

Mayor And Cabinet			
Report Title	Matters referred by the Sustainable Development Select Committee – BSF Review – Schools Site Visits		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	11
Ward	All		
Contributors	Sustainable Development Select Committee		
Class	Part 1	Date	4 November 2009

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report informs the Mayor and Cabinet of the comments and views of the Sustainable Development Select Committee arising from discussions at their meeting following the site visits to Prendergast Ladywell Fields, Catford High and Sedgell schools.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Mayor is asked to note the views of the Sustainable Development Select Committee as set out in section three and agree that the Executive Director for Regeneration is asked to report back to him on the recommendations made by the Select Committee.

3. Context

- 3.1 In January 2008, the Sustainable Select Committee agreed to undertake an ongoing scrutiny investigation into how sustainability issues were being considered and incorporated into the BSF programme. The committee was keen to consider sustainability in the broader sense, ie not just solar panels on buildings, and agreed to scrutinise the BSF programme according to the following criteria:

- The degree to which the wider civic role of schools has been reflected in the new schools
- The enhancement of educational improvement and the learning experience provided by new buildings
- The extent to which schools are a cultural expression of the sustainability aspirations of the Council
- The promotion of Health / Wellbeing
- The capacity of buildings to enhance the wider urban environment
- Design Quality
- Sustainable Procurement
- Long term maintainability of the building

- Are we making the best (eg most sustainable) use of BSF resources?
 - Life Cycle Cost
 - Management proposals
 - Land Use Economy
 - Carbon Footprint
 - Sustainable links with the community (eg transport, safe routes etc).
 - Quality of environment created
 - Will the schools be exemplars of the Council's important Sustainable Development policies?
 - Energy
 - Resources / materials / water / pollution
 - Ecology
- 3.2 Officers attended meetings of the Sustainable Select Committee to provide an update on the BSF programme and how sustainability issues were being incorporated into the design work for the new schools.
- 3.3 As part of their scrutiny, the Select Committee visited Prendergast Ladywell Fields, Catford High and Sedghill schools.

General Comments of the Select Committee:

- i) **Prendergast Ladywell Fields (formerly known as Crofton Park):**
- 3.4 This rebuild was not part of the group PFI under the BSF scheme, but a separate PFI which preceded that. It was built by Bouygues. Planning permission was granted in August 2005, although the rebuild commenced some time after that. The rebuild was carried out in phases, without pupils being decanted.
- The Committee felt that there were few obvious signs of sustainability issues having been taken into account in the rebuild of the school , eg no on-site renewables, very few cycle racks and those there are, are 'tucked away', 'lost' roof space with neither living roofs, solar panels or rainwater recycling, no sensors on lights etc.
 - Ongoing problems with ventilation, with some of the rooms being too hot, particularly those where the windows don't open.
 - Doors keep breaking – not robust enough to withstand teenagers!
 - The local community still does not have access to the sports facilities they previously had, eg squash courts.
 - There is a City Learning Centre within the campus, but relatively little awareness locally of the facility and how it can be accessed.

- The Committee felt it was a fairly unimaginative and uninspiring building design with minimal attempts at landscaping, although the school is taking steps to address this and is, for example, looking at introducing a fruit and veg garden.
- The school building seems rather hidden away and unwelcoming to the local community, with little in the way of signage/notice boards to let the local community know about events in the school, how they can use the facilities etc.

ii) **Catford High**

3.5 935 pupils, new school built in phases with pupils present on site. Site due to be fully available this September.

- Issue over unheated corridor space – school staff want it heated – officers fear this will seriously undermine the BREEAM rating and that it is unnecessary as it is an area where people should be passing through. This kind of situation highlights the importance of academic management being fully involved in the planning stages.
- Use of renewable energy significantly better here than at Prendergast Ladywell Fields – biomass boiler which is expected to provide 60% of heating requirements, lighting all on timers, some photovoltaics on roof.
- Issues over inflexibility of PFI contract eg re cleaning and caretaking.
- Ventilation a problem in some classrooms.
- The Committee preferred design to that of Prendergast Ladywell Fields.
- Concerns of energy guzzling ICT unit, with seemingly no auto turn off of computers. Risk of energy usage from this cancelling out improvements in other areas.
- Sports hall etc not yet open to community use.

iii) **Sedgehill**

3.6 At 1,750 pupils, this is Lewisham's largest school, and it is set on a large campus.

- The Committee generally liked the design of the school.
- It was felt that the dining area was quite small for size of school.
- Energy: biomass boiler in main building, domestic gas boiler in each of faculty buildings. 26% renewables.
- Problem with pigeons in the building – and maggots from dead pigeon carcasses rotting on roof beams. The school is dependent on PFI maintenance contractors to sort this out (less direct than when the caretaker is under the supervision of school head).

- The reception area was poorly thought-out and is now having to be altered.
- Computers in classrooms seemed to have been left on all summer!

Summary of Findings

3.7 Issues common to all 3 sites were

- Severe problems with ventilation in classrooms.
 - It was the opinion of officers that this was an issue relating to poor installation rather than design fault, but it was having a negative impact on students' learning experience. There is a need for officers and contractors to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated in future projects.
 - There were a number of classrooms with windows that do not open and are without proper ventilation, or that are wholly dependent on an unreliable air-conditioning system. The Committee felt that this was not a good idea on sustainability grounds or conducive to a pleasant learning environment.
- Lack of community access: none of the schools had full (or any) community access to facilities out of school hours. There were issues around who was responsible for this and they were waiting for the schools lettings policy to be finalised. While with Catford High, which was only just nearing completion, this was understandable, that was not the case for Prendergast Ladywell Fields and Sedgehill.
- Recycling provision seemed to be patchy or an afterthought, rather than integral to waste management within the buildings.
- ICT equipment being left on when not in use. There's little point in the Council investing heavily in renewables to reduce the building's carbon footprint if this is all cancelled out by 'cyber warming'.
- All the schools visited found dealing with the contracted facilities management teams at times problematic and that the PFI contract was very inflexible. There were problems with facilities management staff not turning up, or it taking ages to get work done.

Recommendations

Following the sites visits the Select Committee made the following interim recommendations on the BSF programme so far:

That the Mayor is requested to instruct:

- i) officers to work with contractors to ensure that ongoing ventilation problems at the schools visited are resolved as soon as possible and lessons learnt so that the problems are not repeated in future projects.
- ii) officers to ensure that the school lettings policy is finalised as soon as possible and steps taken to publicise to the local community how and when they can use facilities. This is particularly pressing at Prendergast Ladywell Fields, where the local community has been without access to the sports facilities they previously used for a number of years now.
- iii) officers to work with contractors to see how ongoing issues with standards of caretaking and maintenance work can be improved.
- iv) the Executive Director of Children and Young People and the Executive Director of Customer Services to look at ways to improve the recycling facilities in these buildings.
- v) officers to work with our ICT providers to implement a programme to reduce our 'cyber' emissions in schools, including scheduled evening automatic shut down of computers.

Broader recommendations on the BSF process so far

The committee had a number of concerns relating to the procurement and design process. The Committee was concerned about the balance of resources between the procurement and design phases, and engagement of key stakeholders. The Committee requests that the Mayor asks:

- vi) officers to look at ways of 'slimming' the procurement process to allow more resources (financial and time) to be devoted to the design process and to give design quality a greater weighting in the bidding process.
- vii) officers to ensure that sufficient time is assigned to the design stage to ensure weak designs are improved before the building stage e.g. ventilation.
- viii) officers to ensure that plans are considered by the Design Panel in a timely manner and for revisions to be considered by the panel.
- ix) officers to engage key stakeholders (Head teachers, teachers, parents, and the community) very early in the process and throughout the project.

- x) officers to consider whether there are sufficient resources within the planning department for thorough qualitative assessment of schemes as they are developed.
- xi) officers to report back to the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the extent to which they have engaged with the zero carbon taskforce set up by the education minister, and the impact this has resulted in.
- xii) officers to identify schools beacons of sustainability and work towards that standard.
- xiii) the committee felt that the travel plans for the new schools should be viewed as a means to herald a cultural shift in how it operates, that with the new building should come a new, more sustainable travel culture. To help achieve this, officers should ensure that all new schools aim for their travel plan to get gold standard status from Transport for London (TfL). School travel plans to be used to draw in TfL money for local infrastructure improvements that will give pupils and parents confidence to walk or cycle to school, and be accompanied with training and events to encourage staff, parents and children to make the 'modal shift'.
- xiv) officers to report back on progress being made in this area to this Select Committee in three months time.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report, however detailed financial implications of the recommendations, will follow in the officer report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Constitution provides for the Select Committees to report to the Mayor and Cabinet, and for the Executive to consider the report within one month of receiving it.

If you have any queries on this report, please contact Olga Cole (0208 47298), or Kevin Flaherty, Head of Business & Committee (0208 314 9327).