

Subject:	An Academy at Portslade Community College: Submission of the Expression of Interest		
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2010		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Gil Sweetenham	Tel: 29-3433
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No: CAB16457	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) was that the Council required further clarity regarding funding arrangements from the DfE which could not be received until after the deadline for reports to Cabinet.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 In line with the Council's policy to ensure that all pupils are given every opportunity to excel, this report updates Members on the proposed Academy at Portslade Community College (PCC).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Expression of Interest (EOI) regarding the development of an Academy to replace PCC, for submission to the Department for Education (DfE).
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves project management expenditure of up to £300,000 including £100,000 in advance of EOI approval, which will be a first call on the available Schools Futures project budget if EOI approval is not awarded.
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes that in setting the 2011/12 revenue budget, consideration will need to be given to setting aside a financial provision to meet potential severance costs in accordance with the terms and conditions of the EOI.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following the submission of the Statement of Intent in April 2010 and having received ministerial approval, the Council undertook the preparation of the Expression of Interest and the associated consultation process with regard to the creation of an Academy at Portslade Community College. This consultation was undertaken between 10 May and 18 June 2010. The Cabinet meeting of 22 April 2010 noted the initial discussions with regards to the future of PCC, agreed to initiate the consultation process and noted the outline timetable for this project.

- 3.2 The proposal is for a new 11-18 Academy to replace Portslade Community College. The new Academy would be co-educational and accommodate 1200 11-16 year olds and a sixth form of 250. It would specialise in Entrepreneurship and Science. The lead sponsor would be the Aldridge Foundation and the Academy would be co-sponsored by the Brighton and Hove City Council, working in education partnership with the University of Sussex. The proposed new Academy would remain on the Chalky Road site of PCC and open in September 2011 on the existing sites with capital completion, procured through PfS National Framework, by 2014. It is proposed that the sixth form centre, which is currently located one mile from the main school, would be integrated into the Chalky Road site as part of the capital works. The existing sixth form centre site would be retained by the Council as a potential location for a new primary school. This Academy would be the City's second Academy; both sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation, and is key to Brighton & Hove's Strategy for Change and the creation of a "City of Learning".
- 3.3 The latest OFSTED report of Portslade Community College in May 2010 has placed PCC into Special Measures. This reinforces the urgent need to transform academic performance by creating an Academy.
- 3.4 The proposed Academy would offer Entrepreneurialism and Science as its specialism's, with a link to Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) at Falmer to extend sporting expertise. Earlier work in preparation for BSF identified a need for the continuance and expansion of the existing community links by enhancing existing multi-agency service provision using the Academy as a central hub for the Portslade area. It is expected that the existing sports centre, library facility and adult education services co-located at PCC would be managed by the Academy. Other community services currently managed by PCC but not located on the Chalky Road site would continue to be run by the Council. This would cover the Village Centre with its specific Youth Provision and nursery (with services to the Academy being continued through a service level agreement) and the Pavilion Nursery. Close links with the Academy will be maintained through active participation in the Portslade Community Forum.
- 3.5 Portslade is a large Neighbourhood Renewal area with a resident population of 19,500 and 7,900 households. It has a high percentage (44%) of people under the age of 16 and a high percentage of people (30.4%) with no qualifications. Portslade Community College is a significant and well used community asset and its continued development is integral to the neighbourhood action and regeneration plan. A full time Community Development Worker supports the growth of the Portslade Community Forum which brings together all the key stakeholders involved in delivering the neighbourhood action plan. Key areas of focus are reduction in NEETs, strengthening communities and involving people, promoting enterprise and learning, promoting resource efficiency and enhancing the environment. The Academy would be a critical member of the Community Forum. The Academy's vision is very much aligned with the neighbourhood action plan. The integration of the existing community facilities with a community Academy would provide an exciting opportunity for the Portslade Community Academy to deliver a Strategy for Change that would truly encompass the needs of the wider community and significantly contributes to the Council's vision of "A City of Learning".

3.6 The Expression of Interest (EOI) requires the council to contribute towards the costs associated with the transfer of staff (TUPE) by funding 50% of any severance costs incurred.

3.7 The estimated Project Management costs are £300,000. This is made up of:

- Staff Costs £255,000
- Office Expenses £5,000
- Surveys £40,000

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 To ensure that the local community were fully informed about the proposed creation of an Academy at PCC extensive discussions have taken place including:

4.1.1 1,500 consultation pamphlets issued to PCC Parents/Carers, Staff, Governors, Pupils and users supported by a detailed consultation document available on line and hard copies from the Council and PCC.

4.1.2 Detailed consultation document provided to Headteachers and governing bodies of other primary, secondary and special schools in Brighton & Hove, City College, Varndean College and BHASVIC, Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), neighbouring Local Authorities, Church of England and Roman Catholic Diocesan Boards of Education, Trade Unions and Associations.

4.1.3 Public consultation meetings held at; Portslade Community Forum (two), Portslade Youth Forum, PCC and Portslade Village Centre.

4.2 The main items raised through public consultation were:

- Recognition of the need for change
- Recognition and support for the positive signs of improvement being seen already as a result of the actions being taken by the new Headteacher.
- A number of technical elements were raised as concerns such as traffic safety, disruption to student's studies during transition/construction, fear of losing community facilities and cohesion, and anxiety over the City having a second academy.
- Concern that an Academy is not a proven solution to raise standards

4.3 The issues have been addressed as follows:

- The post of Principal would be advertised nationally and the existing Principal would be able to apply. Appointment would be based on merit.
- The Government's view remains that Academies are an effective solution to addressing the issues of failing schools
- All changes to both curriculum, and the buildings and facilities required to deliver the curriculum would be carefully planned and managed to avoid any adverse impact on existing students
- Any impact of expanding the number of student places would be taken into account as part of any redesign of PCC and subject to detailed scrutiny by the Council's Planning Department

- Community services would not be adversely impacted by the creation of the Academy and the expectation is that the Academy Trust would work closely with the Community Forum to continue to develop the wider community services.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The capital cost of the Academy will be met by the Department for Education (DfE). Discussions continue with the DfE to determine the exact amount that will be required following the options appraisal currently underway.
- 5.2 The Expression of Interest (EOI) requires the council to contribute towards the costs associated with the transfer of staff (TUPE) by funding 50% of any severance costs incurred. This incentivises both the council and the Academy to minimise severance costs at the point of transfer. At this time, these costs cannot be quantified as these will be dependent on the finalised staffing structure of the new academy and consultation with staff and unions, however, inclusion of a financial provision in the Budget Strategy for 2011/12 should be considered as part of the council's budget setting process.
- 5.3 Project management costs, up to a maximum of £300,000, will be met via a DfE grant which will be awarded once the EOI has been approved. However, given that the recent budget announcement indicates that government departments will be required to find reductions of 25% over the next 4 years, it is possible that this will impact on the level of grant funding for project management costs. If this is not met by DfE grant then any start up costs will need to be a first call on the budget currently reserved for the Schools Futures project. Approval is therefore sought to incur project management costs of up to £100,000 in advance of EOI approval, and up to £300,000 (or the revised value of the grant, if applicable) once EOI approval is granted.
- 5.4 The revenue budget for the Academy will be based on the existing PCC formula budget and will be finalised nearer the time. As things stand, PCC will have a budget deficit at the planned time of closure, 31 August 2011, with the current position indicating a deficit of approximately £200,000. Regular meetings are being held with the college, involving the Principal, Chair of Governors, School Improvement Partners, Human Resources and Finance officers, where all areas of the college's budget are scrutinised, including how the financial position can be improved alongside the process for moving toward the development of an Academy.

Finance Officer consulted:

Andy Moore

Date: 10/06/10

Nigel Manvell

Date: 28/06/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.5 Submission of the EOI is the next formal step in the process of establishing an Academy to replace PCC. It is designed to provide all the key details about the proposed academy project to the DfE and will inform Minister's decisions about whether the project should proceed to the next stage, the Feasibility stage.

Lawyer consulted:

Serena Kynaston

Date: 08/06/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.6 Planning and provision of school places is conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admissions priorities or planning processes. The city council and voluntary aided school bodies must be mindful of best practice as described in the Admission Code of Practice.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.7 Any future building developments associated with the proposed Academy would adhere to DCSF guidelines (Building Bulletin 98) and would be in line with stringent new targets issued by the Government in March 2008 to reduce school carbon footprints to 60% for all new school buildings. Thus the proposed Academy would where possible take full advantage of all appropriate environmentally sustainable energy and recycling systems including, ground source heat pumps, bio mass boilers, green roofs and solar panels. The design would meet the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Model (BREEAM) Excellent standard for new build elements and very good for substantial remodelling. Thus the proposed Academy would be a flagship for environmentally sustainable schools for Brighton & Hove for the future.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.8 Throughout the development of the proposed Academy, consultation with both community groups and the Community Safety team and police liaison officers would take place. Sussex Police Service endorse the view that the engagement of the community in the use of the facilities at the Academy and with the availability of those facilities outside normal school hours, it is envisaged that crime and disorder in the local area would be reduced, as would the numbers of pupils not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no main risk implications associated with the submission of the EOI. Should the EOI be approved by Cabinet and the Department of Education a risk register would be compiled as part of completing the Outline Business Case (OBC).

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The proposed development of an Academy on the PCC site is in accord with the Department of Education's policy on developing a range of schools in each Local Authority, thereby increasing the variety of types of school available to parents. As part of the development of the Academy, careful consideration would be given

to developing the community use of the facilities and a community engagement plan. The City's Neighbourhood Manager for the area has taken an active part in the community engagement.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Officers and the Lead Member of the CYPT have considered the alternatives to an Academy (detailed in Cabinet Report 22 April 2010). Only the Academy option would secure a transformation in standards and investment in extending and refurbishing the existing accommodation.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Given the opportunity afforded both to pupils and the local community, the possibility of substantial capital investment that will be made by the Department of Education together with the sponsor's academic and entrepreneurial expertise, Members are asked to approve the recommendations of this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Summary of Consultation Responses

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. The proposed Expression of Interest.
2. The detailed consultation document.
3. Detailed Consultation Responses

Background Documents

1. Cabinet Report dated 22 April 2010