

Kent County Council News Release

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£600m school building project is signed and sealed

Ambitious plans to transform education in Kent got the green light today (27 October) following financial and contractual agreement on the first phase of the county's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

The signing of the contract between Kent County Council (KCC), Building Schools for the Future Investments (BSFI) and Land Securities Trillium (LST) / Northgate Education (NE), means that construction can now begin to completely rebuild or substantially refurbish the first 10 secondary schools.

KCC will now form a Local Education Partnership (LEP) with LST, NE and BSFI, to manage the delivery of current programme and lead on the development of proposals for a further 25 secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units in the Gravesham, Thanet and Swale districts. The contract has an estimated capital spend of almost £600million.

The agreement will provide a boost to the Kent construction industry and offer employment opportunities. As part of the deal, 400 apprenticeships will be offered to young people – a key wish of KCC Leader Paul Carter, who is keen to open up work-based training for school-leavers.

The contract and creation of the LEP represents a major milestone for Kent's far-reaching plans to combine significant capital investment in state-of-the-art buildings and ICT facilities with a bold educational vision to transform teaching and learning and put schools at the heart of their community.

Kent's overall Building Schools for the Future Programme, the largest school building scheme in Europe, is worth an estimated £1.8billion.

The first 10 schools to be transformed are:

- Charles Dickens School, Broadstairs
- Community College Whitstable, Whitstable
- Dane Court Grammar School, Broadstairs
- Herne Bay High School, Herne Bay
- King Ethelbert School, Birchington
- Northfleet School for Girls, Gravesend
- Northfleet Technology College, Gravesend
- St George's CE Foundation School, Broadstairs
- St John's Catholic Comprehensive School, Gravesend
- Thamesview School, Gravesend

Ifield School, Gravesend has already been rebuilt as part of KCC's Special School Review Programme but will benefit from ICT services provided by the LEP.

Cabinet Member for Education Operations, Resources and Skills Mark Dance said:

“The signing of this contract marks an historic day for education in Kent. The Building Schools for the Future programme will see radical transformation of school buildings in the county.

“State of the art technology, fantastic learning and teaching environments and unrivalled community facilities will have a huge impact on generations to come. This an enormously exciting time.”

KCC Managing Director for Children, Families and Education Graham Badman said:

“The timing of this contract marks the start, not the end of the process. This process will give Kent and other authorities a once in a lifetime opportunity not just to transform the schools through rebuilding but to create the circumstances that will determine a 21st Century curriculum, where the needs and ability of the learner are central to the school curriculum. True personalisation is now a reality.”

Chief Executive at Land Securities Trillium Ian Ellis added:

"The Kent BSF project is a transformational partnership which will benefit generations of students by creating fully inclusive flexible learning spaces with groundbreaking information and communications technology infrastructure.

"As well as providing facilities for students, the wider local community will also benefit from increased employment opportunities, apprenticeships and work placements within the new schools."

Tim Byles, Chief Executive of Partnerships for Schools, the government agency responsible for delivery of the BSF programme across England, said:

"As the largest BSF scheme to reach financial close to date, today marks an important milestone not just for Kent, but for the national BSF programme. At its heart, BSF is about transforming education and improving the life chances for all young people, and I look forward to charting the progress of this first phase of Kent's ambitious scheme."

For more information about the Kent's BSF programme, log on to www.kent.gov.uk/bsf

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Note to Editor: Partnerships for Schools (PfS) is the delivery agency and national programme manager for Building Schools for the Future. PfS was established in April 2004 as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), and is operated and funded under a joint venture between Department for Children, Families and Schools and Partnerships UK.

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