

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GODMANCHESTER

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 16 September 2014

From: Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services

Electoral division(s): Godmanchester and Huntingdon East; Huntingdon

Forward Plan ref: N/A **Key decision:** No

Purpose: a) To advise the Committee of the outcome of the process adopted by the Council to discharge the statutory requirement, under the Education Act 2011, to seek an Academy or Free School sponsor for the new primary school to serve the Bearscroft Farm development and the wider Godmanchester community; and

b) to seek the Committee's endorsement of the Godmanchester Community Education Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for this new primary school, subject to the Trust being granted approval by the Secretary of State for Education as an academy sponsor.

Recommendation: Members are asked to:

a) Endorse Godmanchester Community Education Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for the new primary school to serve Godmanchester, subject to the Trust being granted approval by the Secretary of State for Education as an academy sponsor; and

b) Endorse the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust as an alternative sponsor for the new primary school to serve Godmanchester in the event that the Godmanchester Community Education Trust is unable to secure approval from the Secretary of State for Education as an academy sponsor.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council as the local Children's Services Authority, 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 state funded sector. To achieve this, the Council has to keep the number of school places under review and to take appropriate steps to manage the position where necessary. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also requires local authorities to adopt a strategic role, with a duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school provision.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to secure sufficient childcare for parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment (section 6) and secure free early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds (and up to 40% of 2 year olds who meet nationally set eligibility criteria) of 15 hours a week, 38 weeks a year, of early years education.
- 1.4 Huntingdonshire District Council is in the process of developing its Local Plan to replace its Core Strategy (adopted in 2008). The Plan identifies sites for development and infrastructure up to 2036 and includes supplementary vision documents that aim to guide growth within every village and town within the district.
- 1.5 A total of 870 new homes are proposed for Godmanchester across four sites, the largest of which is Bearscroft Farm, a development of 750 homes.
- 1.6 In response, the Council has identified the need to establish a new primary school with early years' facilities in the Bearscroft Farm development. The school will also serve existing need across Godmanchester.
- 1.7 The 2011 Education Act sets out the following requirements for Local Authorities with regard to the establishment of new schools:
 1. The Council has to seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy or Free School, and specify the date by which proposals must be received.
 2. Following the published closing date by which proposals should have been submitted, the Council must contact the Secretary of State for Education, to outline the steps it has taken to secure applications for the establishment of an Academy or Free School, together with details of any which have been received.

Only if no Academy or Free School proposals are received, can the Council seek the Secretary of State's permission to begin a competition process to establish a maintained school under the provisions set out in the 2006 Education Act.

2.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Godmanchester is served by two primary schools: Godmanchester Primary School (an academy) and St Anne's Church of England Aided Primary School. Between them they provide a total of 630 places (three forms of entry (FE)).
- 2.2 The table below shows the combined permanent intake limit of the primary schools against the forecast demand for places for Reception aged children (4 year olds), excluding the Bearscroft development, using the forecast birth data received in August 2013.

Demographic Forecast for number of Reception Places Required.					
Godmanchester	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Combined permanent intake capacity (split 60 places at Godmanchester Primary and 30 places at St Anne's Primary. The latter includes 12 places allocated on denominational grounds.)	90	90	90	90	90
Actual (October 2013) and Forecast Demand for Reception Places	91	99	92	98	89
Actual (October 2013) and Forecast Surplus/Deficit Reception Places	-1	-9	-2	-8	+1

- 2.3 To date, where it has not been possible to accommodate Godmanchester pupils at one or other school, places have been allocated in primary schools in nearby Huntingdon.
- 2.4 The Bearscroft Farm development is forecast to generate demand for around 245 places (the equivalent of 1.2FE). However, through Section 106 (S106 negotiations) with the developer, the Council has been able to secure a site which is sufficient to accommodate a school of 420 places (2FE), to provide flexibility to respond to changing needs. The expectation is that the new primary school at Bearscroft will provide for the wider needs of the Godmanchester community as well as the new development.
- 2.5 The new school will open in September 2016 with places for children in all age groups as follows:

Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2			
Reception	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6
20	10	5	5	5	5	5

3.0 ACADEMY/FREE SCHOOL SPONSOR PROCESS AND OUTCOME

- 3.1 The main elements of the sponsor selection process date back several

years as they were established in response to the requirements of the 2006 Education Act. The process was reviewed and updated in 2012 to take account of the requirements of the 2011 Education Act, receiving Cabinet approval on 17 April 2012. More recently, some slight adjustments have been made to take account of the Council's new decision-making arrangements. The process consists of six main stages:

1. Development and publication of a specification detailing the requirements and expectations of the potential academy or free school sponsor together with a background document which provides the context for the need for the school and the area in which it will be established.
2. Invitation to potential sponsors to submit applications within a set timeframe.
3. Assessment and scoring of the applications.

Only applications deemed to have met a certain standard will be shortlisted and taken forward to the next stage.

4. A public meeting at which the applicants are asked to present their proposals and answer questions from the audience. Applicants are requested to prepare a presentation which should take no more than 15 minutes to deliver.
5. Assessment and scoring of the way in which the applicant presented their proposals and responded to questions from the audience at the public meeting followed by an interview with a joint officer and Member panel during which the applicants will be asked a series of questions. This usually lasts around 1 hour. The panel is also provided with a summary of any written comments or feedback received following the public meeting.

The panel membership is drawn from the following:

- the Chair of the CYP Committee;
- the CYP Spokespersons for each of the political parties;
- the local County Councillor(s) for the area in which the school will be established;
- the respective Head of Service with responsibility for primary, secondary or special schools;
- the 0-19 Place Planning and Organisation Manager; and
- the Head of Service, 0-19 Place Planning and Organisation (Chair)

Other officers may also be invited to participate if the plans

include provision for early years and childcare.

6. The panel discusses each of the proposals in detail, taking account of what they have read, seen and heard from which a combined score for each application is derived.

The chair's aim is to secure a consensus score for each application and a resulting recommendation to the Children and Young People's (CYP) Committee on a preferred sponsor.

- 3.2 On 4 April 2014, the Council published both a local and a national press announcement setting out the need for a new primary school to serve the Bearscroft Farm development. Potential sponsors were invited to submit proposals by 16 June 2014, to establish and run the school as either an Academy or Free School. The Background Information document and the detailed School Specification document produced to support potential applicants/sponsors in developing their proposals are available on the Council's website through the following link:

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20059/schools_and_learning/347/school_changes_and_consultations/6

The documents were also sent to the Department for Education (DfE).

- 3.3 Two proposals were received by the 16 June 2014 deadline from:

- Godmanchester Community Education Trust
- The Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust

Copies of the executive summaries of the applications are available to either view or download from the Council's website through the above link.

- 3.4 A public meeting was held on 2 July 2014 when representatives from the two potential sponsors presented their proposals and answered a range of questions. The audience included local members and members of the assessment panel.

A number of issues and concerns were raised, these related to:

- the location of the Bearscroft Farm development and its physical isolation from the rest of Godmanchester and how the respective potential sponsors intended to work to promote and support community cohesion;
- how the new school would work alongside or might compete with the two existing primary schools;
- the potential role of the school in meeting the existing in-catchment pressure within Godmanchester which, in recent years, had resulted in some children being allocated places in Huntingdon;

- the admission criteria to be adopted in the event of over-subscription and, in particular, the priority given to children living in the Godmanchester community.

3.5 The joint member/officer Assessment Panel met on the 10 July 2014 to interview and assess each potential sponsor's application against the criteria detailed in the School Specification document. The interview panel comprised three of the four CYP Spokespersons, together with one of the two Local Members for Godmanchester and Huntingdon East and four officers.

A copy of the assessment criteria used by the Panel, together with the details of the membership of the panel is provided in **Appendix 1**.

3.6 The Assessment Panel was unanimous in its view that both of the potential sponsors had demonstrated that they had the requisite capabilities to establish and run the new school and make it a success. On balance, taking account of all the various components of the assessment process, the panel concluded that it would recommend the Godmanchester Community Education Trust to the CYP Committee as the Council's preferred sponsor on three main grounds:

1. Their plan specified how the Trust would work with the Council to respond proactively to changes to the forecast number of children through use of space at Godmanchester Community Primary School.
2. Their implementation plan both pre and post-opening. This detailed the leadership, management and governance structure and also provided evidence of financial modelling.
3. Their understanding of the local context in which the new school would operate together with their plan for engaging the local community, in particular parents/carers and support for partnership working, which included a number of practical examples.

However, the panel also wished to recognise the fact that, at the current time, the Godmanchester Community Education Trust is not an approved academy sponsor. The Trust is working with the DfE to achieve this recognition. In the event that its application is turned down by the Secretary of State for Education, the panel's recommendation is that the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust should be approved as the sponsor of the new school.

3.7 All the information used by the Assessment Panel to reach its recommendation to Committee, together with the outcome of Committee's consideration of the proposals, will be forwarded to the DfE by 30 September 2014.

3.8 The Secretary of State for Education will make the final decision and select the successful sponsor. There is no defined timescale for this

part of the process. Officers will keep in close touch with the DfE as it progresses.

4.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 4.1.1 Providing access to local and high quality education and associated children's services will enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. The school and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 4.2.1 If pupils have access to local schools and associated children's services, they are more likely to attend them by either cycling or walking rather than through local authority-provided transport or car. They will also be able to more readily access out of school activities such as sport and homework clubs and develop friendship groups within their own community. This will contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 4.3.1 Providing a local school will ensure that services can be accessed by families in greatest need within its designated area.

5.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

- 5.1.1 New academy schools receive a combination of Council and Education Funding Agency (EFA) funding. The main funding will be based on the local formula applied to all schools, but will need to include diseconomies funding to reflect the costs incurred whilst the new school fills to capacity.

5.1.2	Funding:	Funding Body:	Detail:
	Local Formula Funding	EFA	Based on the Council's local formula. Funding recouped from the Council and allocated by EFA (some factors based on county averages in initial years)
	Pupil Premium	EFA	Based on National Pupil Premium funding rates
	Funding for Education Services	EFA	Based on National Education Services Grant (ESG) funding rates
	Insurance Grant	EFA	Additional funding available to support insurance costs
	Diseconomies Funding	LA	Funding from the Council to recognise costs whilst the school fills to capacity.
	Pre-opening Revenue	LA	Funding from the Council prior to opening (usually 1 term) to support costs of Head Teacher and Admin support)
	High Needs Pupil Top-Up Funding	LA	Top-Up funding for pupils with statements of SEN

- 5.1.3 In the initial years of operation new schools are funded based on an agreed number of pupils. In the 4th year of operation the school is funded based on actual numbers plus additional funding to reflect anticipated growth allocated from the Council's Growth Fund.

Please note: *The Growth Fund is an amount agreed by Schools Forum which is top-sliced from the schools' block distribution total prior to budget setting to allocate additional funding to schools anticipating growth, including academies.*

- 5.1.4 Pre-opening costs payable by the Council have historically been based on the cost of a Head Teacher and administrative support for a term prior to opening (currently £35,000 for primary schools).
- 5.1.5 Diseconomies Funding is assessed for each new school on a case-by-case basis. The allocation is based on the Post-Opening Grant currently payable to Free Schools, although the expectation is that the lump sum provided to the school will be used to meet at least **50%** of these diseconomies.
- 5.1.6 Final revenue funding amounts for new schools will vary depending on numerous factors. As the majority of the funding will come directly from the EFA their application of the local formula factor and national factors is key to determining these amounts.
- 5.1.7 The methodology for funding new schools is subject to change dependent on local and national policy changes and as such will be reviewed on an annual basis.

5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 There are specific statutory requirements which have been followed in seeking a successful sponsor for the new primary school under the provisions of the Education Act 2011. The process adopted by the Council is compliant with the requirements of the Act.
- 5.2.2 The Council will grant a standard 125 year Academy lease of the whole site (permanent school site) to the successful sponsor based on the model lease prepared by the DfE as this protects the Council's interest by ensuring that:
- The land and buildings would be returned to the Council when the lease ends.
 - Use is restricted to educational purposes only.
 - The Academy is only able to transfer the lease to another educational establishment provided it has the Council's consent.
 - The Academy (depending on the lease wording) is only able to sublet part of the site with approval from the Council.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) 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.

- 5.3.2 The accommodation provided for delivery of early years and childcare and primary education will fully comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and current Council standards.

5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 5.4.1 The process adopted by the Council for consideration of Academy or Free School proposals makes provision for a public meeting at which members of the local community can meet the potential sponsors and ask them questions about their proposals. The public meeting took place on Tuesday 2 July 2014. It was attended by around 30 people.

5.5 Public Health Implications

- 5.5.1 The school will be accessible to pupils as either pedestrians or cyclists. If children had to attend schools some distance away (more than 2 miles) they would be provided with free transport by the Council in accordance with its statutory duty.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 5.6.1 Both of the local Members for Godmanchester and Huntingdon East attended the public meeting. However, only one, Councillor Michael Shellens was able to participate in the joint officer/member panel because Councillor Graham Wilson is a governor at Godmanchester Primary School, which created a conflict of interest.

Source Documents	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment Panel Evaluation Document• Assessment Panel Interview Questions 10 July 2014• Notes of Public Meeting 2 July 2014• Godmanchester Community Education Trust Application• Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust Application• Background Information Document April 2014• School Specification Document April 2014• Cabinet Report – Establishing New School: New Legislation, Policy and Strategic Implication (17 April 2012)• Establishing a New Maintained Mainstream School – A Guide for Local Authorities (DCSF February 2010)• Cabinet Report - New Schools Competition Arrangements Policy and Decision-Making Process (11 September 2007)	<p>Paul van de Bulk</p> <p>0-19 Place Planning and Sufficiency Officer</p> <p>B202 Castle Court Shire Hall Cambridge CB3 0AP</p>