

**PROPOSAL TO REPLACE SALISBURY HIGH SCHOOL WITH AN ACADEMY
FROM SEPTEMBER 2010**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide details on the proposal to build an Academy to replace Salisbury High School (SHS) in Bemerton Heath, Salisbury, and to seek approval to submit an Expression of Interest (Eol) to the Department for Children, Schools and families (DCSF) as at **Appendix A**. This Academy proposal represents a unique opportunity for the young people of West Salisbury to have an education fit for purpose in the 21 Century. If approved by the DCSF the project can proceed to the Feasibility Stage.

Background

2. Salisbury and its surrounding area are selective with two single gender grammar schools, four non-selective schools and a further non-selective school south of the city.
3. The Academy proposal for Salisbury High School is a relatively recent development. In July 2008 the government announced that any secondary school with results at, or below, 30% 5+ A*- C at GCSE, including English and mathematics, (Government Floor Target) were to become part of The National Challenge Programme. The National Challenge is a detailed strategy to secure higher standards in all secondary schools that are currently below the floor target to ensure that by 2011 at least 30% of its pupils are achieving 5+ higher grade GCSEs, including both English and mathematics. This threshold mirrors the academy performance criteria and as a result, both school plans and LA plans had to be submitted to the DCSF and 'structural solutions' such as replacing with an academy had to be considered. Salisbury High is a National Challenge school. In the summer of 2008 initial discussions with the DCSF and potential sponsors eventually led to a formal Statement of Intent being sent to the LA and Church of England Diocese of Salisbury as lead sponsor inviting us to submit a formal Eol for two academies in Salisbury.
4. With the re-emergence of the proposed Academy at the Laverstock site and Salisbury High School becoming part of the National Challenge it was clear that there should be wider discussion of the options for non-selective secondary education across the City. In the autumn term 2008 the LA commissioned Place Mace to provide a report on when we might need a further secondary school in Salisbury due to plans in the Regional Spatial Strategy and in preparation for Building schools for the Future (BSF) readiness to deliver. The report shows that the 11-15 population will be fairly stable over the next five years then it is scheduled to grow, reaching 25% above current levels in 15 years' time. There is now an opportunity to provide two academies on separate sides of Salisbury City, one at Laverstock and one at Salisbury High. This proposal is central to the re-

generation of Salisbury's secondary schools.

Main Considerations for the Cabinet

5. In 2008, SHS achieved below 30% 5A*- C GCSE including English and mathematics. The LA achieved 53% and nationally the result was 48%. This means that standards at SHS were well below the LA and national averages. Raising standards in relatively deprived areas such as this part of Salisbury is clearly extremely difficult for any school to achieve. Replacing SHS with an Academy is a sensible solution for this area as the school could become the centre of a hub of wider community area support.
6. With a possible Academy at Laverstock the potential for a more strategic, City-wide re-structure of non-selective secondary schools provides a very compelling case for considering a second Salisbury Academy.
7. It is proposed that the Academy to replace SHS will be opened in September 2010 and will be sponsored by the CofE Diocese of Salisbury as lead sponsor and with co-sponsors the LA and a local independent school. The independent school can bring considerable additional educational and wider expertise similar to that of Wellington College in relation to The Wellington Academy
8. The SHS Academy will be an 11-18 all-ability, co-educational single faith Academy of 1200, 11-16 pupils plus, 200/250 in the sixth form. Currently there are 814 pupils on roll including the sixth form so the Academy has space to grow. The Academy will be committed to recognising, understanding and supporting learners from all backgrounds. It will be committed to persistent and continuous improvement, both for the organisation, and for each and every learner. It will foster a culture of achievement and aspiration.
9. Both the proposed Academies in Salisbury will fully embrace the notion of collaborative arrangements between each other and across the city to support the principles that are underpinning the 14-19 reforms. This will include the two grammar schools, Wiltshire College and other providers to allow the full entitlement of courses and programmes to be offered. The academies will be committed to recognising, understanding and supporting learners from all backgrounds and understanding their particular needs and styles. They will be committed to persistent and continuous improvement for every learner and they will foster a culture of achievement and aspiration. The Academies will be fully inclusive. Currently significant numbers of students who attend schools on both the proposed Academy sites access post 16 provision across Wiltshire's borders to Hampshire and Dorset. With these proposals it is intended that the young people of Salisbury will have access to a wider range of high quality provision within the Salisbury area.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

10. If this Academy proceeds to the Feasibility Stage consideration will be given to rebuilding the school on the same site or on adjacent land next door at Fugglestone Red. By increasing the size of the current school from 814 to potentially 1450 there will be increased traffic in the area. Wider environmental implications will be explored further during Feasibility Stage.

Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal

11. Provision of a new Academy replacing SHS will have benefits to all members of the community of West Salisbury and the City as a whole and will benefit the most vulnerable members of the community by raising aspirations and achievement. Closing the attainment gap for particular groups of young people is both a national and local priority. Providing a high quality learning hub at the centre of Bemerton Heath will have a potential to improve community cohesion.

Risk Assessment

12. There are risks related to school organisation and place planning for other local schools in the area. The estimated numbers of students at SHS are based on known data of students attending primary school and the trends in birth rate. While there are enough places in the City for the known students and some spare capacity for known building programmes there is a risk that there will not be enough places if all the possible buildings under the South West's Regional Spatial Strategy comes to fruition. If all the house building occurs then there is a possibility that there will need to be a further secondary school built.
13. Although the total number of students in the Salisbury area should support an expansion of the current small sixth form, as yet these numbers are unsubstantiated. A further risk may be the effect on other schools and College sixth form numbers in the area. The LA is working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) alongside the other partner schools and College in the City to resolve the numbers for the sixth form.
14. The costs associated with off-site works must be met by Wiltshire Council. The costs identified in the financial implications section of this report have been based on experience with other projects but more precise details of the works required will not be known until the Outline Business case (OBC) is completed at the end of the Feasibility Stage. Project management and off-site costs, together with the overall level of DCSF funding, will be assessed during Feasibility. This analysis will be critical in resolving the financial risks identified below, prior to the Council entering into any legally binding agreement. It should be noted that the EoI, when agreed by the sponsors, whilst indicating a strong commitment on behalf of Wiltshire Council, is not a legally binding document.
15. Three options are being considered in the siting of this Academy. The first is relocation to a piece of land at nearby Fugglestone Red, the second is on a piece of land adjacent to the current SHS and the third is on the existing site. There are risks involved with the first two options as they involve a land swap with the local landowner. The planning process represents a risk which will be managed through careful pre-application consultation, and a thorough review of the contents of the planning application, which will ultimately be prepared by the contractor.
16. If SHS EOI is not approved by ministers the LA will have to consider other solutions to address underachievement, inadequate buildings and insufficient post 16 provision in the area with no finances to do this until 2016 at the earliest when BSF potentially is available. The buildings require a 95% rebuild with many urgent maintenance concerns.

Financial Implications

Capital budget implications:

17. In general terms it is important to identify, as far as possible, all of the potential costs of this project at the outset so that the Council has a clear understanding of the costs involved. While it is understood that Partnerships for Schools (PfS) will, in broad terms, fund the core of the project, there are certain caveats on this which are outlined below.
18. At present no indicative level of overall funding has been provided by DCSF or PfS. On approval of an Expression of Interest, an indicative Funding Allocation Model (FAM) will be issued. Using the basis of the FAM provided for The Wellington Academy, it could be expected that the funding allocation would be in excess of £35 million, with abnormal costs, such as decant, funded beyond that
19. Academies are built by the LA to a Design and Build Contract Framework. £7.17 million is required from the LA's capital programme over the next two years for off site works and project support costs to build both the Salisbury Academies. This will draw down approximately £60 million plus of DCSF finances to rebuild the schools. There is a risk that if we do not proceed quickly enough to the Feasibility Stage that government money to do this will not be forthcoming.

Revenue budget implications:

20. Academies are funded directly by the DCSF and in order to fund this there will be a reduction to the overall level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in respect of the budget for each new Academy. The deduction will mirror the LA formula for funding each school and therefore will be revenue neutral to the overall delegated schools budget for Wiltshire.
21. Academies also receive an additional allowance in respect of the funding that Local Authorities hold back centrally from maintained schools; this is called the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) and is top-sliced from the LA's DSG in order to be paid to the Academy. Using the prescribed formula it is estimated that the top slice for the SHS Academy in its first year would be £23,000. It is clear that as the number of Academies increases the impact on central DSG funded budgets held by the LA is greater and could potentially have implications for service delivery.
22. Academies will receive School Standards Grants, Standards Funds and Leadership Incentive funds. In the first year of opening an academy will be entitled to receive the full amount of School Standards Grant (SSG) that would have been paid to a school, or schools, that close when an academy opens. This means that the predecessor schools do not receive any SSG in the year of closure and this may impact on the financial position of the closing schools
23. Any balance (surplus or deficit) remaining on a school's budget which closes when an academy opens is returned to the local authority. However the LA may pass the surplus to the academy if it chooses but deficits must be retained by the LA. Any deficits from closing schools need to be written off from within the overall

schools budget and therefore this has implications for the funding for schools across Wiltshire.

24. Schools Forum is currently considering the position in relation to surpluses and whether they should be retained in addition to deficits.

Legal Implications

25. The EoI at 5.2 contains a section in relation to TUPE and indemnity. The LA is asked to meet all costs associated with restructuring and to indemnify all employment costs relating to the transfer to an academy. The LA is discussing this with the DCSF as three or four schools involved in the proposed two Salisbury academies, Salisbury High School, Wyvern and St Joseph's the LA are not the employers, the current governors are. The LA is the employer only for St Edmunds girl's school. This matter is currently being dealt with by our legal department.
26. The LA wishes to become one of the three co-sponsors of the SHS Academy. This is because it will have an equal voice in every part of its vision, planning and construction. It will be an equal partner in all Project Steering Group, Design Group, Education Group and Transition Group meetings. Guidance notes for sponsors recently presented by the DCSF states that there is an expectation that the Academy Trust establishes and secures donations for an endowment fund to be used for the benefit of students attending the Academy. However, LA's, Diocese and other schools involved as co-sponsors are now exempt from sponsorship.

Options Considered

27. No other options being considered at this time

Conclusion

28. Cabinet is asked to approve the EoI at **Appendix A** to be submitted to the DCSF in July 2009 and to approve the LA as co-sponsors to this Academy.

Background Papers

29. The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None.

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