

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 40

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Academies and Partnership Working		
Date of Meeting:	18 April 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, People		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report is in response to a written request from Councillor Warren Morgan to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Committee examine ways in which the city council as local education authority may work with current and potential academies to share good practice and strengthen city wide provision for all learners, to the benefit of the local economy. In his letter, Councillor Morgan noted in particular the improved performance of students at the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy in 2011, compared with that of students of the former Falmer High School in previous years.
- 1.2 Councillor Morgan's letter is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee consider and note the information in this report about partnership working with Academies in the city.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 There are currently two Academies in Brighton & Hove, the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA - formerly Falmer High School) which opened in September 2010, and Portslade Aldridge Community Academy (PACA - formerly Portslade Community College) which opened in September 2011. Both Academies are sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation. PACA is co-sponsored by the City Council, and has the University of Sussex as its Education Partner.

- 3.2 The City Council, the governing body and other partners, including City College and the University of Brighton, are currently in discussion with the DfE about converting Whitehawk Primary School to an Academy. This development is in response to the government's policy of requiring Academy solutions to be considered whenever a school is placed in special measures following an Ofsted inspection. The DfE has confirmed that it would expect an academy solution to be found for Whitehawk. The Principal of City College is in discussions to establish the College as an academy chain which would leave it well placed to support and sponsor Whitehawk School. It already has a significant presence in the area, not least through its leasing of the former COMART site and an extensive community education programme, and has given a commitment that proposals for Whitehawk School would be integrated with other developments in the local community.
- 3.3 Over recent years, the City Council has been closely involved in the development of Academies at Falmer High School and Portslade Community College. While becoming an Academy takes a school out of the local authority maintained sector, Academy solutions were seen as a means of securing new expertise and significant investment into schools where a major need for improvement had been identified, in the interests of pupils and the local communities.
- 3.4 As a result of this close involvement in their development, the Council has been able to maintain a level of engagement with both open Academies. The Strategic Director and Lead Commissioner meet regularly with senior representatives of the Aldridge Foundation and with the Principals. There is a local authority officer nominee on the Board of both Academies. The authority's officers have been very closely involved in the major capital projects for BACA and PACA.
- 3.5 The Committee will be aware of the outcomes of the Secondary Commission and the development of the Secondary Schools Partnership. Over the last year, the authority has delegated significant additional resources for school improvement to the secondary schools collectively, in support of the agreement that they should take shared responsibility for improving the achievement of all secondary age children and young people (11 – 16) in the city.
- 3.6 The two Academies are full, participating members of the Secondary Schools Partnership, whose primary focus is on raising attainment of all pupils through excellence in teaching and learning. For example, they participated both as hosts and as visiting partners in the Partnership's Joint Practice Development Day, a common INSET day for all nine secondary schools and academies held on 27 February. Both Academies have signalled their intent to sign up to the Compact which has been negotiated with the SSP, which defines its ongoing relationship with the local authority. It is through participation in the Partnership, and in particular in the teaching and learning strand of its action plan, that the Academies are best able both to share their good practice with other schools and learn from them too.
- 3.7 In addition to this work through the Secondary Schools Partnership, senior members of staff from the Academies are participating in other city wide initiatives, including the Curriculum Groups of the 11 – 19 Operational Board, and Connected Schools Sixth. The Academies are also represented on the Learning Partnership Strategic Board.

- 3.8 Academies, like all schools, are subject to the competing pressures of school to school support in achieving improvement and an increasing government focus on individual school autonomy and self improvement. In Brighton & Hove, the aim in recent years has been to foster a strong spirit of school to school support and collective responsibility for the success and well being of all the city's children and young people. It is encouraging that the existing Academies have committed so fully to the Secondary Schools Partnership, and it will be important, not least for the benefit of the city's pupils, that all partners perceive real improvement and collective progress through such collaboration if it is to continue.
- 3.9 GCSE results at BACA and PACA and their predecessor schools are set out in the table below.

	2009		2010		2011	
	% 5+ A* - C inc E/M	% 5+ A* - C	% 5+ A* - C inc E/M	% 5+ A* - C	% 5+ A* - C inc E/M	% 5+ A* - C
Falmer High	25.0	50.0	23.2	58.7	-	-
BACA	-	-	-	-	37.1	78.4
Portslade CC	24.9	38.1	35.2	57.4	39.4	66.1
PACA	-	-	-	-	-	-

We expect both academies to show further improvements in 2012.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 There has been no specific consultation on the content of this report, which is intended as a basis for informed discussion by the Committee.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The funding for all schools and Academies is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and is based on the pupils they have each January. The Academies are included within the schools funding formula calculations for the relevant year, i.e. January 2012 pupils for 2012/13 DSG and schools funding formula. The DfE then recoup from us the amount of funding that we calculate for each Academy and use this to pay over to the Academies. Both Academies have also received funding from Secondary Commission during 2011/12.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 07/03/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There is no statutory requirement for any formal relationship between Local Authorities (LA's) and academies beyond that which is required for the delivery of LA statutory duties such as special educational needs and transport. However LA's continue to play a key strategic role locally, and it is the view of the DfE that there will be significant advantages for both LA's and academies in constructive partnership working, in the manner of the initiatives outlined in the report above.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 04/04/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 No Equalities Impact Assessment is planned in relation to this report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 While no formal risk assessment has been undertaken in relation to this report, it is clear that the development of Academies presents both risks and opportunities for the Council, and more important for the success and well being of the city's children and young people, and for other city wide priorities such as employment and skills development, enterprise and reducing inequalities.

- 5.7 There is a risk that the presence of Academies may weaken the commitment to school to school support and collective responsibility. There is the potential for the development of a more fragmented service, which may see some provision growing stronger at the expense of other provision.

- 5.8 Actions to mitigate this risk include the continuing development of the Learning Partnership, the local clusters of schools and the Secondary Schools Partnership, all of which provide strong underpinning for a culture of school to school support. A further mitigating factor may be the government's wish to see strong Academies providing support to weaker schools.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 None.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.10 Some implications for corporate and city wide priorities have been indicated earlier in this report.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 It is reported that some local authorities are pursuing a policy of increasing disengagement with schools, in the light of the government's clear policy of encouraging more schools to become Academies as its preferred model for raising attainment and school improvement. A policy such as this is considered less likely to achieve the aim of a collaborative approach to collective improvement and city wide raising of standards.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to consider and note the information contained in this report – the Committee's comments will inform the further development of the Brighton & Hove education service towards the aspirations set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Letter from Councillor Warren Morgan to Councillor Stephanie Powell, Committee Chair, 5 January 2012

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None.

Background Documents

1. None.

