

**ESTABLISHING A NEW MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL THROUGH COMPETITION  
IN GUNHILD WAY, CAMBRIDGE: DETERMINATION OF PROMOTER**

*To:* Cabinet

*Date:* 28th September 2010

*From:* Executive Director: Children and Young People's Services  
(CYPS)

*Electoral division(s):* Queen Edith's

*The report is also of relevance to the following primary schools  
in the south of Cambridge City:*

*Abbey Meadows: Abbey Electoral division*

*Cherry Hinton Infant and Junior Schools Colville, Spinney  
Cherry Hinton Electoral Division,*

*Fawcett, St Paul's, Trumpington Electoral Division*

*Morley Memorial, Queen Edith, Queen Edith Electoral Division  
Newnham Croft, Newnham Electoral Division*

*Park Street, Market Electoral Division,*

*Ridgefield, Coleridge Electoral Division,*

*St Matthew's, Petersfield Electoral Division*

*St Philip's, Romsey Electoral Division*

*Forward Plan ref:* 2010 / 024

*Key Decision:*

**Yes**

*Purpose:*

- To advise Cabinet of the outcome of the competition process for the establishment of a new maintained primary school in Gunhild Way, Cambridge in September 2011.
- To seek approval to the recommended ways forward, as a result of that competition.

*Recommendations:*

**That:**

**i) The Queen Edith Community Federation Group should be awarded the competition to run the new school in Gunhild Way, Cambridge.**

**ii) The parental letters of support and the petition that is being presented by Catholic parents to Cabinet should be judged to be a formal parental representation under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006); and that**

**iii) the County Council should, therefore, produce a timetabled plan for future action on the establishment of additional Roman Catholic primary school provision in Cambridge, in consultation with the Diocese of East Anglia, within four weeks of the date of the Cabinet meeting.**

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## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The County Council has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents want their child educated in the maintained sector. Cambridgeshire's policy is to admit children into Reception in the September following their fourth birthday; children become of statutory school age once they reach the age of five.
- 1.2 A series of reports were produced for the Children and Young People's Policy Development Group (CYP PDG), between November 2008 and January 2010, which provided detailed information about the projected increased demand for primary school places across Cambridgeshire due to rising birth rates and increased fertility rates. This information was based on National Health Service (NHS) data, which made it possible to identify pressures at individual school and local area level up to and including the 2013/14 academic year.
- 1.3 The most significant level of growth is in Cambridge, particularly in the south of the City. Proposals were developed to meet this pressure, which were the subject of public consultation in December 2009. The outcome of this consultation was considered by the PDG on 19 January 2010, and the resulting recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet on 23 February 2010.
- 1.4 One of the key recommendations was the establishment of a new two-form entry primary school on the former Netherhall Lower School site, in Gunhild Way, Cambridge, from September 2011. It was agreed that this new school should be established by means of an open competition process. The specification for the new school, which would form the basis of the competition, was also endorsed at

the February Cabinet meeting.

- 1.5 The remainder of this report outlines the competition process, the outcome of the public consultation and the recommended way forward.

## **2.0 THE COMPETITION PROCESS FOR THE NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

- 2.1 In order to meet the statutory duty to provide a school place for every child whose parents want them to be educated in the maintained sector, the County Council also has a legal responsibility to keep the number of school places under review and to take appropriate steps to manage the position. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to adopt a strategic role, with a duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school provision. This includes a requirement on local authorities to invite other potential promoters to enter into a competition to provide any new primary, secondary or special schools that they plan to establish.
- 2.2 In accordance with the decision taken by Cabinet on 11 September 2007 about the County Council's overall approach to school competitions, it was agreed that the Council should not enter its own proposals to establish a new school. Bids were, therefore, sought from individual promoters or organisations choosing to collaborate. In view of the decision not to enter the competition, the County Council is the decision-maker for the process.
- 2.3 The timeline and process for the competition is set out in **Appendix 1**, and the, then, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) appointed the consultancy firm, Deloitte, to act on its behalf to provide advice to the Council and to individual promoters.
- 2.4 In view of the need to provide the new primary school by September 2011, to meet the increased demand for places, it was emphasised from the outset that the design and construction of the school accommodation would take place alongside the competition arrangements. Promoters would not, therefore, have the opportunity for detailed involvement in the design of the school building. Further information about the current position on the school building is set out in section 7.1.

## **3.0 THE PROMOTERS AND THE PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Bids were received from two promoters by the competition closing date of 28 June 2010. Information about the promoters and summaries of their proposals, which were published on 9 July 2010, are set out below. Electronic copies of the full bids can be accessed from the County Council's website using the following link:  
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/schools/planning/Cambridge.htm>.
- 3.2 **Queen Edith Community Federation Group**
  - 3.2.1 The Queen Edith Community Federation Group submitted an independent proposal to establish the new primary school as a foundation school (without a foundation trust) linked in statutory federation with the neighbouring Queen Edith Community

Primary School.

- 3.2.2 The Federation Group consists of members of the Governing Body of Queen Edith School. It is supported by three groups of Community Partners for:  
**Education:** Netherhall School; Parkside Federation; University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education; **Well-being/Inclusion:** Cambridge Childcare; Lunchtime UK; Romsey Mill; Cambridge Family Mediation Service; Addenbrooke's Hospital; and **Faith/Community:** St James' Church; Queen Edith Chapel; parent representatives of the Muslim and Hindu faiths.

Each group would appoint a representative to the Federation Governing Body and use its specialist expertise to support the federation in helping children develop as successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

- 3.2.3 The ethos of the federation would be: 'Partnership in Excellence, Opportunity for All'. The new school would work in close collaboration with Queen Edith Primary School, with the three partnership groups, with the Local Authority, and with the local community. It would do so to achieve first-class teaching and learning and to share Queen Edith's ethos of inclusion, respect, community cohesion, personalised provision and support for the most vulnerable.
- 3.2.4 Members of the Federation Group are already established providers of extended services in the local community, and the proposed extended provision for the new school includes a range of after-school and holiday clubs, support for local families (including a dedicated Family Worker) and community access to the school building.
- 3.2.5 The proposed catchment for the new school would comprise the combined catchment areas of Morley Memorial, Queen Edith and Ridgefield primary schools. This is intended to meet the acute demand for school places projected for those catchment areas in the coming years, and to protect the sustainability of planned expansion in Cherry Hinton. Children who have a statement of special educational needs that names the school would be admitted. The school's admission criteria would be:
- 1) Children in Care/Looked After Children ;
  - 2) Children living in the catchment area who have a sibling at the school;
  - 3) Children living in the catchment area;
  - 4) Children living outside the catchment area who have a sibling at the school;
  - 5) Children living outside the catchment area, but unable to gain a place at their catchment school because of oversubscription;
  - 6) Children living outside the catchment area, but nearest the school as measured by a straight line.
- 3.2.6 The school would not have a specific religious character, but would welcome children of all religious faiths and of none. It would seek to serve the area's culturally and religiously diverse community, supported by the federation's Faith and Community Partnership Group.
- 3.2.7 The new primary school would not have a subject specialism. However, through federation with Queen Edith Primary School, it would benefit from the support of a

wide range of specialist teachers, including an Advanced Skills Teacher, a Leading Literacy Teacher and a Maths Specialist Teacher.

### **3.3 Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia**

- 3.3.1 The Roman Catholic (RC) Diocese of East Anglia submitted an independent proposal for a Voluntary Aided (VA) Co-Educational Primary School with early years provision on site and dedicated space for extended school activities.
- 3.3.2 The new school would provide a full and varied menu of extended activities, including a range of after-school and holiday clubs, wrap-around care and community access to the school building.
- 3.3.3 The school would have a clear Christian ethos, a staff team which would join a closely-supported and supportive family of schools. The education of the 'whole child' is a fundamental tenet of Catholic education. The Catholic Church provides schools to contribute to the creation of a society that is highly educated, skilled and cultured. The Catholic bishops of England and Wales insist that Catholic schools contribute to the common good. Ethnic and cultural diversity have always been features of the Church's transnational identity and membership.
- 3.3.4 There has been a shortage of places in the area for families wishing to access a Catholic school for a number of years. Pressure on the one school in the south (St Alban's) is such that the effective radius of its catchment continues to decrease and is now less than one mile. Baptismal figures for the two Catholic parishes clearly show that a single form of entry is inadequate for the Catholic population, even accepting that not all would wish to access a Catholic school. If the bid was successful, the proposers would ask the Secretary of State for designation of the school as one with a Roman Catholic religious character.
- 3.3.5 Children who have a statement of special educational needs that names the school would be admitted to the school, and the admissions policy would give priority to:
  - 1. Looked after Children
  - 2. Baptised Catholics in the south area of the City as defined by the current catchment areas of the following schools:  
Abbey Meadows, Cherry Hinton, Colville, Fawcett, Morley Memorial, Newnham Croft, Park Street, Queen Edith, Ridgefield, Spinney, St Matthew's, St Paul's and St Philip's.
  - 3. Other children in the above area
  - 4. Baptised Catholics outside the area
  - 5. Other children outside the area.
  - 6. Over-subscription will be resolved by distance from the school.

## **4.0 OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS**

### **4.1 Public Meeting**

- 4.1.1 On the evening of 15 July 2010, a public meeting was held at Cambridge

Professional Development Centre. This was facilitated by the consultants from Deloitte.

- 4.1.2 The purpose of the meeting was to give members of the community the opportunity to hear about the promoters' proposals to establish the new primary school and to ask questions. Over 120 people attended the meeting. The notes of that meeting are attached as **Appendix 2**.

## **4.2 Written Representations from the Public**

- 4.2.1 Detailed information about the written representations received from the public is set out in **Appendix 3**.

## **5.0 DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

### **5.1 Meetings with Individual Promoters**

- 5.1.1 On 16 July 2010, County Council Members and officers held separate meetings with the Queen Edith Community Federation Group and the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia. The aim of these meetings was to enable representatives of the County Council, as the decision-making body for the competition process, to discuss the proposals in detail with the promoters.
- 5.1.2 In preparation for the meetings, copies of the two proposals were circulated to key officers, who were asked to highlight any areas of the bids that they wished to be explored further.
- 5.1.3 A copy of the notes of these meetings is attached as **Appendix 4**.

### **5.2 Assessment of the Proposals using the Decision-Making Framework**

- 5.2.1 In addition to the meetings with individual promoters, officers have also undertaken a detailed assessment of the bids, using the decision-making framework that was produced for the competition. This framework is based on and follows the structure of the DCSF's document '*Decision-makers' guidance (Local Authority or School Adjudicator) for: Establishing a New Maintained Primary School*'. Any additional elements contained in the Cambridgeshire specification for the new school were also included in the framework. This framework was shared with the promoters at an early stage in the process, so that they were aware of the requirements against which the bids would be judged. The completed assessments of each proposal are attached as **Appendices 5a) and b)**.
- 5.2.2 These assessments show that both bids meet the basic requirements, and officers are confident that both promoters would run a good school.
- 5.2.3 Nonetheless, having considered both proposals in detail, the recommendation is that the running of the new school should be awarded to the **Queen Edith Community Federation Group**, for the following reasons:
- Their proposal is much more substantial than that of the Diocese of East Anglia, with strong supporting evidence of how the school would be run;
  - There is a clear federation and partnership structure, which outlines in detail who would be involved in the running of the school and how this would be implemented;
  - Most importantly, it is considered that the admission arrangements

proposed by the Queen Edith Community Federation Group would better meet the demographic pressures in the south of the City - the main purpose of establishing the school - without adversely affecting the other measures that the Council has put in place in that area to meet demand, particularly in Cherry Hinton.

- The wider catchment area proposed by the Diocese of East Anglia is likely to result in far more cross-City travel.

5.2.4 As the need to meet the demographic pressures is key to this decision, the relevant extracts from the decision-making assessments are set out below.

**This new two-form entry primary school is being established to meet the demand for additional places in the south of Cambridge, as a result of a rising birth rate in that part of the City.**

**How effectively would the proposal meet this basic need for school places?**

#### **Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia**

This proposal's main focus is the provision of an RC VA Primary School to meet the demand for Catholic school places in the south of Cambridge, as the existing RC school is oversubscribed. However, in order to address the requirement for the new school to meet the demand for additional places, as a result of a rising birth rate, the proposal has varied the normal admissions criteria for an RC VA school. A broad catchment area has been defined, encompassing the catchment areas of all the primary schools in the south of the City, and, after any priority allocation of places for children with statements of SEN and looked-after children, priority would be given to baptised Catholics in that broad catchment area, and then other children in the area. (See section 3.3.5 of this paper for the full admissions criteria.)

The rationale for these criteria is that the admission of Catholic children from across the south of the City to the new school would release places in the other primaries for local children whose parents did not want a faith-based education for their child. Over-subscription would be resolved by distance from the school.

A survey of the parents of Catholic children in the St Philip Howard Parish was undertaken by the Diocese. This aimed to identify demand for places in a new RC primary school, at Gunhild Way, in Reception in 2011 and beyond. Using postcode information, where this had been provided by parents, the responses were then analysed into current school catchment areas.

This analysis indicated that there was substantial demand for RC places. However, out of the overall total of 116 respondents that could be identified, who lived in the catchment areas of the relevant schools in the south of the City, 58 of those children are in the catchment areas of Cherry Hinton schools.

It is important to note that the Council is already making an additional two forms of entry (FE) available in Cherry Hinton, to meet the increase in demand there (Colville, 1FE from September 2010 and Cherry Hinton Infant/Junior, 1FE from

September 2011). If the parents of baptised Catholic children living in Cherry Hinton exercised their preference to attend a new RC VA school in Gunhild Way, in the event of oversubscription, Cherry Hinton's closer proximity to the new school site is likely to trigger the distance tiebreak criterion, ensuring that they had priority. This would mean that children from the other school catchment areas, particularly Ridgefield and Morley Memorial, where there is significant demand, are likely to have to be transported to spare places in Cherry Hinton schools. There would, therefore, be considerable crossover of children.

In view of this, it is considered that this proposal would **not** meet the basic need for school places in the south of the City effectively.

### **Queen Edith Community Federation Group**

The proposed catchment area for the new school would encompass the existing catchment areas of the three primary schools (Queen Edith, Morley Memorial and Ridgefield) in the south of Cambridge where there are currently no other measures planned, or in place, to meet the demographic pressures. Adopting the same admissions and oversubscription criteria as Cambridgeshire's community primary schools would mean that children living in the new school's proposed catchment area, where there is significant need, would have priority. There would, therefore, be less need to transport children across the City.

The Federation Group also proposes to form an admissions group in partnership with other headteachers south of the river to ensure that the growth of the new school would not have a negative impact on the sustainability of local primary schools.

It is considered that this proposal **would** meet the basic need for school places in the south of the City effectively.

5.2.5 As background to this issue, also attached are :

- the January 2010 National Health Service data table, as **Appendix 6**,
- a summary of the measures that the Council is taking to meet the demographic pressure in Cambridge, as **Appendix 7**, and
- a school catchment area map of Cambridge, as **Appendix 8**.

## **6.0 PARENTAL REPRESENTATIONS FROM ROMAN CATHOLIC PARENTS**

6.1 Since May 2007, the local authority has had a specific duty to respond formally to parental representation, under the Education Act 1996, (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) in furtherance of its duty to promote choice for parents and secure diversity in the provision of schools.

6.2 In making representation to the authority, local parents can either respond to a formal consultation or competition process or approach the authority spontaneously with their own proposals or complaints. In every case, the local authority has to exercise its judgement in considering whether the approach is a representation from parents requiring a response under the new duty.

6.3 Where the local authority is satisfied that the communication from parents amounts to representation under the new duty, then the local authority should investigate



and respond in a proportionate way according to the circumstances of the case.

- 6.4 As a minimum, local authorities are expected to respond to any parental representation within four weeks, setting out the authority's initial response and, where appropriate, a timetabled plan of future action.
- 6.5 This competition process has shown strong parental demand and support for the provision of additional Roman Catholic primary school provision in Cambridge, and it is considered that the letters of support and the petition that has been presented should be judged to be a formal parental representation under the new duty. It is, therefore, recommended that the County Council should produce a timetabled plan for future action on the establishment of additional Roman Catholic primary school provision in Cambridge, in consultation with the Diocese of East Anglia, within four weeks of the date of the Cabinet meeting, and present this to the 4 November 2010 meeting of the CYP PDG.

## **7.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Resources and Performance**

- 7.1.1 The CYPS capital programme was reviewed to take account of the increased need for primary school places resulting from the increase in demographic pressures. The capital to build the new primary school in Gunhild Way, Cambridge, was identified as part of that process.
- 7.1.2 The development plan for the construction of the new primary school is on target. The design work has been completed and planning permission has been obtained for the building. Netherhall Lower School vacated the site at the end of the summer term 2010, and the former Lower School buildings are now being demolished, to enable the construction work to start.
- 7.1.3 There are revenue implications arising from the creation of additional school places, in terms of the need to employ teaching and support staff in advance of a school generating Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding. The cost of revenue funding will be a call on the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 7.1.4 In a town or city environment, the expectation should be that the majority of children should be able to walk or cycle to school. There is clearly the potential for more children to have to be transported to schools other than their catchment schools if the Authority is unable to match supply with demand, thus placing a further pressure on revenue budgets.

### **7.2 Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working**

- 7.2.1 There are specific statutory procedures which have been followed as part of this competition process. These are set out in section 2.

### **7.3 Climate Change**

- 7.3.1 The Council's current policy is for all newly-commissioned Council buildings to

meet the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'very good' standard, with an aspiration to achieve 'excellent'. In the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy, a public commitment has been made to develop a new minimum standard for all newly-commissioned buildings. This will ensure that the Council is prepared for the implementation of the Government's zero carbon standards for new schools, which come into effect in 2016, and for other buildings, which come into effect in 2018. It is anticipated that the Gunhild Way primary school building project will achieve an 'excellent' rating.

#### **7.4 Access and Inclusion**

- 7.4.1 The County Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs (SEN) are able to attend their local mainstream school where possible, with only those children with the most complex and challenging needs requiring places at specialist provision.
- 7.4.2 The specification for the new primary school indicated that the school would be expected to serve the children with SEN in its catchment area for whom mainstream education was considered appropriate. Both promoters have confirmed that this requirement would be met, and children with statements of special educational needs are the highest priority in the school admissions criteria outlined in both proposals.
- 7.4.3 The accommodation for the new school will fully comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

#### **7.5 Engagement**

- 7.5.1 Meetings have taken place with the relevant planning officers, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the educational imperative of meeting children's basic need entitlement to school places.
- 7.5.2 In view of the city-wide nature of the pressure on school places in Cambridge, there is close liaison with Cambridge City Councillors and officers.

#### **7.6 Consultation**

- 7.6.1 Consultation in relation to this competition process has followed the statutory requirements, as outlined in Appendix 1.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
23 February 2010 Cabinet paper, including the specification for the new primary school.	Sian Phillips Education Officer
The proposals from the two promoters. See electronic link in paragraph 3.1, above.	Open plan office, Second floor, B wing, Castle Court
The remaining papers of relevance are included as appendices to this report. For ease of reference, a list of appendices is included on the next page.	