

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

CABINET - 24 MARCH 2009

REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (11 MARCH 2009)

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SCHOOL IN THE NORTH OF THE BOROUGH (BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE)

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on Family and Children's Services considered the **attached** report from one of its working groups about the development of a new school in the north of the borough.
2. The OSC agreed the recommendations in paragraph 7 on page 3 of the report. The committee agreed with the working group's pragmatic view that, given present Government policy in respect of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, the academy route was the best one to pursue at present. Should that policy change in the future then no doubt the Council might wish to reconsider the matter.
3. The working group's report is very much intended to keep the momentum going on this important project and the committee recognised that further work would be needed to take the matter forward.
4. The committee agreed that the following points should be drawn to the Cabinet's attention:
 - The fact that the Council would be a co-sponsor was a strength and would widen the choice of appropriate co-sponsors.
 - It was recognised that the Cabinet would want to consider the selection of a co-sponsor very carefully - a number of options were available; financial contribution was important but not enough - a sponsor should be interested in community engagement and should bring in a range of able people from varying backgrounds who would provide a challenge and stimulus to both Council and school. The sponsor should not be an individual where continuity depended on his surviving and his enthusiasm but should have the continuity provided by a charity or similar body.
5. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to agree the recommendations set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

Councillor John Cox

Chairman of the Family and Children's Services OSC

Public background papers used in preparation of this report:

None. **Officer Contact:** Mr Ivor Quinn, Governance Services, The Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8 7NX (Tel: 020 7361 2306) Email: ivor.quinn@rbkc.gov.uk

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

CABINET REPORT

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SCHOOL IN THE NORTH OF THE BOROUGH (BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF))

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the OSC working group for a new school, and provides recommendations on the most appropriate way to proceed in developing a new school to meet local demand in the north of the borough.

FOR DECISION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The unbalanced and inadequate pattern of secondary provision currently experienced within the Royal Borough means that the proportion of pupils in the secondary transfer who get their first preference school is usually only between 50% and 60% of the total (the London average is between 70% and 80% and national average of over 90%). Further, there are about 660 resident pupils in the secondary transfer each year and only about 300 of these (45%) get a school place in the Royal Borough.
- 1.2 In seeking to remedy this situation the Royal Borough's first priority was to meet the urgent demands of parents in South Kensington, Chelsea and the Earl's Court areas for whom Holland Park is not readily accessible and good quality alternatives were not easily available. The new Chelsea Academy, jointly sponsored by the Royal Borough and the Church of England and due to open in 2009, will provide high quality, local, secondary education for children in this part of the borough. However, the needs of parents and pupils in North Kensington are not adequately being met.

2. THE WORK OF THE OSC WORKING GROUP

- 2.1 Over the past six months the OSC Working Group has been gathering and considering a range of information in connection with developing a new school, including:
 - Current options available for the type of school: i.e. community, foundation (including "trust") or academy;
 - A paper outlining the pupil projections;

- Potential sponsors; and
 - Funding options.
- 2.2 Based on the information received and considered, the OSC Working Group have formulated the following recommendations which are believed to provide the best outcome for the borough and to meet the borough's vision for education provision.
- 2.3 **Type of school:** The best option for the Council is dependent on its priorities, future needs, appetite for risk and timescale. The most appropriate option would be to establish an academy. Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds. It is possible for an academy to be co-sponsored by the Council thereby ensuring the Council retains some influence over the strategic leadership of the academy while obtaining the benefits that an external sponsor can bring. It is essential that the new school lies at the heart of the local community in the north of the borough and provides places for children within that community to meet local demand – a co-sponsored academy would meet these needs.
- 2.4 **Sponsors:** It is considered most appropriate that the Royal Borough co-sponsor the academy.
- 2.5 **Size of school:** Based on the GLA projections to 2018 and other local developments the school could offer a maximum of 240 places in each year equating to an 8FE school (1,600 pupils including sixth form), although in reality and dependent on the site, a 6FE school may be the optimum size.
- 2.6 **Funding:** Academy buildings are now procured through Partnerships for Schools (PfS) and local authorities as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme, and sponsorship now takes the form of an endowment fund that is not connected to building work. Decisions about the capital project will take account of the sponsors' views as well as expert advice commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Under the BSF programme there is estimated capital funding available of c£22m for development of a new school. This will be dependent upon final pupil projections to be agreed with the DCSF. Additional funding sources are likely to be required, however the extent of this will not be known until plans are further developed. Should an affordability gap arise, other potential funding sources are Prudential Borrowing or Reserves. See Appendix D for more information on these funding options.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Under the Building Schools for the Future programme the funding available for the new school is likely to be c£22m. The cost of a

new school is likely to be greater than £22m, however, it is difficult to estimate the cost at this stage. The build cost for Chelsea Academy could be used as an approximation of the cost of a new school which is c£40m. Therefore, there is likely to be an affordability gap of c£18m.

- 3.2 Options to fund the affordability gap are Prudential Borrowing, Council Reserves or depending on the site, the Council could seek to generate capital receipt through the site. For example, developer contributions, selling 'air space' or site space for private development. These options would need to be investigated once the site has been determined.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No direct legal implications at this stage, however, the Council will be required to enter into a suite of legal agreements in the future should an academy be developed.

5. PERSONNEL AND/OR EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No known equality implications. No direct personnel implications at this stage.
- 5.2 It will be important to undertake a series of consultations about these plans as they develop.

6. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no safeguarding implications to this report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the academy route is selected as the preferred route to develop the new school.
- 7.2 The new school shall provide a maximum of 1,600 pupil places including a sixth form, although a 6FE school may be a preferable option, with a flexible school design that would allow growth at a later date.
- 7.3 The Council agrees to co-sponsor the Academy and will seek an appropriate co-sponsor.
- 7.4 Building Schools for the Future funding will be used to fund the development and other funding sources will be investigated.

FOR DECISION

ANNE MARIE CARRIE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE

Contact officer: Rebecca Matthews, Director for Schools, Quality and Standards

Tel: 020 7598 4811

E-mail: rebecca.matthews@rbkc.gov.uk