



Building schools for the future

Readiness to Deliver

Guidance for Local Authorities in BSF Waves 4-6

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department for

education and skills

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partnerships **for schools**

building schools for the future

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Building Schools for the Future

Readiness to Deliver (Waves 4-6)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This guidance is for local authorities which have been notified that they have projects included in waves 4-6 of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

1.2 The Building Schools for the Future programme

BSF is an ambitious, long-term programme to transform secondary education. The broad criteria for prioritising local authorities' projects within the programme remain as educational and social need. However, building on the lessons learned from the early waves of BSF, further criteria focusing on authorities' readiness to deliver their projects are being introduced to prioritise projects within waves 4-6. This is alongside the introduction of the 'strategy for change' approval process, which ties together local education and estate strategies.

To enable forward planning, the Department has already told local authorities (in January 2005) which projects would be likely to fall across waves 4 to 6. These projects were chosen on the basis of authorities' expressions of interest, and prioritised by the educational and social need criteria. The Department did not, however, specify which of waves 4 to 6 each project would fall in. This will be decided using the additional criterion of readiness to deliver.

1.3 Readiness to deliver

All the local authorities which have been notified that they have projects included in waves 4-6 should expect their project to go ahead in waves 4-6, subject to demonstrating their readiness to deliver.

This guidance outlines the process and the criteria that will be used by the Department and Partnerships for Schools (PfS) to assess the readiness of local authorities to deliver projects within waves 4-6 of BSF. Local authorities' capacity to deliver will be assessed against a range of core criteria and the results will be used to position projects in the most appropriate waves. The Department will select the projects for wave 4, which will be set off in January 2007, and indicative projects for waves 5 and 6 after assessing which local authorities best meet the criteria to demonstrate their readiness to deliver.

In addition, this guidance includes a schedule of supplementary information (see section 4 and Annex A) that authorities are requested to provide for BSF programme-planning purposes.

1.4 Project developments

All authorities, including those which are new entrants to BSF in waves 4-6 and those which already have projects in waves 1-3, are required to demonstrate that they have reviewed their original proposals in the light of any subsequent developments (e.g. legislation and policy changes).

In addition, local authorities in waves 4-6 that have submitted very large projects should assume that the capital value of their project will not exceed the indicative maximum upper limit of £150 million, as in the original BSF planning guidance (£50-£150m range). If local authorities have projects which are likely to exceed this limit then they need to discuss their plans with the Department and PfS and should also manage the expectations of their schools, whilst assuming that additional funding will not be available. This may require some projects included in local authorities' original expressions of interest to be split into parts; the later part or parts may not fall in waves 4 to 6, depending on progress in delivery.

2. Local authority submissions

2.1 Submission arrangements

All the local authorities with projects in waves 4-6 should make a submission to the Department and PfS to demonstrate their preparedness to deliver. Authorities should decide which wave they wish to be considered for after assessing when they will be satisfied that they are ready to deliver. Authorities should not put their project forward to start in a wave before they are likely to be ready. Indeed, it will be taken as a sign of poor preparedness if an authority puts forward a project that the Department and PfS consider is clearly not ready. Conversely, authorities which do not put forward projects prematurely will be viewed as adopting a sensible approach.

All local authorities in waves 4-6 are required to notify PfS whether they intend to make a submission for wave 4, 5 or 6 by 15th September 2006. All submissions should be made to the Department and PfS by 13th October 2006 (see section 2.3 for detailed timings and arrangements).

The Department will announce the projects which have been assessed as ready to deliver in wave 4 in December 2006 and these projects will be set off in January 2007. The Department will also announce indicative lists of the projects which have been assessed as ready to deliver or likely to achieve the timelines for waves 5 and 6 in December, subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. Authorities will be informed of the areas they need to address and they will need to demonstrate that they have a plan in place so that they will be ready to set off their projects. Once the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review has been announced, the Department will confirm the indicative funding for each project in waves 5 and 6 in September 2007. In addition, the Department and PfS will check that indicative wave 5 projects have addressed the areas raised and are able to demonstrate that they are ready to deliver. This will not include a further formal bidding process. A similar process will commence in 2008 for projects in wave 6.

The submission should cover the core criteria in the same order as identified in this paper. The submissions may be accompanied by a brief covering letter and should not exceed a maximum of 20 pages plus the supplementary programme information (see section 4 and Annex A). Guidance on the maximum expected length of the response is included for each criterion. Any submissions in excess of 20 pages, excluding the supplementary programme information, will be returned to authorities for re-submission.

Authorities may append brief documentation which provides evidence in support of their submission, although this should be focused and directly relevant. Authorities should supply names and contact details, as appropriate, when they supply written confirmation or evidence as the Department and PfS will contact key stakeholders in projects to confirm arrangements as part of the assessment of preparedness to deliver.

In addition, local authorities are required to complete and submit the pro-forma return for supplementary programme information (see section 4 and Annex A). Whilst authorities will be expected to be able to provide this information, it will not be included in the readiness to deliver assessment.

2.2 How projects will be chosen

The Department will decide which projects start in each of waves 4 to 6 as set out here.

- Projects will be assessed as to their readiness to deliver, as described in this guidance, and will only be allowed to go forward if they have met the readiness to deliver criteria;
- Consideration will be given to the balance between projects from authorities that are new to BSF and from those with projects already in waves 1-3;
- In the event that more projects are assessed as ready to deliver than can be supported by the available funding for a wave, the Department will choose those projects which are most ready to deliver, relative to others, and bearing in mind the balance of projects (as described above);
- If fewer projects are assessed as ready to deliver than can be supported by the available funding, the Department will discuss the steps which need to be taken by the authorities which are assessed as being most close to confirming their readiness to deliver and will agree a process to address their issues so that they can move forward at an appropriate stage.

2.3 Timetable

All local authorities in waves 4-6 are required to register by e-mail to Russell Andrews, PfS Education & Planning Director (russell.andrews@partnershipsfor-schools.org.uk) whether they intend to make a submission for their project to be considered for wave 4, 5 or 6 by 15th September 2006.

All local authorities are then required to send an electronic version of their submission for their wave 4-6 project to Russell Andrews at PfS (same address as above). The Department and PfS welcome submissions in advance of the 13th October deadline.

The expected timetable for the next steps is set out below.

The Department announces wave 4 projects and indicative wave 5 and 6 projects	December 2006
Local authorities set off wave 4 projects	January 2007
The Department confirms indicative funding for wave 5 and 6 projects and checks that local authorities have addressed issues for wave 5 projects	September 2007
Local authorities set off wave 5 projects	September 2007 onwards
The Department checks that local authorities have addressed issues for wave 6 projects	Early 2008 (exact dates to be confirmed)
Local authorities set off wave 6 projects	Mid 2008 onwards (exact dates to be confirmed)

2.4 Support arrangements

The Department, PfS and 4ps are providing a briefing event in early July for local authorities entering BSF in waves 4-6 in support of their preparation of submissions (details to follow). Local authorities with projects in waves 1-3 will receive a briefing from their PfS Education Adviser.

This readiness to deliver guidance is available on the BSF website (www.bsf.gov.uk) and local authorities should note that the 'strategy for change' guidance is also available on the BSF website. Section 3 includes suggested further guidance for each readiness to deliver competence, available from PfS or 4ps as appropriate.

Authorities in waves 4-6 are also recommended to review relevant information on the BSF Knowledge Portal. Local authorities which are entering BSF in waves 4-6 should provide a list of individuals (full name, job title and e-mail address) to Robert Woolgar at PfS (robert.woolgar@partnershipsforschools.org.uk) to arrange access to the Portal.

3. Readiness to deliver assessment

3.1 Local authorities entering BSF in Waves 4-6

The preparedness of local authorities to deliver their first BSF project in waves 4-6 will be assessed against the criteria set out in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. It is recommended that local authorities consider the suggested further guidance when preparing their submissions for each criterion.

The Department is keen to ensure that authorities intending to demonstrate their readiness to deliver a BSF project have taken advantage of the support that is available to them. DfES provide funding to 4ps, the local government project delivery specialist body, for this purpose, and we would expect to see that authorities have approached 4ps and had an initial discussion with them about preparations for their BSF project. Where appropriate, arrangements may then be made to improve team procurement skills, or to address particular issues, including those at a corporate level, on which 4ps can provide free support. The Department and PfS will seek the 4ps' views when assessing readiness to deliver.

3.1.1 Readiness to deliver assessment

Core criteria	Areas for assessment	Suggested further guidance
<p>1. Strategy for Change</p> <p>The Authority understands its key educational challenges and objectives and how it will contribute to these objectives through BSF.</p>	<p>The Authority is able to demonstrate its initial plans for BSF to add value in each of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, choice, access. • Underperforming schools. • Personalised learning. • 14-19 entitlement. • Integrated services. • Inclusion. • Change management. <p><i>(maximum of 5 pages)</i></p>	<p>Strategy for Change guidance for local authorities</p>
<p>2. Estate strategy and planning</p> <p>The Authority has identified the improvements required to the school estate to deliver the Strategy for Change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the Authority's schools estate strategy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key Asset Management Plan (AMP) priorities in terms of location, size and cost. - Overview of pupil place requirements and planning projections. - Headline strategic vision for ICT. - Existing and planned consultations. <p><i>(maximum of 2 pages plus project scope pro-forma in section 4)</i></p>	<p>Strategy for Change guidance for local authorities</p>

Core criteria	Areas for assessment	Suggested further guidance
<p>3. Commitment to the BSF model</p> <p>The Authority is committed to the BSF model, in particular the procurement and funding arrangements, and accepts that BSF funding is dependent on PfS and DfES agreeing to any proposed variations to the model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written commitment in principle from the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive that the Authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will accept DfES and PfS' decision on the appropriateness of funding arrangements, including that new build schools will predominantly be PFI and refurbishment will be through conventional capital funding; - understands that the default model is the Local Education Partnership (LEP), unless otherwise agreed with DfES and PfS, and will seek to follow the LEP and only propose an appropriate alternative when it offers VFM; and - is willing to procure an integrated ICT managed service. <p><i>(maximum of 1 page plus letter)</i></p>	<p>PfS website: publications/BSF guidance</p>

Core criteria	Areas for assessment	Suggested further guidance
4. Project management		
4.1 Member leadership Senior Members are committed to leading the Authority's BSF project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The arrangements for Member leadership of the project 	4ps Guidance on Project Governance and Management Structure Presentations/ seminars from 4ps Expert Client Programme BSF Knowledge Portal: Stage 0/Preparing for BSF BSF Knowledge Portal: Stage 1/Project Initiation
4.2 Project Board The Authority demonstrates senior, corporate level commitment and leadership to the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of an appropriate Project Board (a shadow board would be acceptable at this stage). 	See above 4.1
4.3 Project Director The Authority shows that it has effective arrangements in place for the leadership and direction of the Authority's project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Director arrangements 	See above 4.1
4.4 Project Team The Authority demonstrates its commitment to managing the project through a core team that is able to draw on a wide range of skills, from different sources at different times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans to establish and resource an appropriate project team. <p><i>(maximum of 3 pages for 4.1-4.4 inclusive)</i></p>	See above 4.1

Core criteria	Areas for assessment	Suggested further guidance
<p>5. Support network</p> <p>A network of support is available to the project drawn from both the Authority's own and external advisers. In particular, the Authority has identified its advisory support requirements and is prepared to appoint legal, financial, technical and ICT advisers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for advisory support immediately following selection. • Funding arrangements for advisory support immediately following selection. <p><i>(maximum of 1 page)</i></p>	<p>4ps Guidance on Project Governance and Management Structure</p> <p>BSF Knowledge Portal: Stage 1/Project Initiation</p>
<p>6. Corporate capacity</p> <p>The Authority has the corporate capacity to undertake major strategic investment projects with evidence of its ability to deliver.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate procurement arrangements and capacity. • Experience of delivering strategic projects and lessons learned. <p><i>(maximum of 2 pages)</i></p>	<p>Presentations/ seminars from 4ps Expert Client Programme</p> <p>Support from IDeA and 4ps on corporate procurement</p>
<p>7. Key stakeholder commitment and consultation arrangements</p> <p>Key stakeholders have been and will be consulted at appropriate stages and demonstrate support for the Authority's plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan • Consultation arrangements. • Confirmation of stakeholder support, including contact details. <p><i>(maximum 1 page)</i></p>	<p>4ps Guidance on Project Governance and Management Structure</p> <p>BSF Knowledge Portal: Stage 0/Preparing for BSF</p>

Core criteria	Areas for assessment	Suggested further guidance
<p>8. Risk management</p> <p>The Authority is fully aware of the risks facing the project and those which need to be addressed if the project is to be successfully delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and consideration of risks covering all relevant strategic issues from the Strategy for Change onwards. The risks may include, but are not restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site identification and acquisition. - Educational aspects (see Strategy for Change competence above). - Stakeholder issues, such as PFI and prioritisation. - School organisation arrangements (e.g. three to two tier). - Affordability. <p><i>(maximum 2 pages)</i></p>	<p>BSF Knowledge Portal: Stage 1/Project Initiation</p>

3.1.2 Additional criteria for joint authority projects

The readiness to deliver joint authority projects within Waves 4-6 will be assessed against the following additional criteria:

Core criteria	Areas for assessment	Suggested further guidance
<p>9. Joint authority working</p> <p>Effective joint authority governance/decision-making and partnership arrangements have been established.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management arrangements. • Joint funding arrangements for project costs. • Joint identification and assessment of strategic risks facing the project. <p><i>(maximum of 3 pages)</i></p>	<p>4ps note on suggested criteria for successful joint working</p>

3.2 Local authorities in earlier Waves

Local authorities which are already undertaking projects in waves 1-3 of BSF must concentrate first and foremost on delivering their first project. The Department will only choose second projects in waves 4 to 6 where the authority has demonstrated that its first project is progressing well and to schedule, and that taking on a second project would not threaten delivery of the first.

In addition, as noted in section 2.2, inclusion in a particular wave will also depend on the available resources and the need to balance starting off projects from authorities which are new to BSF with those with projects already in waves 1-3.

The capacity of these authorities will be assessed against the criteria in section 3.1.1 in the sections under the following headings:

- 1. Strategy for Change.
- 2. Estate strategy and planning.
- 7. Key stakeholder commitment and consultation arrangements.
- 8. Risk management.

Authorities which are already in waves 1-3 are not required to provide information for criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6 unless they choose to do so to highlight any changes or improvements they are seeking to make to existing arrangements. We would welcome any such indications as to how authorities are seeking to improve their current arrangements.

In addition, authorities in waves 1-3 will usually be expected to have reached financial close on their wave 1-3 project by the end of December 2006 in order to commence a subsequent project in wave 4 in January 2007. Local authorities which do not expect to have reached financial close by this stage, but consider that they have sufficient capacity to access wave 4 funding in 2008-09, should still submit proposals including a demonstration of how they propose to have the arrangements in place to deliver.

4. Supplementary programme information requirements

The following information is requested for all projects in waves 4-6. The information will be used to provide indicative funding information, but should not be used at present for the purposes of the Schools Organisation Committee.

Programme aspect	Objective	Detailed requirements
Project Scope.	PfS will issue a Funding Allocation Model populated with the schools and pupil number information they have. The Authority can update this information with the 10 year pupil forecast and add schools which may have been left out to give a likely funding envelope and then test their proposals.. The Authority should capture the improvements required to the school estate to deliver the Strategy for Change.	<p>Authorities need to populate the Project Scope proforma excel spreadsheet with the project data, including any schools or PRUs which have been omitted (e.g. special schools) covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic school information i.e. school name, school number, school type (also if proposed Academy), 10 year pupil number forecast and proposed school capacity. • Proposals for amalgamations or closures, or co-location of special schools with mainstream schools. If closures and amalgamations are proposed to confirm whether consultation is planned. • Whether the project is new build or remodel (mixture of new build and refurbishment).
Planning, procurement and construction programme.	To help Authorities plan their work and resources and for PfS and DfES to determine when they will be ready to begin construction of their first school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities should populate the Project Programme pro-forma with completion dates for each activity. • Authorities within waves 1-3 should provide procurement and construction timelines and should include schools within their current wave 1-3 project. • Authorities which are undertaking their first BSF project in waves 4-6 should provide planning, procurement and construction timelines.

Annex A: Programme information request

Project scope pro-forma

Project programme pro-forma