

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

15 July 2010

Strategy for Change and implications of Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

In 2008, following wide-ranging consultation, Plymouth City Council published its *Investment for Children (IfC)* strategy. In this strategy we prioritised attainment in our poorest communities because this would make the most significant changes to our city and have the long term effect of realising benefits to our communities and the economy.

The IfC strategy recognised that capital investment can act as a catalyst and enabler for change, by providing 21st century facilities for new methods of teaching and learning; this will unlock the talents and skills of children and young people, so that they are fully engaged in meaningful learning and can achieve their best regardless of background or circumstance.

The IfC strategy built on earlier investment programs known as *Ideas for Change* and set out a holistic approach to investment that would ensure that the asset stock met demographic demand, address the condition and age of the stock and make the environments in which children and young people learn not only suitable but inspirational. Since then, and in preparation for entering the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, the Council has been working with schools and stakeholder representatives using the principles and policies in the strategy, to develop in greater detail how we would use BSF investment to meet local challenges and objectives.

Background to BSF

BSF has been an ambitious and far reaching long-term change programme; offering Councils and schools a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform educational provision and the educational experience: raising aspirations, and significantly improving educational outcomes and life chances for children, young people and their families.

Meeting the criteria of the National BSF programme the Council developed its secondary school investment programme into three phases. The first phase incorporating five schools: Lipson and Stoke Damerel Community Colleges, Sir John Hunt Community Sports College (within Wood View Learning Community), and the two new academies, All Saints Academy Plymouth and the Marine Academy Plymouth (currently John Kitto and Tamarside Community Colleges).

At the end of last year, following a rigorous assessment of the Council's readiness to deliver, it was announced that Plymouth's BSF Phase 1 project had been approved for funding. Some of the ways we intended to use BSF investment to transform learning in Plymouth included the following:

- Improving facilities in the 11-19 entitlement
- Delivering sections of the PE and Sport Strategy by focusing community sporting facilities at school sites.
- Improving the offer of Culture and Art in the community in schools
- Improving the facilities for SEN and Inclusion in purpose built environments
- Delivering a City wide ICT infrastructure that would make schools multiagency hubs and give students access to high quality, robust, safe technology.
- Improved community use of school buildings

Current position on BSF investment

On 5 July 2010 the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, stopped all BSF projects that have not reached Financial Close. This equates to over 700 projects across the country. Academy projects were on put hold pending discussions between the Department for Education (DfE) and academy sponsors.

The Secretary of State also announced a review into the way the country builds schools to ensure more money is not wasted on pointless bureaucracy and to ensure a higher proportion of the capital investment we have gets rapidly to individual local authorities and schools which need it most.

Further announcements on capital investment will be made through the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) on 20 October 2010.

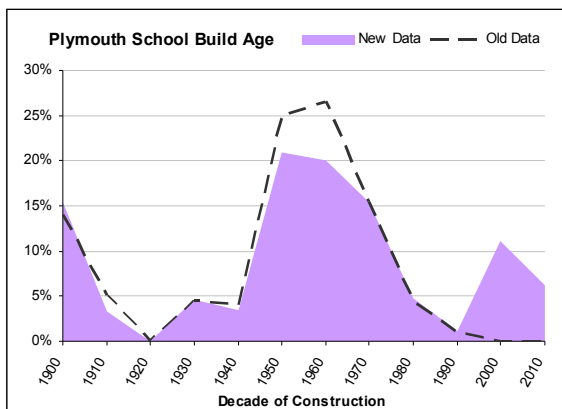
IfC Achievement

The Council has been hugely successful in securing funds and getting on with the complex task of working with private partners, organisations, contractors and the schools themselves to design and build new schools.

In the past 10 years the Council has replaced 12 per cent of its school buildings. The effect that this has had on communities is beginning to be measured in the improvement in community cohesion, better take up of community facilities, rising house prices in the school area, increased economic investment in house building, rising achievement levels and improved quality of life. These improvements are outlined in the 'A Year of

Achievement' document as part of the Municipal Journal awards that has placed Plymouth as the best achieving Council in the country for this year.

At this time this improvement is demonstrated in the graph adjacent which shows the age of the school building stock in Plymouth. However the significant issue of a backlog maintenance liability of an ageing asset stock that Plymouth faced in the early part of the last decade has been tackled only in part. The number of buildings built in the 1950s and 1960s and the



Victorian and Edwardian times still pose a challenge to the Council in providing attractive, suitable and inspiring environments for children to learn in. However the current Government has a stated aim of raising the attainment of the poorest. This means that the local IfC strategy and national government objectives remain in tandem.

Other reference documents

A Year of Achievement

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mj_award_submission_2010.pdf

Gateway review of BSF proposals:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/buildingschoolsnewsitem?newsid=229744>

June 2010 Newsletter:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/education/strategyforchange/buildingschoolsnews/strategyforchangenews.htm>