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partnerships for schools
building schools for the future

This case study looks at how the Local Education Partnership (LEP) in Leeds has forged an effective partnership working model using skills from the public and private sector to deliver more than just BSF secondary schools.

Education Leeds was winner of the 'Best Operational LEP' category in the *Excellence in BSF Awards 2008*.

Key project information

Local authority: Leeds City Council

Type of school: Secondary, also leisure centres

No. of pupils: over 3,000 and rising

Project type: (PFI new build and refurb)

Project cost: Leeds LEP - £224.78m; Leeds BSF phase 1: £133.52m; Leeds BSF phase 2 - £31.77m; Leeds BSF Phase 3 - £26.95m

Project Timescales: Wave 1 contract signature April 2007. Phase 1 schools operational August 2008, Phase 2 schools a rolling programme operational start from August 2009, leisure centres operational from 2010

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Project description

The initial Phase 1 works comprised four PFI schools and two Design & Build schools, which reached financial close in a record 14 weeks from preferred bidder being appointed. The LEP then went straight to work, opening the first three of these schools less than 18 months later, on time and budget.

The remaining three schools have all reached interim phased completion and will open in 2009. Phase 1 was followed by an additional new project PFI school in Phase 2, which reached financial close within nine months of the creation of the LEP.

Two new project leisure centres have also been added to the LEP's work programme. These leisure centres reached financial close in August 2008 and are

currently running on time and due to open in 2009 and 2010.

Each learning environment is unique in its design and concept and has been tailored to meet the specific requirements of the school and local community. Design development was heavily influenced by the school during the Reviewable Design Data (RDD) process, but overall the concepts envisaged at financial close remain primarily unchanged – a testament to the vision of the partnership. The schools are no longer just institutions of learning but are an integral part of the community, offering wide and varied learning and recreational activities to both children and adults alike.

Recreational areas include dance studios, recording studios, theatres, sports halls, gymnasiums, fitness

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suites and in-school radio stations. Learning spaces at the schools have been designed to suit a varied pedagogy; one which recognises the value of personalised learning for individual learning styles, and which develops students' skills to gather knowledge and make their own choices. Facilities are designed around an informal, open, multi-functional space that can be used for, amongst other things, informal and formal teaching, research and learning and study space for groups and individuals. For example, Pudsey Grangefield has a 'show and tell' room – an informal briefing and discussion space for up to 50 students with stepped seating. Spaces like this will enable students to build and enhance their communications skills and offer a more informal way to learn.

A unique strength of the arrangement in Leeds is the additional capacity provided by a separate strategic partner for ICT, RM. The ICT solution has been fully integrated into the design of the schools through the close working relationship of the design teams, the schools, the ICT strategic partner and the FM team.

Records indicate that truancy at the schools is already on the decline. The uptake of school meals has also surpassed expectations.

The LEP has proved its ability to deliver on its promises on time, within budget and in partnership. Overall, the LEP has contributed to the council's vision, and has currently saved the local authority up to £40 million, through such means as reducing the cost and time of procurement; improving project, contract and asset management; evaluating performance of the contract; and providing feedback for future contract. For example, the Sallow Hill Community College demonstrates reduced construction cost inflation through the delivery of the BSF procurement against national averages. The available data identifies an average 42 months procurement programme, compared with 15 for the local authority's project to date. The construction cost saving as a result of reducing procurement times equates to £21.84m, and proportionally £3.3m of this can be applied to west Leeds. The money saved is being invested into improving the lives and possibilities of the next generation in Leeds.

The annual review, performance monitoring and track record test of the LEP have all been held. The results of these monitors show that the LEP has met its track record test in every respect.

Top Tips

Build effective partnerships: A key strength of the model in Leeds is the unique structure built in to the contract which ensures effective working relationships and communications between the LEP and its supply chain, Education Leeds, the key council teams, the ICT strategic partner RM and the schools.

Think outside the box: The Leeds LEP's work programme includes:

- Wider strategic investments being developed with Leeds City Council, including secondary capital works valued at £13m;
- Additional FM services at one-site to accommodate population growth over three years;

- The LEP has been commissioned to provide DQI facilitation services to a pilot primary school re-build scheme in Harehills, Leeds;
- The LEP and its supply partners have been requested to develop their Expression of Interest (EoI) for the new Holt Park leisure centre;
- The LEP is earmarked to deliver the Leeds Primary Capital Programme;
- The LEP is assisting in the Leeds EoI for the early drawdown of their Wave 13 funding.

Work together, literally: The team co-locate within open plan council offices, enhancing working practices.

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Key contacts

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Further information

More information about schools and education services in Leeds can be found on the Education Leeds website at: www.educationleeds.co.uk/