

Subject:	Portslade Community College: Strategic Development		
Date of Meeting:	22 April 2010		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Gil Sweetenham	Tel: 29-3433
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No: CAB15511	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 To outline the consideration given to the future development of Portslade Community College.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the initial discussions with the Portslade Community College Governing Body.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees to initiate a consultative process with parents, the local community and other stakeholders, with a view to submitting an Expression of Interest in June 2010 regarding the development of an Academy to replace Portslade Community College.
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes the outline timetable for this work set out in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.14 below.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Portslade Community College (PCC) is located to the west of the city; the College is a National Challenge school with a catchment area that includes areas of high deprivation. The College has a very active adult learning programme of evening classes, a library that is shared with the community and a sizeable community leisure centre.
- 3.2 Standards at Portslade Community College have been a concern for a number of years and although the appointment of a new Headteacher has resulted in some positive improvements, there is a need to consider a structural solution for this school.
- 3.3 PCC is a National Challenge School because its performance in relation to the number of pupils achieving 5+ A* - C, including English and Maths, is less than 30%. Performance over the last four years has declined and the Local Authority,

the DCSF and the Office of the Schools Commissioner have identified this as a serious concern requiring radical action.

Performance results:	2006 GCSE (inc. Eng & maths)	2007 GCSE (inc. Eng & maths)	2008 GCSE (incl. Eng & maths)	2009 GCSE (incl. Eng & maths)	2008 CVA (KS2-4)	National Challenge risk rating
National Average	% 45.8	% 46.8	% 47.6	% 49.8	1001	HIGH
Portslade Community College	% 33	% 32	% 29	% 25	947.9	

3.4 The Local Authority is giving extensive support to the school under its National Challenge Raising Achievement Plan and under the leadership of a new headteacher there has been some improvement. Nevertheless there is concern that the rate of progress to too slow. In discussion with the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC) we have been required to consider the following structural solutions for PCC:

- Closure
 - Academy Status
 - National Challenge Trust status
 - Hard federation with another school
- All four options have been considered.

3.5 Any reduction in the city's nine secondary schools would severely limit the council's capacity to deliver secondary education and the opportunity for parents to express realistic preferences when applying for a secondary place for their child. Closure of one of the City's secondary schools is not an option.

3.6 Hard federation was considered which would involve the creation of a federation with a school that has been judged by Ofsted to be 'Outstanding'. Initial discussion was held with potential partners but concluded that we are not yet at the point where a collaborative arrangement of this nature could be achieved successfully.

3.7 National Challenge Trust status would offer minimal financial resources and support, and was therefore not considered a suitable option for addressing the issues identified above.

3.8 Having explored a range of structural solutions to school improvement with the National Challenge representatives, the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC), Partnership for Schools (PfS) and the DCSF it was determined that the academy route would best satisfy the external demands on the local authority and provide the best outcome from the options available, in order to secure a transformation in standards and investment in refurbishing the existing accommodation.

3.9 If it is to ensure its future success, the school will need significant investment. The school site does not have buildings suited to modern teaching methods or a

twenty first-century curriculum. In order to offer a modern curriculum, provide up to date teaching facilities and create a positive image to parents, the school will require significant refurbishment. The refurbishment of Portslade is included in the Council's BSF phase 1 proposals, at an estimated cost of £21m.

- 3.10 Portslade Community College has recently been inspected by Ofsted and the report should be published before the end of the month.
- 3.11 An academy will provide a new impetus for a school that currently has limited potential and insufficient promise to make it attractive to aspiring families within its local community. An academy can provide a new ethos and send a powerful message about its intention to transform standards, aspirations and opportunities. It would have refurbished purpose built accommodation with state of the art specialist facilities, and this would be likely to attract good calibre staff. Moreover, in the case of Portslade Community College, the proposal to work with the University Sussex as its education partner and the Aldridge Foundation as one of its sponsors will provide new and exciting learning opportunities.
- 3.12 The development of an academy falls into three phases: expression of interest; feasibility; and design and build.

Phase 1: Expression of Interest (Summer Term 2010)

- 3.13 This involves the exploration of key issues between the principal parties in collaboration with other key partners. As its name indicates, this phase is simply an expression of interest in the possibility of developing an academy. The process requires the completion of an EOI form with support, from the DCSF.

Phase 2: Feasibility Study (Autumn and Spring Terms 2010/11)

- 3.14 This involves the development of draft policies, costing of revenue and capital implications, and the drafting of a funding agreement. At the end of this phase a decision would need to be made as to whether to submit the funding agreement to the Secretary of State for approval.
- 3.15 Throughout both these phases, consultation would take place with parents and the community and other key partners.

Phase 3: Design and Build (September 2011 to August 2013)

- 3.16 This phase would involve all design, site works, and decanting to alternative accommodation until the refurbishment is complete.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Council has had preliminary discussions with the Leader of the Council, the Lead member for CYPT, the opposition leader, the local MP, local councillors and the headteacher and governors at Portslade Community College. A further meeting with the governing body is to be arranged at the start of the summer term.
- 4.2 The timescale given above is illustrative only. The timing of the phases would depend on agreement between the parties and assumptions about the pace of

the work that may not in practice be achievable. Further discussion will be needed to arrive at an agreed schedule, subject to the agreement of the main parties.

- 4.3 Meetings are being arranged with staff at the college and their respective staff unions. As part of the development of the Expression of Interest there will be a 30 day period of consultation with parents at the college and other stakeholders from the community.
- 4.4 The Council has undertaken preliminary master-planning work on the Portslade Community College site to inform the development of proposals and ensure that risks and issues are identified at an early stage.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The capital cost of the Academy will be met by the DCSF. Negotiations continue with Partnerships for Schools to determine the exact amount that will be required following the outcome of the options appraisal currently underway.
- 5.2 The revenue budget for the Academy will be based on the existing Portslade Community College budget and be finalised nearer the time. Project management costs are met by the Sponsors Project Management grant via the DCSF; funding for any residual revenue costs in the overall project will have to be identified in due course.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore Date 01/04/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 At this early stage of the process there is no statutory requirement to consult, however parents, the local community and other stakeholders have a legitimate expectation that they are consulted regarding the possibility that an academy be established to replace Portslade Community College. Following this consultative process an Expression of Interest will be submitted to the DCSF as the first step in the development of the academy.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston Date 30/03/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 Planning and provision of school places is conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admissions priorities or planning processes. The city council and voluntary aided school governing bodies must be mindful of best practice as described in the Admission Code of Practice.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 All new extensions to Brighton and Hove Schools utilise, where ever possible, environmental and sustainable principles such as higher than minimum insulation levels, the use of efficient gas condensing boilers, under floor heating, solar shading and natural ventilation. Materials are sourced from sustainable sources where ever possible.
- 5.6 The refurbishment or construction of the proposed Academy will adhere to DCSF guidelines (Building Bulletin 98) and will be in line with stringent new targets issued by the Government in March 2008 to reduce school carbon footprints to 60% for all new school buildings. Thus the proposed new building will take full advantage of all appropriate environmentally sustainable energy and recycling systems including proposals for ground source heat pumps, green roofs and solar gain. The final design must meet the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Model (BREEAM) standard at either Good or Excellent. Thus the proposed Academy will be a flagship for environmentally sustainable schools for Brighton & Hove for the future and will be one of the “greenest” buildings in the City.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.7 Throughout the development of the proposals consultation will be undertaken with community groups and the Community Safety team and police liaison officers. It is anticipated that by including the community in the development and use of the facilities at the schools that crime and disorder in the local area will be reduced. This will be further improved by offering extended use of the facilities to the community outside of the school day.
- 5.8 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications: There are no main risk implications associated with the completion of the development strategy. The project manager will keep a risk register for the project which will be reviewed on a regular basis with colleagues in Audit.
- 5.9 Corporate / Citywide Implications: The development of the Academy will improve the educational opportunities for pupils and contribute to improved community facilities and cohesion.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation of alternative options is detailed in sections 3.4 to 3.8. Only the academy option will secure a transformation in standards and investment in refurbishing the existing accommodation.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline the consideration given to the future development of Portslade Community College.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None