

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Cabinet
2. Date:	16th October 2013
3. Title:	Approval of recommended Sponsor for the new Central Primary School
4. Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

As reported to Cabinet previously the Local Authority has recently been successful in relation to a targeted basic need funding bid to create a new 1.5 form central primary school. Any new school carries an Academy / Free School presumption for sponsorship. A Sponsorship selection panel has been convened to interview respective sponsor applicants on the 10th October 2013, and make a recommendation to Cabinet on a preferred sponsor. The DfE must be notified by 18th October of the appointed sponsor.

6. Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the panels preferred sponsor 'Central Learning Partnership' following a formal selection process.

7. Proposals and Details

Following confirmation of a successful funding bid to DfE to create a new Central Primary School, it has been necessary to appoint a sponsor for the new school given the DfE's Academy / Free School presumption for all new schools.

Following DfE guidance, expressions of interest were received from potential sponsors. Sponsor applicants were initially verified by DfE as suitable and shortlisted for consideration by the Local Authority. A selection panel was convened to select the highest calibre of sponsor available to control the new school once opened.

The panel consisted of:

Elected Ward Member
Learning Community School Governor
Learning Community School pupil and parent
Senior Local Authority Officers
Observer

A process was developed prior to the selection programme outlining the need for the new School and local community overview. Potential sponsors were asked to deliver a presentation to the panel and were asked a series of pre- determined questions focusing on key elements such as:

Ethos and Partnership
Improving Pupil Outcomes
Inclusion
Working with the Local Community

Panel members graded the applicants individually then following discussions agreed a preferred sponsor.

8. Finance

The capital cost of the building project to create a 1.5 form (45 published admission number) school is £5.5M.. This building programme will provide teaching areas and other required space . Funding for the project is from 'Targeted Basic Need funding' of £3.5M allocated by the DfE for the provision of sufficient school places and £2M capital funding from RMBC.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers and consequently, individual school budget funding, are based on estimated projections at a point in time. Over provision at one school could have a negative impact on provision at other schools. Local Authorities have a duty,

however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice. There is a year on year shortage of sufficient primary school places in the Central Learning Community.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the proposal is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. As a result of the construction of the new school more parents will be able to access their catchment area and first preference school for their child and, therefore, increase that performance indicator from September 2015 onwards.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

DfE Guidance for Local Authorities on opening a new school by Academy / Free School presumption.

12. Contact Name

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