



**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
Secretary of State

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Dear Colleague,

This afternoon, I made a statement in the House of Commons about the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and the future of capital spending in schools more broadly.

As I set out in my statement, the BSF programme has become far too complex, bureaucratic and inefficient. Too much of the money allocated to it has been spent on expensive consultants and advisers and the complexity of the procurement process has compounded this.

I made clear that the BSF model of investment in school buildings could not continue, except for those projects so far advanced in the process that it would make no sense to call a halt.

I have therefore concluded that where financial close has been reached on a particular Local Education Partnership (LEP), then the agreed set of projects under that LEP should go ahead. This reflects the financial negotiations and contracts that have been signed. This means that even where financial close has not been reached on particular school projects within that LEP, they should nonetheless go ahead where formally agreed as part of the creation of the LEP.

Where financial close has not been reached, I am clear that projects should stop as part of the ending of the BSF programme. In particular, I do not wish to allow the creation of new area-wide exclusivity agreements over many years with a single contractor.

However, there are some areas where although financial close has not been reached, very significant work has been undertaken to the point of appointing a preferred bidder at 'close of dialogue'. There are 14 such cases. In these cases 2 (or occasionally 3) school projects have been prioritised locally as 'sample' projects, to be the first taken forward in the area. I will be looking in more detail over coming weeks at these 'sample projects' to see whether any can be allowed to proceed.

In addition, drawing the line in this way in relation to academy building projects affect some 100 academy projects which involve academies which are either open in the predecessor school buildings, or due to open in the next school year or else due to open further into the future, but which already have a signed funding agreement with the sponsor. These academy projects are a

particular concern, because these are the schools which face a history of low attainment and serious deprivation, and are most in need of transformation.

I will therefore speak individually to each affected academy sponsor, to discuss the case of each affected academy. In many cases, it will be possible for the academy to continue its work of educational transformation without urgent injection of new capital expenditure. This will be the case where the existing building provides suitable accommodation for the pupils on roll and for the education provided by the academy. In these cases, I will expect that any building work at the academy will have to await the implementation of an improved approach to our capital programme - as will be the case with other proposals previously being considered as part of BSF.

However, there are also some cases where as well as meeting exceptional educational need, an academy project also meets a demand for a significant number of new places, and so the building work is essential to the functioning of the academy. Likewise, there are some cases where an academy was created from a merger of pre-existing schools, and where continued use of existing buildings would cause very significant educational problems. And there may be other exceptional cases where the implementation of an academy relies heavily on a building programme which cannot wait. In these cases, I will look sympathetically on the need for building work to go ahead, looking to make savings where possible.

The attached information from Partnerships for Schools (PfS), sets out in detail the impact of my announcement on local authorities.

I must stress that the cancellation of BSF does not represent the end of capital investment in schools. I announced today a review of how the Department for Education invests capital money. This review's recommendations will help to shape the design of future capital investment in schools. My intention is that future investment will be focused on ensuring sufficient school places in buildings which are conducive to teaching and learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M' and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MICHAEL GOVE