

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 29 September 2009

RE: Building Schools for the Future – Transforming Learning in Walsall

Purpose

Scrutiny Panel has requested an update on the Building Schools for the Future – Transforming Learning in Walsall programme.

Building Schools for the Future progress update

1.1. Remit Planning:

- Remit Letter response plan has been drafted to maintain team members' focus in preparing for the Remit Meeting on 14th October.
- A couple of meetings with PFS have been planned to further explore the themes in the Remit Letter. A document is in production that will collate the direct response to these key themes.
- The next Remit Planning meeting will take place on 5th October.

1.2. SfC2 Progress:

- Work continues to pull together the SfC2 document with regular writer co-ordination meetings taking place.
- Work to the Estates Strategy section of the SfC2 has commenced with work in earnest planned for the Technical Advisers to assist the Council in completing this section.
- Further work is in train to ensure that teaching and learning colleagues are involved in the production of the SfC2. This includes seeking agreement around a Wave 6a Headteachers forum.

1.3. Consultant Appointments:

- Technical Advisers:
 - Following evaluation, two firms were interviewed on 18th August.
 - Mace Group (with Associated Architects) has been appointed as our Technical Advisers
 - A briefing meeting with Mace took place on 10th September after which a programme of engagement between the Technical Advisers and other team members will take place to progress aspects of the SfC2 and plan ahead for OBC and beyond.
- Client Design Adviser
 - The Client Design Adviser will be interviewed from the SCAPE framework on 2nd October with an appointment to follow shortly afterwards.
 - Our 6a Headteachers will be involved in this process.

1.4. Learning Pilots:

- Now the schools have returned from their break, pilot learning schemes will be developed further.
- A number of exciting aspects to teaching and learning will be explored. A summary of the schools and schemes are as follows:
 - Pool Hayes – handheld technology and outdoor spaces;
 - Streetly – Flexible use of outdoor spaces; and
 - Alumwell – Opening minds (competence based learning, independent learning, flexible use of space).

1.5. Funding Allocation Model (FAM) and Local Education Partnership (LEP)

- A presentation will be taken to Corporate Management Team on 24th September to raise awareness of the function of the Funding Allocation Model and the Local Education Partnership.
- It is expected that this presentation, with the help of advisers, will help kick-start discussion and decision making for scoping the LEP activity.
- Further briefings will be rolled out to Members to keep them informed and involve them in scoping the LEP and addressing affordability issues along the way.
- A meeting took place on 11 September between S151 officer, BSF Project Director and PfS to discuss high-level financial issues ahead of the Remit Meeting.

1.6. Visit to Wolverhampton's BSF Team:

- A visit to Wolverhampton's BSF team took place on 8th September.
- Ahead of the submission of our SfC2 and planning process for our Outline Business Case (OBC), the Walsall team is taking the opportunity to visit Wolverhampton's team to obtain lessons learned which may be useful for progressing our programme through these key stages.

Recommendation

Scrutiny Panel to note the progress made on the Building Schools for the Future project.

Author

Alison Butcher
Project Director – Transforming Learning in Walsall Programme
☎ 655489
✉ butchera@walsall.gov.uk