

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Appointment of the Barrs Court Academy Trust to lead the new Special 16-19 Free School for Herefordshire
Date of decision:	3 May 2018
Decision maker:	Director for Children's Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	The director for children's wellbeing is authorised to take the operational decisions with regards to the above following an executive decision taken on 18/01/2018 which can be found via the following link:- http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4956
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	<p>The process used to select the lead trust for the Herefordshire new special free school was determined in its entirety by the DfE, through their advice and guidance on the process to local authorities.</p> <p>The local authority was allowed to be a joint participant with the DfE, in the process of scrutinizing the applications for the trust leadership, and interviewing the short listed trust. The criteria used and the scoring mechanism applied to both the application and the interview were determined by the DfE. Officers of Herefordshire council were invited to share in the judgments made on the quality of both the application and interview, using the predetermined criteria and scoring, and invited to share in the decision taken about the awarding of the leadership to Barrs Court Trust.</p> <p>The Director of Children's Services was invited to Chair the process, and during the selection process consulted with appropriate internal officers regarding the quality of each element of the application and interview. At the end of the process, agreement was reached between the DfE representatives and the LA representatives, and a joint decision taken. Only one suitable applicant was interviewed, and was deemed to be of the quality required to lead the new school by both the Director for children's wellbeing and the lead DfE representatives.</p>
Decision made:	The joint decision was taken by the DfE in consultation with the director for children's wellbeing for Herefordshire Council in a DfE determined interview process, to award the leadership of the new Herefordshire Special 16-19 Free School to the sole suitable applicant, The Barrs Court Trust, for a 125 year lease commencing subject to ratification by the Secretary of State and the subsequent awarding of an appropriate funding agreement to construct the new school. The decision has no cost implications for Herefordshire Council.
Reasons for decision:	The decision was taken in order to ensure high quality leadership for the new Herefordshire 16-19 Special Free School, which was previously bid for by Herefordshire Local Authority and awarded by the DfE, along with free special schools in thirteen other local authorities nationally. Matters taken into account when taking the decision, were as follows –

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to secure a trust that would meet the requirements in the specification for the new school published on the DfE website and the Herefordshire Council website. • The need to ensure that the trust selected scored highly in both application and interview stages of the selection process in all areas, fully complying with the criteria set out by the DfE • The need to establish that the selected trust has a proven track record of high quality provision for children and young people with SEND. • The need to select a trust that will work collaboratively with Herefordshire Local Authority to ensure that the commissioning of school places for children and young people with SEND, and their transition from one age phase into the next, is highly effective <p>The decision taken impacts positively on the achievement of the principles set out in the published Herefordshire Schools Capital Investment Strategy pages 10 and 11.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>Financial, legal and human resource implications of appointing the trust were examined by appropriate colleagues attendance at, and participation in, the selection process.</p> <p>At the point of awarding the free school leadership formally, through a Herefordshire Council lease, all health and safety matters for the new free school, apart from normal landlord responsibility for leased assets, will become the responsibility of the Barrs Court Academy Trust.</p> <p>There are minimal known risks associated with the leadership of the new free school, as the selection process has been rigorous and the Barrs Court Academy is a known outstanding provider in the county for 11-19 children and young people with SEND.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>The Barrs Court Trust was the only suitable applicant to secure an interview to lead the new school. If the trust had not proved to be of sufficiently high quality, the new school would not have been taken forward by the DfE.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	

Signed..... Date: 3 May 2018