. In part, this may have been due to an understandable desire to start rolling out the programme quickly. But pressure for delivery has led to many commissioners putting greater emphasis on the school construction aspects of the programme rather than the educational outcomes BSF was designed to deliver.

5. In recent months, however, Partnerships for Schools (PfS) has emphasised that educational transformation remains at the heart of BSF and is taking steps to ensure that it will be central to future waves of BSF. We welcome the work being done by Russell Andrews, the newly appointed Director of Education and Planning at PfS to reinvigorate the outcome-focussed nature of the scheme. However, anecdotal evidence from CBI members suggests that for many projects in existing waves, the educational goals risk being sidelined. Any perceptions in the supply community, local authorities and schools that BSF is only about constructing new buildings must be clearly addressed now, when a significant number of local authorities in waves 1–3 are still waiting for their Educational Vision to be approved.

6. We believe that a key factor in reinvigorating the BSF educational agenda should be a more rigorous approach to the Educational Vision process. Local authorities need to be clearer about the outcomes they want and identify the key drivers needed to achieve them, by identifying their existing capacity and ensuring affordability. At present there are 23 existing BSF projects behind schedule with delays ranging from a few months up to two years.⁹ In a significant number of cases this is due to a lack of capacity and procurement skills within the local authority which has resulted in Educational Vision statements being produced that are neither realistic nor affordable. Providers have experienced marked disparities between the procurement ability of local authorities, even those with similar populations and locations. Further, issues of affordability are not coming to light until the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage which then leads to significant delays in the procurement process. In addition, a number of visions have been rejected by DfES for not making satisfactory provisions for Academies.

7. Where bids have come to market on time, providers have expressed concerns that BSF is going “too far, too fast to allow educational transformation to bed into the process”.¹⁰ The CBI believes a more rigorous approach towards the Educational Vision will help prevent delays occurring at later stages in the process. DfES should make it a clear criterion that all existing BSF projects, as well as those in future waves, should not come to market until the issues set out above have been addressed.

⁹ PfS Update April 2006.

¹⁰ BSF Supplier firm.

Local authorities need help to translate Educational Visions into reality

8. Beyond vision, how best to support local authorities and schools in translating vision into reality with the resources available is vital. BSF has the potential to enable innovation and radical design solutions that support a variety of education methodologies. However, it will require effective management and leadership in the first few years of the programme to ensure that the value that the private sector can bring is harnessed and this innovation comes through. To do this local authorities need to clearly define their role in Local Education Partnerships (LEPs) with regard to educational transformation, including their interaction with the private sector partner. They must engage in regular dialogue with providers, before and during the procurement process, and manage the expectations of schools, to ensure affordability. This presents a significant challenge, a typical comment from those responsible at a local level is: “No one has ever done this before—and there’s never enough time.”

9. Educational transformation requires drive and leadership to ensure that it remains at the heart of the BSF process from Educational Vision stage into procurement and beyond. Partnerships for Schools needs to take a leading role in providing this drive. The CBI welcomes the recent internal reorganisation of Partnership for Schools which more clearly divides the BSF process into education and planning and procurement and delivery. This should improve the process in future waves. However, providers involved in existing projects have expressed concerns that education and ICT advisers who are present at the planning stages have not been represented once procurement is underway, causing the focus to shift to the construction side. PFS should ensure that the educational vision has a champion throughout the procurement process to ensure other interests do not obscure it.

10. Questions remain, however, over how to deliver the Educational Vision. BSF should be outcomes-based with the emphasis on what it wants to deliver in terms of higher educational achievement. At this relatively early stage it should be possible to test out a diversity of delivery methods through pilot programmes: for example, giving Local Education Partnerships (LEPs) in successful local authorities an expanded role. Some LEPs could be strongly encouraged to extend the role of their private sector partner beyond building and soft facilities management services to include aspects of educational and pastoral provision. This new use of the mixed market could encourage innovation and would be similar to that successfully employed by the Government in other public service sectors.

The opportunity offered by ICT must be harnessed

11. ICT is a key component for delivering educational transformation. It should be at the centre of the BSF vision but at present it is not being fully utilised. BSF should be the catalyst for radical thinking about how to create an optimum environment for learning. Given that it is scheduled to last up to 15 years, BSF should provide real scope for nurturing new ideas and new approaches to design and education delivery. This is particularly the case in respect to how ICT is applied to enhance the learning process, school administration and performance management. Local authorities should be challenged to drive forward educational transformation by maximising the use of ICT in their Educational Visions in their BSF proposals and establishing a clear and integrated approach with schools to deliver it.

12. The CBI believes that the existing BSF bidding process does not pay sufficient regard to ICT. The scoring system for BSF bids is such that the ICT component only needs to be adequate for the overall bid to be successful. This means bidders and indeed the commissioning side focus more on construction so that the successful bid may not have the best ICT on offer. We are open to suggestions as to how BSF ensures that ICT has parity of esteem with construction. One possibility could be for ICT providers to join bids at the short list rather than the long list stage of the BSF process, to ensure that the best ICT options are properly considered.

13. Partnerships for Schools has issued a baseline specification for ICT and allowed for local innovation and development. This innovation and development must consider the implications of high specification ICT in a PFI context with the limited resources available and how to ensure that ICT providers can add real value to the overall transformational agenda. Partnerships for Schools should work with the ICT providers and other stakeholders to provide further guidance and advice to schools and local authorities on how this can be achieved.

Public sector procurement capacity and bid costs must be addressed for BSF to achieve value for money

14. BSF represents £2.2 billion in annual capital investment. It is essential this spending delivers the best possible combination of cost and quality. DfES anticipates that it will yield savings of £538 million by 2007–08. However, there has already been substantial slippage in the timetable. Three years after the start of the programme, less than half of the LEPs in the pathfinder wave have achieved financial close and the costs of this process to local government and business are rising. Construction inflation, especially in the South East, is also growing. These procurement issues need urgent attention if BSF is to deliver value for money.

15. The capacity and ability of local authorities to deal with the levels of commercial sophistication needed to create the type of partnership on which the success of BSF depends is of major concern. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a marked disparity in procurement capacity and experience between different local authorities. There are some very good local authorities but the overall picture is of shortages of skilled and experienced procurement staff. This has added to the complexity of BSF and increased delays. This is part of a wider concern about public sector procurement ability—the NHS Local Improvement Finance Trusts (LIFT) programme faced similar constraints.

16. Local authorities should be encouraged to engage in good procurement for BSF. They should not procure a LEP until Educational Vision and affordability issues are resolved. Partnerships for Schools should support a more standardised approach to the procurement process and work closely with the local authority regional centres of procurement excellence and the DfES Centre for Procurement Performance to ensure that client capacity is utilised and shared across local authorities. This avoids a costly reinvention of the wheel each time, reduces costs and speeds up procurements. At the same time PfS should seek to shorten the procurement process for LEPs and introduce incentives to speed up procurement processes and so reduce the costs incurred to both the public and private sectors.

17. Given these capacity constraints the CBI questions whether there is a need for every local authority to have its own Local Education Partnership. Partnerships for Schools could support authorities that share a set of common aims, ethos and are geographically adjacent by allowing them to form joint LEPs. There seems to be no business case for 32 separate LEPs across London when these local authorities often share similar visions and migration of people between authorities is so common. There are similar reasons for limiting the numbers of LEPs set up in other parts of the country too. Larger LEPs will help to alleviate some of the capacity problems on the client side and optimise the bid capacity available in the supply community.

18. High bid costs for BSF are already causing concern amongst providers. Companies estimate that the cost of bidding to form a LEP is between £3–5 million. This is comparable to the cost of procuring a £500 million hospital and is true even for smaller LEPs. At present there are over 20 consortia bidding for LEPs but high costs mean that few providers can afford to lose more than a few bids. Without progress in reducing bid costs, companies may begin to leave the market. In these circumstances levels of efficiency and quality would be reduced.

19. More can be done to streamline the BSF procurement processes and ensure that value for money is achieved. Standardised documents, produced by PfS, is one solution. A number of documents have been through several iterations, which has led to confusion as to which version is being used in a particular bid. Evidence from CBI members suggests that many authorities are adding unnecessarily to the standardised documents, in ways that do not enhance local innovation, yet increase processing time and costs. Experience from the early waves of BSF is that legal fees are comparable to those in existing PFI projects due to the heavy weight of documentation that BSF involves.

June 2006

Memorandum submitted by BackCare

ABOUT BACKCARE

BackCare (registered as the National Back Pain Association) is an independent national charity that for 40 years has been helping people manage and prevent back pain by providing information, promoting self-help, encouraging debate and funding research into better back care. HRH, The Prince of Wales, is its patron. The charity represents people who suffer with back pain, those who treat people with back pain and those concerned with minimising the costs (human and financial) associated with back pain. This includes a broad range of health professionals, researchers and employers.

Last year, as a result of increasing concern about the incidence of back pain in young people, BackCare set up a School Back Pain Group, comprising health professionals, leading ergonomists and educators. After critical evaluation of the relevant research in this field, to confirm the significance of the problem, the group produced a review document and other materials in support of the campaign “Protecting Young Backs”.

The campaign aims to:

- raise awareness to the problem of back pain in young people;
- lobby for health and safety legislation to protect children’s backs;
- introduce better practices in schools and in the home; and
- educate and encourage children to look after their backs.

Attached to the following submission are the two publications, researched and produced by BackCare, which, summarise the available evidence to date relating to adolescent back pain, and lay out the ergonomic principles for the adoption of adjustable classroom furniture. (“An Evidence-based Review of Back Pain in Children and Young People” and “Your Back in the Future”.) Further specific references are also attached.¹¹

PUPIL BACK PAIN

Summary of Main Points

- Around 50% school children report back pain at some time and in 8% of adolescents this affects attendance, concentration, handwriting, ability to participate in sport, relationships and well being.^{1,2,3}
- There is evidence to show that adolescent back problems persist into adult life.⁴ Research shows that young people from 12–22 years of age with persistent low back pain (LBP) during the previous year have an odds ratio of 3.5 for persistent LBP eight years later.⁵
- Lower back pain is a growing problem. LBP in 12–18-year-olds was found to be much more common in 2001 than 1991 and in 2001 than in 1999.⁶
- The Children’s Charter and National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP) initiatives, which form part of *Every Child Matters*, require that children “be healthy” and “stay safe”. Back Pain is currently being considered as an issue for adoption into the Physical Activity Toolkit, a NHSP initiative.
- Ofsted will soon be assessing schools on their ability to provide a safe and healthy environment for pupils and their implementation of NHSP recommendations.
- The DfES response to the Select Committee report on Special Educational Needs (SEN) states that children with SEN can succeed in mainstream schools provided they have access to high quality teaching and support. The Ergonomics Society Special Interest Group (SIG) “Ergonomics4schools”, studies and works with schools and local and central government authorities and notes that factors causing back pain problems “are likely to be worsened for any pupils who have physical capabilities significantly below the average.”

BackCare wants the Building Schools for the Future and Academies Building programmes and the capital programme for FE colleges to embrace the following educational solutions, to reduce the risk factors for serious back problems in children at school. These measures will not only protect children’s backs but also improve concentration and future academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Furniture

Seating

Ergonomically designed adjustable classroom chairs, or a range of three different height ergonomic chairs in classrooms, to encourage and allow good posture.^{7,8}

Desks

Height-adjustable desks, (particularly important for IT use) with slopes for reading and writing.^{7,8}

In addition classroom set-ups need to allow for all chairs and desks to face the whiteboard/teacher to avoid damaging twisting positions for long periods during lessons.

- A serious risk factor for back pain is the current poor ergonomic design of classroom chairs and desks in schools. The low, one-size plastic bucket chair and flat desk does not allow for a safe and comfortable sitting position.⁸
- School children do not come in one size, with 14 year-olds varying in height by more than half a metre. Schoolchildren are on average 10cm (4 in) taller than 80 years ago. Chairs and desks are on average 20cm (8in) lower than 80 years ago.^{9,10}

¹¹ Not printed.

- Double lessons are becoming popular and last for up to 80 minutes. Pupils are required to remain static in potentially damaging positions. Sustained poor posture during and immediately following the adolescent growth spurt (12–15 years) is thought to be particularly damaging.

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- Children’s back health and well being must be sustained.
- Current classroom furniture is inappropriate and will not adapt to the growing size of children, more static nature of lessons and increasing IT elements in lessons.
- Extended schools initiatives will require use of classroom furniture outside of pupil population needs. Community use of schools will require furniture to meet adult needs and related Health and Safety Regulations such as Display Screen Equipment (DSE) regulations. Current chairs would be illegal in the office situation.
- Health and Safety legislation (DSE) regs, currently only applicable to adults, may be extended to include school children in their place of work, particularly for 16 years and above, who may be receiving Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to remain at school.
- Existing school furniture may not comply with future Ofsted criteria for pupil back health and safety.
- Seating will need to conform to British Standards, which will become increasingly ergonomically stringent.
- SEN considerations. The Ergonomics4schools SIG states “Little consideration is given to the design and sizing of educational furniture for SEN learners with problems of posture and movement. Poor furniture may create a faster onset of discomfort, resulting in frequent lapses of concentration. In extreme cases, there may be a risk of injury. Sometimes the injured party is the teacher or member of support staff who also have to use the same furniture as the children.”

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- Many European, particularly Scandinavian, Commonwealth countries and others such as India and Tunisia, are already recommending adjustable or variable height furniture in schools.^{3, 8, 11, 12}
- New European Standards for school furniture introduced this year (BS EN 1729 Part 1 and 2 are more ergonomically stringent and will translate into British Standards this October 2006.
- Adopting a range of chair heights in the classroom improved the match in pupil size to seat height from around 25% to around 75% in one study of 12–18-year-olds.¹³
- A controlled study using a simple foam wedge insert resulted in significantly reduced frequency and intensity of back pain in 16–18 year-olds.¹⁴
- A UK pilot school back pain and lifestyle study in July 2006 questioned 600 secondary school children; a sub group of 100 students using ergonomic seat cushions, reported a 61% improvement in comfort. Teacher assessment showed some improvement in attention spans and decreases in “fidgetability” among pupils.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- Ergonomic adjustable chairs may have an original outlay three times that of currently adopted polypropylene bucket chairs. Over a 25-year period, however, due to the sustainability of design and materials, the lifecycle cost of individual ergonomic adjustable height tables and chairs is actually 22% lower than the “budget” alternative.
- Plastic bucket chairs with ergonomic seat inserts will have a similar life span to current varieties but are still under research and development and prices not available.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hansard

- Government has overseen and part-funded data collection of children’s sizes since the 1950’s and contributed to European Standard on School Furniture, to allow children to be better fitted to several furniture size marks.

- Published in 2000, the DfES Furniture and Equipment Guide has a section on design quality with ergonomic considerations for various types of adjustable furniture.

Both information sources are available on TeacherNet, a DfES website. The Department for Education states that the website:

“allows teachers, building professionals and even children themselves to determine the correct size of furniture for a particular pupil. The site offers solutions to size mismatch—a major cause of discomfort among pupils” [. . .]

and that [. . .]

“schools are free to purchase their own furniture and equipment and to determine their own spending priorities”. *Hansard* 23 March 2006 Ergonomic Desks.

There is currently no compulsion for schools or budget holders to refer to this site or incorporate ergonomic recommendations for classroom furniture. This system fails to get ergonomic furniture into schools.

The Department also states that:

“There has been no formal research regarding a possible correlation either between ergonomic desks (or school furniture as a whole) and osteopathic health or students’ learning ability but the Department is aware of the importance as a whole of a pupils learning environment, both to their performance and feeling of well being. Informal discussions, however, have been held with the National Back Pain Association in the recent past and we are aware of that organisation’s concerns in this regard”. *Hansard* 23 March 2006 Ergonomic Desks.

IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH BSF/ACADEMIES BUILDING PROGRAMMES AND THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR FE COLLEGES

- To require Partnerships for Schools (PfS) who manage the BSF programme, to issue policy directing that specifications for new builds and school refurbishments, submitted by LAs or LEPs, incorporate ergonomic classroom furniture.
- To ring-fence part of the BSF/Academies budget for specific ergonomic furniture procurement. The practice of moving old, lowest cost and damaging furniture into new schools should cease.
- To incorporate the new British Standards for school furniture into the TeacherNet website under ergonomics. For this website to give strong and clear direction on the purchase of and considerations relating to ergonomic furniture.
- To commission an updated edition of the Governments DfES Furniture and Equipment Guide (2000) to incorporate the new European and British Standards for school furniture and to give strong and clear direction on the purchase of and considerations relating to ergonomic furniture.

IMPLEMENTATION OUTSIDE OF THE PROGRAMMES

- The Department to fund further immediate research (possibly through BackCare Research committee) into the effects of reducing the risk factors for back pain at school, on pupil back pain and learning ability.
- The Department to liaise with the HSE to address ergonomic seating in schools and specify safe seating requirements for pupils.

2. SCHOOL LOCKERS

Every child should have access to a locker.

- The majority of children has no access to a locker at school and may carry more than 30% of body weight in school bags and equipment. This is a risk factor for adolescent back pain.^{3,4} Pupils are required to carry outside clothes, sports and technology equipment, musical instruments and books to and from school and between classrooms. BackCare recommends a maximum limit of 15% bodyweight.
- Lockers are important to provide pupils with a personal space at school, which fosters a sense of belonging and ownership, encouraging responsibility and allegiance. With current timetables, pupils are required to move between classrooms for different subject lessons and have little time in their designated “form room”. Desks no longer provide storage and often there is no provision even for storage of outside clothing. Pupils forced to carry coats around all day, will inevitably feel like “visitors” to their own school.

- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 has a requirement for locker provision see below):”

Ancillary facilities

7. The buildings provided for a school shall be adequate to permit the provision of appropriate ancillary facilities, in particular—

- (a) for the storing and drying of pupils’ outdoor clothing and for the storing of their other belongings”

Despite this legislation, schools fail to meet this requirement.

- SEN considerations The E4S SIG states “There is a well-known range of health hazards in schools for pupils of all ages when carrying around heavy bags. This practice appears necessary for reasons of security. The bags are frequently much heavier than well-established standards would recommend and as such are a significant source of muscular skeletal problems. These problems are likely to be worsened for any pupils who have physical capabilities significantly below the average”.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- The concern over heavy load bearing by school children is shared by ergonomists throughout the world and has been the subject of many studies and discussions.
- The question of inadequate locker provision has been raised with Government on many occasions.
- In the UK, professional therapists including physiotherapists, osteopaths and chiropractors have all highlighted the problem of back pain resulting from heavy school bags. Each has produced educational materials to help schoolchildren cope with large loads. The Ergonomic Society SIG, E4S is a strong supporter of measures to reduce weights carried by pupils.

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- Children’s back health and well being must be sustained.
- There will be more stringent implementation of legal requirements for lockers (School Premises Regs) in the future. New and refurbished schools not designed with adequate space and reference to locker provision will incur expensive remodelling later.
- Health and Safety Regulations (Manual Handling) currently apply to adults and define maximum load bearing. These may subsequently be extended to protect school children in their place of work, particularly 16 years and above, who may be receiving EMA to remain at school.
- School Travel Schemes have been set up to promote walking and cycling to school. By 2010 all schools should have developed a School Travel Plan for safety and well being purposes. To support this scheme, there will need to be provision of secure storage for pupil’s equipment, books and personal items to allow them to leave these at school overnight and reduce load carrying on the journey to school.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- The Department’s recommended area standards for secondary school buildings include an appropriate allowance for lockers.
- Cheaper to install lockers at time of build/refurbishment than remodelling later.
- Schools submitting an approved School Travel Plan can access grants (Secondary £10K, Primary £6K) towards capital expenditure linked to travel for staff and pupil, which includes the provision of lockers.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hansard

- Questions asked as recently as this July about statistics relating to locker provision in secondary schools yield unsatisfactory answers:
 “The Department does not have these figures, nor figures for other types of personal storage in schools. However, the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 require that the buildings provided for a school shall be adequate to allow for the storing and drying of pupils’ outdoor

clothing, and for the storing of their other belongings. Local education authorities are responsible for ensuring that the premises of maintained schools conform to these regulations” *Hansard* 16 March 2004 Schools (Lockers)

“We do not collect information about provision of pupil locker facilities. The Department requires school buildings to have facilities for storing pupils’ clothes and other belongings, and the Department’s recommended area standards for secondary school buildings include an appropriate allowance. Schools make their own decisions about the best way to provide storage; many choose to provide lockers”. *Hansard* 10 July 2006 Lockers.

- It is estimated that more than 50% of pupils have no access to lockers or other secure personal storage space at school. Local authorities are not currently enforcing legislation.

IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH BSF/ACADEMIES BUILDING PROGRAMMES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR FE COLLEGES

- To require Partnerships for Schools (Pfs), managing the BSF programme, to issue policy directing that specifications for new builds and school refurbishments submitted by LAs or LEPS, incorporate the provision of locker space for all pupils.
- To ring-fence part of the BSF/Academies budget for specific locker procurement.
- To properly enforce existing regulation covering the provision of lockers in schools.

IMPLEMENTATION OUTSIDE OF THE PROGRAMMES

- The Department to liaise with the HSE to address maximum loads to be carried by children. BackCare calls for a maximum of 15% of body weight for pupils.

3. OTHER RISK FACTORS/ISSUES

These are not covered by the terms of reference of the inquiry, in so much as they are curricula issues, not managed through the BSF programme. BackCare however welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence relating to these issues and their importance as risk factors for pupil back pain.

- Adequate physical activity—Essential for children’s health, reduces the risk of back pain and carries many other health benefits. BackCare supports initiatives to increase PE and sport in schools and recommend one hour of moderate intensity physical activity per day.
- Schools should incorporate regular stretching and postural change during long lessons—a 30-minute stretch and wriggle rule should be discreetly observed.
- Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) curriculum to incorporate back health and safety education, teaching pupils good posture, back safety and the importance of regular exercise in supporting and strengthening the back. Good habits started off in school will be taken home and go forward with children into their adult life.
- Ergonomically designed backpacks to be a compulsory part of school uniform or equipment lists and pupils educated and encouraged to use appropriately.
- Health and Safety assessment of all risk factors for pupil back pain in the school environment and legislation introduced to protect young people.

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October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Teachers' TV

Over the two month period September to October 2006 Teachers' TV asked its audience to express their views on building schools for the future and sustainability, via a special page on our website, to the Education and Skills Committee inquiry.

The resultant 148 submissions, which includes 12 that were filmed (the "Vox Pops") came in from teachers, teaching assistants, parents, heads of department, head teachers, governors, subject co-ordinators, support staff, trainee teachers and many others.

The complete transcripts are supplied in a separate document (Ev 282–326).

Our view of the key messages that surfaced from these comments is as follows:

Space:

This was the most common concern and hope. More of it, more rooms, wider corridors, larger outdoor spaces, office space for support staff, and much, much more storage space.

Sustainability:

The second most common theme. Many comments about energy efficiency, such as the use of solar panel, but also recycling, carbon offsetting, and school travel, in particular better facilities for cyclists.

Improved Consultation:

Another key theme, in particular the need for early and sustained consultation with teachers and pupils, to ensure the final designs were created with the end-users in mind.

ICT/Technology:

Many were keen to extol the positive potential for new technology in schools, but warned that designs need to take ICT use properly into account. For example, rooms that could be blacked-out properly for IWB use.

Temperature Control:

Over-heating due to poor design, and better insulation to deal with this and winter chills, came through again and again as an issue. Concerns were raised about the tendency to have large windows/glass panels in new designs without consideration of the impact in hot, sunny summers.

Fairer Funding:

Several were worried about apparent weaknesses in the funding allocation system, with some authorities and schools not receiving what they feel is their correct share of the pot.

Schools for the Community:

100% support for the idea of schools extending the use of their facilities to the local community, by those who suggested that new designs need to take account of this.

Flexibility:

Several raised the point that classrooms and schools need to be able to adapt quickly and easily to new requirements and ways of working, so they need to be designed with flexibility in mind.

Some Other Points

- The importance of natural light.
- Beware on-going maintenance costs.
- Don't forget the importance of good acoustics.
- Pleas for smaller class sizes and smaller schools.
- Better outdoor facilities such as play areas and sports facilities.
- Don't forget security.
- Better quality staffrooms.
- Restore old-buildings.
- Inclusion for the disabled.
- Don't scrimp, but spend enough for high quality and durable schools and furnishings.
- The importance of teacher quality and training over the quality of the buildings.
- Several concerns about PFI contracts not being designed well.
- Heads asking for good support from their governors, external experts and local authorities.
- Several comments about viewing BSF as part of a much bigger push to transform education overall.

November 2006

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
Roz Burch	The Disraeli School	SLT, ICT Coordinator, Team Leader	A school for the future must make best use of developments in ICT—wireless connections, integrated laptops, internet cafe, moviecams, webcams, email and skype. All these forms of communication are what our children will be using as citizens of the future—they need to aware of them and see their benefits. Classrooms big enough to have carpet space, work space, reading areas, wet areas for artwork. Different lessons need different types of learning environments. Classroom tables and chairs need to be comfortable—a child can not learn without feeling emotionally and physically well. Stimulating outdoor areas with adventure playgrounds, equipment, herb gardens—something to stimulate all their senses. Enough space to extend and progress as the school grows and becomes a bigger part of the community. Why not ask the children what they want in their school of the future?	Coordinator
Jane Davies	Godfrey Ermen Memorial CE Primary School	SENCO	I would like to see more schools that are ECO friendly, using sustainable resources and that are built with that in mind. I should also like each and every school to promote a playground which encourages all children to look after the environment. Inner City and suburban schools would have gardens and trees. They would also have an allotment type area to promote growing of vegetables etc I should also like to see a playground gym for all ages which would encourage fitness in a safe environment.	Coordinator
Dorothy Wood	Upminster Infant School	ICT Coordinator Reception Teacher	The biggest problem in primary schools is lack of space. Children are getting bigger and we continue to cram 30 children into a small room. We are already thinking that the next time we buy furniture it will have to be bigger but will it fit? As ICT is the future [. . .] the time has come for integral desks with computers for every child. Lighting, heating and air conditioning are crucial. With computers and changing climate, class rooms can be unbearable in the summer. Integral whiteboards and projectors would be less of a security issue. In Sweden I saw a school where the classrooms all radiated out from a central area. So each classroom was an independent unit but the central area had a kitchen and library and study area which could be shared by three class rooms. It seemed to work really well and was repeated in three further areas. A large hall was central to the whole school. In primary schools we only ever have one hall for each key stage. This is used for assemblies eating PE etc and can be hard to timetable. If we want to get children fit we need space [. . .] another hall [. . .] a swimming pool, a gym. In essence we need space, light, pleasant temperatures and security. The other thing I saw in Sweden was that the teachers had superb areas to work in. Large	Coordinator

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			staffrooms with sofas, coffee machines and long tables for working at and meetings also a special computer room just for staff! These were primary schools in a smallish town!! We were so jealous. It made our staffrooms look so bleak and unwelcoming.	
Alison Burns	St Bede's Catholic Primary Basingstoke	Senco	The school numbers are expanding beyond the capabilities of the current school building.	coordinator
Andrew Pearce	Pencoed Comprehensive	14-19 Learning Coordinator	Internet access in all rooms with Interactive whiteboards. Specially designed outside play areas in Secondary Schools—eg five-a-side pitches, skateboard parks—so we can encourage pupils to exercise. More open plan—in social areas rather than confined spaces. University style cafes so that pupils want to come and eat the healthy foods we are offering. “Wet weather” areas so children do not become disruptive. Lockers so the pupils/students are not dragging their bags around all day. Better Staff Rooms so staff want to sit in them and share good ideas rather than eat/drink and then leave. Time-out areas/“chill out” rooms for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Solar panels to save money/the environment. More community-shared facilities eg sports/arts/music.	Coordinator
Marie Rattigan	Local Authority Day Centre (Partnership Saltley School Citizens)	Person Centred Planning Coordinator for People with Disabilities	Teachers' TV has inspired and given us direction, we are located in Bordesley Green, Birmingham we are in one of the highest deprived area in the UK, we have the second highest youth population in the city of Birmingham and no established youth groups—12 months ago the Government directed policy that day service should be modernised—we have been using your programmes to inspire and shape our thinking. We watch the programmes and have taken several to use as discussion pieces to ensure people in day services because of an assessed need—are hear, have opportunity to practice, and become citizens in their community. Saltley School is really taking small steps towards inclusion, we are hoping to explore timescales that run parallel and negotiate gaps in the community and design our new building to meet those gaps. Please arrange a meeting with us so we can publically share what you guys have enabled people that are excluded by the very nature of their disabilities to have a voice. We promise you will be astonished by what we have achieved with your programmes.	Coordinator
Jo Talbot	Harlyn Primary School	ICT Coordinator and Year 5 Teacher	Having worked at a school that had a whole new wing added, after the first Labour win, I saw it transform our school and create a much tighter community. Half my present school is in huts and it really causes a fracture to the working environment. There is plenty of land around our school to be used imaginatively to create a school that flows and connects. From my point of view as an ICT specialist it would enable a more	Coordinator

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			interactive environment, getting rid of our useless wireless technology to the huts and having purpose-built space in classrooms for group of computers.	
Liz Curtis	At the moment on supply	KS1/Foundation Teacher/SENCO	Primary school is the place where parents congregate. Use the school to reach out to parents. The DfES is putting more and more responsibility onto schools for the wider issues of education of the whole person, so a school needs an element of Health and social care. Schools need a place of refuge for children who can't cope that is staffed by sensitive, caring people. It's no use waiting until children are in their teens and truanting from school and then fining their parents, work needs doing with the children and their families from the age of three, then the later problems would be much less likely to happen. It can be very frustrating working with children like this and not really having the facilities or manpower to give effective and long lasting help and support. To fulfill the goals of Every Child Matters we need space and personnel.	Coordinator
Matthew Jamieson	Honley High	KS4 Coordinator for Science	I feel that I teach at a wonderful school, but the main missing element is a quality surroundings. The decor and the furnishings are mainly very old and in serious need of replacement. Most of the corridors are overcrowded and the canteen isn't suitable for the number of students we have. Like I say its a great school, with great students and staff, but it is desperately in need of a makeover.	Coordinator
Heather Richards	London Meed C P School	ICT Coordinator	I would like to see a budget for schools that would enable schools to plan for the future rather than just see us lurch from year to year with hardly enough money for paper and pencils let alone invest in good quality books for the children to read. Standards would improve drastically if the working environment was enhanced with new furniture and improved cleaning regimes. If there was quality in the environment there would be quality work from staff and pupils and therefore imroved standards.	Coordinator
Stephanie Dickinson	Thomas Fairchild Community School	ICT Coordinator	Schools should have the technical infrastructure to enable them to forge links with other schools in their area, in other parts of the country and in other countries. They could have joint discussions and share information on topics, eg via video conferencing. Children would develop a greater understanding of life in areas that are different to their own and forge links with children they would not otherwise have the opportunity to talk to. Every area of the curriculum would benefit. Within the school environment there could be more use of monitoring screens in unexpected areas, eg the playground, where children could, eg look for ideas of new games to play or record a game they have made up for others to then play.	Coordinator

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
Becky Hughes	Cator Park School	Extended School Project Coordinator	I believe that Cator Park should be chosen by Building Schools for the Future, as this school needs it in a number of ways. The building is old and some parts where the young people have to learn is not conducive to good learning. These young people are being taught in rooms that have windows that don't open—this becomes incredibly hot in summer and impossible for concentration levels. On the other hand there are rooms that do not heat up in the winter and again—how can children concentrate when basic needs are not being met. The school has recently had help to refurbish a new gym across the road which is great and if only the main school could have the same facelift, I am sure the effect upon the education of the pupils would be remarkable. I feel it is disrespectful to expect children and young people to spend their days in accommodation that is so poor. The Head tries incredibly hard to boost levels of achievement and I feel this is another way of really helping the children and young people of Cator Park.	Coordinator
Michelle Alexander	Nelson Primary	Foundation Stage Coordinator	Summary: Build on one level, less concrete, more grass.	Coordinator
Mrs Rosemary Stokes	Ash Field	Assistant Headteacher	Combine the best of special school education with the best of mainstream integration by co-locating special and mainstream schools. Both schools should be autonomous and independent but with a shared vision, coordinated time tables, shared expertise, shared medical support and possibly shared teachers, there could be integration of students—in both directions—which actually works for the benefit of the students.	Deputy Head
Desi McKeown	The Deanes School	Assistant Headteacher	The school of the future should embrace new technologies to allow students to be able to practice distributed and concurrent learning. The personalising learning agenda at present is a step in the right direction. My issue is that despite our moves to personalise learning, we still operate an outdated examination procedure. Surely, the school of the future should be more flexible when it comes to awarding qualifications.	Deputy Head
Michael Steen	Langtree School	Assistant Headteacher	School designers need to give much more thought to the role of support staff and their role in supporting learning. Office space is always at a premium within a school. If I was designing a school “from scratch” I would like to see the office space integrated thoughtfully into the school design.	Deputy Head
Jan Johnson	Springhead Special School	Deputy Headteacher	Despite our building being inadequate and 40 years old we have been judged by Ofsted to be an Outstanding school. This is due to the hard work and attitude of the staff. We are under review at present and keeping our fingers crossed that we will have a purpose built school built in the foreseeable future which are co-located with a primary and	Deputy Head

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			secondary school so we can develop further the brilliant inclusion work we do. Our pupils with SLD and PMLD are entitled to these opportunities but so too are their mainstream peers so our society has a better understanding of disabilities and how they can learn how to overcome communication difficulties. Just to have classrooms which are wheelchair accessible and hoists all over the school, spacious classrooms would be fantastic—in fact Bulletin 77 would be ideal but how can our LA afford the best resources which will last well into the future. The County Council refuses to consider PFI buildings so we need direct government support as closing and selling obsolete school buildings would not bring in the revenue. We are already planning a specially equipped bus which we can be taken out to our many mainstream partner schools where we can provide additional support, resources and training where it is needed. This we hope to fund from specialist special school funding. These are exciting times but it would be easy to loose morale if the best isn't forthcoming!	
Gillian Dillon	Nunnery Wood High Secondary	Deputy Head	Summary: Funding needed for more CCTV cameras.	Deputy Head
John McCormack	Walthamstow Secondary School for Girls	Deputy Head	Summary: Main problem so far with process is uncertainty.	Deputy Head
Andrew Batey	Hatton Park Primary, Longstanton, Cambridgeshire	Chair of Governors	The role of a school at the centre of a community can only be realised by making the school environment and facilities easily available to that community. This means building in adequate, and separate, storage space for a number of groups to make use of a hall on different evenings. Often storage space is the first thing to be sacrificed to meet a budget and in the process excludes a number of community groups making effective use of the facilities and ultimately a concerted effort from the community to establish an activity centre away from the school that better meets their needs. The barrier to community groups establishing their own building on school property is extremely high for small groups (typically having to find £1,000 for "legal fees" incurred by the LA before anything is built) whereas often the buildings they wish to place are on areas that the school is unable to utilise for logistical reasons (access, distance from main school buildings, outside existing security provision) and could be used as a method to engage with these community groups better, in particular youth groups such as Scouts, Guides, etc.	Governor
Clive Cradick	Bishop of Winchester Comprehensive Bournemouth	Parent Governor	What I really must gripe about is the priority of funding. A school in our area re-built on a new site 10 years ago is to receive immediate BSF funding whereas we do not have sufficient funding for a perimeter fence round our delapidated old shack, and it is we who are in SM. This does	Governor

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			not, however detract from our resolve to do so with funding from whatever source or to getout of SM ASAP. Please be fair!	
Michael Billington	South Dartmoor Community College, Ashburton, Devon	Chair of Governors	We have had wonderful support from our LA over the years regarding our building needs but I continue to have concerns that they simply have insufficient funds to do what is required of them across the authority. We were last inspected by Ofsted in 2003. They highlighted various accomodation needs. However, we still have almost 30% of our science lessons taught in non-specialist rooms. We still have sub-standard areas for our Art teaching. We therefore desperately need two to four new science labs and a complete rebuild of our Art Dept. The LA know these things and tell us that we are on the "list" but can not even give a timetable of when these issues are likely to be addressed, because they don't know how much money they will get from Central Gov't. It is lovely to hear of this initiative regarding our secondary schools, but how realistic is it? Are our hopes to be raised yet again, only to be later disappointed because of poor funding? I watch and wait with interest.	Governor
Tim Davis	Cornwall LA	Advisor and Parent and Governor	Buildings make a massive difference to the quality of educational experience pupil's recieve I have seen new classrooms making a real difference as well as conversely old leaky poorly constructed or mobile classrooms adversely impacting on all aspects of the educational process. However, the PFI approach seems ominous to me and provides immediate solutions with massive longer term concerns.	Governor
Pat Keating	Monks Orchard Primary	Governor	Our school consists of old buildings and mobile classrooms. At a recent Ofsted inspection the lead inspector was horrified at the conditions in which the Reception teachers had to teach. The school has two forms of entry so 60 children are housed in two classrooms. To improve the limited space the school had provided an outside learning environment but the inspector still felt that the teachers were having trouble delivering the curriculum. What are we to do in the future? We have contacted the LA to apply for funding for a new block from the "Building Schools for the Future" fund but they are not very confident that we will receive any. Also recently, a surveyor reported that our Dining Hall was in need of such repairs that money would be wasted on trying to improve the conditions there. We are trying to be a Healthy School but are having trouble providing healthy conditions for our children to eat in. We see other schools in our area that have new buildings and new ICT resources. Is it because we are not a failing school that we get nothing? If so it gives little reward to our hard working and dedicated staff, and the children.	Governor

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David Barry	Ashmount School, Islington	Chair of Governors	<p>Ashmount School is a successful, multi-ethnic school (There is no single ethnic group in a majority). It is closely related to its neighbourhood from which it draws its pupils. The building is quite simply falling apart. The Council recognises that the environment is not acceptable, and is deteriorating. The Building being entirely glass clad is very cold in winter, leaks heat—all the windows are working loose in their metal frames. The Council put forward a proposal to move the school to a new site, financing the new building by sale of the old school site. This is an exciting project to build an extended, eco school. Correctly handled it could be an exemplar. However, the council have delayed a final decision as to whether to proceed to a public consultation on this project for over three months. Parental patience with the awful facilities is exhausted. And quite frankly, as Chair of Governors, I feel at my wits end. The stress caused to the teaching staff by the inadequate environment in which they must work is most unfair.</p>	Governor
Stan Terry	Icknield Community College	Governor	<p>Schools have a particular role to play in securing the future for our young people. As models of good practice they can demonstrate to young people and the community what sustainable living is about. Schools should be preparing young people to take positive active roles in finding solutions to both local and global problems and prepare them for a sustainable future world. Schools need to adopt an approach to the design and delivery of their curricula, which encompasses sustainable development at its heart, adopting an environmentally sustainable approach to the utilisation of the buildings and grounds within which they operate, as well as developing policies focussed on sustainable purchasing of goods and services delivered to them as organisations.</p> <p>In the context of the Building Schools for the Future programme it is essential that the programme itself, the buildings it produces and the processes which are undertaken to achieve the completion of the programme are transformative. BSF should offer the opportunity for radical changes in the manner in which students are educated, provide buildings which have minimal impact upon the environment, ensure learning opportunities which engage with the whole community of the school and which exemplify to its community the practices and process which are designed to enable the community to achieve sustainability.</p> <p>The construction industry must be made to embrace more sustainable forms of building and make better use of resources in their delivery of this programme; something historically they have failed to achieve. Government must set higher targets, such as</p>	Governor

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			<p>zero waste, increased (30%+) recycled materials components through the BSF programme. They should also expect “excellent” rating under BREEAM rather than just “very good.”</p> <p>School leaders, governors, teachers, students and communities need assistance through CPD in building a vision for their school of the future. Without that kind of support the transformative opportunities presented by BSF will be lost both in building design and pedagogic practice.</p> <p>The curriculum must change and with it the forms of learning, to grasp the opportunities presented by new learning environments. If schools do not understand the need to change their operational approach towards the curriculum, timetable and communication processes then we are unlikely to make the most of any transformational opportunity presented by BSF.</p> <p>School buildings must be managed sustainably, with the whole school becoming a medium for the community to acquire positive sustainable habits. Sustainability must also be at the core of the purchasing processes of schools so that healthy, local and sustainable food, prepared on site, where possible, with a strong commitment to the environment, social responsibility and animal welfare with the majority of food procured locally is the norm. Schools should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — exemplars of energy efficiency as well as users of renewable energy sources whilst maximising their use of rain and waste water resources; — the embodiment of sustainable travel principles with the majority of students walking or cycling to school and car journeys minimised; — models of resource efficiency, reducing the level of their consumption and implementing re-use and recycling procedures; — should be designed and managed in such a way as to exemplify the principles of sustainable living with opportunities for students to learn from the buildings and grounds; — exemplars of corporate citizenship approaches with positive support for local well being and the environment through their position as learning hubs within their local environment; and — focussed on the practice of global citizenship. <p>BSF is not just a building programme, its primary task is the development of a cultural change for education in the 21st century.</p>	

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			<p>Well-designed working environments support effective and successful working practices, but physical innovation will not alone bring about successful change in our schools. It is only by adapting to a sustainability focus that impacts the curriculum, the pedagogic approaches, the systems and the structures of education that we might see schools becoming models of sustainability principles.</p> <p>The external constraints imposed by guidance documents which frame the BSF programme may ultimately, reduce significantly the impact of the programme. There are difficulties inherent in attempting to develop the BSF process in conjunction with Every Child Matters and the Extended Schools programme. Conflicts are likely to surface. The capacity of the construction industry, through Public Private Partnerships to deliver BSF, whilst exemplifying sustainability principles through processes such as sustainable procurement may be at odds with the BSF KPI's and present construction industry practice.</p> <p>Finally it is interesting to note that the exemplar school designs which are promoted through the PfS web site rarely, if ever, mention principles of sustainability as a driving force for this agenda. Perhaps we should expect more!</p>	
Neil McDonald	Brayton College	Head of History	<p>The schools of the future need to move away from the factory style educational buildings of the 20th century and be innovative and more thoughtful about the nature of education and work in the 21st century. Schools need to be ready not just to embrace the technology we are currently using but that which we are just developing. There also needs to be more care about ease of movement around the school with greater thought about corridors entrances and lighting. Seeing businesses use premises is very interesting, CISCO systems did an open day for the Specialist Schools Trust and their ideas on premises management and design for future schools was enlightening with a focus on the way in which schools of the future should allow Teachers to work more effectively in their environment eg what is the role of the staffroom? Would it not be better to have planning areas for departmental areas. Most staffrooms cannot cater for the entire staff anyway so why have them?</p>	Head of Dept
Lorraine Cooper	St Joseph's Catholic Primary Stourbridge West Midlands	Head of ICT	<p>I would like to see Solar panels and wind power for reducing the world's sustainable resources. Recycling units for paper, plastic and aluminium. Eco light source. Installation of water recycling plant ie for sanitation.</p>	Head of Dept

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Matt Power	Holy Cross Science & Sports Specialist College	Head of Science	I would like to see more schools introduced renewable energy schemes onto their sites. Many have space suitable for wind turbines, but they cost too much to build. These would help to supply the school with energy, can feed back into the national grid at night and would provide a fabulous stimulus for teaching. I would also like to see all secondary schools have secure and extensive bike sheds. Many of our pupils would like to ride to school but can't due to the lack of facilities.	Head of Dept
Sheila Sloan	Caedmon School	Assistant Head of Humanities Faculty	School is the location where plans for the future should be nurtured and practised. The building and site should be demonstrately ecologically friendly and sustainable. It should give all stakeholders the opportunity to experience sustainability and to participate in decision making and carrying plans through to fruition.	Head of Dept
Paula Chesterman	Barton Court Grammar School	AST and Head of Music & Performing Arts	We have a real problem with space—one Hall which acts as Dining Hall, PE and Perf Arts accommodation and assembly Hall. My department is strong, but we have very poor facilities and need a Hall and Drama Studio. I feel strongly that all children should have access to good accommodation and that funding should be more fairly distributed.	Head of Dept
Nik O'Dwyer	Leiston High School	Head of Engineering	Floor-space per student has to be the biggest pointles idea ever, our students have lost their identity, and some classrooms due to what? The fact that when the school's floor plan is measured we have enough classroom space so no need for extra rooms, despite that means that I would have to relocate to an English room for a practical lesson, as it is we currently teach three technology subjects (Resistant materials, Graphics and now Engineering) one of our what was workshops is now a computer room so we only have room for two practical lessons at any one time, what are they thinking. thanks, just needed to get that off my chest, future schools are gonna be great, I just hope they can stay that way.	Head of Dept
Zoe Mather	Education Village	Assistant Subject Leader Mathematics	We have recently moved into a new building and even though it was designed for purpose it is distinctly lacking. My classroom was consistently at over 30 degrees celsius during the months of June and July. There is no air-conditioning. The pupils were unable to learn as they were over-heating and as a consequence over-tired and stressed. The outside play areas have no shelter from either rain or sunshine. There are no staff toilets around the building. There are not enough seats for the pupils to sit and eat their lunch at lunchtime. There is a nice first floor walkway that overlooks the eating area and as a consequence some pupils have thrown/spat at the people below. This is a recently "designed-for-purpose" school. I am not sure that the people involved in these designs have ever worked in a school	Head of Dept

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			or been around young people to ask what they would like. In the future I hope the schools are designed with young people AND staff in mind. Security and safety is what children need and these buildings need to provide that.	
Catherine Ogden	Heckmondwike Grammar School	Head of Mathematics	The fabric of the school is over 100 years old, and has been extended so many times that there is very little open space on school site. The old-fashioned design of the classrooms is not compatible with modern equipment such as Interactive Whiteboards, and the whole environment is cramped and scruffy. Classrooms need to be larger to allow space for a variety of activities, and simply for easier movement around the room. Separate storage is essential for the wide variety of books and equipment that we would like to have access to, more classrooms are needed as not all staff in the department have their own room. Moving classrooms invariably means not having access to the proper resources we are all expected to use to deliver dynamic, engaging lessons.	Head of Dept
Ian Ridgway	Lord Williams's School	Head of Faculty	Technology Faculties tend to be very dated in their layout, decor and in the way they are equipped. Many were never suitably updated for the national curriculum delivered over the past couple of decades and the chances of having the additional faculties needed for the vocational based courses is probably as remote! Students have to be bussed 15–20 miles to complete courses at colleges, something that cannot be sustainable long term!? Existing departments are in decline with loss of middle ability and weaker students to colleges at the same time as more able and mixed ability students drop the subject to take up a wider range of option choices, including, double options in some subjects. The training of staff through suitable degree courses with education is in decline. Some serious thought is needed if we are to prepare all students for life in a technological society and if some students are to specialise in design and technological areas. Let's have some joined up thinking that gets the facilities right in schools, a design technology curriculum for "all" students and the training of the next generation of teachers with the correct subject knowledge and skills as well as the educational training currently recieved! This means three to four years not one year retraining. In terms of technological teaching space! 100 sq m is far too small needs to be at least 120 sq m per room minimum. Why do we think students should be able to produce formal work at work benches? Proper work tables should be available in a workshop as well as benches. Storage rooms needed to be attached to each teaching space for storage of large 3D outcomes—corridors are not the right place! Preparation rooms should 50–60 sq m many	Head of Dept

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			are far too small and should include space for handling CAD CAM. ICT networking, including computers for computer aided design(CAD) and computer aided manufacturing(CAM) is needed in each room, at least eight work stations per room. A dedicated computer room in each technology faculty is needed where every child has access to a computer. Display units are need for both 2D and “3D” work both in workshops and in central display areas. Hope this is useful, it reflects some of my thoughts over 23 years of teaching and in having been involved in a number of building projects where architects are poorly advised by national recommendations on things like teaching space, storage, equipping and room counts.	
Kelly Bennett	Hugh Christie Technology College	2nd i/c Physical Education	Schools of the future have a role to play in ensuring that students have access to 21st century sports facilities. With the 2012 Olympic Games fast approaching and the risk to todays children of obesity regularly hitting the headlines, it is important that we provide pupils with opportunities to participate in is many different activities as possible and provide them with the tools to sustain healthier lifestyles. It is also important with the Olympics at the fore that we provide facilities in our schools that enable our students to develop their individual talents and allow us to compete with the rest of the world. The majority of schools today are fortunate enough to have a sports hall, but when you compare this to the likes of the USA and Australia where the average school has a double sports hall, two astro-turf pitches and swimming pool, we are never likely to be able to compete at international level and limit the opportunities we provide for pupils to have positive experiences in a wide variety of activities developing a lifelong sustainable interest in some sort of physical activity.	Head of Dept
Dominic Bowler	Harrytown RC High School	Head of Science	A few years ago I worked in Manchester and really felt the benefit of a Labour government running the education system. New schools were being built every where and each was better kitted out than the last. All the schools have all singing all dancing science and ICT labs and interactive whiteboards abound. Now I work in Stockport and I feel the wrath of a government that doesn't seem to feel that equality is an important issue. I teach science in an old art room, new buildings are built badly at minimum cost and maximum corner cutting. ICT facilities have improved every year since I joined the school five years ago but still they are not as good as the Manchester school I left. We have no spare cash and we are reeling from the 20 years of Conservative neglect and the 10 years of Labour indifference. If you have money to spend share it out according to need, not just the same old formulae that have failed us and other boroughs in a similar state	Head of Dept

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			again and again. After all we are the ones who do pay our tax and don't claim benefit. So we should deserve a reasonable place in which to work. I have worked in both Africa and the West Indies in local government schools. In both my science labs were more modern and up to date. Next and this is even more important. I feel all new schools should be built with the aim of being carbon neutral. They should have rain water collection systems for all waste water systems. Wind and solar electricity generating systems. A battery backup low wattage lighting and as much passive lighting and heating as possible. The should be made out of sustainable materials and designed to be extremely robust so that they don't need mending and replacing before the next government arrive. No stud partition walls. Lots of wood and stone and plenty of windows. Schools should be designed to be open day evening and night providing centres for their communities where all can learn to spend time together, learning, playing and enjoying cultural activities. Schools should have large play areas with woods and ponds, cycle tracks and activity areas, to encourage children to do something during breaks and before and after school. I could go on and may just do so when I find time.	
Janine Fisher	Fairfield High School for Girls	Head of Maths	My vision for future schools would be enviromentally friendly using recycled equipment (rulers, protractors etc) at affordable prices with allotment style gardens maintained by pupils and organic products, some from the garden sold in the canteen. The furniture would be made of sustainable materials and enviromental studies would be on the curriculum.	Head of Dept
Stephen Schwab	Neston High School	Head of Geography. Geography Advisor— Cheshire	It is vital that our school improvements are as sustainable as possible, we cannot teach about sustainability in learning environments that are not. It is also vital that our students are included into the decision making process so that it becomes a practical lesson in sustainability and the students are empowered and valued in decisions that affect their learning home.	Head of Dept
Hilary Longman	Claremont Fan Court	Head of Year	I would like to see schools as a resource centre for the local community, supporting life long learning and setting and example for pupils about this concept. The actual materials need to be from sustainable materials even if it is more expensive as we need to lead by example. I also think it is important to have a growing area where pupils of any age can have that hands on experience.	Head of Dept
Mr A Hulse	Leasowes Community College	Data Manager/ Head of ICT	Building Schools for the Future is an excellent concept, however it should not be a route for a small number of providers of managed systems to be able to dictate the way in which ICT is provisioned, provided and regulated. As a teacher in an LA with a fully managed system it has taken us nearly	Head of Dept

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			seven years to get the system provider to realise that FLEXIBILITY and INNOVATION must not be stifled by the seemingly overarching RISK factors. There MUST be levels of managed service that are affordable, flexible, innovative and with a REAL partnership between all involved, not just a “committee” of LA officers, Service Providers and the odd token Head or other Senior Teachers who usually do not fully understand the impact of the decisions foisted upon them. BSF can the making of Education in the UK or it can put back the innovative and creative streams in schools by 10 years!	
J B Emerson	Reading School	Head of Chemistry	Reading School is a selective boys’ grammar school in the Reading LA. It is a foundation school and is the main buildings are Grade II listed status. The LA has provided minimal assistance with the expensive and time consuming process of keeping the fabric of the buildings maintained and whilst this looks impressive from a distance, closer inspection shows it is greatly in need of maintenance in many areas and complete refurbishment in others. The school has been consistently rated as successful in providing a high standard of education by successive league tables, placing it as one of the top performing boys’ schools in the country. The science block is particularly in need of refurbishment. Some limited money has been spent on the Biology facilities in recent years but even in this department corners have been cut in the interest of economy, resulting in a laboratory that is too small and subsidence in evidence. The school turns out well qualified Chemists, Physicists and Biologist most of them going to top universities. In the sixth form there are currently 91 Chemists in year 12 and 65 in year 13 making it one of the largest sixth form departments in the state sector and yet we have to manage in three laboratories and teach science in classrooms for around 25% of lessons. The staff have no toilet facilities nearby and no drinking water. The Chemistry department has doubled its numbers in the sixth form in the last four years. Despite the apparent success, the school has limited funds to even maintain the 1950s design of the Chemistry department. Extending it to meet the growing demands is completely out of the question. It seems that the educational success of the school is almost mitigating against money being spent to develop its facilities. The massive potential need for the science graduates of the future is being fully met by the school but far too few of these students choose to study science at University many reflecting on the old-fashioned nature of the learning environment. Their only experience are laboratories built and designed in the era before the first successful manned space flight. I understand that Reading LA will be unlikely to receive any funding for	Head of Dept

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			development of secondary schools before 2012 when successive governments may well not continue with the policy anyway. It is hardly surprising that this initiative is viewed with some scepticism. The Royal Society of Chemistry is concerned at how slowly the BSF initiative is progressing: (Source—RSC Submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007) “Providing the best chemistry education in schools Good school science facilities A capital allocation of £1.9 billion is required to provide modern science laboratory facilities in all schools at the earliest opportunity, and £70 million per annum (£210 million between 2008–10) for equipment. Research commissioned by the RSC into the rate of improvements in school laboratories will assess progress in institutions which have benefited from the Building Schools for the Future Programme because we are concerned about the very slow pace of this initiative.” <i>The Guardian</i> has reported unfavourably on government progress too: http://education.guardian.co.uk/schoolfunding/story/0,,1727378,00.html . Mr Blair is reported to have said schools will receive £75,000 in the next three years to build an extra science laboratory—I wonder what he thinks could be bought for that—part of a modular building perhaps. It is time that good teaching in schools was rewarded with appropriate environments in which to work. The rebuilding programme needs to move ahead much more quickly and target areas that have the greatest development need.	
Ian Davis	Addey and Stanhope Secondary	Head of ICT	Summary: Thinks architects didn’t understand schools. Nice school—shame it doesn’t work.	Head of Dept
Russell Bryant	Walthamstow Secondary School for Girls	Head of ICT	Summary: Visit other schools to see impact.	Head of Dept
Haasan	IQra School	Head Teacher	We need more information about the services.	Headteacher
Mrs Geraldine Dunkerley	Welshampton CofE Primary School	Headteacher	Having watched “Building schools for the future” which focused upon the HLC in Telford and the following programme about new learning communities that the small rural primary school is once again being neglected and issues about learning in the 21st century never seem to address rural areas and our isolation and quite often deprivation due to low income. My school is Victorian, small and not fit for purpose. There are 71 children on roll (one who needs a wheelchair), three small classrooms, no corridors, no hall, no dining room, no heads office, no cloakroom for the junior pupils, no PPA space, no small group work space and a playground which is very small and sloping. Our field is across a lane which is used by milk tankers and tractors and is very dangerous to cross. I have used my DFC funding to completely refurbish the	Headteacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			<p>inside of the building (I am very grateful for this money). All three rooms now have interactive whiteboards. Future DFC money will be useless to me as the building is completely boxed in by the main road and two lanes. I will be unable to extend in any way. Offering after school activities to the “isolated rural community” is very nearly impossible . . . so . . . once again the local community is penalised for living in an isolated rural area with little or no public transport. As a Head I regularly question my pupils about their thoughts on their school (Something which was mentioned in the programme). Very interesting was a comment made about the building and how the children would like a small space just for themselves if they wanted to work during play or just to talk to their friends ie a pupils sort of “staff room”. This was picked up on the programme also. There will never be an opportunity for the children of Welshampton School to have their own space and as a Head I feel very frustrated about the whole issue of educating our pupils for the 21st century when my pleas about a building not being fit for purpose are constantly being ignored because “there is no money”. I am aware of many other Victorian schools with their specific problems but when the site itself does not allow for any form of expansion then the children in the village of Welshampton will continue to be penalised through no fault of their own. We need more people in education who have worked in rural areas to fully explain from 1 hand experiences the problems that are encountered every day trying to meet Government targets and implement new Government initiatives which are all geared around large buildings in large towns or cities. I would like to invite Teachers’ TV to spend a day in my school, bring along the vice principle from the Hadley Learning Community and compare her working conditions in her primary school to the conditions in Welshampton. We achieve high standards under a great deal of stress due to the working environment. I wonder what sort of results Hadley will produce in their multi million pound new build. I will be watching and waiting for the league tables next year!</p>	
Anne Spragg	St Joseph’s	Head Teacher	<p>I am grateful that I have been allocated a substantial amount of money for renewing/developing the school buildings. However, I am seriously concerned that as a VA school I am left with a heavy fund raising commitment to obtain the 10% Governors’ liability, as well as the money to provide furniture, computers etc for the new build, and also to refurbish the ever deteriorating state of the existing, very old building. All of which takes me away from my strategic, day to day role as Head teacher. I am concerned that publicity about the generous allocation of funding does not match my experience.</p>	Headteacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
Beverley Gardner	Christ Church (Erith) CE VA Primary School	Headteacher	Our school building is extremely small and cramped. We have the smallest square meterage per pupil in Bexley. We have two mobile classrooms which are falling down. We do not comply with DDA regulations, have no space for a library, intervention groups, staff to do their PPA work, resources, meetings etc We have even had to turn cupboards into offices as we have had to extend our administration staff in response to accommodating the 24 administration tasks that teachers must not now do. The dream of being an extended school in terms of opening hours, and meeting the needs of our pupils and the community are an impossible dream with the building as it now stands. We have a difficult entry number of 40, which results in a mixed R/1 class, which presents difficult curriculum delivery decisions. We are currently submitting planning permission for huge extension, which meets all our needs as well as will enable an exiting innovation—a Foundation Stage Unit. Our plans are the most cost effective we could possibly have, so that we can get as much as possible for as cheaply as possible! Consequently, we have compromised when we would have loved to have gone that extra mile. We are desparately trying to get funding for our improvements, and so far, have not been successful—hence this application. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, and of course, improvements to the building would make this school, this learning environment, so much better for all those who work here—the pupils, the staff and the volunteer helpers.	Headteacher
Sajid Ahmad Sajid	Government High School Hujra (Okara) Pakistan	Headmaster/ Administrator/ Supervisor/ Mentor/Planer	I am working as Senior Headmaster in Government High School Hujra (Okara) Pakistan, where 1,800 students are enrolled class 6 to 10 and only 35 teachers are working for 22 sections. building is sufficient but other all facilities are less available.	Headteacher
Sue Widgery	East Oxford Primary School	Headteacher	I believe that the school building programme should be providing communities with flexible learning areas both indoor and out, for use by all ages of learners. They must be safe but welcoming and readily accessible. They should be modelling high quality exciting design with an emphasis on sustainability. Working areas need to be readily adaptable to allow for varied use. The users should be involved in the planning and furbishing of the buildings.	Headteacher
Richard Weeks	Teddington	Head	We are extremely fortunate, and extremely excited about our BSF status. The opportunity to re-think learning and teaching appropriate for the 21st century learner, and creating a physical environment to realise that vision is a unique position for a Head and a school. We are a short way through this process having just appointed architects. It is demanding work ensuring	Headteacher

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			that we get our Vision etc to a stage where the architects can move us forward. I have been very impressed by the range and level of external support, advice and guidance that has been available to us, and I think we enter this programme at a very good time as many lessons have been learnt from previous New School Build programmes. I would make two observations. One, that as a Head I am benefitting from an extremely knowledgeable team of Governors who are devoting a lot of time, effort and expertise to this programme. Without their efforts, and an agreement to fund, temporarily, the services of a good quality educational consultant, I think, as a Head, I would now be drowning in the demands of two schools! Secondly, although I guess there is a certain inevitability about this, despite the very large sum of money devoted to our re-build, it would appear that, in order to create the very best school for the future, there is just not quite sufficient money! Nevertheless, we move forward with great optimism and excitement.	
Shiro Kobayashi	Japan College of Music	principal	I was a theatre and drama teacher at the teacher training university. I retired from the university five years ago and now manage a polytechnic where we teach students who want to become childcare centre staff. 1. I teach them Drama. 2. At 2008, we move to the water front of Tokyo bay and are going to build new campus. When I found your tv, I fascinated deeply. After a half year I would like to send you my plan of new school and expect many teachers' opinion to be given.	Headteacher
Jim Marriott	Greenhill Primary, Sheffield	headteacher	The poor condition of the building and lack of security affects educational standards. Teaching is frequently disrupted by unnecessarily piecemeal building work or the results of lack of security. Management time is constantly diverted from the core task so as to attend to premises issues which are invariably hard/near impossible to resolve. Many issues could be resolved by prompter support from the LA.	Headteacher
Charlotte Robinson	Rokeby	Head Teacher	We are one of the sample schools in the Newham BSF project. Whilst the resources made available for "transforming education" through the project is excellent, the method through which we will get our new building is not! Our new building will be PFI and from the research that Newham heads have undertaken that brings about many areas of concern and pitfalls. Not least the ICT managed service, premises and other soft facilities management.	Headteacher
Sarah Peacock	Sheffield West City Learning Centre	Curriculum Development Officer	This is one of the most important things we can do for our young people today. Schools should be able to (and rewarded for) sourcing their energy from renewable sources. Schools could enhance their position as the centre of communities and educate the pupils by hosting sources of	Other

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			renewable energy and pooling it out to the community (ie wind turbines). Pupils should be encouraged to walk to school and parents encouraged to car share. Schools should aim to be as paperless as possible and new technologies should be used to enable this (VLEs for example). The single most important thing that can be done is that pupils are taught about sustainable development and given the skills and knowledge to be well informed, responsible and resourceful young people who can drive it all forwards.	
Kathryn Tipper	Suffolk LA	Secondary Strategy Consultant	Is this about buildings or teachers? I agree that it would be wonderful to have a pleasant and “grown-up” environment to live in—clean, tidy, modern and flexible spaces in which learning can take place effectively. It’s time to throw out the Victorian approach of 30 kids in a classroom and five 1-hour lessons a day. We need to be able to shift furniture for kinaesthetic (I can never spell that!) learning, to allow groups of pupils to work together, to allow them to work on their own. From an ICT point of view—we need flexibility so that ICT can be used as a tool rather than the focus of a lesson. Do we need to take a disposable point of view? What’s right for education now may not be right in 20 years time—life moves fast . . . But most of all we need to have effective teachers if we’re ever going to achieve true independent learners. Teachers with time to prepare and time to truly individualise lessons. Teachers who are flexible to the needs of pupils and society. I could go on—but whatever happens we need to create a wonderful environment where pupils want to learn and teachers want to go to work! Good luck!	Other
R W Goddard	Crowfoot Primary	Parent	Allow each to make all purchases directly from cheapest source and NOT via “county, etc”.	Other
Mark Jones	Various (seven) taught in plus many more as a visitor	Education Consultant, former teacher for 25 years	(1) Acoustics are often appalling (even in some Academies). They need to be excellent to outstanding. Pupils naturally shuffle and fidget. A quiet pupil speaking should still be clearly audible. Teacher and pupil talk are fundamental. This should be the first consideration. (2) Flexibility of spaces with multiple teaching positions and ways of arranging a class in groups of two, three, four etc. Spaces within each classroom for individuals, pairs, and small groups to do different tasks without disturbing the main class, still supervised by the teacher. Multiple seating positions available so lots of pupils can be split up to sit alone or in pairs at the teachers’ discretion. More space, less cramping. Good sight lines. Large display areas and presentation spaces. Room to gather a class around away from their desks, then go back smoothly. Size enough to have different areas in the room which accommodate the class.	Other

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			<p>(3) Laboratories: revisit the original Nuffield “O” level vision which set detailed recommendations (for 32 pupils!)—much of this has been lost in modern, trendy, but ultimately unsatisfactory designs.</p> <p>(4) Durability, solidity, and vandal proofing. Good sound proofing between rooms. Chipboard covered in plastic is a poor material. Stairwells and glass that echo appallingly when one unruly pupil bangs on a wall or kicks a railing. ceilings that disintegrate into crumbs, walls that fingers can poke through: there is too much poor design and shoddy material in schools.</p> <p>(5) Video surveillance, some by concealed cameras. Bullying and vandalism are realities. Shopping centres know this and employ security guards to patrol. A school concentrates teenagers and needs to prevent such behaviour.</p> <p>(6) Good lighting mostly natural, even in corridors, and ventilation. Quiet heating. Shading and measures to prevent overheating and noise from outside in summer.</p> <p>(7) Get all designs to be carefully scrutinised by teachers and pupil panels. Get existing classrooms and buildings to be “graded” in detail by Ofsted—provided this is not done as a “whitewash” exercise.</p> <p>(8) Flexibility of design without compromising solidity.</p> <p>(9) Ask Ofsted to produce a detailed report, with pictures, of good and bad features of at least 100 schools.</p> <p>(10) Look overseas as well.</p>	
Damien Graham	Salford City Council	School Improvement Officer	<p>Above all I think that the schools of the future should be reasonably small (up to 800–900 pupils max). As a part of young children this is my main concern. The smaller the school the more the teachers will get to know the pupils which will inform their lesson planning and hopefully personalise their learning in a true sense. Obviously technology will have a strong part to play and as much as I am in favour of that I still think that there will never be a substitute for a real teacher to inspire pupils in a classroom hence the need to keep schools and classes as small as possible to address their learning needs.</p>	Other
Jonathan Gershon	Achievement & Inclusion Group, Harrow Council (London)	Senior Adviser	<p>Two key elements concern me:</p> <p>1. There is a greater need to engage in an early dialogue with schools, pupils, the community and the LA about the pedagogy and provision for the future. How will personalisation change the learning experience for our pupils (and others), and what sort of accommodation will be needed? Where should it be located and what should co-exist along side for business and the community and how should these elements interact? What degree of flexibility will be needed? Current BSF and PFI process does not allow for sufficient in depth exploration to look into the future, be that five, 10 or 20 years on. Yes there is some blue skies</p>	Other

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			<p>thinking but not enough at all levels of delivery.</p> <p>2. The nature of PFI contracts does not enable schools to be flexible and respond to the needs of pupils and the changes to pedagogy or curriculum. Early PFIs are a straight jacket for many schools now and this can only get worse unless we rethink and change contracts so that they place more importance in success criteria being around school outcomes ie success and progress of pupils in as wide a view as possible—as opposed to the success of the building and organisation to reduce maintenace costs. The contract for the future must incorporate the vision for pupil achievement as its key performance indicators with educationalist having a bigger say than the facilities management.</p>	
Alison Reed	Unity Primary and Nursery School	A concerned parent	<p>My school is on the closure list to close in 2008 and my school has over 10% of special needs children, ranging from ADD to Autism. Their is also a lot of children who have asthma, my son being one of them and the two schools which are left for the area I live in are too far for my son to walk. My school is also very happy to work with me with my son's asthma routine but the two schools I have to choose from will accept him but have said they will not work with his asthma routine as on mad days he has to miss PE at the drop of a hat and sit in a quiet area on his own to look at books are lay down. He knows how to manage his asthma even at a young age as we have taught him how to manage on detect when he is at the border of an attack. When close a school like this that is also in the top 5% for two years running. I know the school is small but some children need a small school as they will not be able or have some to us from a bigger school as they could not cope. We are also a school which works close with the community and we have a close network with a play centre and a savings club which comes into the school every week. The only thing that my school can not work with me with is my son diety requirements as his foodhas to be made from 100% fresh food that has absolutly no chemicals or anything like that been in contact with his food as we have had two years now where there is a small improvement in his asthma because of me changing his food to being made as fresh as fresh can get.</p>	Other
Thomas Roth	River Valley School-Sundre, Alberta; Belview SD, Seattle, WA	Education Sales Consultant	<p>CAT-classroom amplification technology, is the fastest growing proven technology in Canadian and US schools. A Calgary study has found the investment for CAT equipment reduces compensation expense for teach-in or substitute teachers so significantly that overall expense (compensation and investment) is reduced in half, while academic performance is significantly increased without the need of changing circulum nor needing additional training days. The technology is becoming</p>	Other

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			mandatory in many school districts and is hailed as the most important development in education during the past 50 years. Lack of awareness and mistaken belief that the technology is only for the hard of hearing however delays introduction and application in UK schools.	
Alison Toner	Caludon Castle School	School Improvement Officer	Please consider the vital role that school grounds play and that the outside is just as important as the inside. Children and young people need good quality outdoor space to learn, play, relax do sport, just be in some green space.	Other
Judith Underwood	Shenfield High School	GTP Course Tutor	The future of schools is dependent on the quality of teacher training. It is essential that we continue to provide a variety of routes into the profession to attract both recent graduates and those with more experience of work. The TDA must listen to those of us who are at “the chalk face” of teacher training and be more responsive to our needs.	Other
Cheryl Reynolds	School of Education, University of Huddersfield	Course Leader	I visit lots of schools as part of my role and see a huge range of standards in accommodation. In particular, the provision for excluded pupils seems particularly poor and it seems to me that this is a group where environment is key to their chances of turning things around—an example is the KESS centre at Rawthorpe in Huddersfield who have been waiting for improved facilities for over a year . . .	Other
Kate Stanger	Kings Norton City Learning Centre	Programme Development	It is essential that any plans are monitored by people who actually work in schools. There are too many instances of glass “cathedrals” with no blinds or adequate ventilation. BSF schools will need to mount Interactive Whiteboards and will probably need wireless networks and that is only current technology. Teachers need storage space and work space. Pupils need lockers. But more important than the building will be the changes needed in teaching. Forward looking methods will be needed. Well constructed and continuing professional development is essential.	Other
Tosin Fagbewesa	Vivian Fowler Memorial College for Girls Lagos Ni	Socialworker/Tutor	Basically I feel that the purpose of running a school is to produce well focused, well-oriented, articulated and socialised human-beings ready to face the challenges and dynamics of our society. I feel the school management needs to invest more on providing state of the art educational facilities which is learner friendly and effective for the dispensation of knowledge. More should be done on organising workshops and seminars for teachers to make them upgrade their skills and knowledge especially in the utilisation of an effective methodology for the dispensation of knowledge especially for the slow learners in our society.	Other

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Karl Donert	Liverpool Hope University	Teacher Training—Univeristy Education	<p>It is fascinating to think that we invest so much into facilities which in many cases are only use for less than half the possible time. A very inefficient system! I teach a university Education Studies course on Future Schools and Future Teaching and we debated this point last year—to cut a long story short we decided that we really need a radical review of way schooling is organised. We need to structure schools and the school day much better to meet our education needs, rather than those of the Victorian past. We felt such a restructuring would be a really relevant and cost-effective thing to do. So why not have a “shift system” for under-pressure facilities—two school shifts—say 8am to 2pm and 2pm to 8pm, this way schools are open longer (we need just as many people employed but the expensive facilities get more use and there are opportunities to spend the money to achieve better results. Means we can double the number of computers in a school and halve the number of school buildings we need to maintain, The ones used can have twice as much invested in them to produce visionary schools relevant for needs in the future. Now in some parts of the country this might not be possible and some schools do perform community education roles as well, but where it could happen just think of the advantages—less traffic during rush hour for example, more space on the roads. Out of school class times, the pupils could be involved for example in local community centres or library facilities thus making better use of community facilities. Online learning can be encouraged along with community involvement . . . and making a difference. The pupils could get involved in local community projects—adding active participation in citizenship activities to their portfolio, or work experience or careers or actually learning for longer on project work, the exciting things that there is never time to do in class or in a crowded curriculum . . . We really need to consider some different types of solutions for the future. The classroom is not necessarily an ideal learning environment. And classes of 40 minutes long can in many cases be meaningless. So you can imagine my students came up with lots of other ideas . . . but I’ll encourage them to contribute later on—if you don’t mind. I think I would just urge us to look at “different” solutions . . .</p>	Other
Wes Jefferson	London Borough of Hillingdon	ICT Adviser	<p>Over the last few years, I have seen changes both in technology and the introduction of a very successful ICT Secondary Strategy (formerly the KS3 strategy). This has brought about a radical change to teaching in an ICT classroom both in terms of teaching approaches and layout needs. Unfortunately, it still appears that classroom layouts are being designed by non-teaching designers who have outdated ideas about what an ICT equipped classroom should look like. PC versus</p>	Other

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			<p>working area: ICT classrooms need to be designed around teaching and learning. Desk area to computer working area must be considered. Multi use of the classroom to reflect ICT across the curriculum must also be a priority in the design. Technology in the classroom: Wireless technology will remove the need for lab style classrooms. Are interactive whiteboards integrated into the classroom so that they are interactive? Has their positioning taken into consideration glare from the classroom lighting? Can all pupils see the board? Will it still be visible in the summer? Can pupils access the board so it is truly interactive? Is the classroom designed to meet the technology need of the pupils? Is it multimedia ready? Who to consult: Although I immediately want to suggest consulting stakeholder such as advisers, teachers, technicians etc to be consulted, I think we first need to listen to the pupil's voice when designing the classroom. We need to be asking what their issues are/were. What works well? What doesn't work well? In addition, LA advisers have a good overview of classroom layouts. Teachers of ICT often highlight their frustration in their classroom designs as do TA's. Also with the push towards schools being used outside of the curriculum time, tutors, parents etc need to be consulted. Other considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ergonomics of seating for posture. — Does the use of wireless technology pose any health risks? — How do we ensure access for all? Peripherals to engage pupils with learning difficulties, or disabilities? I hope my brief thoughts are of use. Should you wish me to expand on these, please do not hesitate to contact me. 	
Kathy Bor	Southwark School Improvement	Visual Arts Consultant	My daughter went to a nursery where there were low, young child height round windows, which worked very well. I once worked at Countesthope College, where the one story building faced onto an internal circular courtyard, giving an intimate, friendly feel. Not really a design issue, but proper blackout for whiteboards.	Other
Mike Carter	Schools with less than 100 pupils	Editor, National Small Schools Forum	Small Primary schools are often rural and perhaps this explains their generally strong commitment to a sustainable ecology. Teachers and children are physically close to nature on a daily basis. Many small schools help their communities, through the children, to be more aware of the detailed strategies likely to sustain the environment. Rural communities sometimes have mixed views, since some perceive sustainability as "profit erosion". It appears that small rural schools are in a good position to have a long term impact on countryside husbandry. Their buildings are of very mixed quality. There is a strong history of innovation in the architecture of small schools, but there is also a backlog of old and inadequate school	Other

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			<p>buildings. There have occasionally been efforts to overcome problems—eg funding to remove external toilets—but BSF appears to offer so much more. I have a picture of a village school as the hub of community working towards sustainability. The school would need to be built (or heavily adapted) to provide good models of practice—the curriculum with an appropriate emphasis—villagers and pupils working together on projects and extended schooling and services, which support both.</p> <p>Such a local school could achieve a high degree of potency for a relatively large geographical area. It is likely to have a strong impact on the pupils, their education and future generations. Meanwhile, it could provide essential information/facilities to help the community gain awareness and take action.</p> <p>Small schools have definite advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Staff are often quick to innovate. — They have a good history of collaboration to meet gaps in provision. — Their location enables pupils to gain empathy with the environment and direct learning from the surroundings. — Capital costs are relatively low. <p>It will be argued that capital costs, while low, represent higher costs per pupil. However, the value is likely to be high in the many areas where no other public services are provided for the community locally.</p> <p>My suggestion is therefore threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — that small village schools should be used at least as pilots for BSF thinking; — that small schools' buildings need additional space to enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — extended school and community services; — activities included within the networking/federation agenda; — facilities for the local community, where they do not otherwise exist. — that the ECM requirement that schools provide at least information about local services for children, be extended to include provision of information about local services to promote a sustainable environment. 	
Jonathan O'Farrell	Leicestershire LA	School Travel Plan Adviser	<p>Would like to see car sharing spaces for staff/students/visitors given a high profile and preferential placement on campuses—but of course not to the exclusion or detriment of cycle/walking access and storage. Calculate how many vehicle parking spaces on campus > Look at the lifetime of the school > arrive at a figure for the cumulative green house emissions of the vehicles over those years of operation > offset those emissions by planting in sustainable forestry ie The National Forest and other community forests—in the UK.</p>	Other

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Kevin Straw	The Gedling School	Laboratory Technician	When new science departments are being built, consideration should be made for easy to access and safe storage. Also more time should be allowed to consider the size of groups that can be taught in a laboratory and the space needed for both written and practical activities.	Support Staff
Matthew Wheeler	Hodge Hill School	Business Manager	When rebuilding schools, consideration must be given to the proximity of the building to the edge of the site boundary—too many of our current schools are set back from the communities they serve behind car parks, fencing and long, long drives. Double glazing and modern materials mean that we should seize the opportunity to bring schools closer to the communities that they serve—if we are to see the extended schools and dual use agenda flourishing in the future, we need to bring ourselves closer to our communities!	Support Staff
Sue Neal	Nelson Primary	PA & Finance Administrator	Summary: Airy admin areas please.	Support Staff
Gerald Hornsby	Nelson Primary	IT Technician	Summary: Make sure technology accessible by children.	Support Staff
Rose Osbourne	Nunnery Wood High Secondary	Catering Manager	Summary: Build to last.	Support Staff
Helen Chainway	Walthamstow School for Girls Secondary	Business Manager	Summary: What's worked well is to involve the staff.	Support Staff
Miriam Georgeson	Holy Family PS	Classroom Assistant	Schools of the future should be as eco friendly as possible. Solar power plus use of wind turbines incorporated. Rain water collected to flush toilets and recycling bins throughout to encourage staff and pupils to think about their waste. Areas in grounds for wildlife garden and vegetable patches for class use. Conservatory area and sheltered garden areas to allow pupils to chill out. these areas could also double as class group areas also. Pupil involvement at every stage of planning plus a chance for all staff to participate in planning etc.	TA
Ann Spittle	Northumberland Heath Primary School	Learning Mentor	Schools of the future must be built with extra meeting/small group rooms instead of the bare minimum of classrooms and offices. So many schools suffer from lack of private/appropriate space for visiting professionals working with children individually or in small groups and the problems are even bigger for Learning Mentors who now work in schools full time and are frequently found working in corridors, school libraries or having to beg the use of rooms which are not private or appropriate.	TA
Gill Eves	Welling	Teaching Assistant/ Governor/Parent	We have recently been involved in the PFI initiative and this has provided us with a brand new school. We are a Performing Arts College and the re-build has given us an excellent opportunity to put our staff and students' talents to good use. We have, however, had restrictions put on us by the	TA

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			private company involved, such as not being able to stick anything to the walls (in a school?)!! The company has also been slow in sorting out teething problems and other things, such as fitting blinds to windows etc However, overall I think this was a good idea, as the main building of the school was dilapidated and the maths, humanities and english departments were taught in “huts”. Not very conducive to good teaching and learning.	
Brenda Brundritt	Charlton Manor Primary School	Teaching Assistant	Schools should be fun, clean, colourful, and thought provoking. They should be a place where children feel safe and free to be creative. They should be a place that children want to go to, not just where parents want to “dump” children at for the day.	TA
Louise Oliver	Portesbery School	Teacher	Recently I have walked around a number of schools and felt very sad. A number of schools have been very run down, dirty and cramped. Portable classrooms are too hot to work in and a poor solution to the problem. We are trying to instill a sense of pride, respect and professionalism to learning and teaching and yet our surroundings do not reflect this. Other government run buildings I've been into are not like this. Everyone knows if a room/building is clean and in good repair it is more likely to stay that way and be looked after better. Kim and Agi, along with house Doctor should come and do a series in schools! Our premises have been criticised by everyone including Ofsted for a number of years now. We are hoping to move into a brand new school in the near future but the process has taken so long, it has been very unsettling for the staff, parents and pupils. It will be fantastic if/when it happens though.	Teacher
Luke Moseley	John Kyrle High School	Teacher	I am hopeful that the emphasis in education will move away from the focus on academic exams that we have at present and I think Building Schools for the Future is an opportunity to begin this move. By building schools where adult and vocational learning are side-by-side with student learning the link between school and life can be constantly reflected on in teaching. I also think it is important that new buildings emphasise the responsibilities young people, and society as a whole, have for their own environment and thus sustainable technology (energy efficient measures etc) and methods to reduce the reliance on car transportation (as just two examples) should not only be planned in but be very visible.	Teacher
Jeremy Philipps	Michael Hall	Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replace KS3 science with a more wholistic approach. 2. Use encouragement. 3. Include more art, creativity and less glitzy glamour 	Teacher

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Andrea Corbet	Woodstone Community Primary School	Classroom Teacher	We have a wonderful new build Eco School Building which cost three and a half million . . . with not enough toilets and handwashing areas! We are in our second term and are now getting bills at £500 quid a time for the security cameras, rainwater pump etc which are totally out of the blue! Why don't planners have to account for ongoing maintenance costs? How much is viable? We have wonderful grounds which are still being landscaped six months after we moved in to the building . . . the upkeep costs will be horrific but the area we have will allow the pupils to have a wonderful area in which to spend their time! Please let me win the I Pod!	Teacher
Max Deetray	Ruckholt Manor	Teacher	As a form tutor I feel really sorry for the kids at lunchtime, break times, and before and after school. So little money has been spent on the quality of the outdoor environment. It should be life-enhancing, a place to play, explore, make friends, sit around, appreciate nature, climb all sorts of structures and climbing walls, hide, seek, and do sports like basketball and skateboarding. Indoors there should be places to hang out, meet, chill, sit, climb, and play as well. Most schools just seem to have a hard court and some flat grass. Have you consulted the Groundwork Trust charity on this? Or the kids themselves!?	Teacher
Jennifer Dear	The Sweyne Park School	ICT Teacher/ Pupil Voice Coordinator	Our school has recently participated in a DFES Innovation Project looking into "schools of the future". As Pupil Voice co-ordinator at the school, I would like to ask pupils to become more involved in sharing their ideas and truly feeling empowered to effect their learning environment.	Teacher
Shaheen Hussain	St James Infant School and Nursery Derby	Teacher/ Manager/Senco	To make sure that the school has right angles! It is a big issue when it comes to storage and when you are trying to arrange things in order to make things more accessible in order for children to become independent and competent learners. Also for the school to be designed to be a relaxing place, a safe haven for the children where they can be nurtured—using natural products that are ecologically friendly.	Teacher
Angus Lafferty	Bitterne Park School Southampton.	Teacher of Design and Technology	I would like to see schools that have internal spaces, furniture and fixtures that can be easily moved around and quickly adapted to the changing needs of learners and curriculum. Even as the teaching year progresses. It would also be used to enable schools to more easily respond to new ideas and initiatives. It would help them to accept the idea of "change being a constant" and to respond positively. In another sense it would also help such a big investment to be more "future proof" and so be more cost effective over the long term. Schools must be "flood wired" for ICT and the communications of the future. Schools must be designed to be light and airy and designed to be "friendly places to be". Using my proposals schools	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			could readily adjust to increases/decreases in their subject populations, allow teachers to be more innovative in how lessons are delivered. Embrace technological changes as they occur.	
Julie Todd	Ferham Primary School, Rotherham	Teacher	As a teacher working in a lovely, brand new school building I do wish the architects would consult with people who actually work with children and understand the practicalities of it. My school has a serious lack of storage space and my foundation classroom is far too hot with no quieter area to work in with the older children. It seems a shame to spend so much money and not get everything right. A chance wasted.	Teacher
Janet Trow	Red Maids School	Teacher	In my previous school, a State School, I found many of the conditions in we as staff and students were expected to work appalling. Toilets were in a very bad state of repair, dirty and filthy. The school buildings were tired and often leaking and yet we and the children were expected to “pull ourselves together” and produce high results. “Sick building syndrome” has been a phrase used in the industrial sector, but not in terms of schools (or so I am led to believe). Fix the buildings and we will all reap the rewards, if you feel safe and feel you are working in an environment in which you feel healthy then you will respond and work in a more productive manner. Make the schools safe and healthy, make them places in which we want to teach and learn in. Pride comes with something to be proud of. Respect is earned, materially and emotionally. Help us to encourage this from children and parents and guardians.	Teacher
Pamela Manley	Montrose Academy	Teacher	I would like to see a learning building that is a resource for everyone. A building that is pleasant to be in—it is bright, has air conditioning, displays pupils work, has a welcoming atmosphere, and is a professional learning area. A place where computers and the latest technology is available to all—learning leaders and the community. A place that is not short of a textbooks or materials. An environment that welcomes all types of learners and explains why they are learning. A place that allows the learner to study what it is like to be a citizen in the global world we live today. Where learners understand the past and how they fit into its future. A place where learning is enjoyed and decisions are jointly taken. An environment where each person’s strengths are built on, without having to struggle to get the attention of the learning leader. A positive place!	Teacher
Gemma Meneely	Langrish Primary School	Class teacher; RE, MFL Manager & Assistant ICT Manager	I believe the future is ICT. By this, I think every child aged four to 16 should have regular access to computers, digital cameras (including those used to hold video conferences), interactive whiteboards, video cameras, floor turtles and other control devices, as part of their daily lessons. These	Teacher

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			<p>need to be built in and integrated into all other subject areas. Having surveyed a class of year 3 pupils last week, (with regards to their feelings and attitudes towards the school at present and how they think they would like to see it improve), they suggested having their own laptop to work on at their desks, along with having old fashioned styled desks which store books, etc under the lifting lid/desk top (as opposed to our current style of shared tables and separate drawers which they have to walk to whenever they need something). I would have to agree with my class, that this would be something to consider in the future. We have also just installed a NEW ICT Suite, which is fantastic, but still only facilitates one machine between two pupils, which, in the ideal world, isn't practical. Every child should have access to one work station during ICT lessons, at the very least. In the case of my school, we would have to extend or build a separate classroom in order to accommodate a larger ICT Suite, and I personally think this would be money well spent! Children are our future and ICT is an enormous, influential, essential part of the 21st century and beyond. Let's motivate and teach for the future together, moving forward as one.</p>	
Emma Watson	Church Cowley St James	Teacher and Governor	<p>Our School buildings are in reasonably good order on the whole, though what we are lacking is space. In order to teach effectively, we often need to withdraw small groups of children for special educational needs or English as an additional language. Currently these children are being taught in corridors or corners of classrooms where other lessons run simultaneously. The state of the windows throughout the school is a disgrace, they are covered in mould which I am convinced is detrimental to our children's health. Lack of storage is also a real issue for easy access to resources and since teachers have now thankfully been allocated time to plan prepare and assess children's work—we do not have a suitable place to work. When we have tried to work in the staffroom in the past many meetings are carried out there or children sometimes work in this space. We have no designated meeting room and often have to talk over the staffroom or squeeze into a very small and unsuitable space. Our SENCO and Deputy have to share a room which is also used as an internal exclusion room. We have no sickbay . . . need I go on? (I could if I didn't have a mountain of work to do before tomorrow!) We also have to double park in the school car park, so it can be a problem if you get blocked in and need to leave early for meetings etc.</p>	Teacher
Lyn Pakes	The William Alvey School	Teacher/Team Leader	<p>My school is in a market town in Lincolnshire. Most children come from the town and yet most arrive by car. The reasons for this are obviously varied, however, one major reason for not using</p>	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			<p>other forms of transport are the difficulties of travelling by bicycle or by foot. There are few pedestrian walkways. Few crossings. Some roads (where there are crossings) require a long wait to cross. There are cycle paths around the town but none in the centre of town (where traffic is at its heaviest). You have to come through the centre of town if you live in here and I wouldn't let my own daughters ride their bicycles during the busy periods that schools start and finish. If we want parents to encourage their children to walk or ride to school we must ensure their journey to school is safe and easy; at the moment is neither of these. We should also be encouraging recycling in schools by providing the means to recycle. We are able to recycle paper and plastic milk bottles only (we have had to make our own arrangements for this). If councils (who provide recycling provision for households) did the same for all businesses, as well as schools, we would be promoting a sustainable world to live in.</p>	
Sue Howarth	Tettenhall College, Wolverhampton	Science Teacher	<p>A very basic idea, but very practical—more power points for electrical equipment! With laptops, data projectors, interactive whiteboards, kettles for practical work, lamps for microscopes, there needs to be enough power sockets to avoid having to unplug one item to enable another to run.</p>	Teacher
Gerry Gray	Court Moor School	Science AST	<p>Schools need to evolve at the same rate teaching and learning has. Teaching Science using Tablet PCs and dataloggers, linked to the wireless network, with each student working on their own project means the physical constraints of my traditional science lab hinder their achievement. I would like to see the design consultation and foresight given to state-of-the-art offices in London applied to Science lab S10.</p>	Teacher
Mrs Nicki Berry	Hartshead J & I School	Advanced Skills Teacher	<p>In Calderdale and Kirklees there are many Victorian school buildings that are due for extension/renovation. There are also swimming pools that are closing down (eg Brighouse Pool). It would make sense to plan ahead and instead of spending hundreds of pounds on bussing children to swimming pools, build pools on school sites. Alternatively, councils could build multi-educational facilities with municipal gym, swimming, library, etc facilities on school sites. They could even throw in music facilities, recording studios and/or community centres. This would really fit in with the Extended Schools agenda.</p>	Teacher
Kathryn Maidment	St Mary's C of E Primary School	Teacher/Senior Leader	<p>I recently had the opportunity to visit a brand new school, I was amazed by the open spaces, wide corridors, large teaching areas, well thought out, useful technology, and up to date equipment. An inspiring learning environment. I then returned to my school where we don't have enough teaching areas, the building needs a lick of paint and</p>	Teacher

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			classrooms modernising, the dark, windowless corridors and the tired technology. I realised that although we make the best of our environment, our children deserve better. It is up to us to ensure that children have the best learning experiences and opportunities, a key way to ensure this, is through the learning environment.	
Eileen Orriss	Higher Failsworth Primary School	Teacher	Oldham Local Authority were told by Lord Adonis that their bid for funding from “Building schools or the Future” had to include Academies. Now schools are being amalgamated because of falling birthrates and replaced by Academies. Whatever happened to Academies only replacing failing schools?	Teacher
Chris Freudenberg	Selborne Primary School	FS2 Teacher, Art/DT Subject Leader	I hope that BSF will give proper consideration to the need for directly accessible outdoor spaces in primary schools and recognise the current move towards (back to?) outdoor learning/free flow to promote children’s independence and engagement in their learning, not to mention their health present and future.	Teacher
Sue Hood	Round Diamond	Teacher in Charge of Speech and Language Unit	I work in a three-year-old school, which surely should be energy efficient and designed for the current educational (and social) climate. However, the beautiful building which is our school has a terrifying energy bill and hardly any outdoor space not covered by tarmac. Wasn’t this an opportunity missed? Our staff room has to be a work room because space is at a premium, and classrooms are the correct legal size for 32 children but so cramped that stress levels must be affected. Someone thought underfloor heating would be a good idea for the foundation stage so little children are often sitting on uncomfortably warm floors, making concentration difficult. This all sounds very negative, which is far from the case—our working environment is much better than most—but it has made me wonder whether there is any shared vision between Education, Employment and Environment.	Teacher
Jeffrey A Matthews	Hallcross Doncaster	Retired Teacher now on supply	In the 40 years that I have been teaching I have had experience of teaching in a very wide range of buildings and there are very few that have been able to better the old victorian buildings for design and fitness for function. Yes it was mainly chalk and talk and a nature table but I could talk quietly to my class whilst a singing lesson took place next door. We were rarely too hot or too cold to work and the pupils had somewhere to store their coats and outdoor shoes. Brick walls stout well-maintained windows tiled roofs and a skilled caretaker able to carry out running repairs which lasted meant that teachers could go into each lesson confident that they would not have to cope with sticking doors, jammed locks and broken window catches. The chairs were wooden	Teacher

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			but shaped to bottoms and there were always a few different sizes to suit the different sized pupils, desks were strong and not easily tipped. Strangely I do not advocate a return to the old school buildings but suggest that the answer to many of the problems lie in a return to quality construction, an investment in high quality maintainance and the provision of an environment in which the interaction between teacher and taught is without distraction. Cardboard filled doors do not a quiet room make nor cheap plastic chairs a thoughtful student.	
Richard Simpson	King's School	Class Teacher	I just want to ask that consideration is allowed for, in future school building projects, for smaller class numbers which will necessitate more classrooms available, particularly for Primary Schools. This may be costly in the short term but will pay big dividends in the long run and may even reduce education costs and will certainly boost children's performance and achievement. Smaller class sizes make a big difference, they sell private schools which really have little else going for them compared to well resourced state schools. They should be planned for much more seriously.	Teacher
Martin Molloy	St Paul's	Teacher, Former Staff Governor	My current school is fairly modern and the fabric of the building is pretty good. My last school was a mix of buildings built between 50 and 10 years ago. The modern blocks were built on the cheap. The rooms were too small and the fixings were shoddy. If you're going to be spending a lot of money on new buildings can you make sure that they are still fit to teach and learn in 10 years from now. My current school is a collection of buildings on a large campus none more than two storeys high. There is as a result a large expanse of roof space. I have read a lot recently about using Solar panels on houses as a valuable contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I have not heard it mentioned in terms of the schools for the future programme. I'm hoping it won't be one of those things that doesn't get considered because it is difficult to budget for.	Teacher
Diane Hallas	Lawnswood	Teacher	All schools should have sports facilities available to the General public after 6pm. This should include dedicated sports halls and outdoor pitches, which should be bookable but free to groups of school age. This already happens in Leeds but the facilities are woefully inadequate. Schools should also have indoor youth facilities for use by the general public after 6pm. This should be staffed but not by teachers. It will cost but it will save in terms of youth disaffection. Schools should be able to offer driver education and car maintenance classes within the curriculum so appropriate space and facilities should be made available for these options. Junior schools should	Teacher

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			have gardens—maintained by parks and gardens people from the local councils, in which they could plant their own fruit and vegetables. Extended schools in deprived areas should address the digital divide by offering computer facilities and classes to local residents both in and out of school time. Music rooms should be standard in all schools and, again, should be made available to local residents. Solar panels, wind turbines, weather stations and telescopes should all be the norm.	
Richard Knightley	Hugh Faringdon	Teacher	The provision for cyclists is risible. There should be changing/shower rooms for teachers. As to planning, in the same way that planning permission is often refused because of insufficient car-parking space, or granted subject to improvement, planning permission should be made contingent on adequate provision for cyclists—safe ways to school, secure storage space for bikes (with decent racks—not the rubbish that buckles wheels), and changing/shower rooms. And “adequate provision” should apply not only to students’ bikes but also to teachers’.	Teacher
Rob Hunt	Whitmore Primary School	Teacher	Children in the inner cities desperately need grass space to play on. All we have is a poorly designed playground and a small grass verge.	Teacher
Jane Laker	Chatham South	Subject Teacher	The school building and the grounds are maintained to a good standard Staff facilities need modernising and maintaining especially the ladies toilets that closely resemble the pupils. Out perimeters of the grounds need revisiting preventing unwanted intruders. There have been several cases recently of staff assaults and I think staff are entitled to a safe working environment. A secure system could also reduce truancy.	Teacher
Hugh Ruiz	Prudhoe Community High School	MFL Teacher, Spanish and French	I’ve just started working at this school. It’s a very good school full of great kids and a very friendly hard working staff. The building’s a very tired 1950s build that is a bit depressing to work in, there’s only so much a lick of paint can do! The school is used by the community too as they run adult education courses from here. The school’s in Northumberland and for some unknown reason the government doesn’t give as much money to this LA as it does to others . . . It would be amazing what could happen if the school was improved.	Teacher
Lisa Rundle	Buckland St Mary C of E Primary	primary teacher, ICT and Early year coordinator	I work in a rural small school of three classes. The building is over a 100 years old and I love it. It is much better to work in a building with character rather than the buildings that were built in the 70’s. However we are in desperate need of an outdoor area for the foundation stage children to use. As the building is listed it is difficult to add extentions and costly. I think it is important to keep the small rural school	Teacher

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			open as it is part of our heritage. It is important for the government to give those school more money so improvements can be made that are in keeping with the building.	
Phil Glynn	Riddlesdown High School	Teacher of Design and Technology	Open space is really important for a number of reasons—recreation, behaviour management, aesthetics. Schools incorporating space inside and out (or together) would be a pleasant place to work and learn. I am also keen on introducing new and innovative ways to use technology within schools. Access screens around the school to provide opportunity to view e-mail, schemes of work, homework reminders etc. The screen could also be used to display brief information when not being accessed. My school is in a difficult situation considering it's location. The footprint of the school cannot be altered due to it being in a green area so major renovations are all internal. The appeal of buildings should be in what they offer to the user and how they appeal to the eye. Beautiful buildings can inspire.	Teacher
Mel Kirk	Court Moor School	Science Lead Practitioner	Often corridors in school are too cramped—this leads to “fuss”, “panic” and excitement as students move from place to place. In future, school should be built with bigger corridors. In addition, the classroom space should be bigger, especially for practical rooms, so there is more room to move around. Hot rooms should be fitted with fans in the summer. Water fountains should be more frequent.	Teacher
Lucy Kelly	Charles Edward Brooke School	Teacher, Governor	I really would like to know about the decreasing of energy consumption incorporated in the future school buildings; ie; using wind turbines, solar water heating, solar photovoltaics, geo-thermal piling and that these are obligatory considering the name “for the future” and the fact that best practice should be demonstrated to the next generation of designers and the school users. Also, that there is no electrical air conditioning, designs incorporate passive solar gain and natural air flow/ventilation—if there are electrical demands they are met by the solar system. I think you should be talking to the Liverpool Academy Designers, Dutch and Scandinavian designers as from personal experience these urgent ecological design matters are not taught rigorously in architectural schools in the UK and standards/knowledge is lacking so maybe it will be that the BSF program is innovative and forward thinking and thus ideal “education” for the community to see best design for the future there in their children's schools.	Teacher
Laura Lamble	Wallington Girls School	Science Teacher	Schools need to be practical before they are good looking! Teachers need to be involved with architects from the beginning to ensure that all new buildings are truly useful. Teachers understand how rooms are used in a way that an architect cannot, eg Science	Teacher

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			rooms where tables are fixed and half the class are forced to sit with their back to the board.	
Jeremy Philipps	Michael Hall School	Chemistry teacher	Schools should rework KS 2 and 3 Science, so it is experiential and develops observation skills, imagination, intuition and wonder. The students can then build on this secure foundation in KS4.	Teacher
Peter Carter	Noadswood School	Teacher ICT	I have returned to teaching from industry. The school building is more than tired it is abysmal. I have NEVER worked in such squalor and filth. The cleaners try but the fabric of the buildings is destroyed. The pupils have little respect for the school building and it's environment due to this. My clothes are ruined by the poor desks that are full of nicks and cuts. How can I be expected to dress in a professional manner when I am frightened to have my suits ruined by the state of the premises. The school was built for about 600 pupils and now has over 1,000 (albeit with some extra buildings to house them. But the corridors are not enlarged and we have to cram into hallways and corridors in a regular melee. God help us if there is a fire because despite having a fire inspection which we passed I doubt if these number of children in a panic situation of a fire would ever get out of the building without severe damage to themselves. The ICT equipment in my school is old technology, the network is over subscribed and constantly hanging up. Since the beginning of term there have been no printers accessible from my teaching room. Therefore we have not printed any of the pupils work (even GCSE) the registration system fails regularly, and despite employing two full time techies we still wait days or even weeks for repairs and replacements. I have 25 PC's in my room and often have classes of over 25 so pupils do not get the chance to work individually. This is an impossible situation for the GCSE students. Our school subscribed to the Thomas Telford "on line" system with out checking if we could display it correctly and we cannot. The screens are 14" monitors that are set to 800 x 600 resolution and the web site we are using is designed for 1024 x 768 therefore our students only see $\frac{1}{3}$ of the intended image on screen, further, because of this they are time penalised due to having to scroll around the screen to find the work. Other pupils in other schools are able to see the whole screen at once and can work faster. Last year we took part in the year 9 on line testing and could not log on properly, display the icons correctly, or complete the tasks as the network crashed each time. This is a very sorry state of affairs considering the government wants to improve education and use E-learning. Not a hope where we are. Then wonder why we are frustrated.	Teacher

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			Imagine, if we are frustrated, the pupils, many who come from well off backgrounds have thrown away better computers that we expect them to work on. The ICT staff are never are not consulted about IT hardware nor are we allowed have any administrator status so a simple thing like a pupil forgetting their password may result in them being unable to complete the lesson as it can take two periods before a techie arrives to make any corrections. We teach safe use of PC's and then expect the pupils to work with poor CRT screens, in bad posture seating with no proper lumbar support. Before we discuss building new schools for God's sake lets have some joined-up thinking about what we need and who is competent to choose these items.	
Elizabeth Alcock	Christ's College Finchley	Cover Teacher/ Learning support	Currently, the school is on a split level site with very poor access for anyone with any sort of disability, including anyone unfortunate enough to break a leg! Corridors are too narrow for safe passage during lesson changeover and vulnerable students have to leave lessons early to stay safe (further disadvantaging their learning). There is inadequate playground provision and very limited opportunities for constructive play apart from basketball and football. There is no outdoor wet weather provision, nor quiet areas for eating/sitting/reading/talking. There is an outdoor science education area (separate from the school building) with an aviary area, but funds do not allow for the productive use of this space other than voluntary work during lunchtimes/after school—this is a waste of resources and a loss of learning opportunities. The local authority (Barnet) have indicated that they wish to extend the number of children attending the school and some building works will have to take place to accommodate this, but tinkering at the edges of the existing school buildings will only make things worse. An imaginative scheme that could make sensible additions and use of existing spaces (eg a membrane roof over the internal quadrangle to provide a quiet seating area) and proper provision of administrative and reprographic area would result in a local school for the future of all the Borough's young people. The buildings are also used for community and other use outside school hours, thus the investment would be one that would benefit the wider community.	Teacher
Danielle Auerbach-Byrne	Gateacre CC School	Secondary Science Teacher	I would like to see the schools of the future as light and airy buildings. Their construction should be environmentally friendly, as should the heating, lighting etc with as much recycling as possible.	Teacher
Michelle Palmer	Walton High	Teacher	I work in a fairly new school (seven years old), but yet my classroom is too small, the corridors too narrow and we don't have a room big enough to fit the whole school. I think we need to concentrate on getting the basics right first.	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
Wendy Clark	Fernvale Primary School	Year 1 Teacher ICT and Art Coordinator	I would like to see schools that were more energy efficient and being fitted with sustainable and renewable energy sources such as wind turbines and solar panels as standard. To be places that promote sound ecological projects that benefit the school and surrounding community. Where children are valued for the sheer joy of life that they possess and this is enhanced and developed to improve our world in the future.	Teacher
Robert Short	Rodborough Technology College	Teacher	Schools should be promoting the ideas they are teaching in the classroom through the fabric of the buildings. This means that as far as possible schools should be using renewable energy on site. With large roof areas a great deal of solar energy could be used, both to generate electricity and as a means of heating water. Where possible wind turbines should be installed. This will benefit the school in running costs as power bills will be lower. Also the energy generated by these methods could then be monitored and this data used as a real example to students of how effective renewable energy can be. A strong provision for those who do not travel by car should be made, with bus shelters provided and plenty of space for bikes to be parked. This should apply for staff as well who will be likely to be put off cycling by the thought of arriving to school and being very sweaty, so the provision of proper facilities for staff to shower and change would be welcome. Rooms in the school should be well thought out, ICT suites need air conditioning, but can we link the heat transfer to heating something else? What materials are going to allow us to have classrooms that are cool in summer and warm in winter? Is it sensible to have a full wall of windows and expect to be able to see a projector screen when it is sunny? The size of the project will often allow details and common sense to be forgotten. What about storage space? With adequate storage space all stationary could be bought centrally and costs lowered. Prep rooms for practical subjects should be easily accessible to all classrooms that need the support, so would it make sense to have all science labs on one floor for example, so that heavy equipment won't need to be carried up and down stairs?	Teacher
Mark Jubb	Barlby CP	Teacher	Hi, I have worked in two "brand new" primary schools with all mod cons from lights that turn on when you walk past them and Interactive whiteboards in every room. My grumbles are that the classrooms are TOO small. The same size for a class of 30 reception children is nowhere near the size need for 30 plus strapping Year 6 children. Make the rooms bigger please. At each school, due to financial restraints, there hasn't been separate rooms available for small group teaching. What a benefit it would be to have an extra classroom where children could be taught FLS, ALS,	Teacher

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			Springboard et al, small group meetings to teach children away from noise of classroom. I have seen groups being taught in these brand new schools in the cloakroom as there was no longer a spare room. This is not good enough for our children and future generations. Stand up to the accountants and spend some brass! Hope someone is listening.	
David Alexander	John Loughborough School	Futuristic Teacher	My future school would be an oasis in the city, a sort of light to brighten up the neighbourhood. It would be lit up at night and act as a reference point from where major landmarks and important edifices can be identified. It would be school for all cultures that are willing to live, learn and play together. Minorities will be catered for and would leave feeling a sense of worth after studying at my school. We will have much more space to play, enough gyms and playfield maybe on the roof of the school. Healthy foods would be prepared and served to the whole community. The latest in technology would be employed with access to school data from home or any remote area. Pupils will be smartly dressed and discipline will be high on the agenda. The environment would provide enough quiet spaces for all types of pupils to enjoy and relax if they so which. Wheelchair access would be adequate for all pupils and rooms/spaces would be adequate and designed appropriately for all disabled students. Information technology would be taught in small manageable groups where each pupil can have adequate get help when needed. Too many ICT courses in schools today are being taught as if the subject is English. Too many children are fighting their way through the lesson without contact from the teacher . . . ICT is about a process many times . . . not reading from a book. The slow readers would benefit from this easily available tutor who will be able to give more quality time to each pupil . . . (how many adults will pay to attend any ICT course where they are in just one of 30 people . . . not likely. Why do we do it for struggling children with literacy, learning difficulties and behavioural problems? Adults would vote with their feet . . . Children can't. They endure the frustration of getting roughly 1.5 min of teacher time each period of 60 mins on average. We must do better. Too many children are processed not taught! Different styles of learning would be available and practised in the school. The physical building would have a revolving section at the top for a variety of uses. Business and other profession would have regular contact with the school to guide and influence the quality of education at the school. Access to Internet etc would be available anywhere in the school. Appropriate music would be piped through the halls to help to keep a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Practical trades would be taught to all, and on offer to all	Teacher

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			<p>who would like to pursue them further. Sports and creative arts would be actively encouraged for all pupils. Fitness and health are high on the agenda. Tutors won't necessarily have to be working fulltime if they choose not to. The school can call on business professionals to complement the quality of education at the school. Tutors can work from home via videoconferencing etc in emergencies and pupils who are ill can tune in to their lessons from hospital or at home. INSET would be available for all tutors in a variety of ways: online, taught etc My school would be called "A Beacon of Hope".</p>	
Angela Gamar	Keir Hardie Primary	Primary Teacher History/ Geography Post Holder	Could you please include conditioned air and heating that can be regulated by the school. We find that we are too hot in the summer months with a fan that does not reach everybody or blows work all over the place. Also at certain times of the year the heating comes on even though the weather is still very mild!	Teacher
Janice Lafferty	Aberdour School	Teacher— Physical Sciences	If schools are to be renewed then a lot of thought must surely go into storage of books and or locker space for children so that they are not forever carrying around heavy bags—of course a paper free school would be ideal but if not possible then minimise the loads for the children.	Teacher
Teacher	Junior School	Teacher	At the least, good size windows that open. For the best option—air conditioning. Many businesses have had this as a basic for years—and yet many schools are forced to work in temperatures that make children and teachers struggle to function. This would make such a difference to comfort and therefore concentration.	Teacher
Sameem Malek	Sacred Heart Language College	Mathematics Teacher	Thank you for the opportunity to ask teachers what they want to see as all too often we are swept into accepting new technologies without adequate training. Future schools must have adequate support staff to sort out problems rather than relying on a IT teacher to come to the rescue. Learning environments for teachers should include a rest room/recreational room where teachers can have a short break from the stresses of admin and marking.	Teacher
Rebecca Robayo	Courtmoor School (Secondary)	Science Teacher	I think that it should be a national policy that all science classes should have a maximum of 24 students unless labs become significantly larger and extra man power is available for supervision during practicals. Even though science labs can seat 30 and generally are quite large, during practical sessions there is not enough room. If they were made any larger to accomodate larger classes then the distance between a single teacher and some students would be too large for adequate supervision. Children must be allowed to try practical work if they are to gain from the wow factor in science but current buildings are not adequate for	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			current class sizes and limit the type of activities and the freedom to explore and enquire by pupils.	
Alison Walker	Longslade CC	Teacher	Schools need to be big enough, without having to add on mobile classrooms. Classrooms need to be big enough for 30 pupils, and the available space needs to have room for flexibility, eg individual, paired and group work, so furniture needs to be moveable. All rooms should be equipped with ICT resources, and an interactive board. Rooms should be carpeted to minimise noise. There should be adequate facilities for lunchtime, both for eating and for recreation. Staff facilities should be large enough, and there should be places to work. Toilet facilities should reflect the size of the school, and the number of staff. Outside facilities should be made safe from the public (and their dogs!). Solar panels and other environmental considerations should be put in place. All schools should have a space large enough for the whole student body to be accommodated, for assemblies, concerts etc.	Teacher
Sheila Close	Sigglesthorne	Supply Primary Teacher	Some schools are suffering from patchwork repairs. Bits keep being repaired in the hope that it will hold out. Some schools just need knocking down and being built from scratch. Toilets are absolutely revolting and some children would rather go all day without using the school ones because of this. Reclaim land back for playing fields. we wonder why unfit children abound but a lot of schools sold land for houses. Give schools windows that allow loads of light in. Make them green. Solar power and wind power!	Teacher
Ann Tattersall	Alexandra Park Juniot School	Teacher and ATL Branch President	It's all very well re-building schools BUT where is the money coming from? It's often build now and use PFI money, Trust schools etc and pay for it later over a long period of time. The Govt seem to be taking schools out of local authority control. Private companies are only often involved in schools to make money and advertise their company. Think carefully and consult before rushing ahead!	Teacher
Andrew Bunker	Westhoughton High School	Teacher	It's essential to remember when building new schools that staff need staffrooms in which to eat and relax in comfort, workrooms in which to plan, prepare and assess and facility/departmental rooms in which to organise, run and develop their subject areas. State-of-the-art classrooms and facilities for pupils are excellent—but without suitable facilities for staff nothing will improve.	Teacher
Mrs Janet Vyvyan	Barrowcliff Junior School	Primary Class Teacher	I am in favour of rebuilding secondary schools, however, I do feel from both personal and general experience, that our secondary schools are far too large. Many children find the move from small primary schools to vast secondary schools too much	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			to cope with. There is not the personal contact with teachers and support staff, and there is much more scope for bullying in these large impersonal establishments. I would like to see a return to smaller secondary schools which offer a greater choice to children ie academic/vocational instead of one fit for all. Children very quickly feel a failure if they do not achieve academically but have much to offer in a more practically structured learning environment.	
Adrian Trost	St Peters CE Primary, Maida Vale	Teacher	Generally speaking, the rooms are OK. The problem with school buildings, particularly in London, is the route children must take to reach their classroom. The journey from the playground to the room is often flights of stairs that can hide a group of individuals. It is impossible for a single classroom teacher to monitor the behaviour of the entire class as they walk to the room. When a class of children have a history of conflict it presents a serious problem. Altercations occur and these are brought into the room. This requires disciplinary management which reduces the total time spent learning. There are systems I have developed to minimise or prevent the disruption but these aren't as effective as having a clear view of your entire class as they walk to the room.	Teacher
Chris Kitson	Harrogate PRU	Teacher	Because all schools should be working towards sustainability, it is imperative that a "permaculture" designer be used in the consultation and planning stage. This would be really forward thinking and would send out the right message, especially to our children. Sustainability has to be given top priority. Please get in touch if you require any more information about permaculture.	Teacher
Stella van der Gucht	White House Infant School	Class Teacher	My comments are all from experience in primary schools. Children need space especially children who live in small houses or flats. I have taught in schools which are so cramped and airless. Children also need natural light and strip lights give me a headache so I am sure many children are bothered as well. My daughter suffered from migraines and over the years I have seen endless children sitting feeling ill and I am sure lots of them have migraines from the dreadful lighting in schools. Ask the migraine association for advice many children have migraines. All that glass in schools for natural light is lovely but too hot and bright at many times of the year. We can be freezing or boiling. Proper blinds or tinted glass would help. Teachers are always shutting curtains so children spend the day in artificial light. Clever natural lighting is needed. The use of interactive whiteboards has made natural light even more important. All schools are short of storage space. We need much more space to store interesting resources for lessons. Schools need to be able to store artifacts like a museum to	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
			bring out at different times of the year. We need art rooms, music rooms, cooking areas and generous sports areas. Involving parents is very important so rooms for the local community would help involve parents in their childrens education. The basic skills agency can only run family courses in schools which have three rooms spare as they need a creche, parents room and a space for children. Outdoor areas are now very important. Again children need space to run around. They need to shelter from rain and sun. Sadly severe behaviour problems mean many schools need safe places for children to calm down in. Soft relaxing areas. Most of all I am asking for space, storage and natural lighting. Much more space than anyone thinks we need!	
Mrs Dorothy Kennett	Bridgemary Community Sports College	Maths Teacher	We are in the process of introducing the 24/7 364 days a year school. As yet I'm not sure how it will work exactly but it does seem as if this may be the way forward. Giving the students a chance to agree to their own timings and curriculum, "policing" it may cause some headaches, particularly with those who already have a problem with truancy, but maybe with having a say in their own education may get through to them. We can only try and work with them.	Teacher
Helen Selwood	Hope Brook CE Primary	Class Teacher	We have a new school (moved in June 2003). From the first glimpse of the plans we could see layout and size were better in our existing Elliot buildings. We have since been proved right and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the class now have to move places to see the interactive whiteboard, due to L-shaped rooms with the wrong aspect ratio. There are problems due to girls' and boys' toilets being too close together, with facing entrances, but not directly accessible or visible from the outside, leading to lunchtime problems: also, parents waiting to pick up children having to do so directly outside the junior classroom windows and external doors, which is very disruptive. If only we had been allowed to have an early and meaningful input this ridiculous and wasteful situation could have been avoided. As it was, the main thing we had a choice about was the colour of carpets; we all felt our professional judgement was available but ignored. We were also infuriated that when we asked that the school be built on environmental principles simllilar to that in a county "green" school, the LA response was along the lines of "We've got one of those now, why would we spend money on another one?" (It's great having indoor toilets, though!)	Teacher
Mark Taylor	Addey and Stanhope Secondary	History Teacher	Summary: Just get on with it. Don't consult the pupils.	Teacher
Lara Ojana	Nelson Primary	Year 3 Teacher	Summary: Remember the needs of ethnic minority staff.	Teacher

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
Chris Ellis	Addey and Stanhope Secondary	Geography Teacher	Summary: Nothing good has come of it. I feel alienated.	Teacher
Jonathan Stephenson	Kesgrave High School	GTP Trainee Teacher (returning teacher after 20 years in industry)	Smaller windows please, less heat and sunlight in the classroom. We can't use projectors easily because of the bright light and large windows create an impossible environment in the summer (and even now in September). The old Victorian buildings made much better classrooms. If we need light we can go outside! Teachers need much more control over the environment and it's not economic to run air conditioning just to rectify the silly desire for big, hot windows. AV equipment such as IWB must be designed into the buildings from the start by people who understand about the lumens ratings and ambient light levels. It is a joke the way schools are spending £3,000 a room to have IWBs fitted that can't be used because the blackout systems either don't work or are beyond the budget. Likewise the VGA plugs for the laptops are usually at the side of the room so the teacher is stuck on the side bench with a back to the class when the laptop needs attention—not exactly the desired result. After 20 years in the IT industry I am enjoying getting back into teaching again, but I had hoped to really exploit my IT skills to make compelling lessons, only to be forced back to “chalk and talk” by the badly designed classrooms.	Trainee
Karen Jenkins	Sheffield Hallam University	Secondary Trainee	Classrooms that have good ventilation are needed in new schools. Teenagers going through bodily changes can make teaching difficult especially after lunch in the summer term, when body odour takes a new meaning. Windows must ensure the safety of pupils but, restrictive opening often results in the use of fans, which make rooms hotter, and use vast amounts of power, and don't solve the problem just waft it around!	Trainee
Kim Hughes	Hope University, Liverpool	PGCE Student	I would like to see an improvement in the school environment. There needs to be better temperature controls for each classroom and school area. More consideration of how to do this, working with architects to make sure that there are ways that a classroom is not too hot or sunny (in the summer) and too cold (in the winter). Many of our school buildings are old and need a complete overhaul.	Trainee
Daryl West	Almond Hill Juniors	Trainee Teacher on GTP-was TA for five years	What would be extremely beneficial for the children and staff of the school would be smaller extra working areas for teaching small groups of children. At the moment teachers have to accommodate small groups, working in areas such as the dining room where noise level can be a problem. So more workable spaces would be brilliant. Also, taking into account the hotter summers we seem to be experiencing each year, a good air conditioning in any school would prevent everyone wanting to have an afternoon siesta!	Trainee

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name of School</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Role Type</i>
Lee Jaques	North Doncaster Technology College	Student	I believe it is intrinsically important to develop future schools with the input of all stakeholders. Staff, governors, parents, residents, local government, businesses and students all need to be involved from the very beginning, in order for them to create learning environments which can really deliver quality education for generations to come. I would like to see schools becoming the hub of their local community once more, providing not only a quality education for young people but also a wide range of services and facilities available for people of all backgrounds who may not have had the opportunities we do today. School should be a place where young people want to go, not where they have to go. It is very important for young people to be able to take ownership and control of their own future. Education should give them the inspiration to succeed through an unparalleled level of quality teaching and learning.	Trainee

November 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Carbon Trust

THE QUESTIONS

The questions put by the Education and Skills Select Committee in respect of its inquiry into sustainable schools that the Carbon Trust is addressing are:

- Will the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) investment programme ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?
- What are the cost implications of this?
- Is the information available under the programme adequate in ensuring that the programme is effective in its aims of delivering sustainable schools?

OUR RESPONSE

Drawing from our extensive knowledge of energy efficiency, low carbon technologies and buildings, including in local authorities and the schools estate, our response to the questions raised is as follows.

1. *Will BSF ensure that schools are sustainable—environmentally, economically and socially?*

BSF is by far the largest investment in the schools estate in recent times. In theory, this scale of investment in England (£45 billion over 10–15 years, subject to ministerial approval) offers a major, unprecedented opportunity to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of our schools estate going forward. In practice, the extent to which energy efficiency and low carbon design feature in the philosophy and strategy of BSF will dictate the importance the majority of stakeholders in BSF attach to these key elements of sustainability.

The DfES document, *Building schools for the future—a new approach to capital investment*, published in 2004, makes no reference to “energy”, “carbon” or “sustainability”. The short answer to the question put, therefore, could be “No”. However, that would be to ignore the positive work of some individual local authorities and education and building professionals—and the dawning recognition in DfES that there is a role for it to play to use the BSF opportunity significantly to reduce carbon dioxide emissions associated with the schools estate. There are examples of attempts to reduce the carbon footprint of schools under BSF—the Carbon Trust is involved in a number of these through its various energy efficiency and low carbon advice services is helping building designers and managers (including those working in the schools’ sector) to tackle energy waste and reduce their carbon footprints.

Our approach is to start with the local authorities and develop a strategic plan to form the basis for top-down action across their estates. Our Local Authority Carbon Management programme is currently working with 98 councils across the UK, over a fifth of the sector. It is designed to develop carbon management implementation strategies which will reduce emissions under the direct control of the local

authority such as buildings, vehicle fleets, street-lighting and landfill sites. It also provides practical support to organisations: by helping them identify carbon saving opportunities; by providing tools to analyse energy consumption; and by delivering workshop support for staff and senior managers to enable them to embed carbon management into the day to day business of the council.

Specifically in relation to buildings (including school buildings), our Design Advice Service works with designers to consider ways in which low carbon building measures can be incorporated into their design specification. For example, we are providing advice to two primary schools wishing to achieve a 40% improvement in energy efficiency. The schools are both being developed through design and construct contracts under BSF.

We think this is a start which, within our resources, we can build on. However, we think that far more could, and should, be achieved. BSF has huge leverage potential to transform the way the market delivers not just school buildings but buildings in general.

However, converting that potential into actual public benefit requires bolder, coordinated, strategic thinking to re-shape BSF whilst there is time for the changes to take positive effect. There is no systematic requirement to ensure that BSF investments in the nation's long term asset base take and apply best practice in energy efficiency and low carbon design. Moving forward incrementally—for example, by specifying a BREEAM “very good” standard as a minimum for school building designs—shows a willingness to travel in the right direction but insufficient appreciation of the destination, the travel time, or the sense of urgency attaching to reducing our carbon dioxide emissions. We think DfES and local authorities need to go further.

In our view, the carbon goal for BSF should be absolutely clear. New schools built under BSF will have a design life which runs past the middle of this century. Therefore, so far as carbon dioxide emissions and energy running costs are concerned, the schools being specified and designed today will need to be fit for purpose for the low carbon world we and others are seeking to build over the coming decades. This means that the carbon footprint for schools built or refurbished over the BSF investment period will need to be significantly less than half the footprint of schools built in the late 1990s. Simply following current Building Regulations standards—all that is required under BSF—signals a failure to appreciate the opportunity which public investment and public procurement offers to lead the way towards substantially lower carbon footprints for school buildings going forward.

We think that unless it is made clear that BSF will only invest in and incentivise school buildings with low life cycle carbon footprints, the opportunity for public investment to drive market transformation to deliver low carbon (school) buildings will have been lost. It is said that BSF is the biggest investment in schools since the Victorian era and public investment policy should seek to secure this opportunity to create a sustainable, low carbon schools estate. (It is ironic that in some respects the Victorian, thermally heavyweight buildings offer an internal environment more resilient to rising summer temperatures associated with climate change than lightweight schools built in the 1960s and 70s).

A complementary consideration is that an environmentally friendly building in which to teach sustainable development acts as a living exemplar and illustrates the school sustainable development curriculum for the upcoming generation. Although it is not easy to quantify these benefits, it is worth bearing them in mind as part of the wider sustainable development agenda going forward and the importance of shifting consumer and citizenship behaviour in favour of being part of the low carbon economy. This would fit in well with the Citizenship Agenda being taken forward by Defra and others.

Lastly, in this section, we have seen a recognition by DfES that reducing carbon dioxide emissions and getting to grips with energy wasteful buildings stock is, in a clear way, different from the other items on the sustainability agenda—given the enormity of the climate change challenge facing us all. The driving force for this recognition is the huge demand for action from those in the schools design and building communities. It is important that the dialogues now established via consultations and conferences (like the one DfES hosted on 4 December) are capitalised upon and feed positively into policy making. Where we think more progress could, and should, be made is in the setting of strategic direction for BSF from the top to ensure that school building projects are required to meet significantly higher energy efficiency and carbon footprint standards not just in design but in construction and operation.

2. *What are the cost implications of this?*

If whole life costing principles were used to design buildings, then in theory the current capital cost premium over conventionally designed buildings would be offset by reduced operational costs, a better internal environment and an educationally beneficial building for teachers and students alike.

However, whole life costing is not the norm for investment appraisal. First cost drives decision making because most investments are considered over a short term horizon against a fixed budget with competing demands. In a changing environment, this is not in the interests either of asset value over the longer term or of reducing lifetime running costs. Some of the principal issues we think are relevant to the Committee's Inquiry, so far as energy/carbon reduction goals are concerned are:

- (i) *Capital and revenue budgets are managed separately.* Therefore, running cost savings are not easily related to additional capital investment. “Spend to save” and whole life costing approaches are that much harder to implement in these circumstances. Furthermore, even the 5–10% that a low

carbon new design currently costs over conventional new build is seen as potentially compromising the provision of other schools' amenities or reducing the number of schools built or refurbished. Budget ceilings and other demands perceived to be more important tend to drive energy/carbon considerations down the agenda. This is a significant barrier which we think should be addressed without delay.

- (ii) *Building energy management.* Unless this is of a high standard the benefits of low energy/carbon design will not be fully realised. This is a common failing across many building sectors. There is a gap between performance as designed, performance as built, and performance as operated. (The awaited implementation of the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive will, we hope, begin to make this particular gap in design/operated performance transparent to users and decision makers). Notwithstanding the huge impact BSF will have on new build design and refurbishment activity, investment alone is not sufficient. It is also essential that buildings are well managed and designed to be capable of being well managed. To achieve the best possible energy/carbon performance from a building requires appropriate training for building managers so that they gain a good appreciation of the factors which impact on performance and how to address them. We can see no evidence that this aspect of BSF has been considered strategically.
- (iii) *Incorporating energy efficiency in new build over and above Building Regulations standards does not carry significant extra cost.* This is one of the main conclusions of our research to understand the business case for low carbon buildings. (We will be publishing this work in the New Year). Moving to buildings with half the carbon footprint or less currently carries a higher cost premium mainly because of the comparative lack of best practice knowledge and the early cost premium of new and emerging low carbon technologies. Both these cost elements could, over time, be reduced.
- (iv) *Improving the performance of existing stock through refurbishment is more challenging.* The problem with a large part of the schools building stock is its age. Many buildings pre-date 1985, the year in which energy efficiency standards in Part L of Building Regulations were first introduced. The post-war school buildings expansion programme did not have energy efficiency, low carbon or sustainability on the list of items to be taken into account during investment appraisal. As a consequence, the corrective measures required to introduce energy efficiency to these buildings rarely have paybacks of under 10 years. Furthermore, the opportunity points in the life cycle to make worthwhile savings occur less frequently and in some cases demolition may well be the best option—particularly if demographic and societal changes have made the location of the school no longer appropriate.
- (v) *Public private partnership and the Public Finance Initiative (PFI).* This is one of the key finance mechanisms whereby public sector buildings are designed and built. In theory, PFI offers the opportunity to take a longer term view of investment and use whole life costing as the basis of investment appraisal. In practice, this opportunity can easily be missed, or timed out because of inadequate opportunity to devise and consider low carbon, energy efficient design options. The main reason is energy efficiency and CO₂ emissions (beyond the specified minimum regulatory standards) are not regarded as important items for consideration. They can therefore become casualties of contract negotiation, especially if budgets unexpectedly tighten against expenditure and competing demands.

3. *Is the information available under the programme adequate in ensuring that the programme is effective in its aims of delivering sustainable schools?*

Although some low carbon school buildings have been designed and built, these are few in number and of one-off, unique designs. Performance in use is rarely used to inform new building designs. Consequently, there is a dearth of information on good practice low carbon design, and an even bigger gap in knowledge about how to manage low carbon school buildings. Best practice in low carbon school building design and refurbishment is scarce. Good ideas, practices and experiences, hard learnt in one local authority or one architectural practice, are not being made available to others engaged in the same national endeavour. Therefore, there is a high risk that we will continue to see more of the same—ie, most buildings scraping by the standards of the day and a smattering of better buildings designed to be energy efficient and low carbon in use. If good practice starts and stops within the environs of the schools in question, the opportunity to raise standards nationwide will have been missed.

Codifying what is proposed as “best practice”, peer reviewing it, and systematic sharing of professionally accredited knowledge and experience amongst designers and building managers via training etc should, in our view, be essential, strategic elements of BSF (and, we suggest, any large, long-term public investment programme).

The benefits of this approach are significant. It costs time and money for individual local authorities, building professionals and other interested parties to fundamentally review existing practice and rectify under-performing buildings. There is a huge opportunity to use publicly funded investment programmes like BSF to raise the design, build and operating standards for the public estate. Unfortunately, we can see

no evidence that the designers of BSF have considered these aspects strategically. In a capital programme of the order of several tens of £billions over 10–15 years or so, we think this is an inadequacy of design and process. The good news, however, is that it is not too late to think about, and rectify, them.

December 2006

Memorandum submitted by Sir Bruce Liddington, the Schools Commissioner

THE SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER

The role of the Schools Commissioner was laid out in the White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* in October 2005.

This document gave the Commissioner a wide remit, “to ensure more choice, greater diversity and better access for disadvantaged groups to good schools in every area”.

As part of this, the White Paper envisaged a specific role for the Commissioner in the schools capital programme in particular, of which BSF is a key part:

“The Commissioner will advise the Secretary of State on local authorities’ plans for major capital investment”

Higher Standards, Better Schools for All—2.24

The appointment of Sir Bruce Liddington as the first Schools Commissioner was announced by the Prime Minister on 7 September 2006.

ROLE IN BSF

The Schools Commissioner believes that BSF represents a unique opportunity for local authorities to reconsider the organisation of their entire secondary estate. They should make full use of this opportunity to look strategically at provision across their area, taking account of demographic changes, responding to parental demand and ensuring that they provide a diverse range of good schools tailored to their communities.

The Schools Commissioner will provide additional support and challenge to local authorities in BSF wave 4 onwards as they draft their Strategy for Change (SfC) documents. The Commissioner, or a member of his team, will make contact with each local authority before the start of their wave and attend their Remit meeting with the Department. During the drafting of their SfC, the Commissioner will encourage each local authority to make use of the BSF opportunity to address a number of key government priorities, including:

- increasing the diversity of secondary school provision in their area, particularly by supporting schools to become self-governing Foundation Schools, Trust Schools or Academies;
- providing robust solutions for poorly performing schools, particularly those in Ofsted categories;
- expanding popular and successful schools to meet parental demand;
- addressing the issue of falling rolls and removing surplus places as necessary; and
- linking their BSF case at every stage to the ultimate goal of raising standards of educational attainment.

Once a local authority’s Strategy for Change has been submitted to the Department, the Schools Commissioner has a role in clearing this document. In the vast majority of cases, we expect that the series of positive discussions between the Commissioner and the local authority will have resulted in the submission of a Strategy for Change that meets all the key priorities. In this case, the Schools Commissioner will give his approval and the SfC will proceed through the clearance process as normal.

However, where the submitted Strategy for Change does not sufficiently address the Secretary of State’s key priorities, the Schools Commissioner will provide comments and recommend that it should be redrafted by the local authority. In this event, the Commissioner will once again work closely with that local authority to support and challenge them as they redraft their Strategy for Change.

In exceptional circumstances, where the Schools Commissioner remains unconvinced in the long term that the local authority is making a genuine effort to fulfil the Secretary of State’s key priorities or address his comments, he may recommend to the Secretary of State that the local authority be slipped back into a later wave and another authority take its place.

Once a local authority’s Strategy for Change has been accepted, the majority of the Schools Commissioner’s involvement in the BSF process is complete. He will continue to visit and monitor the local authority as it passes through the BSF process in order to ensure that it continues to meet the Secretary of State’s key strategic priorities.

November 2006

Memorandum submitted by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)

Key points made in a discussion between the Chairman, Barry Sheerman and NAHT on 10 January 2007. This focuses on developments and complements our earlier comments on eco friendly schools.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The start point for the growth of sustainable schools and schools for the future should be broader than the education world
- The national vision for our economic growth should describe the essential technological infrastructure required for community engagement and participation in building the economy and social and global cohesion. This national vision will of course be determined by our deep understanding of where our country fits and aspires to be the light of:
 - the technological revolution;
 - Britain's place in the context of global developments and conflicts; and
 - Britain's appraisal of our best economic niche given our educational, cultural and historical legacy.
- The aspirations for Britain's future should be clearly articulated as part of the big picture/story of reform since 1997, so many initiatives across the public sector as a whole have left a confusing set of messages about future direction. This confusion makes it very difficult, if not impossible for the quality and coherence of visioning required by leaders at all levels in the system as a preliminary step towards further reform. In times of multiple layered reforms it is crucial that someone holds together how each part adds up to the whole.
- The current departmental divisions and project management approach is not conducive to the next stage of national public service reform unless the cabinet is fully aware of the interdependence and collaboration required to manage the impact of the technological revolution. The vision of the future and future direction is currently fragmented across government and therefore runs the risk of being contradictory. The resulting confusion leads to wasted energy, public money and increases the distance between original concept and the reality of activity and outcomes
- The project management approach used by the civil service to carry out ministerial wishes can only work if the leadership of the project has the ability and permission to work across departments. There needs to be constant lateral thinking, there must be a clear overview of each of the work strands and constant checks to see whether the programme needs adapting and whether the work strands are still appropriate. This kind of organic approach does not easily fit with the performance pay system of the civil service.
- The current e government strategy needs to support the development of a national e infrastructure: Currently it appears that if the local government leadership is visionary enough it will have seen the purpose in setting up a wireless environment for citizens, pulling together the key public sector partners and agreeing a strategy for local development. Telford and Wrekin set upon the course many years ago and have been able to concentrate on working together for improved service and outcomes. This was clearly a happy accident of leadership at both political and chief executive level. We need to pay considerably more attention to developing leaders of the right calibre to lead us through the next stage of the technology revolution and public service reform

THE EDUCATION CONTEXT

- We are the envy of the world in the way we have invested in ICT in schools and are aspiring to rebuild and remodel our schools to be fit for the 21st century
- We have invested heavily in hardware and in the training of staff. Many would criticise the quality of training on offer and the methods of allocating funds, however no one can deny that many schools have moved light years in a relatively short time. It could be said that we are reaching the end of a 20-year first phase of the technological revolution. This country has responded exceptionally well to that first phase. We have enabled and empowered through investment and encouraged innovation through opportunities such as test bed projects, through the specialist schools movement and through the engagement of the IT industry.
- For phase two we have however a huge distance to travel in understanding the impact of this revolution on young people. We still see ICT as a subject and yet even at the age of 3/4/5 our children have significant skills in the use of ICT. Unlike any other time in the history of mankind our children have more skills in this area and operate in a cyber world which excludes their parents. We need to consider what we have to do to ensure that children's skills and their use of ICT in all its forms is being used to the full to inform our future. We need to be sure that their "new world" is enabling them to be the kind of citizens which Britain needs to take it forward as an economic and socially cohesive participant on the world stage.

- Technology has transformed relationships all over the world. All of us have an expectation of a personalised service and an immediate response to our communications. However, technology has not yet transformed the way schools operate and therefore has not yet brought about the anticipated transformation in standards. One of the reasons is that we still work with the old paradigm of content driven education. The teacher is still seen as the conveyor of knowledge to the recipient learner. We run the risk of losing more and more young people as school and lessons are increasingly irrelevant. We should take note of the increase in those choosing to be home educated in the States and monitor and evaluate our own statistics
- It is not surprising that BSF is receiving very mixed reviews. Given all of the above expecting someone at a local level to make big decisions about the structures required to deliver an education for the future is a very big ask! An incidental observation would be that not enough time is given to the growth and development of local leaders. In the case of BSF they together with the schools have to make decisions on infrastructure. This is not a problem for the Telford and Wrekin style of local government but certainly is for others. It could be argued that wireless broadband should be seen as an entitlement along with gas, water and electricity.
- BSF is operating in the absence of any clear statement about the future vision for the country. This enormous investment is being seen in many cases as a matter for the education team and yet it is a tremendous opportunity for the community. Just as this national education vision must provide the best fit with the vision for the nation so BSF must be an integral part of local and regional development. The locus of leadership must be right. It is essential that chief executives are fully engaged. This is about whole community development, not simply schools. Where communities have been engaged through technology we have the potential to ensure that we have sustainable learning.
- We are in the midst of a revolution. We are so engaged in experiencing it, that it is really hard for us to see the bigger picture. It is imperative that we recognise this state of social, economic and technical revolution as an opportunity to bring about transformational change in the form of a paradigm shift. BSF presents us with a critical moment which must be used to give us some control over the shape of the next phase of the reform. However, as with any revolution we need the courage to move into those different paradigms of government and models of policy development and implementation. We are not doing this blind. There are many voices, pioneers, visionaries and lateral thinkers outside and within government. NAHT suggests that a symposium which brings together key thinkers representing all of the interrelated strands should be brought together to provide the vision and the framework for sustainable schools and educational development for the next phase of transformation and public service reform.

January 2007

Memorandum submitted by New Line Learning

NEW LINE LEARNING PLAZA

New Line Learning is a hard federation of three secondary schools in Maidstone that has been operating since April 2005. A hard federation means that the group is governed by one governing body. Together the schools have a population of over 2500 11–18 year old pupils. Two of the schools—Senacre and Oldborough—serve deprived communities.

In the longer term the schools hope to be rebuilt via the Government's Academies' Programme and discussions are on going with the DfES and the LA.

Meanwhile the schools have embarked on an ambitious programme of change that tries to solve three current difficulties that apply in Maidstone but also in schools elsewhere in the UK and beyond. These problems are those of pupil engagement; teacher development and consistent outputs.

Engagement

National surveys across England tell us that over 95% of pupils see school as a place where they come to see their friends; only 30% like learning new things; only 12% like being in class rooms and around 8% like talking to teachers. The engagement model we have clearly is not working that well.

Teacher Development

The current model of teaching is one that is very isolated as teachers work on their own in isolated classrooms with up to 30 pupils at a time. The experience of working within a team is not daily reinforced or demonstrated. Indeed such an experience can be an isolating one.

Consistent Outputs

Currently outputs from schools across England are highly variable. There seems to be no model that ensures consistency and when headteachers change, so too can schools. This isolated approach means that education remains a perpetual experiment with no conceivable end in sight.

Design as a Solution

At New Line Learning we have begun to look at these issues differently and to ask whether it is possible to design an environment and an educational system that controls for the variables within the experience and allows a general improvement towards consistent and sustained outputs.

Our starting point has been to provide certain common architectures, comprising:

- one to one computer access. All year 7 pupils are given a tablet pc when they start with us to use within a wireless environment
- reporting every 7 weeks to parents on pupil progress
- use of key performance indicator information to enable staff and pupils to assess how things are going
- use of external Ofsted teams every 50 days to assess progress using the Ofsted template
- development of 50 day change plans based on all this data
- training of staff and pupils in social skills via Yale University programme
- use of project based learning to teach pupils how to learn

This is only a partial solution however and we believe that the environment is key to joining these processes together. To that end we have been working on a modern design for a new learning environment. We have opened a first iteration of that on the Oldborough school site. This has space for 90 pupils to learn and we have tried to control for as many variables as possible including: light, noise, space, technology and behaviour. Pupils have been involved in the process and over the next six months we will work with our design partners to design the next iteration of this space.

In the final new school build we envisage an environment where pupils have some ownership of space. Toilets will be co-located next to the plazas for particular year groups. The final school design dispenses with corridors as for 60% of the time pupils will be taught in their plazas by teams of teachers who will operate differently from the conventional classroom.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT: SOME STRATEGIES

Henry Ford used to quip that when asked what people wanted in the way of transport, they were likely to respond with “a faster horse”. That’s a real problem for modernisers caught between the realisation that the current ways of working in schools are outmoded, but future models remain unproven. We all know that schools have real problems engaging students, particularly those who come from poorer backgrounds. For such students the current education deal—be compliant, work hard and you will gain what you need to move on—is not an attractive one. Indeed, this proposition is based on the language and behaviour of deferred gratification, something that middle class students understand but that their poorer counterparts do not.

Rethinking the model

Making schools more engaging places will only come about if we rethink the whole process by which they operate. There are five areas that need to be worked on simultaneously:

1. Curriculum: there is a need to move away from traditional approaches to involve students in more choice and the opportunity to work independently. Project Based Learning offers a route forward here and in particular the use of meta questions that span traditional subject areas: eg Is all violence wrong? Will science save us? Is truth always necessary?

Additionally, how do we design a curriculum around experiences and events as much as around subject content?

2. Space: we need to redesign learning spaces. Must they always be small classrooms? Must they always be owned by teachers? Is it not possible to design space that is optimised for learning, allows pupil ownership and ends the culture of “student as nomad” as we currently know it? If we were to use the design principles that are utilised elsewhere in our society, might it be possible to create an environment that students and teachers actually wanted to be in?

At New Line Learning in Maidstone we have developed a ‘learning plaza’ for 90 students using a different set of principles. We are using this as a test bed to design the next iteration of the concept. The school has tried to think through all the variables in the process of using space and linking it with learning.

3. Teachers: the biggest challenge is probably not students but teachers. They have to be retrained to work in new ways, less as subject specialists and more as mentors and guides for students. This will require both contractual changes and a series of on going training programmes. The solution is to frame teacher work within a wider skills agenda and offer bespoke training with regard to specialised and identifiable skills that will be necessary to work in these new ways. Teacher assessment would then be tied in with their skills development.

In this developing model we can imagine specialised sub groups of teachers tasked with different activities such as assessment, curriculum development and research, and training.

4. Skills for Students: Exams are still necessary but they are no longer sufficient. To fully engage with pupils we need to lay out skills pathways for them and to assess their progress with reference to them. This agenda would neatly dovetail with a similar agenda for staff and be mutually reinforcing.

5. ICT Platforms: within these new more fluid learning environments ICT will be essential with one to one access for both students and teachers. An ICT driven environment allows on line materials for students, on line reporting every six weeks or so, and the use of on line key performance indicator systems which allow students to tell teachers how they are doing. The on line reporting system allows data mining so that students who are slipping can be identified and helped.

Additionally, by looking at data on students we can begin to understand sub groups based on performance, neighbourhood, and consider risk factors that might inhibit their progress. By analysing this information we can diminish risk and increase resilience in target sub groups.

Taken together these measures might aid the development of a more engaged model of learning in our schools.

Dr Chris Gerry
Chief Executive

May 2007

Further memorandum submitted by Partnerships for Schools

This paper addresses the questions in Barry Sheerman's letter of 5 July to the Secretary of State.

An explanation of how the funding method for any given BSF project is decided

The procurement strategy and therefore the type of funding which is provided to local authorities for their BSF projects is determined on value for money (VfM) grounds. Local authorities are required to carry out a detailed options appraisal which considers different procurement and funding methods for the schools in a project using both quantitative (discounted cash flow) and qualitative analysis, in accordance with HM Treasury's "Value for Money Assessment Guidance" of November 2006.

For planning purposes the programme level working assumption for BSF is that where local authorities plan to rebuild 70% or more of the existing floor space of a school, then a PFI procurement is likely to maximise the value for money of the project. For schools with a smaller proportion of new build, a design and build (conventional capital) route is likely to achieve better value. Of course, local circumstances play a part in decision making and these are always taken into account before a final decision is reached.

Across the BSF programme, we expect about half of the gross floor area of the schools estate to be rebuilt, attracting PFI credits, with the anticipation that the other half will be remodelled or refurbished using conventional capital funding. However, this will vary from project to project and from authority to authority.

The projected total revenue costs for an authority with a £100 million project funded by PFI credits, and what projections it has made of the total revenue costs of the £22 billion of PFI credits that will be allocated under BSF

The revenue support that is provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to a local authority for a PFI scheme relates to the initial capital investment, life cycle replacement capital and a marginal allowance for the finance and taxation costs associated with the private sector partner's provision of the capital investment.

Additional revenue costs of soft facilities management (for example, cleaning and security), hard facilities management (buildings maintenance), utilities and (if in the Unitary Charge) buildings insurance, are expected to be met by local authorities, supported by contributions from schools' delegated budgets.

Although CLG makes revenue support allocations to authorities the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) determines the value of PFI credits awards for schools' projects. A funding multiplier is applied to the capital value of the project to calculate the credits to be allocated. The multiplier for BSF is currently set at 1.65, a level which assumes a contribution from local authorities which is affordable. So, the capital value of a project attracting £100 million of PFI credits is approximately £60 million.

For conventionally funded capital works it is for the authority and schools to decide the amount of the funding for life cycle replacement. Local authorities can make discretionary additional contributions that they can either manage on a portfolio basis or pass the funding and risk down to the schools. This approach does allow the authority and schools greater management flexibility over making payments but in turn increases the risk that a whole life approach might be ignored.

Soft and hard services are funded centrally at the same level, but under the availability and performance regime the risk transfer is greater under PFI and hence the costs can be greater.

Naturally, local circumstances will be different across authorities, but we can expect total annual revenue costs for an authority awarded £100 million of PFI credits to be in the region of £8 million. Of this, over 90% will be supported by central government.

DCSF has so far allocated £3.75 billion PFI credits to BSF between 2004 and 2008. Allocations of PFI credits for 2008 to 2011 have not yet been announced. Beyond that, no figure has been given as to the total PFI credits that will be allocated under BSF, as this is subject to future public spending decisions.

A projection of the maintenance and facilities management costs over 25 years of a £100 million BSF project funded by capital grant, and the total maintenance and facilities management costs for all £22 billion grant funded BSF projects

To ensure that new assets procured under design and build arrangements are maintained to a high standard, DCSF requires local authorities to demonstrate in their BSF business case that they have identified sufficient resources to meet the life cycle and maintenance needs of the schools. We consider that authorities should identify funding for buildings life cycle costs at around 28% of the value of the capital investment made in new buildings and 40% for buildings which are remodelled or refurbished. Authorities can put forward a different amount based on the project specifics, but this will need to have been supported by their technical advisers.

The risks associated with each funding method

The risks here are more to do with the underlying procurement decision than in respect of the funding method. The type of funding supports the procurement decision which will have been determined by a comprehensive and auditable value for money assessment.

Its assessment of how sustainable the costs of each method are for local authorities

Authorities throughout the process have to submit business cases at various stages to confirm that each of the school projects and their accompanying specification are affordable.

The whole life costing approach inherent in PFI naturally encourages a more sustainable solution, so much effort is spent ensuring that local authorities ring-fence budgets to ensure that design and build solutions are built and maintained to comparable standards, independent of their funding route. Given the multiplier at which the level of PFI credits is now based upon, the procurement type should not make a difference to the sustainability of a local authority's long term financial strategy if a commitment is made to maintain the schools at the same standard.

Further details of the funding arrangements for BSF is available on Partnerships for Schools website.

July 2007
