

A G E N D A

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Date: **Tuesday 25th September, 2007**

Time: **9.30 a.m.**

Place: **The Council Chamber,
Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of
the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

To:	Councillor	SJ Robertson (Chairman)
	Councillor	WU Attfield (Vice-Chairman)
	Councillors	ME Cooper, P Jones CBE, G Lucas, JE Pemberton, RV Stockton, JK Swinburne, AM Toon, WJ Walling and JD Woodward
	Church Members	J.D. Griffin, Rev I Terry
	Parent Governor Members	Mr R Stevenson and Mr A Wood
	Community Representatives	The Alliance

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES	
To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4. MINUTES	1 - 6
To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2007.	
5. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY	
To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
6. CALL IN OF CABINET DECISION ON WYEBRIDGE SPORTS COLLEGE: ACADEMY PROJECT	7 - 16
To consider the Cabinet decision on the Wyebridge Sports College Academy project.	

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Childrens' Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises corporate matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public Involvement at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

You can contact Councillors and Officers at any time about Scrutiny Committee matters and issues which you would like the Scrutiny Committees to investigate.

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1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

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(Please note that the Scrutiny Committees are not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees

Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing

*Statutory functions for adult social services including:
Learning Disabilities
Strategic Housing
Supporting People
Public Health*

Children's Services

Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

*Libraries
Cultural Services including heritage and tourism
Leisure Services
Parks and Countryside
Community Safety
Economic Development
Youth Services*

Health

*Planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area
Health Improvement
Services provided by the NHS*

Environment

*Environmental Issues
Highways and Transportation*

Strategic Monitoring Committee

*Corporate Strategy and Finance
Resources
Corporate and Customer Services
Human Resources*

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 25th June, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:	Councillor	SJ Robertson (Chairman)
	Councillor	WU Atfield (Vice Chairman)
	Councillors	ME Cooper, P Jones CBE, G Lucas, R Mills, K Swinburne, AM Toon, WJ Walling and JD Woodward
	Church Members	Rev. I. Terry (Church of England)
	Parent Governor Members	Mr R Stevenson (Primary School Governors) and Mr A Wood (Special School Governors)
	Community Representatives	Ms D Scott (The Alliance)

In attendance: Councillors JA Hyde (Cabinet Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor JE Pemberton, Councillor RV Stockton, Mr JD Griffin.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor R Mills substituted for Councillor RV Stockton.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms D Scott declared a personal interest in agenda Item 12 – Review and consideration of committee representative arrangements.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman took this opportunity to thank the previous Chairman (Mr BF Ashton) and Vice-Chairman (Mr JP Thomas) for leading the Committee during the previous Council and particularly through the period of transition from Education to Children's Services.

5. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

No suggestions were made by members of the public.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW 2006/07 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The Committee considered the annual review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2006/07 and the self-assessment of Council's Children's Services for the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) 2007.

The Herefordshire Children and Young People's Plan Review of the First Year 2006/07 and Priorities for 2007/08 document had been sent to Committee Members with the agenda. The APA 2007 Self-evaluation had been attached at Appendix 1 to the agenda report.

The Director of Children's Services reported that a review of progress in delivering the Plan had been undertaken through the Children and Young People's Partnership. The review included consultation with the Shadow Children and Young People's Partnership Board. The self-assessment grades had been discussed with partners, with the Directorate Management Team taking a final decision as the grading was an assessment of the Council's Children's services. She reported that while a significant amount of work had been done to address the issues raised in the JAR inspection further work was needed and targets would have to be prioritised to make best use of limited resources.

On questioning the grade of 2 contained in the self-assessment (Appendix 1 "Capacity to improve") the Director of Children's services report that, while erring on the side of caution, this score had been based on the criteria set by OfSTED.

The Committee noted that the traffic light system had been used to indicate progress against outcome requirements and also that in many cases work had progressed since the time of the assessment. However, the self-assessment had had to be based on a particular timeframe.

RESOLVED: That the Children and Young People's Plan review 2006/07 and self-assessment of the Council's Children's Services be noted,

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE PLAN 2007-2010

The Committee were informed of the Directorate Plan for 2007-2010 and arrangements regarding the subsequent review and update of the three year Children and Young People's Directorate Plan.

The Director of Children's Services reported that the Children and Young People's Directorate Plan 2007-2010 was a strategic overarching plan, which aligned with the Herefordshire Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan. She would use the Directorate Plan, together with the three directorate services Plans, to manage service delivery and to monitor the overall performance of the directorate.

Following the review of the Children and Young People's Partnership Delivery Action Plan 06/07, the confirmation of 06/07 performance data, and the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) the Directorate Plan was being updated i.e. it is a 'live' document.

The Committee noted that while based on the 2002 census data, as more up to date statistical evidence became available e.g. teenage pregnancy statistics from the Primary Care Trust, the Plan would be updated. The Committee were cautioned that when a minor change occurred to a small cohort figure a large statistical change may be produced which need not necessarily indicate an area for concern.

In relation to “staying safe – provision for children experiencing domestic violence is unsatisfactory” the Committee noted that since last years APA further work had been undertaken to ensure better co-ordination between the various agencies to make sure the wider issues were addressed e.g. if a child was in a violent home then its learning and behaviour may be affected.

The Committee noted that the statutory move to a Children's Trust involving all agencies would necessitate the various agencies planning and commissioning services differently.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. CAPITAL BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2006/07

The Committee considered the capital budget for 2006/07 for the Children & Young People's Directorate.

The Head of Commissioning and Improvement reported that the Capital outturn summary had been set out in the report with the full details of all expenditure on all projects set out at Appendix 1 to the report. He gave a brief commentary on major capital projects at Sutton County Primary and Riverside Primary Schools; Kington Children's Centre and Weobley High School sports hall. He highlighted that most capital projects span two or more years and that a large percentage of the capital resources available were project specific.

The Committee appreciated that while some overspends were unforeseen e.g. due to the rise in steel prices, they hoped that greater emphasis was being placed on ensuring that foreseeable liabilities were accounted for from the outset. The Director of Children's Services reported that improvements to the financial planning of capital projects had been discussed with the Director of Resources. Regular reports on capital projects would be made to future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2006/07

The Committee considered a report on the final outturn on the revenue budget for 2006/07 for the Children & Young People's Directorate.

The Finance Manager reported that while the report in October 2006 predicted an overspend of £214,000 the final outturn, being an overspend of £140,000 had been better than predicted. This had been largely due to a £235,000 carry forward from 2005/06 provisionally allocated to the Joint Agency Management budget and not now required and a range of small underspends elsewhere in the budget.

The report gave a brief overview of the position in Safeguarding and Assessment which had resulted in an overspend of £554,000 due to increased external agency placements; an increased number of in year redundancy commitments resulting in an overspend of £285,000 and further efficiencies in School Transport delivering an underspend of £373,000. The level of School balances had reduced with a transfer of funding from revenue to capital to avoid the newly implemented balance claw back scheme, which applied to revenue balances only.

On scrutinising the report the Committee noted the following principal points:

- The needs of the child were given very careful attention when considering the

placement of a child. When internal arrangements were inappropriate (fostering) then external agency placements were used. Some children had very complex needs and therefore required high levels of care, which in turn made the placement more costly. The Committee requested that it be provided with examples of the care/costs involved.

- The rise in number of external agency placements followed the national trend and signs were that the children involved had increasingly complex issues to deal with.
- While the average cost per agency placement was £150,000 pa efforts were made to ensure that the placement was cost effective. Providers were monitored by OfSTED and regional arrangements were in place to monitor quality and cost.
- Questioned on the level of support for the families of children with complex needs the Committee were informed that where possible the family setting was preferable, as provided by the 'Support for Family Strategy', however this was not always possible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

10. PERFORMANCE REPORTING ON CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES 2006/07 OUTTURN

The Committee were informed of the performance levels against key indicators as at March 31st 2007.

The Head of Commissioning & Improvement – School Services reported that a large amount of information was collected by the Directorate and agencies which needed to be collated and presented thereby enabling the Executive to manage the function and scrutiny to assess the effectiveness of those services. To address this weakness identified in the JAR inspection the first edition of The Quarterly Digest had been produced, copies of which were issued at the meeting. The agenda report provided a commentary on each key outcome area.

The Committee noted that the style and content of the Quarterly Digest would be improved as it became more established and it was suggested that it should include the 'process flow' of activities to show the robustness of actions taken.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

11. JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW: TRANSITION FROM LEAVING CARE TO ADULT LIFE

The Committee considered participating in a joint scrutiny review into the Transition from Leaving Care to Adult Life and considered its appointments to the Review Group.

The Head of Safeguarding and Assessment reported the background to the joint Scrutiny Review, which was being lead by the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee, and the work so far undertaken as set out in the appendix to the report.

RESOLVED:

- That (a) the Committee noted the work undertaken so far and agreed that the Scrutiny Review of Transition from Leaving Care to Adult Life continue under the leadership of the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee; and**
- (b) the representatives on the review from this Committee be Mrs D.**

Strutt (Headteacher) Councillor G Lucas and Councillor Mrs J E Pemberton (nominated to Chair the Review).

12. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee noted the statutory co-opted membership on the Committee and considered whether to co-opt a wider representation.

The Committee heard about the wide range of work that The Alliance undertook and the appreciated that they could make a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

The Committee debated the scope of its remit and the various organisations that could assist in its work e.g. Foster Carers, Probation Service; Police; Primary Care Trust; Connexions; Youth Council and those from the education sector.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) the arrangements for the co-option of statutory members (Diocesan and Parent Governors) be noted;**
 - (b) one member be co-opted from The Alliance (representing the voluntary and community sector) and one representative from the Foster Care sector;**
 - (c) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman determine the co-option of representatives from other sectors.**

13. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme.

The Committee debated a range of possible issues for future consideration e.g. the lack of activities/facilities for teenagers; the lack of Youth Services provision in the North of the City/County, and the effect of falling pupil numbers with possible school closures. It was also suggested that future work be more closely linked to the key themes in 'Every Child Matters'.

When appropriate the Chairman wished to occasionally hold meetings at facilities in the community.

RESOLVED: That following consultation with the Director of Children's Services the Chairman and Vice-Chairman determine the draft work programme.

The meeting ended at 11.52 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

**CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION ON WYEBRIDGE
SPORTS COLLEGE: ACADEMY PROJECT****Report By: Director of Corporate and Customer Services****Wards Affected**

Belmont, Holington, and St Martins and Hinton.

Purpose

1. To consider the Cabinet decision on the Wyebriidge Sports College Academy project which has been called in by three Members of the Committee: Councillors JD Woodward, AM Toon and WU Attfield.

Reason For Call-In

2. In accordance with Standing Order 7.3.1 and the Scrutiny Committee Rules set out at Appendix 2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet's decision on 6th September, 2007 on this issue has been called in for consideration by this Committee.
3. The stated reasons for the call-in are:
 - 1) What role and added value will this make to the school, pupils and parents?
 - 2) What financial implications will it have?
 - 3) What will be the control and structure of the academy?
 - 4) What will the impact be on the Learning Village, particularly as the 6th Form is one of the top performing in the country?
 - 5) What consultation has there been, who has been consulted and what future consultation is being planned?
 - 6) How will the community and adult learning provision be continued under the requirements of the previous funding from Advantage West Midlands?
 - 7) Given the falling rolls situation, how can the academy justify 200 places, and what type of education will be provided?
 - 8) How will the academy function as a Community School, i.e. admissions, appeals process, rights of parents, exclusions etc.?
 - 9) Following the success of Whitecross school why was PFI not considered?
 - 10) What justification is there for having three secondary church schools?

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
George Salmon – Head of Commissioning & Improvement – Schools & Services (01432) 260802

4. The draft decision notice (Ref No: 2007.CAB.072KEY), together with the report to Cabinet on 6 September are appended to the report.
5. It is for the Committee to decide whether it wishes to accept the decision of Cabinet or to refer the decision back to Cabinet for further consideration and if so what recommendations to Cabinet it wishes to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
George Salmon – Head of Commissioning & Improvement – Schools & Services (01432) 260802

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF A KEY DECISION CABINET

ITEM:	WYEBRIDGE SPORTS COLLEGE : ACADEMY PROJECT
Members Present:	Councillors: RJ Phillips (Leader), LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer, JP French (Deputy Leader), JA Hyde, JG Jarvis, DB Wilcox.
Date of Decision:	6th September 2007
Exempt:	No
Confidential	No
<p>This is a key decision because</p> <p>It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure above agreed budgets for the service or function (shown as a line in the budget book) to which the decision relates but allowing for virements between budget heads and savings within budget heads of up to £500,000. It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards</p>	
<p>A notice was served in accordance with section 15 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulation 2000</p>	
Urgent Decision:	No
Purpose:	To confirm the size of the school as an academy, and to agree in principle to the Council's role in delivering the academy, namely the grant of 125-year lease to the sponsors, the formal closure of Wyebridge Sports College as a Community High School, and the procurement of the new academy capital project.
Decision:	<p>That Cabinet approve in principle:</p> <p>(a) Wyebridge Sports College becoming an academy to serve 900 11-16 students with up to an additional 200 post -16 places.</p> <p>(b) Granting a 125 year lease to the sponsors on terms to be agreed, if the current feasibility stage concludes with an outcome satisfactory to DCSF, Sponsors and Local Authority, and</p> <p>(c) Issuing the necessary public notices to close Wyebridge Sports College and create an Academy at the appropriate time, if the feasibility study concludes with an outcome satisfactorily to DCSF, Sponsors and Local Authority.</p>
Reasons for the Decision:	<p>1. At a time of falling rolls, significant investment is needed to ensure the long-term success of Wyebridge Sports College. In the absence of other funding sources the Academy initiative offers the means to achieve this. For the school to serve its community, a capacity of 900 is</p>

	<p>sought to provide sufficient space, allowing for the continued operation of parental preference. Post 16 provision is needed to achieve greater participation in education and training, and its provision, on which DCSF is insisting, as part of the National Academy Programme.</p> <p>2. DCSF require at this feasibility stage, an ‘in-principle’ commitment from the Local Authority, the Local Authority will play its part, and take the necessary steps to transfer land, issue notices and manage the procurement of new accommodation for the academy.</p>
Options Considered:	<p>The Academy proposal could be abandoned but the need to invest in new buildings would remain.</p> <p>The size of the Academy could change, but a smaller school is unlikely to be able to serve its community, and a larger one would be more difficult to manage.</p>
Declaration of Interest:	Cllr ACR Chappell declared a personal and prejudicial interest.
Date the key decision is due to take effect:	13th September 2007

<p>COUNCILLOR RJ PHILLIPS.....</p> <p>LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p>	<p>Date: 6th September 2007</p>
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WYEBRIDGE SPORTS COLLEGE: ACADEMY PROJECT

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY:

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

CABINET

6TH SEPTEMBER 2007

Wards Affected

Belmont, Hollington and St Martins and Hinton

Purpose

To confirm the size of the school as an academy, and to agree in principle to the Council's role in delivering the academy, namely the grant of 125-year lease to the sponsors, the formal closure of Wyebridge Sports College as a Community High School, and the procurement of the new academy capital project.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure above agreed budgets for the service or function (shown as a line in the budget book) to which the decision relates but allowing for virements between budget heads and savings within budget heads of up to £500,000; and also because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approve in principle:

- (a) **Wyebridge Sports College becoming an academy to serve 900 11-16 students with up to an additional 200 post -16 places.**
- (b) **Granting a 125 year lease to the sponsors on terms to be agreed, if the current feasibility stage concludes with an outcome satisfactory to DCSF, Sponsors and Local Authority, and**
- (c) **Issuing the necessary public notices to close Wyebridge Sports College and create an Academy at the appropriate time, if the feasibility study concludes with an outcome satisfactorily to DCSF, Sponsors and Local Authority.**

Reasons

1. At a time of falling rolls, significant investment is needed to ensure the long-term success of Wyebridge Sports College. In the absence of other funding sources the Academy initiative offers the means to achieve this. For the school to serve its community, a capacity of 900 is sought to provide sufficient space, allowing for the continued operation of parental preference. Post 16 provision is needed to achieve greater participation in education and training, and its provision, on which DCSF is

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
George Salmon – Head of Commissioning & Improvement – Schools & Services (01432) 260802

insisting, as part of the National Academy Programme.

2. DCSF require at this feasibility stage, an 'in-principle' commitment from the Local Authority, the Local Authority will play its part, and take the necessary steps to transfer land, issue notices and manage the procurement of new accommodation for the academy.

Considerations

1. As the table in paragraph 4 shows, the number of students on roll at Wyebridge Sports College has fallen, despite the fact that the numbers of children in the area is not falling. This is a result of more spaces being available in other schools, where there are falling numbers in their catchment areas. As numbers continue to reduce this does become a greater risk to Wyebridge Sports College. The major factor in any school's popularity is its academic success. Wyebridge Sports College has made tremendous progress in improving the results of its pupils, but this has been despite the buildings and not because of them. To sustain the success of the school, and to secure for the long-term a strong High School in the South Wye area, the current school buildings need to be replaced at a cost of £20,000,000 elsewhere it is unlikely that any alternative source of funding will be available.
2. In the absence of any other funding the Government's Academy programme is a way to achieve what is required. In January 2007 DCSF agreed to place Wyebridge Sports College into the feasibility stage of the Academy programme, with the Sponsors being the Diocese of Hereford. The authority already enjoys a close working partnership with the Diocese, there being 19 Church of England Aided Primary Schools, 17 Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools and one aided Church of England High School. The Sponsors are at the point of issuing their vision for the school as an academy. Views on this vision will be sought by the Sponsors during September.
3. One element of this vision is that the school should continue to serve the local area, which it has in the past, and admission policies will not change. The catchment area is shown on the attached plan. In this area the numbers of children under the age of 11, in each year cohort vary between 234 and 344. South Wye is one area in the County where no significant fall in the numbers of children is projected.
4. The number of students attending Wyebridge Sports College in previous years is set out in the table below:

WYEBRIDGE SPORTS COLLEGE	
	TOTAL ON ROLL EXCLUDING SIXTH FORM
January 2002	822
January 2003	892
January 2004	942
January 2005	912
January 2006	837
January 2007	745

148 students have been offered places for admission in September 2007.

There has always been an outflow of children from this area to other schools although this has reduced in the past two years. The figures for admissions to schools for those living in the South Wye area in September 2007 are as follows:

Wyebridge Sports College	148
Kingstone High School	56
Bishops of Hereford Bluecoat High School	14
St Mary's RC High School	30
Aylestone high School	23
Other Schools including independent	29
Total	<u>294</u>

Investment in the Academy is likely to provide what parents are seeking, and therefore there is likely to be fewer students seeking places at other schools.

5. The DCSF expect and plan for a staying-on rate of at least 80% in all academies. Given this, they require post-16 provision for 200 students. They argue this could be achieved without detriment to existing colleges as an overall staying on rate at 80% would involve 288 students.
6. There has been discussion with the Sponsor over the future of the "2XL" Youth Provision and the South Wye Learning Centre. The Sponsor supports the concept of community use. There will be further discussion over the means of achieving the continuation of this use, particularly around the capital and revenue consequences of retaining this broader provision.
7. The Governors and Headteacher support the academy proposal in principle. There are issues to be resolved during the feasibility stage, particularly on the vision and curriculum offer. The Headteacher is adamant that the school should be built for 900 pupils. There are constraints in the size of the site and in terms of organisation. The Headteacher would be concerned if a larger institution were proposed.
8. The timetable for the academy set by the DCSF requires the feasibility to be completed in November 2007 with a view that subsequent approvals will confirm the opening of the Academy in September 2009.

Financial Implications

The DCSF offer the total costs of fees, construction, furniture and equipment. An allocation of £20,100,000 has been offered by the DCSF. A separate bid has been made for £252,000 to support the Local Authority's cost in design work to the stage that a contract is awarded. Partnerships for Schools have indicated that the bid will be approved, less costs of ICT advice, which is being funded by the DCSF from elsewhere.

On completion, the asset of land and building would be transferred under a 125-year lease to the Sponsor, i.e. Trustees appointed by the Diocese of Hereford. The academy is directly funded by the DCSF in revenue terms and the transfer from Dedicated Schools Grant will be equal to the delegated budget for the school that the authority would have calculated through its local formula, had the school stayed in the maintained sector. The higher the number of students attending the Academy, the lower the numbers will be that attend other nearby schools and thereby reducing their total funding by a sum equivalent to the value of the loss of pupils. All other factors being equal this simply reflects the financial consequences of the changing popularity of schools.

Risk Management

The £20,100,000 for the major project and the additional £252,000 for the initial design work is sufficient to build a 900 place school with 200 post 16 places, on the information currently available. If the decision by the DCSF to proceed with an academy is delayed additional costs may be incurred.

The transfer of land under lease arrangement is the DCSF way of ensuring that if the Academy changes status or function the land will revert to the Local Authority.

Alternative Options

The Academy proposal could be abandoned but the need to invest in new buildings would remain.

The size of the Academy could change, but a smaller school is unlikely to be able to serve its community, and a larger one would be more difficult to manage.

Consultees

John Shepherd, Head Teacher Wyebridge Academy

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Wyebridge Map

Background Papers

None identified.



