

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET MEMBER

CONSULTATION ON DELIVERING BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the council's response to a government consultation on how Building Schools for the Future could be delivered in Wave 7 onwards.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) aims to re-build or remodel every secondary school in England over a 15 year period. At present, projects at each local authority level are grouped into 'waves'. These represent groups of schools that receive the investment at roughly the same time. In some authorities all their schools are in a single wave. Others are be grouped in consecutive waves, or in waves separated by a number of years (as is the case in North Lincolnshire).
- 2.2 To date, the government has announced its investment plans up to wave 6. These have been determined broadly on two criteria; attainment levels and social disadvantage. Before issuing details of wave 7 onwards, the government has launched a consultation on proposals to modify the current arrangements. In summary, these are:
- Broadening the criteria for entry to the programme;
 - Allowing smaller groups of schools onto the programme, in comparison with the current size of a wave. This is to provide a more flexible start, where funding and suitable preparation can be demonstrated;
 - Examining ways to encourage co-location of services and furthering BSF's contribution to regeneration, and
 - Looking again at the case for authorities working together to procure and deliver BSF programmes.

The proposed responses from North Lincolnshire Council are shown on the attached reply form.

- 2.3 One of the main issues for the council is the distance in time between wave 3 (Scunthorpe schools) and wave 13-15 (schools outside of Scunthorpe). Therefore, the responses attempt to address this by asking for the criteria to include narrowing such gaps.
- 2.4 The government is staging regional meetings to debate the consultation proposals. Any further information emerging from these events will be included in the council's response, where relevant. The closing date for responses is 4 July 2008.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 There are only two options available. These are:
- Respond to the government consultation on the future delivery of BSF.
 - Do not respond to the government consultation on the future delivery of BSF.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Responding to the government consultation offers the council an opportunity to influence future delivery arrangements, to the benefit of the North Lincolnshire BSF scheme.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 Staffing

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report.

5.3 Statutory

None

5.4 Environmental and Other

None.

6 OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report

7 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The BSF Project Board has been consulted on the proposed response to this consultation and supported the submission.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Children's Services Cabinet Member approves the response to the BSF consultation.

SERVICE DIRECTOR LEARNING, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

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BRIGG
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Date: 10 June 2008.

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report
BSF Consultation documents.

The Management of Building Schools for the Future waves 7 to 15

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 4 July
2008

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for
children, schools and families

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name A Williamson
Organisation (if applicable) North Lincolnshire Council
Address: BSF Project Team
Suite 18
Lysaghts Way
Scunthorpe
DN15 9YG

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Shaw Warnock on:

Telephone: 020 7925 6454

e-mail: shaw.warnock@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan Body	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Voluntary Aided Body
<input type="checkbox"/> School - Headteacher or other staff	<input type="checkbox"/> School Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> Representative Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector - Financial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector - Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector - Construction
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Please Specify:

Are you an authority, school, organisation or other body that is involved in BSF waves 1 to 6?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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1 Do you agree that we should have a wider set of criteria for the prioritisation of BSF waves 7 to 15?

X Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

We recognise that attainment and levelling-up to overcome social disadvantage are the government's two criteria for prioritising the order of BSF schemes. But just as for the Primary Strategy for Change it does seem to be a positive development to allow other criteria to be considered. We suggest that, as well as those put forward in the consultation document, consideration be given to adding the criterion of bringing together waves for one authority that are several years apart.

2 Do you agree that we use educational and social need as a tie-breaker when two projects are otherwise evenly balanced?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

3 How could BSF better support local plans to join-up and co-locate services for children, young people and families?

Comments:

As it currently stands, the regime for approving BSF schemes does not give any incentive or motivation for other partners to consider co-location of services for children, young people and families. If other partners consider that their current arrangements are satisfactory there is little to persuade them that being part of BSF is a good idea. Anything that government could do to influence this would be helpful.

4 Do you agree that all “new” authorities should be given an opportunity to enter BSF with an initial priority project for early implementation?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

North Lincolnshire definitely supports this, as it is the principle behind our decision to apply for BSF in two waves, to target for early implementation the 50% of schools in Scunthorpe. However, we also believe that the government should consider all or some of later wave schools within an authority to be brought forward, the prioritisation being based on the need to avoid a potential ‘split’ in the provision within one authority area.

5 Are there barriers to having neighbouring authorities work together in a joint LEP, as a condition of an early start with a smaller project. How could they be overcome?

Comments:

The conventional view appears to have been that trying to co-deliver a scheme between two authorities would involve co-ordination problems, leading inevitably to delays in the timetable for delivery. The only way to overcome that would be for both authorities to make binding agreements with regard to a decision-making timetable. A similar commitment from the government and its agents would seem to be a reasonable gesture.

The benefit of co-delivery is that authorities – especially the smaller ones and/or those without experience of similar projects such as PFI - often struggle to find the right staff and knowledge to progress their schemes. Joining-up offers the chance to overcome these difficulties.

6 Are there difficulties with proposing “follow on” projects within these size guidelines? What are they and how can they be addressed?

Comments:

By fixing the allowable size of follow on projects in the range £100-150m, smaller authorities will be forced into co-operative agreements whether or not these are suitable or not. There should be greater flexibility in the size of follow on projects, with a judgement on deliverability if necessary.

7 Is anything more needed to enable local authorities to be ready to deliver?

Comments:

Enabling PfS to make greater use of exemplar approaches and model documentation would be of benefit.

8 Do you agree with a programme of rolling announcements and starts, in line with when projects are ready and funding is available? Are there any practical difficulties with this, and if so what are they?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

If this overcomes the perceived lack of flexibility in the 'wave' approach then it is to be supported. The main practical difficulty might be that fragmenting the implementation into more individual or small group projects would lead to greater dissonance between neighbouring schools in an authority area.

9 Are there problems with LEPs having a wider regeneration remit than just BSF or schools?

Comments:

Aside from the target of raising attainment, one of the great opportunities of BSF is to make a major contribution to an authority's regeneration ambitions. In earlier waves, it did not appear to be necessary to demonstrate how an authority was responding to the opportunity. Placing a greater emphasis might help to ensure that the greatest overall benefit from BSF investment could be achieved.

10 Are there barriers to co-locating other services for children, young people and families on school sites? If so, what are they?

Comments:

Please see the answer to question 3.

11 Are there other factors or options for the management and prioritisation of later waves of BSF which we have not considered? Have you any further specific or general points that you would like to make about the management of Building Schools for the Future?

Comments:

We would like to re-iterate the benefits of considering plans to bring closer together two existing waves in one authority. These are:

- Greater joining-up of education delivery in one locality, particularly for smaller authorities.
- Optimising the value given by established BSF delivery teams
- More attractive offers to potential LEP bidders

Also, there should be a significant weight given to readiness to deliver, where authorities have a track record of developing BSF schemes.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 4 July 2008

Send by post to: Cheryl Hogarth, Schools Capital Strategy Unit, Department for Children Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: BSFManagement.CONULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk