



**PR 4369**

**17 November 2009**

**For Immediate Release**

## **Green light for Walsall's Building Schools for the Future**

Council leaders are today celebrating the official start of Walsall's £100 million Building Schools for the Future programme to transform learning across the borough.

The final go-ahead to embark on the 10 year transformation programme came at a special remit meeting between Walsall Council officials and the Government at Walsall Town Hall.

Representatives from Partnership for Schools (the body set up by the government to deliver BSF) and the Department for Children Schools and Families formally approved Walsall's vision for transforming children and young people's future learning over future generations.

The meeting also identified the objectives and actions needed to deliver this huge investment in Walsall.

Cabinet member for children's services Councillor Rachel Walker said: "We are extremely pleased to have secured this investment which will enable us to transform learning in Walsall.

"It is our once in a life time opportunity to change the face of education in Walsall."

Six secondary schools are in line to be the first to benefit from the start of this investment:

- Alumwell Business and Enterprise College
- Joseph Leckie Community Technology College
- Pool Hayes Arts and Community School
- Shire Oak School (A Science College)
- The Streetly School (A Specialist Sports College)
- Frank F Harrison Engineering College

The council has launched a new website [www.transforminglearninginwalsall.org.uk](http://www.transforminglearninginwalsall.org.uk) to explain their proposals and encourage children, young people, residents, businesses, local groups and many other interested parties to get involved.

All schools in Walsall will benefit from the project through the use of cutting edge technology, greater collaboration between schools and by opening up facilities for greater community use.

The programme will also link in with key regeneration initiatives planned across the borough and a major programme of consultation is already under way to capture ideas and suggestions from children and young people, parents, community and voluntary groups, council partners, other agencies, local residents and businesses.

Deputy leader and cabinet member for regeneration Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "Today's announcement will provide us with the opportunity to link together all our exciting regeneration

initiatives to ensure we maximise the investment into the borough and give existing youngsters - and future generations - a brighter future."

Tim Byles, Chief Executive of Partnerships for Schools, the Government organisation responsible for delivering the national BSF programme, said: "The remit milestone marks the start of Walsall's once-in-a-lifetime BSF journey. We look forward to following the progress of the project as it seeks to transform not only the lives of local school children but communities as a whole."

The council's BSF programme team have been working very hard across the borough to ensure Walsall was accepted onto the programme.

The BSF project in Walsall will see construction work starting in 2012 with the first new and remodelled schools expected to open in 2014.

There will be many opportunities as the programme develops to get involved in further consultation events. Results from previous events are currently being reviewed and will be fed back into Walsall's transforming learning strategy to change the way children, young people and their families learn in the future.

Walsall's Transforming Learning in Walsall programme will bring:

- The biggest ever investment in schools
- A once in a lifetime opportunity to transform learning for the future
- World class learning and educational environments
- Flexible, inspirational and innovative approaches to education design
- Great facilities for our communities
- Not just new buildings, this programme will create learning hubs for whole communities

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