

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Review of School Design

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Improvement and Scrutiny Review of School Design

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Government has embarked on the most substantial capital investment programme for schools for generations. Since 1997 there has been a massive investment in the school estate both at a national and local level. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme is a fifteen year Government Programme which will see in a series of waves, over £30bn invested in the rebuilding and refurbishment of all secondary schools in the country. In addition, the Government has also announced plans to rebuild or refurbish 50% of all primary schools over a 15 year period.

The rapid pace of development of information technology and the use of new education approaches is having a massive impact on how learning and study takes place and this impact is likely to accelerate in years to come. At the same time there has been a growing recognition that the learning environment as a whole can have a significantly positive impact on both learning and teaching outcomes. It is important therefore, that designers of school buildings embrace these changes and developments and design learning environments which are flexible, inspiring, supportive of teaching and learning and which involve educational users and the wider community.

The challenge facing Local Authorities (LAs) is to ensure that new school buildings create learning environments that are fit for education in the 21st century. The danger nationally is that LAs do not take on board these issues and continue to build schools which are dull, uninspiring and not fit for the purposes of modern education. There is evidence that this is not happening in Derbyshire.

1.2 Review Terms of Reference

The School Planning and Support Improvement and Scrutiny Committee 2005 approved the scope and terms of reference for the review. A Working Group comprising Councillors W G Camm, Mrs J Hill, Mrs K D Lauro, Mrs G Newman, I Pryce and Mrs J A Twigg and Mrs D Maddocks (Parent Governor representative) was appointed to oversee the conduct of the review.

The review has concentrated on matters relating to school design although some of the issues and recommendations will have an impact on all capital projects across departments.

1.3 Summary of Findings

Building new schools represents a one-off opportunity to provide inspirational schools fit for education in the 21st Century. “As a nation we are currently building a substantial number of new schools. This is welcome news if we are building the right schools, but an accelerating crisis if we are not.”¹

The BSF programme challenges local authorities to deliver educational learning environments with ICT as a core feature which are inspirational and fit for education in the 21st century. Work will commence on the first of the Derbyshire schools included in wave 3 of the BSF programme which is due to start on site in 2009. It is important therefore, that the County Council make the most of this unprecedented capital investment in schools and deliver the Governments education agenda both in BSF schools and in other school capital projects.

The review concludes that in relation to the BSF programme in Derbyshire, the County Council has:-

- Demonstrated chief officer commitment to BSF in the role undertaken by the Deputy Chief Executive.
- Provided sufficient resources to put in place an effective management structure to respond to the challenge of BSF.
- Embedded BSF in to high level corporate strategies.
- Recognised the importance of developing the education vision at corporate level and in relation to individual projects.
- Recognised the importance and benefits of stakeholder engagement in the delivery of projects.

In terms of the schools visited during the course of the review, the conclusion is that they have generally been of good design and fit for the purpose of education in the 21st Century. The need for flexibility in design to cater for the ever changing ICT dominated education environment has been recognised in the design of secondary schools. It is clear that over time the County Council are learning lessons in the design of new schools, resolving problems that have occurred in earlier developments. The County Council in designing school buildings needs

¹ 21st Century Schools – Learning Environments of the Future – CABE/RIBA

to have greater regard to the introduction of environmentally sustainable measures in its buildings to counter rapidly increasing energy costs.

The review has identified several issues relating to the process of school design including:-

- The development of design briefs for new schools
- The role of the Education Development Team
- The involvement of Planning Officers in the design process
- The need to involve disciplines such as School Travel Plan Officers and the Risk Manager in the process at an early stage
- The performance of external partner architects
- Reporting and monitoring of capital projects
- Support for Headteachers and schools undergoing major capital projects
- Achieving the Secured By Design Award for its school buildings

The review concludes that it is important that the County Council take steps to address the problems identified and implement the reports recommendations in order to maximise the opportunities presented by the general increase in capital investment in schools. The Working Group found that at present the outcome of new school building projects may be determined by the pro-activeness and ability of the Headteachers and Governing Bodies to positively influence the design process. The concern is that where Headteachers and Governing Bodies are for whatever reason less proactive, the benefits to all concerned, not the least the pupils, will not be maximised.

1.4 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- (a) The Major School Investment Protocol to be adopted as a means of ensuring consistency in development of educational visions across all education capital projects, not just those relating to BSF.
- (b) A separate school development protocol be developed for use in minor school development projects.

Recommendation 2

The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the County Property Officer to continue to monitor the standard of design briefs prepared for school projects.

Recommendation 3

- (a) The County Council should evaluate the effectiveness of Heanor Mundy Junior School.
- (b) School design should continue to find a workable balance between a school that looks good and where pupils enjoy learning in and one which is built with quality materials and practical in terms of maintenance and upkeep.
- (c) External play areas should be included as part of the initial overall design and funding process for all schools.
- (d) School design should include attention to detail on matters such as storage and cloakroom space within overall affordability and space preferences on individual sites.

Recommendation 4

- (a) The County Council should continue to fully embrace the principle of invest to save in relation to capital projects on sustainability issues.
- (b) The County Council should examine ways in which schools can be encouraged to assist in the funding of sustainable measures in schools.
- (c) The impact of sustainable features introduced in school buildings be more closely monitored and an annual report be prepared setting out the extent to which sustainable measures have been introduced in capital projects and also what new initiatives are available.
- (d) The County Council should continue to trial new and innovative sustainable measures in its buildings (e.g. New Holymoorside and Herbert Strutt) and report on their impact in the annual report.
- (e) The County Council to continue to seek to maximise the support and advice, including grant funding offered by the partnership arrangement with the Carbon Trust in the design process for school buildings.
- (f) The work of the Energy Management Team in the Property Services Division be promoted to encourage all schools to make

use of the service to maximise the sustainability of new and existing school buildings.

- (g) All Schools should be encouraged to use sustainable features as an educational tool and also to make the wider community aware of them and how they work.
- (h) All Schools should be encouraged to train all staff in the use of sustainable features in order to maximise their efficiency.
- (i) (Not for Cabinet) The use of BEMS in Derbyshire County Council buildings be considered as a possible future Improvement and Scrutiny review.

Recommendation 5

- (a) The County Property Officer secure further improvements in the performance of partner architects.
- (b) The County Property Officer should maximise the design work given to the in-house design team, rather than external architects.
- (c) The County Council should continue to review the performance of the external architects and the County Property Officer should test the market for alternative partner architects from time to time.

Recommendation 6

The County Council to ensure early consultation with partners takes place on extended use of school facilities in relation to the programme.

Recommendation 7

- (a) The Head of Development to address the issues identified in the report relating to the support given to schools and communication between Development Officers and Schools to ensure that schools receive a level of service in line with that set out in the Protocols referred to in Recommendation 2.
- (b) As part of the implementation process of the report, the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee consult with selected schools which have undergone major capital projects.

Recommendation 8

- (a) At the outset of major school development projects a site meeting be convened involving all disciplines involved in the design process including for instance, Planning Officers, STP Officers and the Risk Management Officer in line with the provisions of the Major Design Protocol.
- (b) The Major Capital Investment Protocol be amended to make specific reference to the need for this initial meeting.
- (c) In relation to those schools where it is likely that development will take place in phases over a number of years, master plans for the school site should be prepared.

Recommendation 9

The County Council should design all school buildings in accordance with Secured By Design Principles and where appropriate and practical seek to achieve the Secured By Design Award.

Recommendation 10

- (a) The STP Team to be included in the initial project meeting referred to in Recommendation 8(a).
- (b) The protocol between the Children and Younger Adults Development Team and STP Officers be amended to take account of the new requirement for STPs to be submitted with planning applications.

Recommendation 11

The Risk Manager to be included in the initial project meeting for major projects referred to in Recommendation 8(a).

Recommendation 12

- (a) A Cabinet Support Member and senior officer from the County Council to be nominated to oversee the development of major new school projects as being trialled under BSF.
- (b) The implications of (a) above to be evaluated in terms of available resources.

- (c) The Head of Development to develop a guidance booklet for schools undergoing capital developments.
- (d) In recognition of the importance of this role, schools be recommended subject to funding being available, to second a senior member of staff or the Headteacher to undertake the client role on behalf of the school. The length of the secondment and whether it is full time or part-time should be commensurate with the size of the project.

Recommendation 13

The County Council should introduce more detailed and robust post occupancy evaluation on all capital projects.

Recommendation 14

- (a) Reports to Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Schools should be more robust and transparent and provide greater accountability, particularly where problems causing additional costs or delays are concerned.
- (b) The Cabinet Member for Schools to oversee the monitoring of Education capital projects.
- (c) Similar monitoring procedures be introduced for capital projects undertaken in other portfolio areas.

Recommendation 15

That recommendations 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 14 be introduced in all Derbyshire County Council capital projects

1.5 The Next Stage

The report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration. It is recommended that:-

(a) the Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee presents the report to the Cabinet.

(b) following consideration of this report it is suggested that, should the Cabinet agree to implement the recommendations, the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee receives a report at a date to be determined, to outline progress made.

**COUNCILLOR KATH LAURO
CHAIR, SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IMPROVEMENT AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

2.0 Introduction

The Government has embarked on the most substantial capital investment programme for schools since the first two major building campaigns which took place in the Victorian era and in the period immediately following the Second World War. Society has progressed beyond all recognition since the Victorian days. However, there is a view amongst some commentators that this progression has not taken place in school buildings. A CABE/RIBA Report said “currently school environments are not very different from what they were a hundred years ago, whilst the design of homes, the workplace, retail spaces, hospitals, transport and communications has changed dramatically”².

The rapid pace of development of information technology and the use of new education approaches is having a massive impact on how learning and study takes place and this impact is likely to accelerate in years to come. At the same time there has been a growing recognition that the learning environment as a whole can have a significantly positive impact on both learning and teaching outcomes. It is important therefore, that designers of school buildings embrace these changes and developments and design learning environments which are flexible, inspiring, supportive of teaching and learning and which involve educational users and the wider community.

The challenge facing Local Authorities (LAs) is to ensure that new school buildings create learning environments that are fit for education in the 21st century. The danger is that LAs do not take on board these issues and continue to build schools which are dull, uninspiring and not fit for the purposes of modern education.

2.1 Terms of Reference of the Review

The School Planning and Support Improvement and Scrutiny Committee approved the scope and terms of reference for the review. A Working Group comprising Councillors W G Camm, Mrs J Hill, Mrs K D Lauro, Mrs G Newman, I Pryce and Mrs J A Twigg and Mrs D Maddocks (Parent Governor representative) was appointed to oversee the conduct of the review.

It was agreed that the review would consider the issues involved in the planning, design and building of new school facilities. New schools and new school buildings can be procured by several different means be it Design and Build or PFI as under BSF or by traditional procurement

² 21st Century Schools – Learning Environments of the Future – CABE/RIBA

through the County Council's capital programme. Whatever the means of procurement, the process of designing and building a new school is complex. The review has sought to highlight the main issues affecting the process of school design in general. Some of the issues and recommendations are also relevant to County Council capital projects undertaken across all departments.

As part of the review process, the Working Group has visited a number of schools which have recently undergone capital developments. In addition, the Working Group agreed to monitor the development of the new Hasland Junior School as the project co-incided with the review timescales.

The Improvement and Scrutiny Manager who has overseen the review on behalf of the Working Group, is Vice-Chair of Governors at Hasland Junior School. The Chair of Governors and the Headteacher have both confirmed in writing that the evidence contained in the report relevant to the Junior School is a true and fair reflection of their experience of the school design process.

2.2 Acknowledgements

Members of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee would like to thank all those who have assisted with the development of this review.

3.0 Background

The Government is planning through the 15 year BSF programme to commit an unprecedented level of resources to improving the quality of school buildings, although financial support is only agreed for each wave at a time. In addition to the investment planned as part of the BSF programme, the Government announced in March 2006 that half of all primary schools will be replaced or refurbished over the next 15 years

Over the same period it is clear that there will be significant changes in the way education is delivered. The challenge for all those involved in the process of providing new schools is therefore, to utilise capital resources in a way which maximises best value whilst at the same time being able to deliver education provision in an ever changing educational environment.

Schools can be considered to be amongst the most important of civic buildings so they should be designed in a way which is fit for educational purpose, not least because it offers a one-off chance to get it right. Get the design of the school wrong and problems will undoubtedly be created for future generations of school children. Schools must also be places where adults are able and willing to learn. There is an increasing focus on “end user” and wider community involvement in education generally which extends to school design.

Design Council national research in to the design of school buildings demonstrated that “low quality, standardised and institutional classroom environments and resources are not just uninspiring. They actually:

- Reduce the range of teaching and learning styles possible and affect the interaction between teacher and student
- Undermine the value placed on learning
- Fail to adapt to individual needs
- Hinder creativity
- Are inefficient
- Waste time and effort
- Cost more in the long-term”³

It is widely accepted that well designed schools can have a positive impact on:-

- Pupil attainment

³ Design Council – Learning Environments Campaign Prospectus – From the Inside Looking Out 2005

- Staff morale and well-being and recruitment and retention
- Pupil behaviour
- Reducing bullying
- The morale of the wider community

Education provision, particularly at secondary level has changed dramatically in recent years and it will continue to change in years to come. It is important therefore, that the design of school buildings takes account of this ever changing environment and maximises the opportunities presented by the largest ever capital investment in schools. “As a nation we are currently building a substantial number of new schools. This is welcome news if we are building the right schools, but an accelerating crisis if we are not.”⁴ Only time will tell whether the current investment in the school estate has been successful both nationally and locally. “The success of buildings constructed today will depend on the ability of users to realise the dream in ten, fifteen and twenty years’ time”⁵

The modern secondary school fit for education in the 21st Century will need to be able to be:-

- “Flexible and adaptable – to allow for the different use of space in the short-term and long-term as education evolves, particularly relating to ICT.
- Inspiring – to those learning in the building (both children and adults), to those who work in the School and also those who visit.
- Supportive of effective teaching and learning – the environment should not constrain or inhibit learning. It should accommodate a wide range of experiences and activities including intellectual, physical, practical, social, emotional, spiritual and cultural.
- Involving of users, the wider community and other educational establishments.”⁶

The impact of ICT on present day and future education cannot be underestimated. ICT will change the way our children are taught, particularly those in secondary education. Changes brought about by increased use of ICT will mean:-

⁴ 21st Century Schools – Learning Environments of the Future – CABI/RIBA

⁵ Do Buildings matter? – John Cherrington and Sarah Cassidy 2005

⁶ 21st Century Schools – Learning Environments of the Future – CABI/RIBA

- Education will increasingly be provided via the internet with pupils presenting work to teachers electronically
- Contact with teachers through video conferencing via the internet rather than as one to one tutorials
- The traditional classroom setting will be used less and less
- Research as part of learning will be done remotely from the school via the internet
- There will be less reliance on the school timetable and school term times
- Other learning environments such as internet cafes will emerge

Schools in the future will therefore need to incorporate the following components which have been addressed in the Derbyshire Educational Vision as submitted under its BSF Programme:-

- Personalised spaces for instance, in a library for learning on line individually or with others
- Collaborative spaces for learning in small groups
- Traditional classroom spaces for learning in large groups
- Directed learning spaces such as lecture theatres for learning in very large groups
- Shared spaces to facilitate community and adult learning
- Multi-agency space to provide services to the community.

The debate about the design of modern schools nationally has centred on secondary education. However, it should not be forgotten that the Government has plans to invest heavily in the refurbishment or the rebuilding of primary sector schools. The impact that ICT will have in the future at primary school level must not be underestimated.

As part of the BSF process the Government commissioned multi-disciplinary teams to develop exemplar designs for schools. These school designs were considered to be the best of their kind in terms of delivering education in the 21st Century and claimed to demonstrate educational understanding, design quality, cost effectiveness, ability to deliver and teamwork. The use of exemplar designs will not be mandatory and time has moved on in that not all designs meet current building regulations and some have proved unaffordable. Some designs should however, be considered as a benchmark and as a starting point from which those involved in the design process can start to develop designs tailored to local needs. In fact the new Mundy Junior School utilised some of the exemplar ideas in classroom, toilet and cloakroom design.

The building of new schools is, like many other areas of public sector activity, closely regulated and is in the majority of cases constrained by cost. Building Bulletins set out the recommended standards and sizes for buildings and there is a recognised cost per square metre for school buildings which LAs are expected to adhere to. The challenge for LAs is to construct innovative schools within these parameters which will provide the learning environment in which the above benefits can be realised. The danger is that LAs do not take the opportunities presented by the massive capital investment in education. “The temptation must be avoided to cut corners either to make sure the money is spent on time or (paradoxically) to economise and spread it further. Both will lead to deficiencies for which we will not, in future, be thanked”⁷.

3.1 The National Context

The Government’s programme of education reform has been underpinned by various policy statements and legislation including:

- Every Child Matters
- The Education White Paper
- Building Schools For The Future
- Extended Schools
- Falling pupil numbers

3.2 The Local Context

3.2.1 Council Plan Aims and Objectives

The recommendations arising from the review will support the Council Plan goals and objectives of:-

- Provide direction and leadership, and manage and improve the Council’s resources, in order to ensure high quality and value for money services.
- Creating an environment where all children can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.
- Improve access and encourage participation in leisure, recreation, information, lifelong learning and culture.

The review also impacts on the following County Council values identified in the Council Plan:-

⁷ Creating New Schools – The Education Network (Andrew Beard)

- Openess and honesty in informing people about issues and choices, and decisions taken on their behalf.
- Listening to local people to ensure the County Council are responsive to their needs.
- Respecting the needs of future generations in County Council work and actions.
- Working in partnership with other organisations in tackling complex problems and making the most of limited resources.
- Quality and value for money in all County Council endeavours.

3.2.2 Plans and Strategies

The priorities informing the Schools development arise from various other LEA plans including:-

- Derbyshire Community Strategy
- Children's and Young Peoples Plan
- Derbyshire's Education Vision
- Schools Asset Management Plan
- The School Organisation Plan
- New Millennium Education Strategy
- Class Size Plan
- The Early Years and Childcare Plan
- Behaviour Support Plan
- ICT Development Plan
- Access Strategy
- Security Strategy

3.2.3 Pupil Numbers in Derbyshire

In Derbyshire, in the Primary sector it is estimated the school population will fall from 60,675 in 2004 to 51,851 in 2010, a 14.5% reduction. Similarly, over the same period the Secondary school population will have fallen by 5.3% and by 2014 the estimated reduction will be 9.3%.⁸

3.2.4 The Derbyshire Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme

Derbyshire was not chosen to participate in the first two waves of the BSF Programme. Originally, the first 6 Derbyshire Schools to be included in the BSF programme, namely Bolsover School, Heritage Community School, Netherthorpe School, Shirebrook Community

⁸ Best value Review of Buildings Development Function 2005

School, Springwell School and Stubbing Wood are included in Phase 3 which will commence building in 2009. The County Council has successfully put forward a case to have a further 6 schools included in Phase 5 to follow on closely from its first wave 3 schools. These schools are Tibshelf Community School, Mortimer Wilson School, Frederick Gent School, The William Allitt School, Granville Community School and The Pingle School. The total estimate cost of replacing or refurbishing all Derbyshire's secondary schools could end up being in excess of £650 million. The standard BSF Programme funding available is 50% for new build, 35% major refurbishment and 15% minor refurbishment. However, Derbyshire's first wave is predominantly new build and as such requires up to £8m funding from the Council to meet the affordability gap.

The BSF process is considered to be equally if not more complex than the PFI process. In fact BSF will include a combination of PFI projects for mainly new build schools and design and build projects for schemes that are predominantly refurbishment. As a result, the County Council has recognised the need for additional staffing resources. The BSF management structure was approved by Cabinet on 7 June 2005 and is set out below:-

- BSF Project Board - the Group will have executive authority over the general direction and development of the project and it has delegated powers from Cabinet to make decisions on procedural matters relating to the delivery of the BSF programme
- The BSF Project Team providing the strategic management for the project at Chief Officer/second tier level
- The BSF Management Team which will support the Project Manager in delivering the project with the support of different work streams

BSF Work Streams, these groups are an integral part of the ongoing development of BSF project works.

The County Council has recognised that if BSF is to succeed and achieve its potential, it is vital that additional investment is committed to the project at an early stage. The Deputy Children and Younger Adults Officer has been seconded to work on the development of the Educational Vision which has now been approved. A BSF Project Manager has also been appointed to work exclusively on the project under the direction of the Deputy Chief Executive together with a number of other staff from Education and Corporate Resources

Departments. External Consultant Legal and Financial advice has also been commissioned.

As part of the BSF process, authorities have been required to establish Local Education Partnerships (LEPs). A LEP is a public private partnership between an LEA, Partnerships for Schools and a private sector partner selected in open competition. It will be a joint venture company with the purpose of delivering the BSF investment and making every aspect of school improvement a reality. The County Council is in the process of procuring a LEP.

3.2.5 Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

The County Council has replaced four schools, namely Tupton Hall School and Chapel-en-le-Frith High School all under PFI contracts completed in 2003 and more recently Long Eaton and Newbold secondary schools completed in 2006 at an estimated cost of £30.6m.

3.2.6 The Education Capital Programme

The County Council's Capital Strategy is to ensure that available capital resources across all Departments are utilised in the most economic, efficient and effective way in support of the Council's key priorities and objectives in meeting the needs of local communities. The Capital Strategy Group oversees the County Councils corporate capital programme and makes recommendations to Cabinet.

In terms of the Children and Younger Adults Capital Programme, the Asset Management Plan Advisory Group which comprises of headteachers, governors, Diocesan representatives, the County Property Officer and Children and Younger Adults Department representatives, makes recommendations to Cabinet on the strategic priorities for education capital expenditure.

The Children and Younger Adults Capital Programme has 5 elements.

- The Modernisation Fund
- Basic Need
- Schools Access Initiative
- Targeted Capital Fund
- Children's Centres

Since 1997 Children and Younger Adults capital spending has increased dramatically. In 1997/98, the Education Capital Programme totalled £9.2m. By 2006/2007 this had risen to £34m.

The corporate capital programme, including details of Children and Younger Adults capital expenditure is monitored by regular reports to Cabinet. The Children and Younger Adults Development Team submit reports on the departmental capital programme as part of reports which approve individual capital projects. The appendices to these reports provide brief details of the progress of individual projects including information on underspends or overspends. Reports are presented to Cabinet as necessary on projects where overspends and or delays have occurred. During the course of the review, the Cabinet Member for Schools has established regular meetings with the County Property Officer to monitor matters relating to the Children and Younger Adults Capital Programme.

3.2.7 Sustainability

The County Council is committed to environmental sustainability. Sustainability forms an integral part of Council plans and policies including the Council Plan, the Community Strategy, departmental service plans, the Environmental Policy and the Asset Management Plan. The County Council in February 2006 also adopted the Corporate Energy and Design Sustainability Policy. The Policy recognises the effect energy and water use can have on the environment and sets out a commitment for action to address these issues.

Sustainable features are incorporated in to the design of all new school buildings such as the use of a geothermal heating system and wind power at the new Herbert Strutt School. The extent of use of sustainable features is however, limited by the financial cost of initial capital investment required. Part L of Buildings Regulations has recently been amended making it a requirement that all new buildings comply to a set minimum standard in terms of sustainability.

The County Property Division has established an Energy Management Team to provide guidance and advice on sustainability issues and the efficient running of buildings. Schools for instance can be provided with detailed information relating to their energy and water consumption.

On 9 May 2006, Cabinet accepted an invitation from the Carbon Trust to join the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme (LACMP). The Carbon Trust is an independent company funded by DEFRA to enable the UK to meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments. The Council's Carbon Trust Implementation Scheme was approved by Cabinet on the 5th June 2007. Joining the LACMP provides the County Council with several benefits including:-

- The reduction of on-going maintenance and escalating energy running costs by targeting the most cost effective solutions through design, procurement, financial and operational management.
- Access to sizeable Carbon Trust project match funding, Invest to save and/or venture capital for feasibility studies and capital schemes. The County Council has recently been successful in obtaining a £200k match funding grant for sustainable features in capital projects from the Trust.
- Free independent technical and change management support and advice to the value of £20k per year during the life of projects.
- Facilitating the sharing of best practice between local authority partners.
- Acting as independent advisor to the Council

The County Council in designing school buildings has regard to the environmental impact of the design and sustainable features are included where possible and practical. At present sustainable features are funded by the County Council. It is however, the school which reaps the financial reward of lower energy costs in the longer-term.

4.0 The Design Process in Derbyshire

4.1.1 The role of the Education Development Team

The Children and Younger Adults Development Team undertakes a variety of functions relating to the delivery of the Capital Programme including:-

- School Places Planning
- Asset Management Planning
- Managing the Children and Younger Adults Capital Programme
- Development of the design brief

4.1.2 Project management in the Property Services Division

In 2005, the Property Services Division appointed two Project Managers. The Project Managers are generally involved in larger more complex schemes and their role is to act as a proactive lead manager for all stages of capital projects and to co-ordinate stakeholder input, design team progress and contractor delivery. Their role is also to ensure projects meet service delivery requirements within timescale, budget and corporate policies. Typically the Project Managers will work on projects involving external architects, providing a link between the architect, the County Property Division and the School.

4.1.3 The Design function

The County Council has its own in house Design Team comprising of 37 whole time equivalent officers. In 2001, the Best Value Review of Property Services recommended that external design agencies be engaged formally to work in partnership with the in-house design team in order to deliver the implementation of the expanding Capital Programme. As a result, a partnering commission has been established for design, property management, maintenance and construction services mainly relating to the Children and Younger Adults Service. For example:-

- For capital design in all disciplines, a single consultant, Atkins, Faithful and Gould has been appointed.
- For major design and build work, a single large contractor, Miller has been appointed.
- Seven other contractors provide construction services for both large and small works.

The relationship between the County Council and its main external architect, Atkins, Faithful and Gould is set out in a framework agreement which came in to effect on 31 October 2002. The agreement is for an initial period of 5 years, but it can operate for a maximum period of 8 years. The Agreement does not give a guarantee of work to external contractors. Fees, subject to annual review, were agreed as part of the selection process and these are applied to individual schemes. Among the priorities set by the Council in using external partners are:-

- To secure additional resources and expertise
- To provide an efficient response to a fluctuating workload
- To integrate public and private sector skills in the delivery of services
- To promote a culture of continuous improvement

Once the capital programme has been approved by Cabinet, individual design schemes are allocated by the County Property Officer to either the in-house design team or external design partners. All schemes produced by the County Council and partner architects are submitted to the Head of Design Services, the County Property Officer and the Deputy Chief Executive (Design Champion for BSF) on larger schemes for approval.

The County Property Officer has developed a detailed protocol relating to capital design in general which also applies to new school buildings. The protocol sets out in detail, the various stages that should be gone through by all the relevant disciplines involved in the design process. The external design partners have signed up to use the Protocol.

4.1.4 The Role of Planning Officers

Planning regulations enable the County Council to determine planning applications for their own developments, including schools. It is important therefore, that in dealings with its own developments, that the County Council is seen to be treated no differently from any other applicant. There needs to be a clear distinction between the County Council's role as applicant and its role as planning authority.

Developments can have a major impact on an environment and on the lives of people who may live or work nearby and they need to be taken in to account. Officers within the Environmental Services Department have a range of skills which can in most cases, prior to a planning application being submitted, assist in making the planning process work as smoothly as possible. This includes advice and assistance on

matters such as highway access, listed buildings/conservation areas, effects on trees, sustainability and effects on wildlife habitats. Most planning applications for built development are now required to be accompanied by a 'Design and Access Statement' which sets out the principals behind the design of the proposal and how it will relate to its local environment in terms of appearance and access arrangements.

The Environmental Services Department has produced a draft document, "Working Together" which is a protocol for use by Officers involved in County Council development proposals. The protocol sets out the various stages of the planning process and the reasons why they are necessary. As the title suggests the emphasis of the document is very much on a co-ordinated approach to the planning process with relevant officers being involved in the design of buildings at an early stage. The Environmental Services Department are also in the process of producing a guide for those responsible for County Council properties such as schools entitled "A Guide to Obtaining Planning Permission for Derbyshire County Council Development" which is aimed at informing those responsible for properties when planning permission is required and how they should go about the process.

4.1.5 Crime Prevention Design Advisors and the Secured By Design Initiative

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on a local authority to do all that it can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. Covered under this Section is the need to take such factors in to consideration when designing new public buildings including schools.

Secured By Design is an Association of Chief Police Officers initiative developed in 1989. The initiative seeks to achieve a reduction of crime risk by combining minimum standards of physical security and well tested principles of natural surveillance and defensible space.

The Derbyshire Constabulary employs a dedicated team of 3 Crime Prevention Design Advisors (CPDAs) which are located within the Safer Derbyshire project.

In 2005 it was agreed that the CPDA would be consulted on the design of County Council buildings at an early stage particularly on major schemes by both internal and external architects designing buildings. It was also agreed that the CPDA would involve the planning case officers as appropriate.

The CPDA Officers are able to offer advice on crime prevention measures in order to “design out” crime prior to the planning application being submitted. It is widely accepted that crime prevention measures are most cost effective if they are planned and implemented at the time of development.

The County Property Division Protocol on Capital Design states that buildings will be designed to Secured By Design principles. The County Council do not currently apply for the Secured By Design Award.

4.1.6 School Travel Plans (STPs)

The Government set out its national transport aims in ‘Transport 2010 – the 10 Year Plan’ which included the aim of promoting sustainable modes of transport. ‘Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) ‘ of March 2001 outlines how managing travel demand should be achieved through the planning process and it encourages the use of travel plans amongst businesses, schools, hospitals and other organisations.

To meet the particular requirements of addressing “the school run” issue the DfES and the Department for transport jointly announced in September 2003 the launching of ‘Travelling to School: An Action Plan”. This included funding to boost the development of school travel plans by 2006 in order to meet the target of 100% of schools with travel plans by 2010.

The Government considers that travel plans should be submitted alongside planning applications which are likely to have significant transport implications. In recognition that it would take some time to prepare and adopt STPs for all schools a protocol was agreed between the Children and Younger Adults Department and the Environmental Services Department which states that a STP will be required if:-

- There is an increase of 10% or 50 pupils whichever is the smaller
- where particular local safety or congestion problems have been identified which could be exacerbated by the proposed development, and
- Where community or other use could contribute to a material change in the number of people visiting the school site

Planning permissions for developments in these categories normally incorporate conditions including requiring the establishment of groups within schools to help prepare, submit and monitor STPs.

Over the past few years most district councils within the County have adopted new local plans which contain policies requiring the submission of travel plans with appropriate planning applications.

Children's Centres are not strictly speaking school developments and therefore a workplace travel plan is normally more appropriate than a STP.

Current Capital Programme timescales make it difficult for STPs to be fully prepared and agreed prior to the submission of planning applications. Recent legislative changes mean that they must now submit STPs with planning applications. The Environmental Services Department employ 3 STP and 1 Workplace Co-ordinators to advise schools and others on the preparation and introduction of Travel Plans.

4.1.7 The Headteacher and the Governing Body

The Headteacher understandably will be the main point of contact between the school, the Children and Younger Adults Development Team and the other disciplines involved in the project to design and build a new school. Once a project has been approved as part of the Capital Programme, Children and Younger Adults Development Officers will liaise with the Headteacher and the Governing Body to develop the project brief.

It is inevitable however, particularly in larger projects involving new schools, that the Headteacher will have a significant involvement across all aspects of the project. This will involve contact with the architects and the contractors. In many cases, the Governing Body will appoint a "Lead Governor" to oversee the project and support the Headteacher. The Headteacher and/or the Lead Governor are likely to attend the regular site meetings which assess the progress of the project.

4.1.8 Risk Management

The County Council employs a Risk Manager, based within the Head of Corporate Finance's Division. The role of the Risk Manager in respect of schools is to advise the County Council and schools on the physical security of buildings and personal security of staff, pupils and other school users.

4.1.9 Post Project Evaluation

Information is collected on the outcome of capital projects by the Property Services Division mainly by means of two questionnaires, one

relating to the build and the other the service provided. The latter refers only to the service provided by Property Services Division and not the other departments involved in the design process. At present no detail on the performance of the building as being fit for purpose is collected. The County Council has also piloted the use of a more detailed post project survey.

The DfES has produced the Design Quality Indicator (DQI) for use in school and other designs. The DQI covers all aspects of design projects including one which is to be used once the building is in use. This will provide feedback on the project and provide benchmarking information which will hopefully lead to improvements in future projects.

All BSF projects have to use the DQI process and a CAGE Enabler for Derbyshire projects has been appointed.

4.1.10 Special Educational Needs

New school buildings are now designed to comply with a range of requirements regarding pupils with special educational needs. In May 2004, a revised Part M of the Building Regulations came in to effect. The revised regulations reflect the idea that peoples abilities are not one dimensional and may change over time. There has been a move away from simply making buildings accessible to disabled people to making buildings accessible to and usable by everyone, including those with disabilities.

Various Building Bulletins for instance, set out the requirements for the extra space needed to allow mainstream schools to accommodate pupils with complex needs including mobility aids.

The design of such features in to new school buildings has for the most part minimised the need for adaptations to be undertaken. However, there will always be pupils whose needs are such that special provision will need to be made.

5.0 Issues and Recommendations

The report makes several recommendations arising from the evidence gathered during the course of the review. Implementing these recommendations should enable the framework in which County Council designs and procures schools to satisfy the Council's overall aims and objectives, deliver best value and improve value for money and efficiency.

5.1 Developing the School Vision

It is requirement of the BSF programme that the voice of all relevant bodies and individuals with an interest in secondary education is heard as the project develops. The development of the school vision is one of the most important aspects of the design process. If the school has a clear vision of where it is going both in terms of educational and wider community use contexts, the job of the architects in designing an inspirational school will be made that much easier.

The challenge for schools is to develop a vision which avoids the recreation of the old school in a new building. Schools need to rethink themselves completely in order to create an institution to meet community needs and improve learning. This is a very important part of the BSF process. It is not sufficient to leave the process to the current headteacher, staff and governors who are in effect only temporary tenants of schools which will serve local communities for many years.

The development of the vision will need to be undertaken in the context of County Council and Government policies, the Education Vision developed by the County Council and agreed by the Partnerships for Schools and plans being developed by neighbouring schools as part of the local learning community. At individual school management level, the vision will need to address issues such as:-

- Curriculum and timetable
- Teaching and learning styles
- Length and organisation of the school day
- Teaching and non-teaching staffing structure
- Extended/community use of school buildings

As part of the BSF process the County Council has recognised the importance of this process and support will be given to schools in the active waves to fully develop their vision.

The Best Value Review of Children and Younger Adults Development completed in 2005 recommended the development of a major school investment protocol to be used in major refurbishment or new building projects as a whole and not just under BSF. A draft protocol has been approved although it is not currently being utilised for non-BSF projects. The recommendation of the Best Value Review is supported. The protocol will provide a standard and consistent framework by which schools can develop their visions which in turn should lead to better quality design briefs and ultimately better designed schools. The review supports the idea that the Major School Investment Protocol should be used for all major school capital projects and not just those procured under BSF.

In addition, the review considers that it is important that smaller projects are also supported by a protocol again to ensure consistency and clarity about the process. The review recommends therefore that a separate protocol be developed for use in minor school development projects.

Recommendation 1

- (a) The Major School Investment Protocol to be adopted as a means of ensuring consistency in development of educational visions across all major education capital projects, not just those relating to BSF.
- (b) A separate school development protocol be developed for use in minor school development projects.

5.2 Quality of Project Design Briefs

Like any project, getting the process off to a good start will go along way to ensuring the success of a project in the longer-term. This is the purpose of the project brief. The brief “needs to explain the ethos of the school, their aspirations, and the background to the project as well as the more tangible requirements. If this isn’t fully resolved at the outset, valuable design time will be wasted and compromises may result. The LEA should therefore ensure that all the stakeholders in the project are signed up to the brief – headteachers, other staff, governors, school council and so on”⁹

In terms of preparing design briefs, headteachers gave varying evidence regarding their experience in the process. The Headteacher of Long Eaton Community School felt that it had been a positive experience and one in which the School had been fully engaged. The

⁹ Creating New Schools – Don’t Just Spend the Money – The Education Network

review group considered that the new School at Long Eaton was the most impressive of all the schools they had visited. The Headteacher had a clear vision of what he wanted in the new school and this had been translated in to a clear design brief. The result was although there were still compromises made, a school which was designed for the most part in line with the wishes of the Headteacher and Governing Body and which was fit for purpose.

However, the Headteacher and Governors at Hasland Junior School whilst being consulted, felt that the design brief had largely been determined in advance of any consultation with the School and that there was little scope for changes to be made. It is accepted that the size of the area of land available for the build at this School had a bearing on the design brief in this case.

The Head of Design reported that the quality and consistency of design briefs had been raised as an issue with the Head of Children and Younger Adults Development Section. The issue had also arisen as part of the Best Value Review of Children and Younger Adults Development. Atkins Faithful and Gould also referred to the poor standard and level of detail of design briefs in their annual performance review with the County Council in 2005. All parties are in agreement however, that the situation has now improved largely as a result of the Head of Design Services and the Head of the Children and Younger Adults Development working together to produce a good practice model example.

The County Property Division have also produced a guide entitled Design Quality which sets out the essential features that a project must satisfy if it to be of a good design and construction and also if it is to provide value for money.

The review also noted that Headteachers and governors may not engage fully in the process of the design brief owing to a lack of knowledge of school design and procurement. They may not feel able to challenge the brief and to suggest changes even though they may have the knowledge and expertise to do so. The suggestions for training referred to in Section 5.12 should go some way to resolve this.

Recommendation 2

The Strategic Director of Childrens Services and the County Property Officer to continue to monitor the standard of design briefs prepared for school projects.

5.3 School Design

As part of the review process the Working Group has visited a number of new schools and new school buildings, both primary and secondary, including some procured under PFI and others from within the Council's capital programme. The schools visited are:-

- Glebe Junior School
- Holymoorside Primary School
- Mundy Church of England Junior School, Heanor
- Tupton Hall School
- Long Eaton School
- Chaucer School, Sheffield
- Henry Fanshawe School, Dronfield

Given the current DfES design constraints and the funding restrictions which apply to the design of all schools no matter by what method they are procured, it is virtually impossible to design the "perfect school". In reality the design of a new school is a series of compromises based on competing factors such as space and cost. At Tupton Hall School for example, the compromise to achieve larger classrooms was to have narrower corridors.

It should be noted that this compromise evolved from one Headteachers view which is not necessarily shared by all Headteachers. Evidence shows that Headteachers can have very different and individual views on school layouts. It is important therefore, that the professional team need to be able to offer firm and reasonable advice to ensure in general terms school designs will be generally acceptable to successor Headteachers.

The debate around the constraints currently involved in school design has been going for some time nationally. The review supports the view that is not easy to design schools fit for the 21st Century in line with regulations that appear outdated. It does however, stress the need referred to in more detail in section 5.1, for the school to ensure that it has fully developed its education vision and for local authorities to challenge as far as possible the parameters set by building bulletins and funding restrictions.

The report has made reference to the national CABE/RIBA report, 21st Century Schools, and also to other national research which highlight the potential dangers of building schools which are of poor design, poor quality and which do not inspire teachers and pupils. The review is clear in its conclusion that the County Council is designing schools

which are of a high quality, are fit for the educational purpose, are “future proofed” and which provide an environment in which teachers want to teach and pupils want to learn and attain.

All the schools visited were generally pleased with the outcome of their projects, although most felt that they could have been even better but for the external constraints of DfES Building Bulletins and budget allocations. Derbyshire will need to consider the implications of meeting any funding gap between Government allocation and value for money, on all future capital schemes. The schools all had their own identity which was considered important and they all had individual “wow factors”.

5.3.1 Secondary Schools

In respect of the renewal of the secondary school estate under PFI to date and BSF in the future, the review concludes that the County Council has mostly taken on board issues affecting modern education. The new secondary schools visited as part of the review at Tupton and Long Eaton, demonstrated that the design had provided buildings which:-

- Are visually attractive and welcoming
- Provide a degree of flexibility in the use of space such as different size classrooms and multi-use school halls.
- Have a major emphasis on ICT provision
- Provide social spaces for pupils
- Provide good facilities for staff
- Incorporate features to minimise bullying and vandalism. The Headteacher at the Long Eaton School commented on the improved behaviour, reduction in bullying and vandalism since the new school opened.

Even though it is a brand new school, Long Eaton School demonstrates the difficulties faced in designing new schools. Since its original design, changes have had to be made to accommodate a new curriculum provision for hair and beauty facilities. A major design change was also accommodated during the build process to provide a Craft Training Centre.

The review welcomes the action taken by the County Council to develop the BSF process. The Headteachers from the 5 Derbyshire Schools involved in Wave 3 of the BSF programme have been seconded for one day a week to contribute to the overall educational vision for the County and also to work to develop the actual plans for the school sites. A

second group comprising between 6 and 8 headteachers will, in addition to developing the overall County vision, develop ideas of how new approaches to teaching and learning will impact on the design of schools. This second group, the Education Vision Group will also act as a sounding board and challenge to the work of the headteachers in Wave 3. The Group has visited schools elsewhere in the County which are considered to have either progressive curriculum delivery or progressive design features.

As a means of ensuring that design and curriculum issues in respect of BSF projects are fully taken in to consideration, the Council has nominated a Cabinet Member and also a senior officer to work with the Headteachers and Governors of each school to co-ordinate and fully develop the proposals.

5.3.2 Infant/Primary/Junior Schools

The Working Group visited several new or refurbished primary and junior schools in the County. For the most part, the design of these buildings was traditional along the lines of past generations of school buildings, very much based around the classroom.

The review notes that the influence of ICT will in years to come have an increasing role to play in the education of pupils of junior school age. The need for flexibility in educational space at these schools will be greater than at present and will need to be taken in to account in school designs.

5.3.3 Standard School Designs

The review has looked at the issue of standard school designs as a means of reducing costs in the longer-term. The idea is not however, considered practical owing to:-

- the size and layout of school sites varies meaning that in many cases standard designs would not be suitable.
- schools will through the development of their education vision and design brief, have identified different needs and requirements.
- Schools should be designed which are not only inspirational but that give the local community a sense of pride in and ownership of the building. The impact of this is likely to be diminished if schools in an area are of similar appearance and design. Pride and community ownership will be achieved by individuality of design.

There are however, ways in which school design can be standardised to a degree without losing the sense of uniqueness in design. The Working Group visited the new Mundy Junior School in Heanor which opened in late 2005. The School is constructed with a steel frame with pre-cast concrete panels assembled on site similar to CLASP buildings used in construction in the 1960's and 70's. The County Council is a partner in the CLASP company (now renamed Scape), which has developed the idea. The School has internal walls that can be reconfigured with minimum disruption offering flexible teaching space. The effectiveness and success of the design will need to be evaluated over time.

5.3.4 Quality

The review concludes that it is important that the County Council ensures that quality materials are used in the construction of its school buildings. In visiting Henry Fanshawe School in Dronfield, the Working Group was advised by the School that as a cost cutting measure, poor quality window catches had been fitted. As a result, after a year of the School re-opening the window catches needed to be replaced. Whilst the circumstances regarding this example may be disputed by the County Property Officer and the Head of Development, the review concludes that in all cases quality materials should be utilised in school projects as this will be beneficial in terms of sustainability, although there may be an additional cost initially. The review recognises that DfES cost allocations for projects impacts on the use of quality materials.

5.3.5 Minor Design Problems

The Working Group visited several schools during the course of the review. Whilst all schools visited were very pleased with the outcome of their projects, there were several minor problems, some of them recurring which were raised as issues, including:-

- Storage – all schools visited (with the exception of Long Eaton School) indicated that storage was a problem. The Working Group felt that the sight of equipment left on the corridor owing to a lack of storage space detracted from all the good attributes of a new school and also in some cases raised health and safety issues.
- Cloakrooms – the junior schools visited complained of poorly designed and/or insufficient cloakroom space.

- Access to opening windows – there are examples of windows being installed which cannot easily be accessed to open and close.

The review considered that whilst such issues were not a high priority in educational terms they should none the less be taken in to account in the design of new school buildings. It is accepted however that more storage space may have to be at the expense of other space to meet overall area criteria as set out by the DfES. The Headteacher at Long Eaton School for example, identified storage as an issue and ensured that it was taken in to account in the final design.

5.3.6 Maintenance

During visits to schools, the Working Group noted that in some cases the design of buildings whilst generally good, was not conducive to on-going maintenance once the project was completed. An example is the lighting at Henry Fanshawe School, Dronfield which requires a scaffolding platform to change light bulbs in some areas of the School. This is an issue for all high level areas i.e. halls, sports hall and high level social/circulation areas with atriums. The review accepts that it will never be possible to completely “design out” such problems, but it considers that wherever possible future maintenance costs should be taken in to account in the design of school buildings.

5.3.7 School Playgrounds

The review concludes that it is important that full consideration is given to the design of school playgrounds from the very outset of the design process. There are important features of playgrounds including the need for shaded areas, quiet areas and sports play areas which should be expertly designed and costed as part of the school design process. By giving thought to play ground design it is possible to “design in” features which will for instance, discourage bullying. The playground areas at Heanor Mundy School were included as part of the original design process. At Hasland Junior School however, the design of the playground was not included as part of the initial design plans leading to confusion and uncertainty which was only resolved during the construction stage.

The review accepts that playground design will need to be considered as part of the overall project costs and DfES space allocations.

Recommendation 3

- (a) The County Council should evaluate the effectiveness of Heanor Mundy Junior School.
- (b) School design should result in a workable balance between a school that looks good and where pupils enjoy learning in and one which is built with quality materials and practical in terms of maintenance and upkeep.
- (c) External play areas should be included as part of the initial overall design and funding process for all schools.
- (d) School design should include attention to detail on matters such as storage and cloakroom space.

5.4 Sustainability

The issue of environmental sustainability and building design is one which could warrant a review in its own right. The review has examined only the broad issues and principles of sustainability and school design.

Designing environmentally sustainable school buildings is now a requirement to meet Part L of the Building Regulations and it supports a host of national and local plans and targets. It does however, raise 3 particular issues for the County Council:-

- Designing in environmentally sustainable features into schools cost money. A typical rainwater harvesting system for instance, will cost around £12k.
- The County Council funds these sustainable features but it is the school which reap the financial benefits in terms of lower energy bills.
- The savings generated by sustainable features are therefore not re-invested into financing new environmentally sustainable initiatives on other capital projects.

The issue of cost and also the constraints imposed by the DfES on school design has meant that the extent to which the County Council, like many other local authorities, has embraced environmental sustainability in schools designs has been limited. The Council has introduced some sustainable features in to its new school buildings such as:-

- The water harvesting system at Holymoorside Primary School
- The solar panels installed at Hady Junior School
- A range of measures at the new Herbert Strutt Primary School including geothermal heat pumps and wind power.

Energy costs can fluctuate significantly making it increasingly important both nationally and locally, for sustainability issues to be addressed. During the course of the review, gas prices rose by 50% and electricity prices by 25% over a 12 month period, although prices have now begun to fall again. The County Property Officer indicated that there were signs that the DfES recognised the potential future impact of rising energy prices and is now beginning to recognise the introduction of energy saving measures in to school designs. Currently there is no funding available from DfES to meet these needs and the Council are lobbying Government to address this aspect of funding.

If the County Council is to tackle the sustainability issue and move away from a piecemeal approach to one where it is fully embedded in the design process, it will need to fully embrace the principle of invest to save. Greater investment will be needed on environmentally sustainable initiatives such as water harvesting and wind turbines along with the utilisation of more robust and quality materials and features such as energy efficient boilers, lights and lights controls and high levels of insulation. The provision of environmental features may mean that less school buildings are provided from the Capital Programme.

There are potential approaches through which schools could assist in funding sustainable features:-

- Licensed Deficit – Provision is already made in the funding scheme for schools to have a licensed deficit, effectively a loan, to support projects which might produce savings. Schools could be encouraged to apply for a project loan on the basis that whilst investment costs would be repaid, ultimately in the long-term benefits would be gained by the school.
- Voluntary Agreement – Schools could sign up to a voluntary agreement to contribute over time, a specified share or an amount of funding to the County Council to cover the investment or savings.

Either option would allow capital funding to be spread more widely and if desired, re-invested in additional sustainable features. To make the idea more attractive to schools, they could be asked to match fund the contribution made by the County Council for sustainable features.

The impact of environmentally sustainable features in school design will vary from school to school. By way of an example, the table below sets

out estimated costs and savings produced for a recent school project with a total estimated cost of around £4m.

Table 1

Sustainable feature	Initial Cost	Payback period
Photo voltaic cells (Solar Panels)	£55,000	15 years
Wind Turbine	£20,000	10 years
Geothermal heat pump	£120,000	8 years
Rain water harvesting	£12,000	11 years
Total Cost	£207,000	

*The period of time before savings accrue will reduce if energy costs rise at a higher rate than at present predicted.

There is potential for Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS) which control through computerised systems, a range of features such as heating, lighting, zone controls and security systems to reduce the payback period still further. However, such systems require more site management and training to operate. The Working Group recommends that the use of BEMS in County Council buildings be considered as the subject of a future Improvement and Scrutiny review.

The review accepts that the introduction of environmentally sustainable features is more cost effective in major school developments than it is for a single classroom extension. It supports however, the view that environmentally sustainable measures should be introduced where feasible in all capital projects. Reports seeking approval for capital projects should include details of the sustainable measures in the design and also their cost and the period of time before savings will be accrued.

The use of sustainable measures in school buildings is welcomed but at present there is a lack of consistent monitoring information which provides evidence as to the success or otherwise of the initiatives. It is recommended therefore, at an appropriate time after the completion of a project (say 1 year), a report should be produced outlining the impact of the sustainable measures used in the project. The review also recommends that a report be presented to Cabinet on an annual basis detailing the extent to which environmentally sustainable measures have been introduced across the whole of the Capital Programme and also the extent of estimated carbon and cash savings.

In addition, the report should also provide detail on any new sustainable initiatives available and being considered by the Council. Whilst it is felt that escalating energy costs along with a national recognition of the need to act will help drive the sustainability agenda forward, the review is keen to ensure that at a local level this momentum is maintained. The report will enable the Council to judge the extent to which the environmental agenda is being fulfilled in terms of building design and construction and to challenge the extent to which new and innovative sustainable features such as wood are being utilised in building design. Nottinghamshire County Council for instance, has trialled the use of wood fuelled boilers in some of its schools, but no clear evidence is yet available on their use.

The review welcomes the partnership arrangement with the LACMP and it recognises the potential benefits that could accrue in the sustainable design of school buildings.

It was considered that the use of the advice service available from the Energy Management Team within the Property Services Division should be maximised. The Team should be promoted so that all schools are aware of the services that can be provided in making new and existing school buildings more sustainable.

The review considers that environmentally sustainable features in schools can be used as an educational resource for pupils, parents and the local community. Schools should be encouraged to teach pupils about the sustainable features of their school. Schools should also offer guided tours to parents and the community including the sustainable features of the school and information at the school gates should also be provided on the sustainability status of the school. In order to maximise the benefits from sustainable features, schools should be recommended to train staff in the use of the equipment.

NB: In May 2007, the Government issued the Energy White Paper "Meeting the Energy Challenge". The Paper was published after the Working Group had concluded its work on the review but before the final report was produced. The provisions of the White Paper, if enacted, particularly in relation to the Carbon Reduction Commitment and the Energy Performance Certificate, will impact on school and other local authority buildings.

Recommendation 4

- (a) The County Council should fully embrace the principle of invest to save in relation to capital projects.
- (b) The County Council should examine ways in which schools can be encouraged to assist in the funding of sustainable measures in schools.
- (c) The impact of sustainable features introduced in all school buildings be more closely monitored and an annual report be prepared setting out the extent to which sustainable measures have been introduced in capital projects and also what new initiatives are available.
- (d) The County Council should look to trial new and innovative sustainable measures in its buildings and report on their impact in the annual report.
- (e) The County Council to seek to maximise the support and advice, including grant funding offered by the partnership arrangement with the Carbon Trust in the design process for school buildings.
- (f) The work of the Energy Management Team in the Property Services Division be promoted to encourage all schools to make use of the service to maximise the sustainability of new and existing school buildings.
- (g) All Schools should be encouraged to use sustainable features as an educational tool and also to make the wider community aware of them and how they work.
- (h) All Schools should be encouraged to train all staff in the use of sustainable features in order to maximise their efficiency.
- (i) (Not for Cabinet) The use of BEMS in Derbyshire County Council buildings be considered as a possible future Improvement and Scrutiny review.

5.5 Use of Partner Architects

The Working Group heard evidence from a variety of sources regarding the partnership arrangement with external architects. The Deputy Chief Executive and County Property Officer considered that there had initially been problems with the use of external architects. However, as the agreement was progressing, these problems were diminishing and the relationship was developing in a positive manner. This view was echoed by the representatives of Atkins, Faithful and Gould when the Working Group met with them.

The Head of Planning Control, the Head of Education Development and the external partner contractor however, whilst acknowledging that the

position had improved, had on-going concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of external architects.

The common concerns referred to included:-

- High turnover of staff, particularly in relation to larger partners leading to inconsistency and discontinuity of service
- Use of inexperienced/junior architects
- A lack of understanding of partnership working
- Poor communication and provision of essential information
- Individual architects with work loads that are too high
- Architectural drawings are minimal with essential information/detail missing leading to problems and expense later in projects

The following are examples of comments have been received from external contractors:-

- “Very difficult to work with, do not appear to understand the partnering ethos...very slow with information issues, individuals seem over worked and unable to cope, rely heavily on the contractor to bail them out”
- “Pre tender information and site investigations are generally lacking and often cause unnecessary expense during the contract”.

It should be pointed out that the problems vary from architect to architect. It is clear that some external architects are performing better than others. For reasons of commercial confidentiality, individual companies have not been identified in this report.

The evidence presented overall suggests that the situation with external architects has improved as the relationship has developed. The review notes that those consulted, including the external construction partners, have a much more positive view of the service provided by the County Council's Design Team as opposed to some of the partner external architects.

The reasons for entering in to the partnership arrangements and for using external architects are clear and accepted by the review. The Derbyshire County Council Design Team would not have the capacity to cope with the increased design workload over the last few years. The requirement to create a LEP under the BSF programme, is likely to mean that the volume of projects undertaken by the internal and

external architects outside of the BSF programme will reduce and the LEP could also take on the role of our current framework partners. The performance of partner architects will be a key issue therefore for the Council's LEP partners on all future secondary education sector developments.

The review considers that 4 years in to the agreement, the performance of the external architects should at least be on a par with that of the performance of the County Council Design Team. The performance of the external architects was of concern to the review. The problems identified such as those relating to Hasland Junior School in section 5.8.1 below lead to delays and additional expense. The Hasland Junior School case may be an extreme example, but the review group found that problems mainly of a minor nature, were happening on a regular basis which could be avoided. The review has not attempted to quantify the potential savings that could be made as this would require a considerable amount of time consuming research. It considers however, that the problems are causing additional expense and delays to projects.

Recommendation 5

- (a) The County Property Officer secure further improvements in the performance of partner architects.
- (b) The County Property Officer should maximise the design work given to the in-house design team, rather than external architects.
- (c) The County Council should continue to review the performance of the external architects and the County Property Officer should test the market for alternative partner architects from time to time.

5.6 Extended Schools

Many existing schools in Derbyshire currently engage in extended use of some form, although this is likely to be relatively small scale activities such as adult education classes and use of school sports facilities. The proposals for smart schools under BSF however, take this extended use further with school sites able to provide a range of facilities and services over and above normal school use such as recreational and health services.

To implement this agenda, the County Council will need to work with partners within the area such as District Councils, Health Trusts, Parish Councils as well as private and public sector to plan and develop these services. The extent to which extended use of school buildings will materialise will depend on the ability of partners to work together to

provide and fund joint facilities. To assist the process the County Council has appointed an officer as part of the BSF Team with specific responsibility for co-ordinating the response to extended school use.

No new funding to provide these extended facilities has been provided by the Government. If projects are to develop, the Council and its partners will need to raise funds from organisations such as Sport England and the Big Lottery. The Working Group noted that the County Council has a good track record and considerable experience that can be called upon in attracting external funding.

It will be important that the Council and its partners as part of the visioning process, identify what communities want as part of extended facilities. The County Council has recognised that this consultation needs to be carefully managed so as to not raise public expectations from the outset beyond what is achievable. The idea is that duplication is avoided with individual schools having facilities unique to their area to which pupils and other users travel to. The geographic nature of Derbyshire makes this more problematic than provision in an urban environment as some schools are in relatively isolated locations.

As with PFI contracts, planning with partners under BSF will be important. Phase 3 of the BSF programme which starts in 2009, includes the first Derbyshire schools. Planning with partners to provide extended facilities within this timescale will be difficult, nonetheless discussions are progressing. The next group of Derbyshire Schools are included in later waves to be confirmed by the DfES. This gives the Council and partners several years to develop plans for the delivery of smart schools and it is important that this opportunity is taken. A considerable amount of planning on extended facilities has already taken place and this will continue as part of the BSF process.

Under BSF, like PFI, the management of extended facilities will be the responsibility of the LEP which will mean a change of culture in the way in which schools use school buildings outside of school hours. The Headteacher at Long Eaton School indicated that whilst some flexibility of school use of the premises was lost, the situation was manageable by forward planning.

The problem with many existing schools and extended use is that they were not designed for the purpose. New schools provide the opportunity for designers to design in features such as zoned heating and zoned security and occupation control to make extended use practical. Where schools are refurbished rather than new build this becomes more problematic. The review would like to see all new

schools whether part of the BSF programme or not, designed in a way as to make extended use more practical and achievable. Designing in such features as part of projects will be cheaper than doing so as an after thought at a later date. This will make it more practical for schools to open after normal school hours, even if it is for their own use.

Recommendation 6

The County Council to ensure early consultation with partners takes place on extended use of school facilities in relation to the programme.

5.7 The Role of the Children and Younger Adults Development Officer in managing Projects

The Best Value Review of the Children and Younger Adults Development Section completed in 2004. The outcome of a consultation exercise undertaken as part of the Best Value Review was that there were some communication difficulties between schools and Children and Younger Adults Development Officers, although most gave positive feedback. A few Headteachers complained of feeling isolated when dealing with matters relating to project management. The latest action plan presented to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee in December 2005 indicated that the following steps had been taken to address these problems:-

- Schools to be informed of all relevant decisions relating to the project.
- Processes have been put in place to monitor the progress of projects involving all relevant disciplines.
- Schools to be advised of problems/delays as soon as possible.

The Working Group notes the outcome of the Best Value Review which was concluded in 2004. During the course of the Improvement and Scrutiny review, the Working Group met with several Headteachers during 2005/6. In some but not all, of cases, Headteachers reported that there were continuing problems with communications between schools and Children and Younger Adults Development Officers.

A common complaint was that Children and Younger Adults Development Officers did not appear to have regard to the need to minimise the disruption caused to the running of the school in general and also importantly the education of pupils during the management of a project. Headteachers indicated that they were left in the dark about project matters and had to contact Children and Younger Adults

Development Officers for information on projects which they felt should have been provided as a matter of course. (see also Section 5.12)

There also appears to be confusion, certainly on the part of Headteachers, as to their role and the role of Children and Younger Adults Development Officers in the management of projects. This is particularly the case in relation to the practical arrangements of running schools during developments. For instance Grassmoor Primary School has recently completed a project to provide a new double classroom block. The School were advised only at very short notice that the contractors would be arriving on site.

Building projects can even with the best of planning, be stressful periods for those involved. The Working Group heard evidence from Headteachers who indicated that they became so heavily involved in the project management that it was difficult to concentrate on educational matters and the day to day running of the school. Whilst accepting that Headteachers will inevitably have a role to play in projects as they progress, the Working Group considered that the roles of the Headteacher, the Children and Younger Adults Development Team and others involved in the project management need to be clearly defined. Large building projects are complex and require the co-ordination of all the different elements of the build. It is important if projects are to run on time and within budget that if decisions are required, that they are not delayed by confusion as to who is responsible.

The Working Group accepts that the number of schools consulted as part of the review was relatively small. However, it concludes that arising from this consultation, that there are clear and consistent issues arising particularly in relation to communication with schools which need to be addressed in order that schools as clients are supported fully and the benefits gained from new schools and new school buildings are maximised. The review concludes that Scrutiny should undertake further consultation with schools undergoing major capital developments in the future to ascertain that there has been an improvement in the service provided. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee.

The County Council has always separated the client delivery and project delivery functions of capital projects. Consideration was given to combining the two roles and having one officer responsible for the project from start to finish in a similar way as projects are managed under BSF as part of the Best Value Review of the Development function. This review supports the conclusion of the Best Value Review

that for sound educational reasons, the Development function should continue to be located with the Children and Younger Adults Department.

Recommendation 7

- (a) The Head of Development to address the issues identified in the report relating to the support given to schools and communication between Development Officers and Schools to ensure that schools receive a level of service in line with that set out in the Protocols referred to in Recommendation 2.
- (b) As part of the implementation process of the report, the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee consult with selected schools which have undergone major capital projects.

5.8 Liaison with Environmental Services Department on Planning matters.

The review heard evidence from the Environmental Services Planning Control Manager relating to school design and the planning process.

5.8.1 Advice and involvement of Planning Officers

School design projects are for the most part large scale projects which give a greater potential for problems to occur. Planning officers are able to offer advice to colleagues in other departments on the planning requirements of a particular development. A protocol entitled “Working Together” has been produced to assist in the preparation of planning applications. The protocol stresses the need to involve at an early stage, all relevant parties involved in a project.

Similarly, the County Council employs other officers such as School Travel Plan Co-ordinators and the Risk Manager, who also have an important role in the development of capital projects. It is important that they are also involved at an early stage in the project to avoid problems at a later date.

There are examples where the review considers this early consultation has not taken place and where subsequently problems with the planning process have been encountered which have led to delays and additional expense.

On the original plans for the new Hasland Junior School, the building was located close to several trees which local residents did not wish to see cut down. The planning application was submitted and during the

application process, local residents were successful in having Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) placed on the trees. As a result the planning application had to be withdrawn and the plans redrawn moving the building several metres away from the trees. The project was delayed several months and the costs increased.

It is the view of the Planning Control Officers that the architects should have taken account of the issue of the trees as a matter of course. The Working Group supports this view, particularly as the trees were highlighted as a potential issue by both local residents and the School. Had the architects consulted and taken advice from planning officers at the outset of the project, the trees would have been identified as a potential problem and the additional costs and delays would have been avoided.

5.8.2 Building in accordance with agreed planning permission

Planning Officers provided examples in relation to school developments where plans had not been adhered to. During the construction of the new sports hall at Brookfield School, the architect located a vent on the wrong elevation on the building. The venting of the Hall had been an issue during the planning process. The result was that the vent had to be moved. At Langwith Bassett Primary School, fencing was approved on the basis that the colour should be a dark shade of green. In the event, the fencing erected was of a lighter shade of green. In this case the fencing was not a major issue and the County Council have not insisted on the problem being corrected. If it had been necessary to correct it there would have been considerable expense.

Fencing of the wrong colour for a conservation area was erected by Crich School without planning permission. Not only was additional expense caused by having the fencing painted an appropriate colour, the problems caused considerable public bad feeling. This emphasises the need for Schools undertaking their own work to take proper advice.

5.8.3 Taking account of the cumulative impact of developments

The nature of redevelopment at some schools will be piecemeal and undertaken over a number of years. Planning officers expressed the view that they were not party to the longer-term plans for schools which may lead to problems with future developments. If they were to see how schools were programmed to expand, applications considered in the early parts of developments may be dealt with differently. Buxton Community School is an example where Planning Officers would have

raised objections to earlier applications if the expansion programme had been made available.

The review accepts that long-term planning of school development may not always be possible. However, it is considered that there is benefit in the production of school master plans and that Planning Officers should be consulted over their development. Where the County has produced master plans at schools such as Swanwick Hall, these have proved very beneficial to the planning process. The Head of Planning Control and the County Property Officer both support this proposal.

5.8.4 Planning Applications

It is accepted that generally the plans submitted in relation to school buildings are of good quality and that planning procedures have been followed. However, the review concludes that the level of problems should be less, particularly in relation to implementing the detail of planning applications. The examples provided, with the exception of Hasland Junior School, are relatively small scale although minor problems should not be underestimated. A recent legal case determined that the previously accepted practice of allowing minor planning changes without a new complete application being submitted is not in accord with planning legislation. The effect of this decision is that any deviation from the approved plan requires a new planning application. If a change to a building design is made during construction without the appropriate planning permission the whole planning application could be deemed to be unauthorised. The costs and delays to projects which could be caused by the need to resubmit planning applications for large capital projects are likely to be considerable.

This view is supported by Councillor Ken Armstrong, who was Chair of the County Council's Planning and Control Committee at the time of the review. Councillor Armstrong considers that whilst there has been a considerable improvement in the situation over recent years, there is a tendency to assume that planning consent will automatically be granted by the Planning Committee when dealing with County Council applications. It must be remembered however, that the Planning Committee is an independent committee that judges all applications with an equal view and which does not favour County Council applications but subjects them to equal scrutiny. He also shares the view that the County Council generally makes good planning applications and that they are associated with fewer problems.

Recommendation 8

- (a) At the outset of major school development projects a site meeting be convened involving all disciplines involved in the design process including for instance, Planning Officers, STP Officers and the Risk Management Officer in line with the provisions of the Major Design Protocol.
- (b) The Major Capital Investment Protocol be amended to make specific reference to the need for this initial meeting.
- (c) In relation to those schools where it is likely that development will take place in phases over a number of years, master plans for the school site should be prepared.

5.9 Secured By Design Award

Section 4.1.5 of the report refers to the Secured By Design Award which seeks to reduce crime by addressing potential issues at the design stage. School buildings are designed to Secured By Design principles. The Secured By Design Award is however, not applied for by the County Council.

The Crime Prevention Design Advisors, part of Safer Derbyshire, would like to see applications for the Secured By Design Award to be the norm as this would give full recognition of the County Council's responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Applying for the Secured By Design Award could also bring other possible benefits including to the County Council's insurance premiums. The fitting of sprinklers in newly designed buildings would bring immediate reductions in insurance premiums and would also remove the policy excess for fire damage. However, the review accepts that the economic case for sprinklers is difficult to justify in all cases given the high initial installation costs and the high on-going maintenance costs, although there is an increasing DfES expectation that schools, particularly those in "high risk" areas should have sprinklers.

Secured By Design also improves risk management at establishments. If buildings are designed in accordance with Secured By Design principles there should overtime be a reduction in insurance claims. Whilst the financial implications cannot be quantified, it is likely that increases in insurance premiums could be reduced. Secured By Design features will also improve the safety, well-being and morale of the users of an establishment.

The review accepts that whilst all schools should be designed in line with Secured By Design principles, it is not practical or possible to apply for the Award in respect of every new school or school building.

The County Council should design all school buildings in accordance with the Secured By Design principles and where appropriate and practical seek to achieve the Secured By Design Award.

Recommendation 9

The County Council should design all school buildings in accordance with Secured By Design principles and where appropriate and practical seek to achieve the Secured By Design Award

5.10 School Travel Planning in the School Design Process

As detailed in section 4.1.6 in accordance with the policies of the local plans of most district councils in Derbyshire it is now a requirement of major school developments that a STP be produced and submitted as part of the planning application for the development. In order to be acceptable planning applications have to accord with the policies in the relevant local plans. If an STP is not submitted with the application it could, in planning terms, be regarded as being in conflict with the development plan. Such cases are known as 'departures' and have to be referred to the Secretary of State who may "call in" the application for his/her own determination. This procedure is likely to lead to delays in the decision making process even if the application is not formally called in.

The STP Team in the Environmental Services Department has concerns that the production of STP is not fully embedded in the design process. The result is that Travel Plan issues have not consistently been taken in to account at the design phase but have been dealt with as planning conditions attached to planning consents. Under the new legislation this is no longer possible.

Protocols have been created with the STP Team and the Children and Younger Adults Development Team which seek to govern the STP process. However, the review has concerns that:-

- In many cases the Education Development Team do not advise the STP Officers of forthcoming capital projects where STPs may be required
- The protocol with the County Property Division whilst including the STP Team in the design process does not do

so at a sufficiently early enough stage in the process which risks delaying projects pending the completion of the STP process.

The review accepts that the timescales involved in the production of an STP make it difficult to fully include them in the design process prior to the planning application being submitted as it takes several months to consult and prepare an STP. However, the new planning requirements make it even more imperative that sufficient time is allowed for the production of STPs. Consideration of STP issues at the outset of a project will enable the potential costs to be taken into account as part of the overall costs of the build. Road safety features will also be better planned and more cost effective.

By way of an example, during the redevelopment of the Henry Fanshawe School in Dronfield, the STP Team were not advised of the development at the School until only a few weeks prior to planning permission being formally submitted. This gave no time for travel issues to be considered or for a STP to be produced. The STP was produced retrospectively as a planning condition.

When consideration was given to the travel issues at the School, it became apparent that a Puffin Crossing was required outside the School gates at a cost of around £50,000. Obviously, this was a major expense for which funding had to be found. The review accepts that the crossing would have been required whatever the circumstances surrounding the STP and that some additional cost would have been incurred.

However, whilst the exact savings in this example cannot be easily quantified, it is likely that the installation of the crossing would have cost less had it been undertaken as part of the main school project. For instance, during the main project equipment and manpower will have been on site already to undertake the landscaping works required to install the crossing. As it was, equipment and manpower had to be employed specifically to install the crossing.

Recommendation 10

- (a) The STP Team to be included in the initial project meeting referred to in Recommendation 8(a).
- (b) The protocol between the Children and Younger Adults Development Team and STP Officers be amended to take

account of the new requirement for STPs to be submitted with planning applications.

5.11 Risk Management

The review considers that the Risk Management Officer should be involved in the development of major projects from the outset. Issues relating to school security and the extended use of school buildings are important issues which are more cost-effectively considered at the start of a project rather than as an after thought at the end.

Recommendation 11

The Risk Manager to be included in the initial project meeting for major projects referred to in Recommendation 8(a).

5.12 Training/Support for Heads/Governors

Being involved in the design and construction of a new school is likely to be a once in a career experience for the majority of Headteachers. The same applies to school governors. The review has heard from Headteachers about the pressures faced by them during the process of designing and building new schools in terms of balancing the need to oversee the project and the normal day to day demands of running a school.

Headteachers commented that throughout the whole planning, design and build process, that they felt, their concerns and complaints were not being fully addressed, particularly those relating to the Development Team (see also Section 5.7). Headteachers were unsure as to how to seek to address these issues. The Working Group welcomed the idea under the BSF programme of identifying a Cabinet Member and senior officer to develop design and curriculum issues. It was considered that in other major non-BSF projects this role could be undertaken by Cabinet Support Members to give Headteachers and governing bodies points of contact if problems were being experienced. Hopefully, the recommendations within this review will lead to improvements in the way in which the County Council communicates with school clients during projects. If however, problems persist, the appointment of a responsible Cabinet Support Member and Senior Officer should enable problems to be identified and resolved sooner and avoid delays and potentially increased project costs. The implications of this proposal should be evaluated in terms of the resources available to undertake the role.

Evidence from organisations such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and School Works emphasise the need for all stakeholders, including Headteachers and governors to be involved in the design process. The report has already highlighted the benefits that can be gained from having a clear educational vision and translating this in to a detailed design brief such as at Long Eaton School. Headteachers and governors currently undertake this role and their client roles without any formal training. The review concludes that there would be benefits in providing guidance and advice in these areas. It is recommended therefore, that a guide for Headteachers and Governors should be developed for use by schools undergoing developments.

Particularly in larger projects it is likely that the involvement of the Headteacher in the project will become so onerous that there is a danger that the day to day duties of running the school become neglected. Whilst schools cannot be forced to do so and it is recognised that there may be budgetary constraints, the review would recommend for larger projects that schools second the Headteacher or senior member of staff to undertake the client role on behalf of the school.

Recommendation 12

- (a) Cabinet Support Member and senior officer from the County Council to be nominated to oversee the development of major new school projects as being trialled under BSF.
- (b) The implications of (a) above to be evaluated in terms of available resources.
- (c) The Head of Development to develop a guidance booklet for schools undergoing capital developments.
- (d) In recognition of the importance of this role, schools be recommended subject to funding being available, to second a senior member of staff or the Headteacher to undertake the client role on behalf of the school. The length of the secondment and whether it is full time or part-time should be commensurate with the size of the project.

5.13 Learning Lessons/ Post Occupancy Evaluation

The increase in capital spending on schools in recent years and also in years to come has given local authorities an unprecedented opportunity to regenerate the education building stock. It is important therefore, that all those involved in the design of schools get it right. Part of this process involves learning lessons from projects which have been

completed (and also from other projects outside of the County). These lessons can only be learnt by evaluating not just on how well the contractors or the design team performed, but also all those involved in the process from the school and pupils and other service users on the effectiveness of the building as an educational resource.

The County Council should introduce more robust post occupancy evaluation which covers the whole design process from start to finish. Part of the process should involve feedback from school users including pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. School Works have piloted with DfES support a Post Occupancy Evaluation Tool. The DfEs is looking to develop Design Quality Indicators along similar principles.

Recommendation 13

The County Council should introduce more detailed and robust post occupancy evaluation on all capital projects.

5.14 Monitoring/Reporting

The Working Group has concerns regarding the monitoring of individual projects, particularly in terms of reporting to Elected Members. At present, Cabinet receives reports where there have been significant problems with particular projects that have led to overspends or delays.

Cabinet also receive update reports each time a new project tender is approved in the form of a schedule of figures contained with an appendix to the report. The Working Group considers that the schedules provide limited information which is difficult to interpret and of little meaning in determining the present position in respect of projects within the Capital Programme but this view is not accepted by Officers.

The problems relating to Hasland Junior School detailed in Section 5.8.1 are an example. The report presented to Cabinet on 29 November 2005 refers to “the unavoidable delay to the scheme” caused by the problems with the trees. In light of the comments referred to earlier, the review considers that the problems encountered were in fact avoidable. The report suggests that the TPOs had been the cause of the problem with the application. Planning Officers indicate however, that the trees were always likely to be a planning consideration whether or not they were the subject of TPOs. The estimated additional costs caused by this problem in terms of additional design work, loss of floor space and inflationary costs are estimated to be £250k.

The Cabinet Member for Schools also expressed concern over the quality and timing of information provided to Elected Members on projects. Councillor Charles indicated that often the first he is aware of problems with projects is when reports are presented to Cabinet.

The review concludes that the monitoring of projects should be more robust and transparent and also provide greater accountability, particularly where there have been problems. Reports need to provide more detailed information on problem areas and to identify where appropriate, responsibility for problems. The review agrees that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Policy and Budget should continue to have responsibility for the Councils overall capital programme. The review considers that the Cabinet Member for Schools however, should have responsibility for the day to day monitoring of capital projects involving schools. Through regular briefings on projects, the Cabinet Member should be in a position to identify problems at an early stage, monitor recurring trends and also report to and advise the Cabinet as necessary. During the course of the review, the Cabinet Member for Schools has established regular meetings with the County Property Officer and the Head of Development to discuss the progress of capital projects in detail and the review would recommend that projects continue to be monitored in this way.

Recommendation 14

- (a) Reports to Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Schools should be more robust and transparent and provide greater accountability, particularly where problems causing additional costs or delays are concerned.
- (b) The Cabinet Member for Schools to oversee the monitoring of Education capital projects.
- (c) Similar monitoring procedures be introduced for capital projects undertaken in other portfolio areas.

5.15 Relevance to other County Council Capital Projects

The review has concentrated on capital projects relating to school buildings. Some of the recommendations however, are relevant to all capital projects. It is proposed therefore, that the relevant recommendations be introduced in respect of all capital projects.

Recommendation 15

That recommendations 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 14 be introduced in all Derbyshire County Council capital projects.

6.0 Conclusions

Since 1997, there has been an unprecedented level of capital expenditure in schools both at a national and local level. The 15 year, £30bn BSF national programme to rebuild or refurbish all secondary schools and the recent Government announcement that this will also extend to the infant and junior schools means that this expenditure and development is set to continue. The BSF programme challenges local authorities to deliver educational learning environments with ICT as a core feature, which are inspirational and fit for education in the 21st Century.

Work will commence on the first of the Derbyshire schools included in wave 3 of the BSF programme due to start in 2009. It is important therefore, that the County Council make the most of this unprecedented capital investment in schools and deliver the Government's education agenda both in BSF schools and in other school capital projects.

The review concludes that in relation to the BSF programme in Derbyshire, the County Council has:-

- Demonstrated senior executive officer commitment to BSF in the role undertaken by the Deputy Chief Executive.
- Provided sufficient resources to put in place an effective management structure to respond to the challenge of BSF.
- Embedded BSF in to high level corporate strategies.
- Recognised the importance of developing the education vision at corporate level and in relation to individual projects.
- Recognised the importance and benefits of stakeholder engagement in the delivery of projects.

The schools visited during the course of the review outside of the BSF Programme, have generally been designed as fit for purpose. Headteachers, teachers, pupils and Governing Bodies are all very happy with the new schools and new school buildings. However, the review has identified, several issues relating to the process of school design including:-

- The development of design briefs for new schools
- The role of the Education Development Team
- The involvement of Planning Officers in the design process
- The need to involve disciplines such as STP Officers and the Risk Manager in the process
- The performance of external partner architects
- Reporting and monitoring of capital projects

- Support for Headteachers and schools undergoing major capital projects
- Achieving the Secured By Design Award for its school buildings

The review concludes that it is important that the County Council take steps to address the problems identified and implement the reports recommendations in order to maximise the opportunities presented by the general increase in capital investment in schools and more specifically by BSF. The Working Group found that at present the outcome of new school building projects may be determined by the proactiveness and ability of the Headteachers and Governing Bodies to positively influence the design process. The concern is that where Headteachers and Governing Bodies are for whatever reason less proactive, the benefits to all concerned, not the least the pupils, will not be maximised.

7.0 The Next Stage

The report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration. It is recommended that:-

(a) the Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee presents the report to the Cabinet.

(b) following consideration of this report it is suggested that, should the Cabinet agree to implement the recommendations, the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee receives a report at a date to be determined, to outline progress made.

**COUNCILLOR KATH LAURO
CHAIR, SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IMPROVEMENT AND
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