

3 January 2007

**Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



Academies Consultation

**Report of Neil Charlton, Head of Business Services, Children
and Young People's Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To inform the committee of the consultation that has taken place on the Development of Academies in County Durham.

Background

- 2 At its meeting on 19 July 2007, Cabinet agreed the strategy for the development of Academies as set out in Appendix 3 of that report and cabinet authorised formal consultation could begin on the pattern of secondary provision as outlined in the strategy.
- 3 A consultation document was distributed widely across the Authority on 9 October 2007.
- 4 The consultation included a programme of meetings with Governors, staff and the local community from 15 October to 15 November 2007. Closing date for responses was 23 November 2007.

Current Position

- 5 The responses to consultation are being analysed and a report will go to Cabinet in 2008 on the outcomes of the consultation.
- 6 Adverts were placed in local and national newspapers seeking potential sponsors on week beginning 1 October 2007. Closing date for applications was 9 November 2007.
- 7 Ten applications from potential sponsors were received from a range of different organisations including HE and FE institutions, high performing schools, educational charities and trust, faith and business sectors. Members received an email on 30 November 2007 with the list of applicants.

- 8 Applications are currently being evaluated by Durham County Council representatives (Director of Children and Young People's Services, Lead Member for Children's Services and School Places Strategy Manager) and an independent assessor appointed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).
- 9 Each sponsor is meeting with the County Council representatives between 12 December and 23 January to discuss their application and share ideas in more depth, particularly in the context of co-sponsorship with Durham County Council.
- 10 The independent assessor, Maurice Smith, will spend the 7 January in County Hall, meeting the Director of Children and Young People's Services, members, Head of Access and Inclusion, the Chief Executive before meeting key stakeholders at the seven schools who may be affected on 8/9 January.
- 11 Maurice Smith will spend the remainder of January meeting potential sponsors before he submits his written report to the County Council at the beginning of February,

The Next Steps

- 12 A report will be presented to Cabinet on 21 February outlining the evaluation outcomes of the sponsor's applications. The County Council will then meet with the DCSF to jointly decide on appropriate sponsors.
- 13 A Cabinet report will be presented at a later meeting on the outcomes of consultation on the pattern of schooling.

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