

WYEBRIDGE ACADEMY: PROGRESS REPORT

**Report By: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING & IMPROVEMENT
(SCHOOLS & SERVICES)**

Wards Affected

St Martins and Hinton
Belmont
Hollington

Purpose

1. To receive a report on the progress being made in Wyebridge Sports College becoming an Academy.

Financial Implications

2. There are both capital and revenue implications which are explained in more detail in the report.

Background

3. In June 2006 the Local Authority was asked by the Department for Children, Schools and Families if there was interest in and support for Wyebridge Sports College becoming an Academy. At a meeting in September 2006, Cabinet approved in principle that this should be explored, and in January 2007 the DCSF agreed that feasibility work should proceed using funding provided by Partnership for Schools (£250,000).
4. The Outline Business Case sets out the conclusions to the feasibility work. The Outline Business Case was considered and approved by Cabinet on 27 March 2008. At this meeting Cabinet resolve that:
 - (a) the draft Outline Business Case for the creation of an Academy at Wyebridge Sports College be approved for submission to the Secretary of State, on the strict understanding that all capital costs associated with the project are met from within DCSF grant (£21,939,195), and that the Academy will be funded after the initial start up period on the same basis of other schools in the county;
 - (b) the relocation of a temporary unit on the Wyebridge site as an alternative provision for Redhill Residents Association be approved in principle, subject to a successful bid being made to the capital programme to secure the necessary funding, estimated at £80,000;
 - (c) the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council & Partnership for Schools be authorised, thereby agreeing the use of the National Academy Framework for the procurement of the construction of the

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buildings be approved; and

- (d) the engagement of Navigant Consultants to implement the next stage of the project at the cost of £107,000 be approved.
5. This Outline Business Case is now assessed by Partnership for Schools who make the appropriate recommendations to the Secretary of State. If the Outline Business Case is satisfactory, and the notice to close the predecessor school has been taken, the Secretary of State is in a position to sign a funding agreement with the Sponsors and to approve the opening of the Academy.
6. On 28 February 2008, Cabinet authorised the issue of Statutory Notices to close Wyebridge Sports College. These were formally issued on 27 March 2008, and there will be a minimum six week statutory consultation period running to 8 May 2008. A copy of the public notices and supporting documentation is attached as Appendix 1. A public meeting will be arranged at Wyebridge Sports College during this period at a time which should be most convenient to parents and community of South Wye. Consideration is also being given to offering meetings at other community centres to ensure that all members of the community are aware of what is being proposed.
7. The aim is to report to Cabinet on 29 May or 12 June 2008 on the outcome of the consultations for Cabinet to determine those notices.
8. This timescale does allow Wyebridge Sports College to become an Academy by 1 September 2008. The current Headteacher was appointed Principal (designate) of the Academy in a competitive interview in December 2007. He is working on the curriculum and organisation of the Academy. Steps to ensure the smooth transfer of staff are in hand if the necessary approvals are given.
9. The subsequent stages to achieve the new building are set out below:

Milestone	Date
Final OBC Approval	28 April 2008
Issue PITT to Framework Contractor	28 April 2008
Receive PITT bids	19 May 2008
Announce short listed bidders	30 June 2008
Issue Draft ITT	18 April 2008
Approve ITT	12 June 2008
Issue ITT to bidders	30 June 2008
Receive ITT bids	20 October 2008
Announce Preferred Bidder	22 December 2008
Award D&B contract for Hereford Academy	24 April 2009
Completion	March 2011

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10. During this process, members of Scrutiny Committee have had a number of queries. Some of these were discussed at a meeting on site on 13 March 2008. The questions raised and the answers given are set out in Appendix 2.
11. A further four queries were raised following the Cabinet meeting on 27 March. These and the responses are set out in Appendix 3.
12. The Sub-Group of Scrutiny Members had a further meeting on Wednesday 9 April. There may be additional issues to verbally report to the meeting on 21 April 2008.
13. It is recognised that at this early stage in the development of the Academy there is a degree of uncertainty. This remains an exciting and rare opportunity for rebuild and investment in one of our secondary schools. Further details will unfold regarding the specifics of the rebuild and it will be important to closely monitor expenditure throughout this process and to appropriately report issues and decisions as they arise through project management processes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Scrutiny Committee note the position on this major project.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet and scrutiny papers
- The Outline Business case

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