

Division(s):

CABINET –15 JULY 2014

New School for Barton: report on selection process for approved providers and approval of Preferred Option

Report by Director for Childrens' 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.
2. The approved specification for Barton sought providers for a new 1.5 form entry primary school.
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:
 - i. Assess expressions of interest and then invite detailed bids from three or fewer 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.
 - ii. 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 or Cabinet as appropriate. As this is the third time this process has been applied it has been brought to Cabinet.
6. Two expressions of interest were received. These were assessed according to criteria derived from the Department for Education (DfE) Academy / Free school presumption paper February 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 there were only 2 applications and both scored well in some areas they were both shortlisted
7. The shortlisted providers were:

Chapel Street Community Schools Trust. This organisation opened the Tyndale Community School (a Free School) in Oxford City in September 2013. It has opened two other free schools and sponsored two failing primary schools in London and the North West. None of these schools have yet been open long enough to have been inspected by Ofsted. The bid was submitted in partnership with the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education and the Headington Baptist Church.

Cheney School Academy Trust. Cheney School has been judged Good by Ofsted in its last 2 inspections. It has been approved as a sponsor for Bayards Hill Primary School which serves the existing Barton community. Bayards Hill will join the Cheney Academy Trust in October. The new school will be in Cheney's designated area for admissions.

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 member for Barton and representatives from Oxford City Council and the Developer were also invited to be present. 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

11. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the Cheney School Academy Trust as the preferred provider to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for final agreement.**

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children's Services

Background papers: Cabinet paper – 21 May 2013

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