

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES – 20 APRIL 2015

NEW SCHOOL FOR BARTON: REPORT ON SELECTION PROCESS FOR APPROVED PROVIDER 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 Barton, Oxford. The cabinet meeting of 15 July 2014 gave approval for the decision to be delegated to the Lead Member for Children, Education and Families, unless there are exceptional circumstances. There are no exceptional circumstances in this case.
2. The approved specification for Barton sought a provider for a new 1.5 form entry primary school in the new development at Barton.
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 invited interest from providers able and willing to work with the county council to promote inclusive opportunities for the most vulnerable children and have a strong focus on equalities, early intervention, and supporting the needs of the local community.

Background

5. The agreed process has now completed the following stages:
 - (a) Assess expressions of interest and then invite detailed bids 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 for Children, Education and Families.

6. Two expressions of interest were received. These were assessed according to criteria derived from Department for Education (DfE) Academy / Free school presumption paper October 2014 and also from the council's specification document for Barton previously agreed by Cabinet. A scoring system was used to assess the strongest applications. As both providers achieved high scores in some but not all areas both were taken through to the shortlist.
7. The two shortlisted providers were:

The Cheney School Academy Trust

The Trust manages The Cheney School in Headington. It was also approved as sponsor for Bayards Hill Primary School which joined the Trust in October 2014.

GLF Schools

The Trust currently has 13 schools and the group contains primary, secondary and special schools. It has been approved as the provider for one of the new primary and the new secondary school in Great Western Park, Didcot.

8. The shortlisted 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 Children Education and Families. The providers were again scored against specified criteria.
9. The highest scoring provider was The Cheney School Academy Trust.

Financial and Staff Implications

10. 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

The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families is RECOMMENDED to agree The Cheney School Academy Trust as the recommended provider to be submitted to the Regional Schools Commissioner for final agreement.

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children's Services

Contact Officer: Charlotte Christie, 01865 328567

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