

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 1 July 2010  
**PRESENTED BY:** Strategic Director – Children and Young People  
**SUBJECT:** Building Schools for the Future - Update  
**WARDS:** Wards in Runcorn

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report provides an update on the BSF Procurement process. It also identifies the opportunity to transfer the centrally based IT support team for schools, known as the SIMs team, and the team who provide support for the Virtual Learning Platform into the LEP managed service

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

### **2.1 RECOMMENDED THAT:-**

**(a) The progress in the BSF Procurement process be noted and a further report submitted to Executive Board on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010 for approval of the selected bidder; and**

**(b) Executive Board approve, in principle, the transfer of the SIMs team and the team working on the Virtual Learning Platform, subject to the agreement of the Primary and Secondary Schools and on provision that this represents value for money.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Procurement Process**

The BSF Procurement process consists of two stages of dialogue with the bidders. The second round of competitive dialogue commenced in February 2010 and was completed on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The two bidders, Halton and Warrington Learning Partnership (HWLP) and Local Transformation Partnership (LTP) submitted their final bids on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

3.2 Eight teams will now evaluate the bids. The eight teams are as follows:

- Partnering;
- Finance;
- Legal;
- Transformation;
- Wade Deacon;
- The Grange;
- Design, PE and Sport, Planning and Transportation; and
- ICT.

3.3 The teams will have three weeks to complete the evaluation. After the initial review the evaluation teams will then meet to discuss their comments and attend a final presentation by each bidder. A further meeting will be held to confirm the final comments on the bid. The recommendations of the team will then be reported to both Halton and Warrington's Executive Boards for approval. On 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010 the Executive Board in Halton will meet to agree the preferred bidder. Warrington Executive board will meet on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 this will allow the Preferred bidder to be announced on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2010 in line with the programme milestone. The programme team with then have until the 7 December 2010 to reach financial close.

#### 3.4 **IT Provision**

School staff that work on IT must be transferred to the Local Education Partnership Managed Service. The managed service consists of a single contract designed to deliver all IT systems and services for schools. It comprises provision and support for the following:

- Learning Platform;
- Wide Area Network (support of);
- Institutional Infrastructure;
- All users equipment;
- Network system e.g. e-mail, virus protection etc;
- Change management for schools;
- ICT school administration;
- Help desk;
- Technical Support; and
- Refresh and sustainability funding.

- 3.5 In addition to the school staff the Council has staff that provide support and guidance on the learning platform for schools. The Virtual Learning Platform (VLP) is externally hosted and managed by UniServity. The VLP staff offer support to schools, pupils, teachers, headteachers and governing bodies to assist and develop their learning resources. The current system has been well adopted across all Halton schools, with all BSF schools using the system and understanding that this is a key tool for education into the future. All other schools in the borough are also adopting the system which is seen as a key for the continuity of education across the ages. Whilst there are a number of Virtual Learning Platforms on the market, at present it is not possible to automatically transfer content from one system to another. To build on the progress achieved to date it is suggested that approval be given to transferring the VLP team to the BSF Managed Service. As the current service is provided across the school sector there will need to be consultation with all schools to gain approval to the transfer to the LEP. This would provide the current staff with job security and the funding for this provision would still continue to need to be met by schools.
- 3.6 The SIMs team provide support for the schools IT administrative systems. They are highly respected and are funded in total by schools purchasing the service annually. The team have a key role in data collection from the schools to the Directorate. The team assists schools with the management of their data on children and staff, providing information essential for the financial planning of the Dedicated Schools Budget, timetabling in schools; and the termly census for children and young people and the workforce.
- 3.7 It is essential that the level of service provided to all schools remains at the same level or improves and that there continues to be a single source of help and assistance for schools. However, as schools will have the option to purchase this support through the managed service unless all schools take up the same option the authority will no longer have one single source of robust data.

3.8 It is therefore recommended that provided the primary, secondary and special schools agree to the proposal, the VLP and SIMs team transfer to the LEP as part of the managed service. The reasons for this transfer are as follows:

- It ensures a single point of contact with no necessity to hand off issues between the future BSF managed service and the Council;
- There are no interface issues between the Council and the managed service as both functions are the sole responsibility of the managed service;
- Allows clear contract management and clear lines of accountability;
- The managed service is responsible for the delivery of a range of key performance indicators;
- The arrangements fall within the contract and there are therefore agreed payment mechanisms in place for the successful delivery of these functions through the LEP;
- Schools have a clear line of contact for all aspects of service;
- It makes the contract more attractive to the LEP; and
- Through the TUPE transfer of existing teams it ensures that schools have continuity of service and still have the staff within these areas that understand the current position and their needs.

3.9 In producing their bids both bidders have been asked to price for the option of including the SIMs and VLP staff. However, as these services are paid for by all schools there will need to be consultation with all schools about this option. If both Executive Board and the schools approve the transfer the current staff will be transferred to the BSF Managed Service.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Current funding for the two staff that provide support for the VLP finishes in 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The work of these two staff would have to be paid for by the schools from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The SIMs team are fully funded by schools it is essential that all schools continue to purchase their IT support from one source to maintain the integrity of the data systems.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **5.1 Children and Young People**

The BSF Programme aims to transforming the learning environment for children and young people and ensure there is sufficient provision within the borough.

## **5.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

Through access to an excellent Secondary School for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People.

## **5.3 A Healthy Halton**

The BSF Programme will enable schools to meet the School Sport Public Service Agreement through its Capital Investment and achieve high nutritional standards and encourage healthy living and eating.

## **5.4 A Safer Halton**

Schools for the future will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

## **5.5 Halton's Urban**

Through the BSF Halton schools will become a major resource for communities they serve and will be designed to offer shared community facilities, linking to other wider regeneration projects as well as being the focus for the local delivery of children's services.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

It is important that there is a single source of support for schools and that the authority continues to have access to robust and accurate data that is produced in a timely manner so that it can fulfil not only its statutory duties but to ensure the welfare of children is maintained.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The BSF Programme seeks to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

## **8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

8.1 To provide a single source of data and IT support to all schools.

## **9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

9.1 VLP and SIMs are retained by the authority. This could cause interface issues for the authority as part of the service will be delivered by the LEP managed service and part by the local authority.

## **10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

10.1 The decision needs to be made on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 so that consultation can be undertaken with the schools.

## 11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact
BSF Strategic Board Agenda, papers and minutes and ICT Workstream Minutes	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Eccleston Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website <a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk/bsf">www.halton.gov.uk/bsf</a>	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director Children’s Organisation and Provision