

# **Developing better facilities**

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Some local authorities are also thinking about the strategic benefits that the BSF programme brings for their sport and arts services as well as their education service. Many local authorities are saddled with old sport and arts facilities – Victorian-era swimming baths, 1960s civic halls, theatres and entertainments venues and 1970s sports and leisure centres – which are expensive to run, maintain and staff, don't meet today's expectations and are of poor quality. For them, the BSF investment programme provides a real opportunity to replace their leisure and culture estate with something better, more modern, more accessible – and cheaper to run and maintain. (The BSF, NOPES and Active England investment programmes all include innovation and best practice in the design and management of facilities as a key outcome.)

The capital receipts that are released from selling the sites of these old centres can be pooled with BSF or NOPES funds. This will provide much better and, where appropriate, larger sport and arts facilities for both school and community than would have happened with BSF or NOPES funds alone and a more restricted vision for community use. And it ensures strategic provision across the local authority area.

*"I love the fact that the school's open from eight till ten and I love the fact that we have got people coming in. You walk round the school and there are all sorts of parents and children from other schools in and they are looking around and saying really nice things about the school and the things we have. I can't see me ever wanting to go back and just run a school."*

Nic Fiddaman, Headteacher Woodlands Primary School in Inspiring Active Minds and Bodies, Space for Sport and Arts, DCMS, DCSF and partners, 2006

In two-tier local authority areas, this joined-up approach depends on the district or borough councils, as the owners of the leisure estate, engaging with their county council, as the drivers of the BSF and LSC & PCP investment programme, right at the start of the programme planning process. Similarly, in unitary local authority areas, the cultural and children's services departments must be planning strategically together.

The revenue costs associated with whole community use of the facilities can be transferred from the Leisure and Culture's existing revenue budget, while the management of the facilities can be left to the leisure and culture professionals. Since the revenue costs of existing facilities are likely to be greater than the revenue costs of the equivalent school-based facilities, the local authority leisure and culture departments and their finance department will also be pleased. A true win-win situation!

### case study: Nottinghamshire County Council and Bassetlaw District Council

Under Nottinghamshire County Council's Private Finance Initiative new secondary schools will be built in both Worksop and Retford. Bassetlaw District Council is working with the County Council to ensure state-of-the-art community leisure facilities at these new schools will be available to all residents. To this end, the District Council has taken lead responsibility for the leisure management specification and procurement of a specialist leisure management contractor.

To find out more, go to [www.bassetlaw.gov.uk](http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk)

### case study: Boldon School, South Tyneside

South Tyneside MBC was successful in combining 'leisure' PFI credits from the DCMS – funding a 200 seat theatre and sports centre with a 4 lane 25 metre pool, sports hall, gymnasium, fitness centre, sauna and sports pitches – with DCSF credits to build a new school. The theatre and sports centre have separate signage, parking and reception areas for community users. The local Boldon Community Association has a formal agreement with the PFI operator to book the facilities at agreed rates between 6.30pm and 10pm. Other arrangements with the operator provide for access for other local residents and groups and the flexibility for development of partnerships with more outside sport and art groups in the future.

To find out more go to [www.boldonschool.com/](http://www.boldonschool.com/)