

## Establishment of a new primary school at Waterbeach New Town (formerly Waterbeach Barracks)

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021

From: Executive Director: People & Communities, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn

Electoral division(s): Waterbeach

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: As a result of this report the Council will have a preferred sponsor for the first primary school to serve the Waterbeach New Town settlement, endorsed by the Committee, thus enabling the Council to meet its statutory school place planning duty.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to endorse Anglian Learning Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for the first primary school to serve the Waterbeach New Town development.

### Officer contact:

Name: Clare Buckingham  
Post: Strategic Education Place Planning Manager (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)  
Email: [clare.buckingham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:clare.buckingham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 699779

### Member contacts:

|        |  |  |
|--------|--|--|
| Names: | Councillor Bryony Goodliffe  | Councillor Maria King  |
| Post:  | Chair  | Vice Chair   |
| Email: | <a href="mailto:bryony.goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">bryony.goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a> | <a href="mailto:maria.king@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">maria.king@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a> |
| Tel:   | 01223 706398 (office)  | 01223 706398 (office)  |

# 1. Background

- 1.1 Section 14 of the Education Act (1996) places local authorities (LAs) under a general duty to provide a school place for every child living in their area of responsibility who is of statutory school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state-funded sector. To achieve this the Council monitors provision across the county and, where necessary, takes appropriate action to increase capacity in response to identified demand.
- 1.2 The Education and Inspections Act (2006) places additional duties on LAs to ensure fair access to educational opportunity, to promote choice for parents and secure diversity in the provision of schools.
- 1.3 The Council also has a statutory duty under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 to secure sufficient childcare for parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment and secure free provision for all 3- and 4- year olds (and up to 40% of 2 year olds who meet the prescribed eligibility criteria) of 15 hours a week, 38 weeks a year, of early years (EY) education. The Childcare Act 2016 extended this entitlement to provide an additional 15 hours (per week 38 weeks per year) of free EY provision for 3- and 4-years olds who meet the prescribed eligibility criteria.
- 1.4 Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing counties in the country. As part of South Cambridgeshire District Council's (SCDC) adopted Local Plan, land north of Cambridge on the former Waterbeach Barracks site, and adjoining land to the east, were identified as appropriate for a new town settlement, Waterbeach New Town (WNT), to address the housing demand to the north of Cambridge City required by 2031. WNT is situated to the north of Waterbeach Village, 3.1 miles from the northern edge of Cambridge and 9.3 miles to the south of Ely. It is located between the A10 to the west, the London to Kings Lynn rail line to the east and south of the village of Chittering and is within the ward of Waterbeach.
- 1.5 Following approval of planning consent for 11,000 new houses, (30% of which will be affordable housing), on the two WNT development sites, a new primary school is required by September 2023 to ensure that places are available for the first families to move into the new town. The school will be built with capacity of 420 places/2 forms of entry (FE) which will be expanded to 3FE/630 places as the developments are built out. The site and funding for this new school has been secured through S106 developer contributions. EY accommodation will also be provided on the school site. At the appropriate time the Council will run a competitive tender process for interested parties in order to identify an EY service provider. The timetable will be planned to ensure that EY provision is in place and operational from the day on which the school opens. As well as further 4 primary schools the development, will eventually have dedicated secondary education provision, a special school and post 16 provision.
- 1.6 The 2011 Education Act sets requirements for LAs in the establishment of new schools as follows:

- The Council must seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy or Free School and specify the date by which proposals must be received.
- 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. Main Issues

- 2.1 The WNT development is forecast to generate demand for around 4,400 primary school places, the equivalent of 20.9 FE. The first of the five primary schools is required to open in September 2023 with places available in all year groups. This will ensure there is school provision for families moving into the WNT development. Upon opening the school will have the following places available in each year group:

Table 2: Proposed school organisation

| 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    |

- 2.3 The Council's sponsor selection process was established in response to requirements of the 2006 Education Act. The process has since been reviewed and updated in 2012 to take account of the requirements of the 2011 Education Act, receiving Cabinet approval on 17 April 2012 and in 2016 to take account of further Advice from the DfE. Some slight adjustments were also made when the Council moved from a Cabinet to a Committee system. An outline of the process is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 A four-week pre-launch consultation commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021. In May 2021, the Council published a local and national press announcement setting out the need for the new primary school. Potential sponsors were invited to submit proposals by 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021, to establish and run the school, as an Academy, a Free School or a Voluntary Aided School. A detailed School Specification document (see **Appendix 2**) was produced to support potential applicants/sponsors in developing their proposals. These were published on the Council's website. The documents were also sent to the DfE.
- 2.5 Six proposals were received by the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 deadline from the following multi-academy trusts (MATs):
- ACES Academies Trust
  - Anglian Learning
  - Bedfordshire Schools Trust
  - Cambridgeshire Primary Education Trust

- Eastern Learning Alliance
- United Learning

Copies of the executive summaries of the applications are available to view or download from [the Council's website](#).

Following a short-listing exercise against published criteria (see **Appendix 3**) the following 3 MATs were invited to attend a joint officer/member assessment panel as the final part of the competition process.:

- Anglian Learning
- Cambridgeshire Primary Education Trust
- United Learning

- 2.6 The Assessment Panel met on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to assess each short-listed sponsor's application against the criteria detailed in the School Specification document. The interview panel comprised of 2 members of the Children & Young People's Committee, and the Local Member for Waterbeach, plus two Council 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 3**.
- 2.7 The Assessment Panel was unanimous in its view that the Anglian Learning Trust should be awarded the opportunity to establish and run the school. The particular strengths of their proposal were:
1. An ability to evidence clearly, and provide examples, that they understand in detail the challenges and opportunities for children and their families in the locality; that they have the necessary in-house expertise (an experienced network of leaders who work cohesively, drawn from the Trust's central team and across its academies) and capacity to lead and manage a primary school on a new development and have a clear plan, including leadership arrangements, which will ensure the Trust's support for the new school and community from day one.
  2. There are clear support structures within the Trust for teaching, curriculum development, school improvement/challenge, ongoing training and professional development and the close involvement of governors, who include representatives from the school communities.
  3. There is a robust training, coaching and challenge model for teachers to draw upon.
  4. There is a very clear and strong governance model which has been developed and refined. There is evidence of robust financial monitoring and forwarding planning and modelling of different growth scenarios. The Trust invests in new skills and staff development where resources allow and gaps have been identified. For example, it is currently exploring the employment of a family support worker to work across the Trust's primary schools and with new families.
  5. There is evidence of a clear strategy and mechanisms for championing the needs of disadvantaged or vulnerable children and narrowing their attainment gaps with peers.
- 2.8 The outcome of the Committee's consideration of the proposals will be forwarded to the DfE as soon as the Decision Summary of the Committee's meeting has been published, i.e. within 2 working days.

- 2.9 Officers have been advised that the proposals will be considered and a decision made by the Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) Advisory Board, at its meeting on 16 December 2021, regarding which potential sponsor they will recommend to the Secretary of State. If approved, this will culminate in a funding agreement between the DfE and the Trust.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

#### 3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The following bullet points sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- There is an expectation that schools will provide access to and use of the school's accommodation for activities e.g. sporting, cultural, outside of school hours.

- Schools are community assets; and
- Help to support the creation and development of new communities

#### 3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Providing access to local and high-quality education and associated children's services should enhance the life opportunities of the communities they serve

#### 3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- New primary schools designed and equipped for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, including providing high quality EY provision, this should maximise educational opportunities for children

#### 3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

The following bullet points sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Innovative design, supported by robust planning policy and expectations should ensure that new schools set an example and create communities that people will want to live, work and study in
- If pupils have access to local schools and associated children's services, they are more likely attend them by either cycling or walking rather than by car or public transport

This will contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles and contribute to the overall impact of the Council's policy to reduce carbon emissions in Cambridgeshire by 2050.

#### 3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Schools are safe places in which to teach, learn and develop
- Providing a local school will ensure that services can be accessed by local families in greatest need

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

Where new schools are commissioned to meet basic need LAs are responsible for the pre-opening start-up and post-opening diseconomy of scale costs. These are currently met from the Council's Growth Fund which is centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding. The amount in the fund and the criteria for its allocation are subject to annual Schools Forum approval. National policy changes have impacted on how growth funding is allocated to individual local authorities.

4.2 Where a new school is opening, LAs are required to estimate the pupil numbers expected to join the school in September to generate funding through the Authority Proforma Tool (APT). LAs should also estimate pupil numbers for all schools and academies, including free schools, where they have opened in the previous seven years and are still adding year groups. These estimates should be adjusted each year to take account of the actual pupil numbers in the previous funding period. For academies an allocation of funding is recouped from each LA and following formula replication by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) an annual grant allocated.

4.3 Pre-opening funding for primary schools is currently £50,000 and is calculated on the basis of 1 term prior to the date of opening. Post-opening diseconomies funding is provided at the rate of £125 for each new mainstream place created in the primary phase on an annual basis, plus an additional allocation to reflect the number of year groups that the school will ultimately have that do not yet have pupils.

4.4 Final revenue funding amounts for new schools will vary depending on numerous factors. As the majority of the funding will come directly from the ESFA, their application of the local formula factor and national factors is key to determining these amounts.

4.5 The DfE have recently consulted on reforms to the National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools and how they transition away from local formulae to all schools' funding allocations being determined directly by the NFF in the years ahead. The proposals include potential changes to the way in which new schools and growth are funded, although there is limited detail at this stage. Therefore, if implemented this is likely to impact on both the funding methodology and local flexibility for new and growing schools.  
[\(fair funding consultation\)](#)

4.6 Officers have negotiated with developers and secured an appropriate level of Section 106 to meet the capital costs of building the new school.

### 4.7 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The Council delivers the capital projects where new schools are commissioned under the presumption process and these schools are designed and built under its framework arrangements.

4.8 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 if it has the Council's consent.
- The Academy (depending on the lease wording) is only able to sub-let part of the site with approval from the Council.

#### 4.9 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are specific statutory requirements which have been followed in seeking a 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.

#### 4.10 Equality and Diversity Implications

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.

#### 4.11 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.

#### 4.12 As part of the planning process for new schools, LAs must also undertake an assessment of the impact, both on existing educational institutions locally and in terms of impact on particular groups of pupils from an equality's perspective.

#### 4.13 Engagement and Communications Implications

The process adopted by the Council for consideration of new school presumption 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. As the first primary school to serve a new community, this was not a requirement in this case.

All new school projects are subject to a statutory process which includes public consultation at various stages e.g. prior to the launch of the competition process, and at pre-planning application stage

#### 4.14 Localism and Local Member Involvement

All CYP Spokespersons were invited to participate in the assessment panel stage of the sponsor selection process. The local Member for Waterbeach, Councillor Anna Bradnam, participated in the joint officer/member panel with Councillors Bryony Goodliffe, Chairman of the CYP Committee, and Simone Taylor. Councillors Maria King, Vice Chair of the CYP Committee and Samantha Hoy were invited but unable to attend.

#### 4.15 Public Health Implications

It is Council policy that schools:

- should be sited as centrally as possible to the communities they serve, unless location is dictated by physical constraints and/or the opportunity to reduce land take by providing playing fields within the green belt or green corridors
- should be sited so that the maximum journey distance for a young person is less than the statutory walking distances (3 miles for secondary school children, 2 miles for primary school children)

- should be located close to public transport links and be served by a good network of walking and cycling routes
  - should be provided with Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs) and all-weather pitches (AWPs) to encourage and support wider community use
- New schools will have an impact on the Public Health commissioned services such as school nursing, vision screening, National Childhood Measurement Programme, school-based immunisation programmes.

#### 4.16 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

##### 4.17 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

###### Neutral Status

While new schools will be delivered in line with current planning policy around energy efficient and low carbon buildings, they will still result in increased energy demand. On balance, this is a neutral status.

##### 4.18 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

###### Neutral Status:

Schools on new developments are located to be accessible by walking and cycling. Where families express a preference to attend a school outside their catchment they are encouraged, where possible, to travel by sustainable means including public transport.

##### 4.19 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

###### Neutral Status:

The planning applications for new schools include landscape designs and will be in line with planning policy to create some green space. Any trees removed and replanted as part of site clearance will be addressed through the planning application process and will be in line with current policy.

##### 4.20 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

###### Negative Status:

The construction process will generate some unavoidable waste; however this will be minimised as far as possible and robust waste management strategies implemented throughout the construction process.

Waste generated by new schools will be subject to normal recycling facilities being provided on site. Other services operating from the school, e.g. early years provision by a third party, will adhere to policies on recycling.

##### 4.21 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

###### Neutral Status:

The planning application for any new school will be submitted in line with planning policy. The statutory consultees include the Council's Floods team.

##### 4.21 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

###### Neutral Status:

The planning application for any new school will be submitted in line with planning policy. Air pollution will be addressed as part of this process.

4.23 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Neutral Status:

Any new school proposal is designed to deliver education provision in the local community but will also facilitate community activities e.g. sport and other activities by community organisations through the school's letting policy. The services provided are not specific to climate change, however local provision makes access easier. On balance, the impact on this implication is neutral.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Henry Swan

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?  
Yes or No

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?  
Yes

Name of Officer: Simon Cobby

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes or No

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?  
Yes

Name of Officer: Raj Lakshman. Public Health Consultant

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

## 5. Source documents guidance

### 5.1 Source documents

- Assessment Panel Evaluation Document
- Assessment Panel Interview Questions
- The ACES Academies Trust Application

- The Bedfordshire Schools Trust Application
- The Cambridgeshire Primary Education Trust Application
- The Eastern Learning Alliance Application
- The United Learning Application
- School Specification Document May 2021\*
- *The free school presumption: DfE advice for local authorities and new school proposers* (November 2019)\*
- New School Revenue Funding Policy June 2021\*

## 5.2 Location

\* These documents are available at the following links:

School Specification Document May 2021 [Specification document - Waterbeach Primary 120521 \(cambridgeshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/specification-document-waterbeach-primary-120521)

*The free school presumption: DfE advice for local authorities and new school proposers* (November 2019) [Academy and free school presumption departmental advice \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428242/academy-and-free-school-presumption-departmental-advice.pdf)

New School Revenue Funding Policy June 2021 [A guide to new mainstream free school revenue funding 2021 to 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428242/a-guide-to-new-mainstream-free-school-revenue-funding-2021-to-2022.pdf)

The remaining source documents are available at:

Box ALC2607

New Shire Hall,

Alconbury Weald Civic Hub,

Emery Crescent, Enterprise Campus,

Alconbury Weald,

Huntingdon

PE28 4YE