

**MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS' TRANSFORMATION BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 2008**

**LC22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence submitted from Jane Farrell, Colm Mhickey, Sharon Shoemith, Nigel Spears, Ros Hudson and Andy Yarrow.

**LC23. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None received.

**LC24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**LC25. MINUTES - 27 FEBRUARY 2008**

**RESOLVED**

The board considered the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 February and agreed the following amendment to L19 paragraph 26: *Ms Shoemith advised that in terms of the choice /diversity agenda a Champion would be appointed.*

Matters arising

Clarification was sought on the source of the 60k funding for the Choice/Diversity Champion. The board was advised that this would be a local authority appointment but would not be the subject of a public advert as would be sourced from the Council's agreed Educational Advisors Framework. Further information was sought on the agenda which the employee would be working to. In response it was noted that the employee would be working to the schools transformation agenda.

**LC26. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY UPDATE**

The board noted the key issues for consideration which were :

1)ICT Procurement - This was at a critical stage of development. Dialogue on the contract was due to end and there would follow a further month of contractual resolution. The contract would then be reported to school governors and would finally

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go to the Council's Procurement committee in June for agreement. Key information noted by the board was as follows:

- ICT installation – there was a need to ensure, by September, that requirements of the school were understood and there would also need to be consideration of the schools pending building requirements.
- Outstanding issues with schools would need to be dealt with within the next week.
- The contract would be issued for 5 years and contractors were already targeting effort and funds to the service to justify a renewal at the end of the 5 years. The board were assured that the Council would be making clear, to the contractors, that a significant amount of work was required to ensure a future renewal of the ICT contract.

2) There were a number of schools with finalised designs ready for letting to building contractors.

3) PFI/BSF - The board noted that there was currently a period of reflection where the government was examining PFI and BSF. The board noted that this was currently a national issue and the Council was continuing with their plans for BSF. A formal outcome to the governments thinking was expected in the next few weeks.

4) Affordability of designs - design approval expected for Woodside High and good progress was being made with the new school on the Heartlands site. Issues arising were the cost of sprinklers which was not included in the BSF funding envelope. The installation of sprinklers would be an expectation for new built schools. However also due to recently issued government rules and required tests it was thought that 4 or 5 schools may also need sprinklers installed. The board commented that there had been concern expressed by schools for some time on the issue of sprinklers and clarification was sought as to whether this had been discussed at the health and safety committee structure. In response to this question the board noted that the legislative changes concerning sprinklers had only recently been introduced by the government as part of BV100. The board noted that there had been discussions over a number of years on the framework for sprinklers in school. The government now advised that there should be a risk analysis undertaken by a school and if there is a higher than average risk then there should be a further value for money test and a sprinkler installation.

The board noted the concerns of Woodside High School which was the first school to enter stage D of the design and construction phase. The board were informed that this phase of the works required completion in 8 weeks. The board noted concerns of Woodside School which included the number of key meetings requiring arrangement in these 8 weeks in what was a critical time in the school calendar with schools SATs, exams and the Easter holiday period approaching. The Chair agreed that these issues could be further raised as part of item 10 on the agenda (What happens after RIBA Stage D)

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### **LC27. FORUMS OF THE STB**

The board heard from Gladys Berry, Chair of the TM's Forum, who informed the meeting of the work being completed on improvement plans and how BSF would be permeated throughout these plans to ensure that any future inspection would clearly identify where developments in BSF have had an impact.

The board were informed that a significant feature of the TM's Forum discussions was anxiety conveyed about the amount of work to be completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of September for ICT implementation in what would be a busy time of year for schools. It was explained by the BSF team that Stage D (planning, design and construction) of the process would address change planning and planning of priorities. Concern regarding capacity was raised as an issue by the board and the lack of clarity given regarding an interim ICT service and the schools allowed impact on this. There was also a need to keep in mind that Transformation Managers had other roles to fulfil i.e. examination and work on a new curriculum. It was recommended that the discussions with the MSP would need to involve a range of staff as by September there would need to be a clear strategy on the roll out of ICT and a need to look at how the capacity in schools is supported.

A further view expressed by the board was the need to keep in mind the essentials of the ICT contract which was crucial and would only be clear once the contract was received and work started.

The BSF team recognised that schools were at the peak of ICT and building planning activity and were fully aware of the leadership achieved by schools to reach this level of activity. The board noted the offered support from the BSF team as appointment of the MSP would lead to more detailed work being required and there was a need for organisation to minimise impact. It was important for the board to keep in mind that the ability to respond would have been enabled by the high quality of work already achieved.

The board spoke about the end of the Procurement process for ICT which would require further time commitments from schools and therefore asked that this be addressed as a programme issue. The board felt there needed to be a suitable recognition of the engagement taken in the procurement process by schools outside of school time.

The board agreed that there be a public recognition, at the appropriate time, of key persons involved in the ICT project. The board further agreed that there is recognition of the work completed at the next BSF board meeting on the 01 April.

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### Update from the ICT Forum

The board received a verbal update from Paul Renault the ICT forum representative.

The board learned that Nowshad Choudhury had been appointed to the post of ICT service delivery manager. The ICT strategic lead post had been approved and the appointment to this post was in progress. It was reported to the board that there was a strong feeling from schools that this post should have a high quality appointment as it would be a position of high need with consistent support required to all 10 schools. The board were advised that there had been considerable discussion at the forum on the MSP. The board noted that a lead bidder for the contract would be finalised by 29.04.08 and it would be necessary to have Member consultation before there was any report to STB on this issue.

The board were informed that the teacher's framework programme with the CLC was progressing well.

The board were informed, that in preparation for the ICT implementation, it had been recognised, by the forum, the essential need by schools to examine their current ICT provision and keep in mind any changes. The forums had been essential for head teachers to share experiences and raise awareness of existing issues and identify further issues which needed investigation.

The board were reminded that the process for the completion of the MSP contract would as follows:

April - Draft (shell) contract sent to school governors to enable early consideration. – Agreed that there is clear guidance provided to governors on what is expected from them regarding sign off of the contract in May. Noted that David Williamson and Gordon Smith will be available to attend governor meetings to discuss any concerns.

May – final contract will be sent to governors in late May or June to sign

June – contract considered and agreed at Cabinet Procurement Committee

September - ICT Implementation

### **LC28. CHOICE DIVERSITY AND FAIR ACCESS**

The board were advised that the next stage of activities planned for Choice Diversity and Fair Access was the appointment of a Champion. This was not critical in terms of timescales but it was expected to be at an advance stage by the Summer term. The board were advised that discussion on CD&FA at governing boards may or may not take up a full meeting. The board noted that the Council was willing to provide support to governing boards when discussing this issue and could provide persons to facilitate dialogue. Noted that the BSF team could either attend any special meetings organised on this issue or attend arranged governing board meetings. To note that there was yet a response to be received to the Council's submission for Schools For Change 2.

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The board sought clarification on whether discussion on this significant issue of CD & FA would be held in the private or public part of a governing body meeting. The board discussed the principals of transparency, public knowledge of the balance of information considered by the governing body when reaching a view, responsibility for public monies and being open on a subject which had local public interest. The board recognised that there cannot be an imposition of a view on this subject. It was also prudent to take into consideration that there were legal requirements followed when deciding what should be considered in an open and private part of a governing body meeting. The board agreed that the Chair discuss this with the governing support unit.

The board noted that it would be of public interest to show how the decision of funding the post for a Choice and Diversity Fair access champion, costing 60k had been reached.

### **LC29. SPECIALIST PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

The board learned of the recent key challenges of obtaining funding for a super pupil support centre. There was funding provision and space available for each secondary school to reduce the number of exclusions. There was funding available for a special school status but this would mean building a new school which of course would be the subject of a competition. The board noted that the Council was seeking a multi agency approach. Funding negotiations with the DSF were still ongoing to resolve this complex issue with the director of Children and Young People's service and the Chief Executive to have meetings with the DCSF this week to seek a funding solution for this proposed centre. The board was advised that the Strategy for Change document cannot be approved until this issue is resolved.

The board sought clarification on when consultation had begun for the Strategy for Change document. In response it was noted that work had begun as part of the Bright Futures document which had then been translated into Strategy for Change 1. There had then followed a section on each school's vision for DSG and continued dialogue with head teachers. The board were advised that once funding issues had been resolved for Strategy for Changes 2 a fuller strategy with a clear direction would be drawn out and would be available for parents.

### **LC30. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RIBA STAGE D ?**

The board were provided with a diagram which set out, visually, the plans for the high level post stage D plan. The board noted that stage D required an intensive amount of activity lasting only 8 weeks which began with a planning proposal being submitted and ended with design and construction. Noted that project managers would be discussing stage D with schools to highlight where necessary action is required. To note that advice to schools entering stage D, at a later stage, would be better as there would be the experience of other schools to learn from.

Agreed the need for more information on roles in this process and ensuring that BSF type issues are addressed. Noted that it would be important for schools to examine the plan and identify at an early stage where support is required and to ensure that

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there is an implementation plan compiled to meet the tight completion deadline of 8 weeks which could not be extended. Further noted that issues should be identified by schools where BSF centrally can provide advice and assistance with. The board were advised that it was important for schools to conduct a self review and fully question what tasks needed to be completed before September. Agreed that this could be considered at the ICT forum where there could be further debate on the level and type of support needed.

The board learned that there was a need to look at divisions of labour and identify the main tasks to be completed and delegated. Suggested that job roles could be examined to further divide up tasks.

The board commented that there could have been more advance warning of the level and intensity of activity at stage D to allow necessary dialogue to be prepared for. Also there was a need to factor in school holidays which also impacted on the number of tasks requiring completion.

The board raised the following issues which were responded to regarding stage D:

- Need for early advice on the schedule for stage D to allow pre stage planning by schools.
- Early involvement of the FFE person to consider and advice on the layout of the classrooms. – Noted that the experience of contractors will be relied upon and the final layout of classrooms will be determined by MSP.
- Noted the specific issues with Woodside High which had to deal with the cost of sprinklers (after late government guidance) and being the first school to enter stage D in school holiday period.

The board commented that it would-be important to expedite the pace of the school BSF projects to reach stage D, ideally by the school summer holidays. The board noted that the BSF team would consider the board's overall comments on stage D and have further discussions with schools.

### **LC31. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

No items received

### **LC32. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

23 April at 18.00hrs

**Cllr Liz Santry**

**Chair**