



REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 16 April 2008

SUBJECT: Consideration of an expression of interest to establish an academy to serve the Bramley Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress an expression of interest into a detailed feasibility and consultation process that will allow a full examination of the issues surrounding the establishment of an academy to serve the Bramley area in inner West Leeds.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting on 17 October 2007, the Executive Board authorised Education Leeds to begin discussions with the Department of Children's Schools and Families (DCSF) and the charitable foundation Edutrust to explore the potential of Edutrust sponsoring an academy to replace Intake High School and serve the Bramley area of inner West Leeds

2.2 The expression of interest has now formally been received from the DCSF with Edutrust as a prime sponsor, and including potential support from both of the universities in Leeds.

2.3 Education Leeds has formally assessed the expression of interest and judges that there is sufficient merit in the proposal to undertake further detailed consideration through a comprehensive feasibility and consultation process. This report outlines the basis for this judgement.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are asked to:

- i) approve moving to a detailed feasibility and consultation process that will allow a full examination of the issues surrounding the establishment of an academy to serve the Bramley area in inner West Leeds.
- ii) note that a further report will be presented in Autumn 2008 that will explain the outcome of this feasibility and consultation process and enable Members to come to a final decision on the value of establishing an academy to replace Intake High School and serve the Bramley area in inner West Leeds.



Agenda Item:

Originator: Pat Toner

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Electoral Wards Affected:

Bramley and Stanningley Ward



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity



Community Cohesion



Narrowing the Gap



Eligible for Call-in



Not Eligible for Call-in

(Details contained in the Report)



1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress an expression of interest into a detailed feasibility and consultation process that will allow a full examination of the issues surrounding the establishment of an academy to serve the Bramley area in inner West Leeds.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 At its meeting on 17 October 2007, the Executive Board authorised Education Leeds to begin discussions with the Department of Children's Schools and Families (DCSF) and the charitable foundation Edutrust to explore the potential of Edutrust sponsoring an academy to replace Intake High School and serve the Bramley area of inner West Leeds.

2.2 Increasingly the role of the Local Authority is changing from 'provider' of services and schools to the 'commissioner' of provision to serve local communities: Academies are independent schools whose success critically depends on the absolute responsibility given to their sponsors, their governing bodies and their

principals. However, most Academies are jointly commissioned by the DCSF and the Local Authority on a partnership basis. They are established through an agreement between the DCSF, the Local Authority and the sponsor. The basis of this agreement, or protocol, is detailed in a separate report to the Executive Board and was shared with, and accepted by, the DCSF and sponsors as they considered the contribution they might make to improving the outcomes for young people in the Bramley area.

2.3 An expression of interest has now formally been received from the DCSF with Edutrust as the prime sponsor and identifying support from both of Leeds universities as active potential partners within the academy. Intake school's governing body has been actively included alongside the DCSF and Edutrust in developing this Expression of Interest.

2.4 Education Leeds has formally assessed the expression of interest and judges that there is sufficient merit in the proposal to undertake further detailed consideration through a comprehensive feasibility and consultation process. This report outlines the basis for this judgement.

3.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

3.1 When considering this expression of interest Education Leeds considered three things. Firstly, the potential of academy status to provide additional support or benefit to enhance young people's outcomes that isn't available through the established school improvement partnership arrangements that operate through the Leeds School Improvement Policy. That is, "does the proposal bring potential benefits to young people?" The second consideration was the extent to which potential sponsors recognise and value the contribution an academy will make as part of the educational community in Leeds. That is, "does the proposal meet the requirements of the Leeds protocols?" Finally, Education Leeds considered the extent to which the expression of interest committed the Council irreversibly to a particular decision or course of action. That is, "if an alternative proposal emerges as the best solution for the Bramley area can it still be developed?" These three questions are each addressed in turn below.

3.2 ***Does the proposal bring potential benefits to young people?***

3.2.1 Intake High school is located between Rodley and Bramley in West Leeds. It was one of the first specialist colleges and grew rapidly in the 1990s. It has had a high reputation for performance arts and is still excellent in this area at post 16 but has suffered from continual poor performance in core subjects. Intake was visited by HMI under the school facing challenging circumstances floor targets initiative and placed in special measures in April 2004. Achievement at 5 and 1A*-G was then the lowest in Leeds, and today is still under 80%. A strong partnership with Otley Prince Henry grammar School brought the school out of special measures in January 2006, a term ahead of schedule. A new headteacher began in September 2006 and, while improvements are evident in a few areas, overall progress has been limited. Intake has a relatively low number of preferences from parents and pupils choosing a high school. However, it serves a large residential area and is an appropriate size for the potential demand. The school is facing very significant financial pressures resulting from the combined impact of a falling role and changes to post 16 funding that is limiting the schools capacity and options for accelerating improvements. The school is due for a further inspection soon. Whether or not the school is endorsed as satisfactory by Ofsted, the pace of improvement is insufficient. In such circumstances Education Leeds, on behalf of the Local Authority, is bound by regulations to consider the benefits of academy status. Academy status provides an opportunity to build a new vision with a strong partner and to secure the governance

and increase leadership activity to deliver more rapid improvement.

3.2.2 In addition to the above, this particular expression of interest indicates that the DCSF will release sufficient capital to enable a new school to be built to replace the existing Intake School. This is likely to lead to a capital investment in excess of £20m, considerably more than was potentially available to refurbish the site as part of the BSF programme.

3.2.3 In summary Education Leeds recognises that, given the school's present circumstances, existing arrangements are not impacting quickly enough. The school has benefited from effective school improvement partnership arrangements in the past but needs to identify a suitable partner that will be able to provide close long term support to secure and embed improvements for the longer term. Action needs to be taken to change the perception of the school in its community and to provide financial assistance. Developing an academy has the potential to address all these issues positively and provide fresh impetus to leadership and governance.

3.3 ***Does the proposal meet the requirements of the Leeds protocols?***

3.3.1 Edutrust is committed to social responsibility and partnership. Representatives of Edutrust have held an informal meeting with parents and a series of meetings with young people and staff. They have indicated a willingness to recognise relevant trades unions as they have done in all the academies they sponsor. They have also indicated their commitment to operate as an active partner with the community of schools in Leeds. Edutrust has been made aware of the need to agree to a Memorandum of Understanding and have indicated that they will have no difficulty with this in principle. If we move into a process of feasibility and consultation Edutrust will have to formalise their position on this.

3.3.2 Edutrust have made a clear commitment to apply the admission arrangements that already operate across Leeds in addition to abiding by the Admissions Code of Practice. Within the expression of interest Edutrust have made a very strong commitment to inclusive practice and to avoiding exclusions.

3.3.3 Edutrust understand that an academy is unlikely to be successful unless it operates as an active member of the wider education and children's services community. This is a strong indication of the academy's willingness to plan the development of curriculum provision in partnership with other schools and other providers.

3.3.4 A move into feasibility stage will allow Education Leeds to address the make up of the academy's governing body with Edutrust particularly in regard to their willingness to have two City Council nominees on the governing body.

3.4 ***If an alternative proposal emerges as the best solution for the Rodley and Bramley area, could it still be developed?***

3.4.1 It is only at the end of the feasibility and consultation process that the City Council will be required to make binding decisions on the future of Intake School and the establishment of an academy to serve the Bramley area. At this stage the only question to be addressed is whether there be value in further detailed work, including formal consultation, being undertaken to enable the Council to determine if an academy will better serve young people than the present provision made through Intake School. If, as a result of detailed feasibility considerations and the outcome of consultations, alternative viable strategies emerge then the Council will be free to withdraw from considering an academy and progress the alternative instead. A further report will be available in the Autumn of 2008 that will enable the Council to make its final decision on this matter.

3.4.2 Given the above, it is the judgement of Education Leeds at this stage that there are potential benefits for young people in the Bramley area and for the City Council to continue to explore the potential of establishing an academy to replace the existing Intake School.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 Key stakeholders including young people, ward councillors, Intake school governors and staff have already been engaged in developing the attached expression of interest. The relevant neighbouring authority, Bradford, and the LSC have both indicated that they are willing to support this proposal in principle at this stage. In a further report to be presented in Autumn 2008 formal community consultation and formal consultation with all stakeholders including recognised trades unions will have to take place and the outcomes analysed and addressed.

4.2 The issues addressed in this report will impact on the 'Narrowing the Gap' and 'Going up a League' agendas. Academies in Leeds have the potential to contribute to the ambitious targets to meet key priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan and the work on the Local Area Agreement.

4.3 The development of new models of provision, such as Academies, will have significant implications for Council policy and governance which will be addressed in any proposals that are developed for further consideration by Executive Board.

5.0 **LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The funding of secondary and post-16 provision in Leeds is a significant part of the Children's Services overall budget and part of the Learning and Skills Council budget. The establishment of an Academy in Leeds has the potential to have major financial implications for Leeds City Council as it increasingly takes total responsibility for all 14 – 19 provision here in Leeds. A detailed financial plan will be developed alongside any specific proposal that is developed for further consideration by Executive Board.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Members are asked to:

- approve moving to a detailed feasibility and consultation process that will allow a full examination of the issues surrounding the establishment of an academy to serve the Bramley area in inner West Leeds.
- note that a further report will be presented in Autumn 2008 that will explain the outcome of this feasibility and consultation process and enable Members to come to a final decision on the value of establishing an academy to replace Intake High School and serve the Bramley area in inner West Leeds.