

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

Liverpool City Council believes that effective consultation with stakeholders generates invaluable information, insights and learning that can be used to shape services in accordance to stakeholder requirements.

The BSF Communication and Consultation Strategy (included in the Project Initiation Document) details the methodology and processes that will be used to communicate and consult with stakeholders. This strategy covers a long term commitment starting from the development of the BSF Vision through to implementation of each individual school vision.

The strategy will ensure continuous rigorous effective communication and consultation with stakeholders working to agreed principles, using proven methods, and exercising transparent and accountable judgement to provide leadership as to the most appropriate way forward.

The BSF Communication and Consultation Strategy is derived from the Corporate Consultation Strategy (Listening, Learning, Leading) and the successful model of consultation carried out during the development of the Vision for Education, which has been produced as a result of a series of developments over the past five years.

The Communications and Consultation Strategy encompasses the Young Peoples' Consultation Strategy, the Schools Consultation Strategy and the Community Consultation Strategy which all promote the key priorities of the Building Schools for the Future programme on a local basis.

As schools develop their own individual school visions the consultation process will ensure that all school stakeholders have ownership of the process and are fully aware of how and when the changes affected by BSF will take place.

Partnership working and an integrated service approach is adopted to ensure effective communication between and with all stakeholders. Through partners in Children's Services and the Youth Service the strategy will support the overall consultation process within the Every Child Matters outcomes framework.

The Consultancy and Consultation Strategy outlines the identified communication and consultation opportunities for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

## **The Aims**

1. To implement a Communications and Consultancy Strategy which is derived from the Liverpool City Council Corporate Consultation Strategy (Listening, Learning, Leading) which highlights key events and opportunities for communication and consultation with schools and communities in Liverpool on the Building Schools for the Future programme.
2. To deliver a Communication and Consultation Strategy that engages local stakeholders, uses proven communication and consultation methods, and monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation methods for all stakeholders.

## **The Outcomes of the Communications and Consultation Strategy**

### **Outcomes**

- ❖ Identify the transformational issues both educational and social, which need to be overcome to achieve school improvement and increase the value of education for all stakeholders.
- ❖ Sustain communication and consultation processes with all partners, once BSF contracts are awarded, to refine and develop further the processes for implementing the agreed partnering arrangements.
- ❖ Identify documentation (current issues, policies, practice), newsworthy stories and press releases covering the communication and consultancy process to ensure that all stakeholders are kept up-to-date with BSF developments and best practice is shared.
- ❖ Implement a flexible approach to BSF consultation and respond to additional opportunities beyond those identified within the Strategy.
- ❖ Maintain pro and reactive relationships with Children's Services, the Youth Service and the LCC Communications Office to respond to cross-service working opportunities.

## **Stakeholder Groups**

The Communication and Consultation Strategy encompasses the three discreet stakeholder groups the Schools Consultation Strategy (Headteachers, Governors, teachers and parents and carers), and the Community Consultation Strategy (Neighbourhood networks, health, housing) and the Young Peoples' Consultation Strategy which all promote the engagement of stakeholders in defining the BSF Vision.

Each stakeholder group will be consulted separately, but there will be opportunities for collaborative working and joint stakeholder meetings.

### **1. The Schools Consultation Strategy (Appendix 1)**

- ❖ To deliver a Schools Consultation Strategy to ensure effective means of communicating and consulting with Headteachers, Governors, school staff and parents and carers.

❖ **Headteachers**

- ❖ Representatives from the Headteacher stakeholder group meet on a monthly basis and have the responsibility for:
  - Presenting consultation responses for the development of the BSF vision
  - Disseminating information to the wider network
  - Ensuring that all schools are committed to the vision and its interpretation in their own schools
  - Ensuring the effective involvement of teachers and young people in the project developments

Consultation and information is also disseminated through the Liverpool Association of Secondary Headteachers (LASH) and the Association of Liverpool Special School Headteachers (ALSSH)

❖ **Voluntary Aided (VA) and Foundation School representatives**

Representatives from the VA and Foundation Schools are present at all stakeholder group meetings. It is envisaged these stakeholders will form a separate group based on the current needs analysis.

❖ **Governors**

Chairs of Governors represent the Governor stakeholder group and meet on a quarterly basis.

❖ **Parents and carers**

Initial consultation with parents and carers on the BSF Vision is carried out through regional consultation groups (North, Central and South Liverpool). Further consultation will be concentrated at school level.

**2. The Community Consultation Strategy (Appendix 2)**

- ❖ To deliver a Community Consultation Strategy to ensure that the community is able to make meaningful input into and shares the local educational vision of the LEA and the school-community vision for the future.

❖ **Community representatives**

The Community Consultation Strategy takes account of the key community stakeholders and is delivered on a local basis. The Area Committee structure across the City provides one mechanism for including local communities, in consultation about the City Wide developments but with a focus on their local implications. The City has also held a “State of the City” debate to engage a

wider audience to debate some of the major issues facing the City, and this is complemented by regular focus groups and citizens panels.

#### ❖ **Liverpool Partnership Group**

The Liverpool Partnership Group includes representatives of Health, Social Housing, Liverpool Community College, the LSC and voluntary/community/faith networks and meets monthly.

Stakeholder groups will be consulted separately, but there will be opportunities for collaborative working and joint stakeholder meetings.

### **3. The Young Peoples' (YP) Consultation Strategy (Appendix 3)**

- ❖ To deliver a YP Consultation Strategy to ensure effective means of communicating and consulting with young people.

#### ❖ **Young people**

Young people in Liverpool are given the opportunity to be active in the decision-making process, are empowered to engage and participate in the consultation process and contribute to the development of the BSF Vision.

Representatives from the Liverpool School Parliament have attended consultation workshops and have the responsibility to disseminate information and continue consultation with their peers at school level.

Further consultation workshops will take place with all groups of young people ensuring a positive inclusion policy.

#### **Terms of Reference**

To ensure that the agreed principles of the consultation process are implemented and understood, the Terms of Reference for each stakeholder group have been agreed as follows:

- ❖ To ensure effective consultation with respective stakeholders
- ❖ To provide a focus to discuss emerging ideas and plans
- ❖ To receive feedback from wider audiences represented by stakeholders
- ❖ To provide additional expertise to the project
- ❖ To ensure an effective customer focus
- ❖ To ensure that the views of stakeholders are made available to the Project Board
- ❖ To ensure effective joint planning of provision

## **The Implementation of the Communications and Consultation Strategy**

Communication with stakeholders and information dissemination to stakeholders is essential to the successful implementation of the BSF Vision and school vision.

### **Implementation Objectives**

- ❖ To identify the communication and consultation materials required for example, texts, photographs, questionnaires and other visual/audio resources.
- ❖ To identify consultation methods to maximise communication opportunities for example, website texts, brochures and presentation documents.

The status of the BSF programme will be developed through effective communication and consultation methods using local, regional and national media to ensure a successful sustainable programme.

The strategy aims to develop the right public image and reputation, and celebrate achievement of the involvement of young people and the local community. Young people, parents, schools, local community figures and other stakeholders will have a purposeful engagement in the communication and consultation process.

Involving local businesses and gaining local support will be increasingly more important as the project progresses and if there is a move to developing a sustainable programme. The Communication and Consultation Strategy will also become more important as part of the Corporate communications and Consultancy Package as the programme is implemented and development.

### **Communication and Consultation is fundamental to:**

- ❖ Cultivating a positive public opinion and input into the project development and raising public awareness
- ❖ Engaging all stakeholders in contributing and sharing an agreed educational vision to act as informed partners and assist in the development of the BSF programme
- ❖ Developing support and future partners
- ❖ Generating a good reputation with the press on a local, national and international level
- ❖ Promoting the achievements of the initiative
- ❖ Sharing best practice with PfS, the DfEs other authorities

This Communications and Consultation Strategy brings together an agreed vision that ensures that there is a consistent approach when implementing the BSF programme.

The implementation of the strategy ensures that the following items are clearly explained about the project:

- ❖ BSF aims and objectives
- ❖ BSF key stakeholder involvement
- ❖ BSF key impacts and outcomes of the consultation events
- ❖ BSF key messages
  - Liverpool City Council is participating in the DfES Building Schools for the Future programme, Wave 2, which has a proven track record of success.
  - Liverpool City Council is playing a central role in raising achievement of local children.
  - The benefits of the BSF programme to local schools and the local community.

The Communications and Consultation Strategy means that a clear structure of the communication and consultation opportunities are identified and prioritised.

Ongoing communication and consultancy events and one-off special events that will occur over the BSF period.

Reactive communication and consultation opportunities must be accommodated for and there is flexibility within the time plan to ensure that this is used to full advantage.

All press opportunities are communicated through the Liverpool Communications Office and the press releases are agreed by the BSF Project Director.

The Communications and Consultation Strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**Additional key stakeholders will also be engaged for example:**

- ❖ DDA representatives;
- ❖ local universities and colleges;
- ❖ regeneration co-ordinators;
- ❖ trade unions;
- ❖ Potential Academy sponsors;
- ❖ Dioceses and other voluntary aided bodies;
- ❖ social services;

- ❖ local health organisations;
- ❖ other local authority departments;
- ❖ local businesses and potential sponsors;
  - DfES;
  - partnerships for schools ;
  - the media;
  - regional providers of special education;
  - neighbouring authorities (school place planning); and
  - school organisation committee (statutory proposals).

### **Target geographical communications and consultation area**

The communication and consultancy strategy will be directed at:

- ❖ The local audience in Liverpool
- ❖ The surrounding areas Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral and the North West region
- ❖ Nationally and internationally

### **Recording and Evaluating the Results**

The out-put of the consultation process will take the form of reports which are distributed to consultees and decision-makers and are accessible for review by all stakeholders.

### **Quality Assurance**

The corporate quality assured approach to consultation ensures that the evidence collected has a direct impact on the development of the Liverpool BSF Vision.