

# BBLBNEWS

VISION / COMMITMENT / SKILLS & EXPERTISE / DELIVERY

## MASONS CLOSE SOCIAL HOUSING SCHEME COMPLETE

### ALSO INCLUDING

Code 6 equivalent home in Sussex  
Space Utilisation and Energy Audits

Extra Care at Bluebell, Camp Hill

Increasing number of Schools  
converting to Academies



# HCA Affordable Rent Programme



## Number of New Affordable Homes by HCA Operating Area\*

HCA Operating Area (OA)	Affordable Rent Homes	Affordable Home Ownership Homes	Total Affordable Homes	OA%
East and South East	10,874	3,558	14,432	18.04%
London	16,130	5,726	21,856	27.32%
Midlands	10,647	2,898	13,545	16.93%
North East, Yorkshire and The Humber	7,286	849	8,135	10.17%
North West	8,320	991	9,311	11.64%
South and South West	9,697	3,024	12,721	15.90%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62,954</b>	<b>17,046</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\* All figures subject to change through contracting process

HCA announced the successful bidders for £1.8bn affordable homes funding in July. Almost 150 housing associations, local authorities, house builders and other providers are set to deliver 80,000 new affordable homes as the Homes and Communities Agency confirmed successful organisations and area-based allocations for its Affordable Homes Programme.

The £1.8bn investment programme, launched in February, will deliver more homes than anticipated for Affordable Rent and affordable home ownership due to the quality and quantity of offers made by providers, helping the government to exceed its ambition to deliver 150,000 new affordable homes during the 2011-2015 spending period. It is now anticipated that up to 170,000 new affordable homes will be delivered over that period.

Subject to the signing of contracts with each of the 146 partners listed, investment will be split between each of the HCA's six operating areas, with London on track for 27 per cent of the total number of homes, an ambition of the HCA's Framework document.

The successful bidders include 26 local authorities, whose contracts will be confirmed in early 2012, when DCLG's changes to the Housing Revenue Account are implemented.

Of the 80,000 new homes expected to be delivered through the programme, 29 per cent will be larger family-sized homes with three or more bedrooms; almost 10 per cent will be supported housing and 9 per cent will be homes in rural areas.

Specific allocation figures for each partner will be agreed and confirmed as part of the contract signing process, which is now taking place.

The first Affordable Homes Programme contract to be signed in the Midlands was with Waterloo Housing Group - worth £39m and delivering 1,600 new homes.

The HCA website has recently published a spreadsheet which it is regularly updating with those organisations that have signed their contracts, how much the contract is for and for which areas. Visit [www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/affordable-homes](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/affordable-homes) to access the link.

## Investment for New Affordable Homes by HCA Operating Area\*

HCA Area	Total Funding	Funding
East and South East	£229,967,259	13.10%
London	£627,636,632	35.76%
Midlands	£286,497,269	16.32%
North East, Yorkshire, & The Humber	£181,600,184	10.35%
North West	£188,252,663	10.72%
South and South West	£241,330,260	13.75%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£1,755,284,267**</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* All figures subject to change through contracting process.

\*\* Just under £450m of the overall £2.2bn Affordable Homes Programme budget will be separately used for the Homelessness Change, Traveller Pitch Funding, Empty Homes and Mortgage Rescue elements of the programme and for any community led offers that may develop during the spending period.

The source for this article is the the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) website - [www.homesandcommunities.co.uk](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk)

The HCA is the single, national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England. Their vision is to create opportunity for people to live in homes they can afford in places they want to live, by enabling local authorities and communities to deliver the ambition they have for their own areas.

## Incubator Units, Kidderminster

BBLB is working with Thomas Vale on the proposed, sustainable scheme which covers an existing two storey building which is to be reconfigured and renovated, the construction of a number of new-build units to the remaining site and associated landscaping and parking.

The new-build units will be small starter B1 office / business units, and the existing building is to be converted to a Construction Technologies Training Academy and Business Centre, with facilities that will also support the new 'starter' units. Support facilities including a cafe and meeting rooms, have been provided to serve both the business units and the Academy users.

The scheme has been submitted for planning approval.

## WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN ISSUE OF BBLBNEWS

Welcome to the Autumn Issue of BBLB News, we hope that you will enjoy reading this issue. In addition to pieces about BBLB and our projects we have also included articles about topical subjects which we hope will be of interest to you. If anyone else in your organisation would like to receive a copy please let us know.

If there is anything you would like more details on, or you are interested to find out more about how BBLB could assist you with current or upcoming projects, please call Debbie Ward on telephone: 01384 880550.

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## Masons Close, Olton

The development comprises a rich mix of homes which provides a diverse, high quality housing scheme of 100% Affordable Homes, ten of which are for Social Rent and the remaining nine properties are Shared Ownership.

The scheme, for 19 new homes, includes nine two-bed houses, six three-bed houses and four two-bed apartments on a former redundant garage and car park site.

Plots 1 – 10 (Solihull Community Housing) have been designed to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and plots 11 - 19 (Waterloo Housing Group) to achieve Level 3.

All plots achieve enhanced energy performance, delivering both a sustainable development and lower energy bills for residents. This has been done by incorporating a number of approaches including solar PV panels and water saving technologies along with increased building fabric insulation. All units have also been developed to meet the changing long term needs of residents through the inclusion of the Lifetime Homes standards.

The height and massing of the new houses reflect the context of Masons Close and the

wider residential area. The two storey semi detached dwellings are stepped and staggered to accommodate the steep gradient of the site and provide an attractive variation in height and massing. A change in roof profile also contributes to the scheme's well articulated massing whilst giving the scheme a simple yet unique, contemporary character.

“Waterloo Housing Group is very pleased with the design of the affordable new homes at Masons Close, Solihull. The development forms part of a very successful partnership with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, with the 10 rented homes being managed by Solihull Community Housing, and the 9 shared ownership homes being sold through Waterloo Homes”

**David Pickering, Chief Executive, Waterloo Housing Group**

A material palette of buff brickwork, white render, red cedar timber and coloured spandrel panels between windows form a modern composition, presenting an architectural solution aimed at meeting today's living aspirations.

The key principles were:

- Contemporary, innovative design, using good quality, traditional materials with a consistent design language.
- Building heights and scale that respond to the character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- Clear site identity that will have well integrated landscape proposals combined with retained existing trees, to create a sense of place and improved biodiversity.
- Inclusion of 'Secured by Design' measures to provide a safe and secure environment not only for residents of the new properties, but also for residents of existing properties surrounding the site.
- Delivery of a sustainable development which utilises renewable energy sources.

BBLB worked closely with contractor FHM to deliver this successful scheme which is now fully occupied by tenants and owners.

“With rising fuel prices and winter approaching, the enhanced energy-saving measures achieved in the new scheme will benefit our tenants enormously. This is the sort of development we have ambitions to repeat in future.”

**Steve Boyd, Chief Executive, Solihull Community Housing**



# Conversion to Academies

## WHY SCHOOLS ARE RUSHING TO CONVERT

Since the Government's announcement last year that it intended to extend the academy programme, the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, has been virtually flattened in the rush by state schools to throw off the shackles of local authority control and embrace autonomy. Latest figures from the Department for Education show that almost 20% of eligible schools have already converted to Academy status and conversion rates are currently running at two a day. It is not difficult to see why schools are applying for Academy status: greater financial, management and curriculum freedom are the prime motivating factors behind the dash to convert to 'independent' state schools.

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The DfE is making conversion fairly straightforward – online registration, confirmation that the governing body approves the intent to convert and consultation with the LA is all that is required to kick start the process. The eligibility rules governing which schools can convert have been relaxed; no longer do schools have to be judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted to convert automatically.

Now, single schools that are judged to be 'performing well' or groups of schools of which at least one member is judged to be 'performing well' can convert. Each application is considered on a case by case basis and performance is considered against three basic criteria: relative exam results; Ofsted report; and financial management.

Although prospective academies do not require a sponsor (which the 'old style' academies needed) as part of their funding agreement, they are expected to support other schools which need help in raising their standards.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN ACADEMY TRUST

- An Academy will need to ensure that it is properly equipped to deal with a range of matters previously dealt with by their LA including finance, HR and payroll.

Academy Trusts are charitable companies limited by guarantee and as such need to register with Companies House and comply with both company and charity law – including accounts filing requirements which differ from the CFR returns schools currently have to submit. Despite being charitable companies, they are classified as 'exempt charities' and so do not have to register with the Charity Commission. Instead they will be regulated by a 'principal regulator' (currently the Department for Education). The board of governors will act as Trustees and will have a duty to act in good faith and in the best interests of the Academy Trust at all times.

- There are a number of financial considerations to be borne in mind including the funding agreement with the Department for Education; any LA surplus (or deficit) held for the Trust; a new bank account to receive new funding; and the ability to secure emergency funding.
- Staff will need to be transferred to the Academy Trust from the LA under TUPE regulations and schools will need specialist advice to help them do this.
- Agreement needs to be reached over which assets, such as IT or maintenance contracts, are to be transferred to the Trust.
- Finally, school land will need to be transferred to the Academy from the LA (or, particularly in the case of a foundation or voluntary school, a private landowner) either freehold or on a 125 year lease.

## FREE SCHOOLS

As part of the liberalisation of the education sector, the Government announced that Free Schools could be established from June 2010 by parents, teachers, charities and other bodies in response to a real (as opposed to perceived) demand for better school provision in their area. These schools receive public funding and must have inclusive admissions arrangements.

Although anyone can apply to form a free school, the process for evaluating business plans is rigorous to the extent that only 41 applications out of 323 proposals received by February this year, to open in September were approved. From that number, 32 groups are progressing their plans and it is significant that the majority of these are located in deprived areas of the country where current provision is seen as inadequate. This counters one of the arguments of the anti-free school movement which feared that middle class enclaves would see the setting up of free schools as a route to a publicly funded, exclusive education.



The second round of applications to establish a free school received between February and June this year, have been subjected to an even more streamlined and rigorous process to ensure that only the truly committed groups get through to the next stage. Among other information, the applicants have to show evidence of: demand from parents; how the school will be run; and the school ethos and curriculum.

Before granting approval, the Secretary of State for Education will consider the impact of a free school on the other schools in the area as well as the proposed teaching provision.

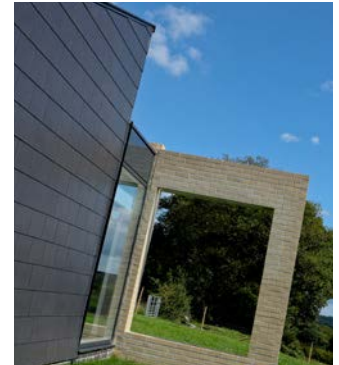
## SUMMARY

On the face of it, the argument for conversion seems unassailable for schools that are judged to be performing well. However, it is crucial for the leadership teams either to have people in place – or have access to the relevant expertise – who can manage the new financial reporting requirements, legal compliance, service procurement and HR issues efficiently.

The setting up of a free school is a completely different proposition: starting a school from scratch is not a task for the faint-hearted which is why the Government, quite rightly, is insisting on robust, rigorous procedures for determining who will, and who won't, be given the green light.

The article above has been kindly provided by Wright Hassall. If you have any questions about legal aspects of running an academy, please contact Mark Lewis on 01926 880700 or email [mark.lewis@wrighthassall.co.uk](mailto:mark.lewis@wrighthassall.co.uk).

## RESIDENTIAL



# Wimland Farm, West Sussex

This highly energy efficient private house, situated on a 180 acre arable farm in West Sussex, utilised cost effective construction and materials throughout, achieving standards of energy reduction normally associated with a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 house.

The project included the upgrading of all the existing farm out-buildings to create a purpose built grain store, and to provide a new smaller, more sustainable home for the Client as the original Grade II listed farmhouse was too large for their requirements.

The site location affords a magnificent view and the house and re-planning of the farm was developed to maximise this potential for the

client, together with ensuring the continued viability of the farming operation.

The house is designed as an open courtyard with a two storey living/guest accommodation, and single storey sleeping wing. The wing is further extended into the landscape to protect the external spaces and the southern elevation from the direction of the prevailing wind. All internal spaces are therefore focused to the view to the south, with deliberately placed large openings to this aspect, and smaller apertures to the north to assist the environmental performance of the building.

The superstructure was constructed using a SIP system further enhanced to achieve

a uniform U Value of 0.1 throughout, with a simple rainscreen of Grade A+ Fibre cement tiles to walls and roof. This ensured high levels of air tightness and insulation to the fabric, together with a simple strategy to minimise thermal bridges.

Heating and hot water is provided by a ground source heat pump located within the field, integrated with a whole house ventilation system supplied by a Nilan VP18 unit. Air is collected from bathroom and kitchen spaces, as well as the double height dining space, to recycle heat within the system.

## EDUCATION



# Barr Beacon Language College, Walsall

The project is part of Walsall's strategy for providing teaching facilities to accommodate increased pupil numbers in the catchment area of Barr Beacon Language College as a consequence of recently completed new housing developments.

Following initial feasibility study, the scheme represents the preferred option for creating additional teaching space and complimenting the development for the school on a tight campus plan.

It takes the form of a first floor extension and refurbishment of an existing single storey building and

provides a new drama studio and music technology & digital arts facility.

Key design drivers included creating attractive teaching spaces with open views; accessible, inclusive design creating a healthy environment with good daylighting and natural ventilation; and flexible teaching spaces with a high level of acoustic performance.

The building is located adjacent to the main entrance of the school and will provide a high quality demonstration of the Council's commitment to education. Our Client for this project is Walsall Council.



## Bluebell Extra Care, Camp Hill

Barratt/David Wilson are Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's partner for the high profile, 15 hectare, regeneration project known as Camp Hill Phase 3, whose marketing name is Bluebell.

Outline consent has been granted for approximately 814 dwellings and the first phase of 158 dwellings will be completed this year.

BDW have secured HCA grant to provide 55 affordable rent apartments on Phase IIB, and they are currently working with Extra Care provider Housing 21 to deliver these to them under a development agreement.

BBLB has recently been appointed to

work on the Bluebell site, with BDW and their partner Housing 21, to design and deliver the Extra Care apartment scheme.

The scheme will enable residents to live with independence and privacy in a secure and caring environment with social and emotional support provided by residents and staff.

The accommodation will be designed to be future proofed to allow residents to remain in their home for as long as possible and balance three prime requirements namely:

- Progressive privacy
- Integration of housing and resources
- Design clarity



## The Forches Estate, Barnstaple

BBLB is working with contractor FHM on the first phase of the redevelopment of the Forches housing estate in Barnstaple, Devon for North Devon Homes.

The site is currently occupied by poor standard post war, prefabricated, concrete panelled homes and due to the sloping nature of the site suffers from drainage and flooding issues.

This first phase of the redevelopment will see the demolition of the majority of the existing homes and the creation of 67 new family homes including a number of bungalows.

One of the challenges has been the topography of site and surface water run off. A combination of homezones and sustainable drainage techniques have been used to address these issues.

The completed units will be Lifetime Homes compliant and achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 3, incorporating solar PV and rainwater harvesting technologies.

Works on site are due to commence in November 2011 with completion scheduled for winter 2012 and further phases to follow sequentially.



## Architects back petition to reform procurement

(Excerpt from article published on [www.bdonline.co.uk](http://www.bdonline.co.uk))

Leading architects including Rab Bennetts and Paul Williams are backing a petition for the government to simplify public sector procurement.

Called Save Money – Streamline Procurement, the e-petition was launched by Willie Watt, partner at Dundee-based Nicoll Russell Studios. The petition is calling for government to make procurement less wasteful, fairer for architects and to rid the process of “tick box mentality and policies rather than the talent, skills and services offered by the bidders”.

“We understand the need to ensure quality is maintained and risk is reduced within the architectural selection process,” he said. “But this is not achieved by increasing the amount of soulless and costly box ticking that inevitably sucks the creative life blood out of the public sector procurement process.”

Paul Williams

Watt said: “The profession is spending vast sums of money chasing projects, there is little scope for newcomers to get onto the roundabout and the system has become so bloated that the review process is leading to projects grinding to a halt.”

The petition was backed by Paul Williams, a director at Stanton Williams which designed Central St Martins College's new home. Bennetts, a trustee of Design Council Cabe, has already promised to lobby ministers over the issue as the current scoring system originates from the Treasury.

Sign the e-petition online at

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/273>

Closing date: 05/08/2012



## Space Utilisation & Energy Audits

BY SIMON JONES, PARTNER

As energy prices continue to rise, energy use and conservation have become key topics of conversation. At BBLB we design all of our buildings with energy use and sustainability at the heart of the design, we feel that these factors should be one of the main drivers to good building design.

Being 'eco-effective' is equally as important, whether you are reviewing existing facilities or commissioning a new build project, as energy costs are no doubt still having a significant impact on your organisation.

Schools for example account for 2% of UK carbon emissions and 15% of the country's public sector emissions. The government's carbon management strategy for the schools sector, published in April 2010, set an ambitious target to cut schools' current emissions from energy use by 53% by 2020.

At BBLB we have teamed up with a team of like minded professionals and started an energy audit and space utilisation service. The key drivers behind the energy audit is to reduce energy demand, this could be achieved by looking at practical items like low energy fittings and controls, right through to fabric upgrades and on to items of capital investment like Photovoltaic (solar) panels and Combined Heat & Power solutions.

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Space utilisation analyses whether and how space is being used; measuring frequency – the proportion of time that space is used compared to its availability - and occupancy - how full the space is compared to its capacity rate.

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One of the obvious ways to reduce energy bills is to operate within less space and this is where the space utilisation service comes in. BBLB has worked in the commercial sector producing BREEAM excellent buildings and buildings with EPC A ratings and whilst working on commercial buildings, space efficiency has always been key to successful and viable commercial design. We have always tried to cross fertilise ideas between sectors to improve our designs. Whilst doing

this we have noticed that in certain building types some of the utilisation of spaces can be very low and this space whilst unused will still be generating energy costs. Energy savings delivered via improved space efficiency can deliver environmental and financial benefits immediately over more expensive capital items that have a pay back period.

Another benefit of reviewing your space utilisation can be to assess how you are currently working and to see if there are better ways of modern working or if spaces can be flexible and adapted to different use. This may not generate savings of floor area but may allow additional uses to be incorporated in your existing space and reduce the need for expansion into new floor area, which again would ultimately increase your energy bills.

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*"Space, like time, is money. If your institution is typical, servicing and maintenance of accommodation is the second largest cost it has to bear. Without efficient space management, the resources tied up in your institution's estate are not used to best effect. Reducing estates costs by using space more efficiently can release funds for other more important activities."*

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**The National Audit Office, in relation to a report on Higher Education**

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In order for improvements highlighted by any survey or consultant review to be successfully implemented the physical changes have to go hand in hand with good management. For example high rates of utilisation where the space is being inappropriately timetabled, or not monitoring energy systems correctly can result in drastically reduced return on investment. Conversely when Space Utilisation and Energy Efficiency solutions are committed to as a holistic initiative, either or both can make a real difference an organisation's bottom line and in times of cut backs and budgetary constraints can be a solution to improving built assets at lower capital cost.

## Staff Profiles



**ROB LANGLEY**  
ASSOCIATE

### Favourite piece of Architecture

A cave, it's the most honest piece of architecture I've seen.

Technically, Stonehenge proves that nothing is impossible and where there's a will there's a way.

### Why I joined the Industry

Don't know, I needed a job for a couple years before joining the marines as an assault engineer and tech drawing (that's what it was called back then) was a subject I enjoyed at school so I fell into it really. Then I got a bad knee injury playing football that put paid to my RM option.



**DEBBIE WARD**  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

### Favourite piece of Architecture

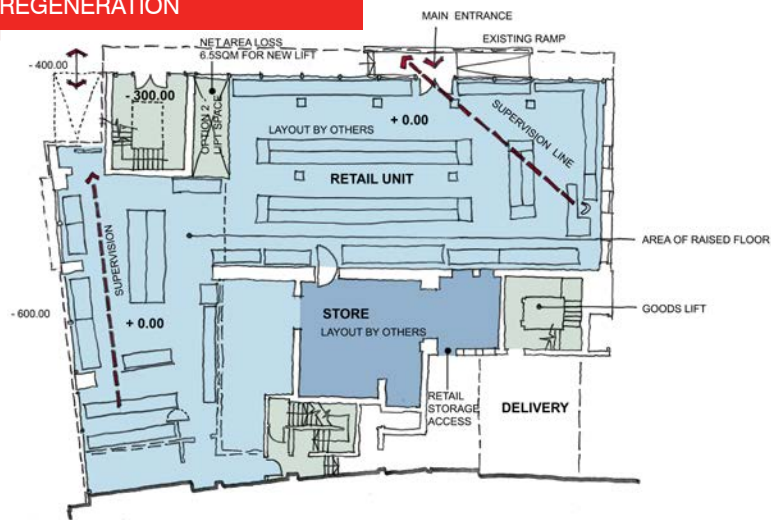
Sydney Opera House with its distinctive, sculptural roof of 'sails' and Mayan inspired podium is a favourite, though it can be argued the equally iconic Harbour Bridge that sits opposite it is a worthy rival for attention - both were feats of engineering ingenuity in their time.

I also like the Chrysler Building in New York and the 'Dancing House' in Prague.

### Why I joined the Industry

After several years in the IT industry I wanted a change, and for some reason an interior design evening class gave me the idea that getting into the property & construction sector could be for me.... something about the sector must have appealed as that was 10 years ago!

## REGENERATION



# Mixed Use Scheme, Shrewsbury

The former Post Office in Shrewsbury was constructed in the 1950's and is located at the top of the main pedestrianised High Street. The building had been empty for 5 years following the relocation of the Post Office who were the main tenants, and the other ground floor tenant.

The first phase of the project was to link together the existing ground floor units to make a larger retail space on split levels with a new

frontage onto Pride Hill to capitalise on location. The building was then successfully marketed and the second phase work completed. This incorporated the stripping out of the upper floors to generate shell office space, introduction of a new lift and lift lobby entrance, with new services connections to enable future fitout for office tenants on the upper floors. Little Waitrose, the new ground floor tenants,

complete their fitout simultaneously with final external repairs and refenestration of the main windows to the elevations completed.

The landlord is currently in negotiation with two prospective office tenants to occupy the 10,500 sq ft remaining of the upper floors of the building and the fitout is due to commence shortly.

Our client for this project was Carlton Holdings.

## COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL



# Worcester, Bosch Training & Assessment Centre

Labour party leader, Ed Miliband, has recently visited the headquarters of Worcester, Bosch Group to officially open the organisation's £1.5 million Training and Assessment Centre.

The new facility provides approx 6500 sqft of additional flexible training and assessment rooms and external teaching areas which will be used to teach apprentices and approved installers to install the latest in heating, hot water, solar and ground source heat pump products produced by Bosch.

The building connects and enhances an existing Bosch building, increasing the capability of the training and office facilities, and through BBLB's design approach has

increased the energy performance of the existing building and it's long term sustainability.

As well as incorporating low-carbon technologies, the proposals have been designed to maximise passive sustainability measures such as natural light and ventilation. Offices are positioned on external walls and have relatively shallow plans to facilitate natural light and ventilation. Areas which are transient have been located in positions which don't benefit from natural light, such as corridor space which will be lit with low energy lighting. The deeper plan practical training spaces are double-height and will benefit as much as possible from natural lighting through roof lights.

## ROYAL OPENING OF TAMWORTH ACADEMY

Tony Mead, BBLB, attended the official opening of the Landau Forte 11-16 Academy in Tamworth this month. Tony designed the bid winning project whilst at a previous practice, (together with the Post 16 Academy) with contractor Willmott Dixon last year. The event included a walk around by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester before the official plaque was revealed in the naming ceremony.

## Project Updates

### LEICESTER SCHOOLS:

Rushey Mead continues on site and will be weather tight during November. The remainder of Leicester BSF has begun to move forward with BBLB looking at three schools in Phase 3 and two schools in Phase 4, these include a mixture of secondary and special schools. We are hoping to receive two further secondary schools in Phase 5 during November.

### LONDON ARRAY, RAMSGATE

The O&M building for the London Array Project is due for completion and handover at the end of this month. The distinct architectural concept has been designed around the exposed marine conditions and driven by positive sustainable measures. BBLB acted as Architect, Contract Administrator and Project Manager on the new facility which as part of the world's largest off-shore wind farm. For further details on the project refer to [www.londonarray.com](http://www.londonarray.com)