

Building Schools for the Future: Readiness to Deliver

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) aims to provide 21st century learning facilities at secondary aged schools throughout the country. The impact of BSF investment in Devon is considerable: it will have a lasting impact on the education, social fabric and economy of the county. As well as being the catalyst for educational transformation, BSF will make a major contribution to social and economic regeneration. It aims to increase community cohesion, providing opportunities for co-location with other statutory service providers and for the community to gain better access to public assets and public services.

In November 2008, Devon County Council submitted a successful revised Expression of Interest and has been advised that, subject to demonstrating 'Readiness to Deliver', it will be invited to join the programme.

The Readiness to Deliver submission will take the form of a 21-page document, which will be judged against a variety of criteria devised by Partnerships for Schools, to determine whether Devon is ready to enter the BSF programme. We are making every effort to send a high quality Readiness to Deliver submission to Partnerships for Schools before December 2009 so that investment can be brought to Devon as soon as possible. It has been made clear that Local Authorities are in competition with each other to join the programme and funding is likely to be limited.

The experience and organisational learning that the authority gained through Exeter Reorganisation and the Bideford BSF project have placed Devon in a good position to develop Readiness to Deliver, mainly using in-house resources. A Readiness to Deliver project team has been established, as has a BSF Programme Board which reports to Corporate Management Board, the sponsoring group. Building Schools for the Future has the potential to be an exciting cross-directorate programme with involvement from the entire council as well as extensive dialogue with stakeholder organisations.

The total capital investment in secondary and special schools over the 15 to 20 year BSF construction period is estimated at £800million and this will be funded in a number of 'waves'. The first wave involves the secondary schools in Ilfracombe, Chulmleigh, Tiverton and Dartmouth and Marland special school at Peters Marland.

Simon Niles
Vic Ebdon
10th June 2009