



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Cabinet

27th June 2005

A City Academy to Replace New College

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 At its meeting on 13th June 2005, Cabinet received the attached report. This report provides further information on the Department for Education and Skills' response to the Council on the acceptability of the alternative bid and their views on the urgent need to proceed to signing an Expression of Interest with the Interim Executive Board (IEB) of New College and named sponsors. The DfES position is set out in the attached letter.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Cabinet considered the attached report at its last meeting and received a report from the Education Scrutiny Committee. These minutes included two new developments: that New College IEB had agreed to sign an Expression of Interest with the only confirmed sponsors; and a letter from Core Management and a short presentation from Steve White signalling their interest in sponsoring a sports and citizenship academy, with the support of a number of the City's sporting clubs.

- 2.2 In the light of these developments, the Cabinet resolved as follows:

- (1) that the commitment to an Expression of Interest for a City Academy on the New College site be reaffirmed,
- (2) that the wish for a full and meaningful consultation exercise be confirmed before signing an Expression of Interest with sponsors,
- (3) that the Scrutiny Committee's proposal that an advisory group for the consultation process be established comprising the Cabinet Lead, Scrutiny Triumvirate and ward member

representatives be supported, and that this group meet within the next two weeks,

- (4) that officers be asked to refer the new bid to the DfeS for further exploration and evaluation,
- (5) that the interest of the Church of England and David Samworth in sponsoring the City Academy be welcomed, and a final decision be made on a sponsor after the results of the consultation exercise, and
- (6) that the support to the interim Executive Board of New College in bringing the school out of special measures be reaffirmed.

- 2.3 The Core Management/Steve White bid was referred to the DfES and their response is set out in the letter attached. This highlights unacceptable delays because the proposed, but unnamed, sponsor company is not UK based.
- 2.4 In the light of this the DfES have reinforced their very clear view that the Council should not now delay any further proceeding to the Expression of Interest stage with the original sponsors, David Samworth and the Church of England.
- 2.5 If Members delay decisions further there is a risk that this opportunity will be lost. The Academy would bring significant capital investment into the City, up to £20 million, and would enable the standards agenda to be addressed in a new environment. If the Academy opportunity is lost, the City Council would need to make a case for additional Building Schools for the Future capital at the annual Strategic Business Case (SBC) review meeting. There is no guarantee that this would be approved. If it is not this would impact negatively on other schools in the current BSF programme if Members wished to invest capital in New College. There is, of course, the further risk that the DfES might choose to intervene directly in the management of New College.
- 2.5 Members have been concerned to ensure that there is full consultation on the proposal. The Advisory Group is being convened and is intended to advise the Cabinet on the consultation process and the exact nature of the consultation question(s).
- 2.6 However, Members may now wish to reconsider whether they would wish a consultation to take place before agreeing to sign an Expression of Interest. If members accept the DfES advice and the Government accepts the Expression of Interest, the funding for the feasibility study (up to £500,000), including the consultation stages, would be awarded to the potential sponsors.

3. Recommendations

3.2 Cabinet is asked to:

- (a) reconsider whether, in the light of the DfES's strong advice, it wishes to agree at this stage to be a co-signatory with the Church of England and David Samworth and the New College Interim Executive Board for the Expression of Interest for an Academy to replace New College and to initiate full consultation on this basis; and
- (b) welcome the other bidders' interest, either as a potential partner with the Church of England and David Samworth or as a future potential sponsor for other educational developments in the City.

4. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

4.1 These are as reported previously in the attached report.

5. Consultation

DfES City Academy Unit

6. Report Author/Officer to contact:

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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Significant in its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)