

## **CABINET MEMBER – 22 NOVEMBER 2017**

### **NEW SCHOOL FOR SOUTHAM ROAD, BANBURY: REPORT ON SELECTION PROCESS FOR APPROVED PROVIDERS AND APPROVAL OF PREFERRED OPTION**

**Report by Director for Children's Services**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Cabinet meeting of 4 September 2012 approved a process for the identification of sponsors for new academies to meet the needs of population growth such as the one at SW Bicester. This was amended in the Cabinet meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to give the decision to the Cabinet member unless there are special circumstances. There are no special circumstances in this case.
2. The approved specification for Southam Road, Banbury sought providers for a new primary school. The school will be a 1 form entry 3-11 age range primary school, with an Admission Number of 30.
3. The specification did not impose restrictions on the nature of provider – e.g. faith organisations, or existing providers – given that the local consultation was inconclusive on these issues.
4. The specification includes 6 places reserved for specialist resourced provision for children with communication and interaction needs (autism and speech and language difficulties), physical or sensory needs.

#### **Exempt Information**

5. The Department for Education has instructed that any recommendation should not be made public until the Secretary of State has made a final decision on this matter.

#### **Background**

6. The agreed process has now completed the following stages:
  - a. Assess expressions of interest and then invite detailed bids from short-listed providers to show clear plans of how they will contribute to the raising of education standards, add diversity of choice and which best fits the local requirements and meets the

needs of those within groups offered specific protection under s149 Equality Act 2010.

- b. Assess bids against criteria and rank in order of preference. Agree a preferred option to be approved by Lead Member responsible for Education.
7. Four expressions of interest were received. These were assessed according to criteria derived from the Department for Education (DfE) Free School Presumption advice February 2016 and also from the council's specification document for Southam Road, Banbury previously agreed by Cabinet. A scoring system was used to assess the applications. Although the county council's standard practice is to short-list up to three providers, it was decided on this occasion to allow all four to submit detailed applications.
8. The applicants were:
  - a. **The Aspirations Academy Trust.** The Aspirations Academy Trust currently has 12 open academies, including in Oxfordshire, Banbury Academy, Dashwood Academy, Harriers Academy and Space Studio Banbury.
  - b. **GLF Schools.** GLF consists of 27 schools, including in Oxfordshire, William Morris Primary School and the newly opened Longford Park Primary School in Banbury, and The Aureus (secondary) School in Didcot, with Aureus Primary School opening in 2018.
  - c. **United Learning.** United Learning was formed from the merger of the United Church Schools Trust and the United Learning Trust. It covers the state and independent sectors and is one of the country's largest education providers, with 17 primary schools, 26 secondary schools and 4 all-through schools. These include in Banbury, North Oxfordshire Academy, Hanwell Fields Primary School and Hill View Primary School.
  - d. **The Warriner Trust.** The Warriner Multi Academy Trust was formed in August 2015 and at that time, consisted of The Warriner School and three small rural primary schools – Sibford Gower, Bishop Carpenter and Hornton; Bishop Loveday Primary School joined in June 2017.
9. The four providers were asked to complete a more detailed application form and make a presentation to a panel consisting of officers and the Cabinet member for Education & Public Health. The providers were again scored against specified criteria.
10. Based on the applications and presentations, a preferred sponsor has been identified. As the Department for Education requires that this be

confidential until the Secretary of State has confirmed the approved sponsor, the preferred sponsor will be reported verbally at the meeting.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

11. There are none arising directly from this report. However once an approved sponsor has been confirmed by the Secretary of State there will be a need for significant and on-going liaison with council officers.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

12. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the preferred provider to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for final agreement.**

**LUCY BUTLER**

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