
Report to: Cabinet
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

12th December, 2006
6th December, 2006

Report of: Director of Children, Learning and Young People and the Director of Finance and ICT

Title: Authority to Submit an Expression of Interest for the Swanswell Academy

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on discussions in relation to the establishment of an Swanswell Academy as part of the proposed Learning Quarter, and to seek authority to submit an Expression of Interest to the Department of Education and Skills (DFES) for such an Academy on a different basis than has previously been discussed.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval to commence a public consultation and establish a process for Scrutiny of the establishment of an Academy to replace Sidney Stringer, should the Expression of Interest be submitted and approved by Ministers.

2 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to

- 2.1 Authorise the submission on an Expression of Interest for a Swanswell Academy to replace the current Sidney Stringer School on the basis outlined in the report. The draft Expression of Interest is attached as an Appendix to this report.
- 2.2 Approve the proposed Consortium of Sponsors for the Academy project which will be led by City College Coventry and the City Council and also include Coventry University, and Jaguar Cars.
- 2.3 Delegate authority to the Head of Financial Management and the Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and young People) to finalise the wording of the Expression of Interest and to submit it to the DFES on behalf of the City Council.
- 2.4 Subject to the approval of this report, and the approval of the Expression of Interest by Ministers, approve a public consultation during Spring 2007 on the establishment of an Academy to replace Sidney Stringer School.
- 2.5 Approve the approach to Scrutiny laid out in section 4.13.

- 2.6 Note that the proposal will also need to be approved by City college governors before it can be submitted.

3 Information/Background

3.1 On 11th April 2006 the City Council considered a report on the outcome of a consultation to establish two proposed Academies in Coventry. One of these Academies was a direct replacement for Woodway Park School and the other, a potential Academy to replace both Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer Schools.

3.2 The report recommended proceeding to issue a Statutory Notice for the Woodway Park Scheme. In the case of Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer the report gave delegated authority to the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People) to finalise an Expression of Interest on the basis of a **single Academy** to replace **both** Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer but operating on **two sites**:

- a brand new school to be built as part of the proposed Swanswell Learning Quarter and to replace Sidney Stringer School buildings
- continued operation on the current Barr's Hill site.

3.3 At the time that this report was approved, the City Council had been in discussion with the Centre for British Teachers (CFBT), a large charity with a significant track record in the Education field, as a potential lead sponsor for the project. However, one of the problems at the time was that the £2 million requirement for the sponsorship stake had still not been fully identified.

3.4 The report outlined that the preferred approach for the City Council would be to establish a Consortium of sponsors which would include the City Council itself, City College and Coventry University. At the time, the Government's expectation was that there would be a lead sponsor from the private sector, and it was in that context that discussions with CfBT had taken place.

3.5 Since April there have been two key developments which significantly change the possible approach to a Swanswell Academy:

- The DfES have indicated that they will NOT support a single Academy operating on the two sites as was being proposed.
- The Government are now allowing Colleges of Further Education, such as City College, to act as lead sponsors

3.6 This opens up the option of an Academy on the Learning Quarter as a simple replacement for Sidney Stringer with City College and the City Council leading a consortium of sponsors.

4 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

4.1 The revised proposal is for a new 7 form of entry Academy to be built on the proposed Swanswell Learning Quarter as a direct replacement for the existing Sidney Stringer Secondary School.

- 4.2 The diagram at Appendix 1 illustrates the broad approximate location of the new school on the Learning Quarter Site adjacent to the proposed New City College buildings. Phase 1 of City College is already on site and planning permission has been granted for Phase 2.
- 4.3 It should be stressed that some or all of the existing Sidney Stringer site will still be required for the Academy, most likely for sports provision. There is one possible option to use part of the site to locate a new City-wide Sports Centre and swimming facility to replace the facilities in Fairfax Street. This would be on the basis of shared use on an agreed basis by the school. More detailed work is required on the feasibility of this option, which can be progressed in tandem with the submission of an Expression of Interest and subsequent feasibility work for a possible Academy.
- 4.4 This proposal is for an Academy as a replacement for Sidney Stringer School **only**. Barr's Hill will continue to operate as a community school and options for the refurbishment of Barr's Hill will be considered as part of the City's Building Schools for the Future project in due course.

4.5 Sponsorship

The proposed sponsors for the new Swanswell Academy are:

- City College
- Coventry City Council
- Coventry University
- Jaguar Cars

The lead sponsors would be City College and Coventry City Council. It is no longer proposed to involve the Centre for British Teachers since the required £2 million sponsorship can be generated from within the other partners. It is felt that by creating a Consortium of partners who already have a strong stake and a good reputation in the City, some of the concerns about Academy sponsorship can be very significantly reduced.

4.6 The Vision for a Swanswell Academy

The establishment of a Learning Quarter as part of a major regeneration project, which contains a new purpose built Further Education College and a brand new school, provides the ideal context for this proposal. The co-location of the school and FE College makes City College and the City Council a natural choice as lead sponsor for the proposed Academy. It should be stressed that the Vision for a new school as part of the Learning Quarter has always been developed in consultation and discussion between Coventry University, City College and the City Council and this current proposal represents a realistic possibility of delivering that original vision.

- 4.7 The co-location of the proposed Academy and the new FE college on the Learning Quarter has a number of enormous potential benefits to the City:

- Government policy is to encourage collaboration of Schools and Further Education Colleges, particularly for the 14-19 age range. City College is actively involved in our federation for 14-19 Education and Training developing these ideas with the City Council, schools and other providers. The co-location of the College on the same site as the Academy will present significant opportunities (although it must be stressed that City College would also continue to work in partnership with other City Secondary Schools)

- There is the potential as the detail of the Academy is developed for significant sharing of facilities between the School and the College to the benefit of the pupils. Clearly this would need to be done in a way that protected the health, safety and well-being of pupils.
- The Consortium of Sponsors would help develop a gateway for the local community to access secondary education and then progress to Further and Higher Education through the Academy's close association with City College and Coventry University.
- The proposal would replace the current Sidney Stringer buildings, which are nearing the end of their economic life and are not well suited to delivering the modern curriculum.
- The project would give a real kick start to the regeneration of Swanswell in a very tangible way.

4.8 The Role of Sponsors

The Consortium of Sponsors have together identified how they will put together the required £2 million sponsorship stake, which would be vested in a Charitable Trust. The Charitable Trust would be a Limited Company and be legally responsible for the development and ownership of the Academy.

The Charitable Trust appoints the Governing Body of the new Academy which in turn would appoint the Principal.

- City College

As a lead Sponsor of the Academy and as its neighbour on the Learning Quarters site, City College will be actively involved in collaborating and developing provision for pupils in the area, particularly in the 14 – 19 age range. The precise nature of provision would need to be planned carefully between the School and the College to make sure that opportunities for pupils are maximised and any potential for competition eliminated. In particular, there are significant opportunities for pupils to access facilities at City College, for example, the planned Advanced Construction and Technology Centre.

City College would be represented on the Governing Body of the Academy.

It is also proposed that the new Academy should adopt a specialism, which is in line with the specialisms of City College and this would enable opportunities for collaboration to develop. City College would continue to work in partnership and collaboration with all secondary schools in the city.

- Coventry City Council

The City Council will be represented on the Governing Body and will be encouraging both the new Academy and the City College to take part in the growing Federations between Coventry Secondary Schools, FE Institutions and Training Providers which are delivering the Government's agenda for 14 –19 age education. The City Council would wish to offer the range of support services to the Academy on a similar basis to those it makes available to other Secondary Schools.

- Coventry University

Coventry University would be involved as a member of the Governing Body and in providing advice on the development of the Academy. It may also wish to become involved in some specific activities e.g. mentoring for pupils at the school. At a strategic level, Coventry University would work through the City's 14 – 24 Strategic Forum to plan educational provision to meet the needs of the City and avoid competition and duplication – its role in the Academy would be a new and more developed way in which this objective can be delivered.

- Jaguar Cars

Jaguar will want to be involved in the Academy to extend its long tradition of supporting education in the City, particularly in Secondary Schools. Jaguar have had extensive involvement in providing a Partnership Centre for city pupils and working in a variety of ways with city Secondary Schools. They see this work as continuing, and an involvement in the Academy as providing a focus for developing it still further. Jaguar will be represented on the Governing Body and will provide advice from a private sector perspective on the Academy's development. It would also be involved in mentoring and possibly work placements for Academy pupils. It should be stressed that Jaguar will continue to wish to work across the City and with many other Schools and not exclusively with the proposed Academy.

4.9 Conditions for the Proposed Academy

The City council and its partner sponsors will include the following conditions in the Expression of Interest, should it be submitted:-

- The Academy will replicate the current admissions policy and catchment area of Sidney Stringer School
- The Academy will not operate selective admissions
- The Academy will not be a faith school
- The Academy will play a full and active part in the federations and partnerships operated between the City Council, schools and other Educational providers and stakeholders in the city.
- The sponsors are committed to ensuring that parents, staff and the community will be represented on the governing body of the school.

4.10 Other options for the replacement of Sidney Stringer School

One of the key drivers behind the Academy proposal is to renew the buildings at Sidney Stringer School in a way which would be consistent with the proposed Swanswell Regeneration of the area immediately surrounding the School.

As outlined above the Sidney Stringer buildings need to be replaced and given the nature of the existing site it would not be possible to accomplish a rebuild on the current site while keeping the school in operation. The Learning Quarter site, which is already in the City Council's ownership, is the obvious location to rebuild most of the school buildings.

The alternative to an Academy would be to wait for the city's allocation to the Building Schools for the Future programme and attempt to rebuild Sidney Stringer using that

approach. It is felt that on balance there is a strong case of pursuing the proposed Academy for a number of reasons:

- The timing of Coventry's Building Schools for the Future allocation is still not certain and is subject to a complex procurement process. It is likely that the new school can be completed more quickly under the Academy programme. It is important for the Vision of the Learning Quarter that the new school is built in as close a timeframe as possible to the new College. It is also important to make progress on Swanswell Regeneration – this would not be assisted by keeping the proposed site for the new school vacant, possibly for years, while the BSF strategy and funding streams are secured.
- The total allocation from Building Schools for the Future is still uncertain. School rebuilds are likely to be using the Private Finance Initiative, and experience from other authorities shows that there is likely to be a significant affordability gap from this approach. Using an Academy model would mean that funding for a new Sidney Stringer can be obtained quickly without the possibility of revenue affordability problems.
- For the reasons outlined in section 4.7 above, this revised model which links the Governance of the Academy and the partners in the Learning Quarter provides a good model for the development of the school. Building Schools for the Future would involve a PFI contractor and be less flexible than an Academy model.
- If the City Council wishes to pursue the option of looking at a city wide sports centre/swimming development on the site, this needs to proceed as quickly as possible because of the pressing need to decide on the long term future of the current facilities.

4.11 Changes to the Government's Academy Programme.

The Government have recently made some changes to the Academy programme, which mean that if the Expression of Interest is successful, the project will differ slightly from that in train for Woodway Park.

The £2 million sponsor contribution no longer goes towards the capital cost of the buildings which are funded fully by DfES. Instead, the £2 million is invested in an endowment which will produce an annual revenue to the new school over and above its direct funding from government. These additional resources can be directed by the Governors for a wider variety of uses e.g. community activity, school trips, extended school activities.

The overall project management arrangements will be handled by Partnerships for Schools, an agency set up by central government to direct the Building Schools for the Future programme, and which is experienced in the design, procurement and build of new secondary schools. This organisation will coordinate the project and fund the various professional and technical support that will be required to implement the project. The Council and other sponsors will effectively be the client in this process, and will be required to put time into the project – but not additional cash. In practical terms this input will come from the BSF Team being established in the Council – the new Academy will in practice form part of the Council's overall strategy for secondary education as laid out under BSF.

4.12 Public Consultation

Subject to the approval of this report the Expression of Interest will be submitted to the DfES immediately following Cabinet for Ministerial decision. If the outcome is positive, a formal public consultation will need to take place on the proposed closure of Sidney Stringer, and the opening of a new Academy. The outcome of that consultation will be reported back to Cabinet and the City Council for a final decision.

Depending on the progress of the Education and Inspection Bill, the decision may also need to go to the City's School Organisation Committee. The Bill proposes the ending of these Committees, with their powers reverting to the City Council. It is not clear at this stage whether and when this part of the Bill will be enacted.

In parallel to the consultation the DfES through Partnerships for Schools will commence a detailed feasibility study. The outcome of this will be the detailed funding agreement between the DFES and the sponsors for the construction of the new school.

At this very early stage, it is anticipated that the new school may be capable of completion by September 2010.

4.13 Scrutiny Arrangements

The City council has already public consultation on the establishment of an Academy to replace Woodway Park and on the principle of a Swanswell Academy. This was paralleled by a cross party Scrutiny Review group which looked at the issue in detail, and made a recommendation to Cabinet and Council. Focusing at the time on the Woodway Park proposal.

If Cabinet approve the Expression of Interest it is important to submit it as soon as possible to DfES as there is an opportunity for a swift Ministerial decision. If the Academy is to proceed that work commences as soon as possible to align the project with the new City College project. Getting an early ministerial decision, possibly before Christmas, will avoid further delay.

This approach will mean that the normal call in procedure could not apply. The Chair of SCRUCO has been briefed on this, and the item has been placed on the Agenda for SCRUCO on 6th December for consideration.

It is also proposed that before cabinet a Seminar is held for all elected members to brief them on the proposal and give an opportunity for informal scrutiny and feedback. The other sponsors will if possible also attend this meeting.

Finally, Cabinet has approved the establishment of a Scrutiny Review Group for Building schools for the Future, along the lines of the model of the former Academies Review Group. It is proposed that the issue of the Swanswell Academy also be referred to that group, as it is in practice part of our overall strategy for BSF and secondary education in the City. This will allow scrutiny to look at the issue in detail and make a recommendation to Council when the matter comes back for final decision after public consultation.

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5. Other specific implications

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Neighbourhood Management		✓
Best Value		✓
Children and Young People	✓	
Comparable Benchmark Data		✓
Corporate Parenting	✓	
Coventry Community Plan		✓
Crime and Disorder		✓
Equal Opportunities		✓
Finance	✓	
Health and Safety		✓
Human Resources	✓	
Human Rights Act		✓
Impact on Partner Organisations	✓	
Information and Communications Technology		✓
Legal Implications		✓
Property Implications	✓	
Race Equality Scheme		✓
Risk Management		✓
Sustainable Development		✓
Trade Union Consultation	✓	
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		

5.1 Children and Young People

The objective of this project is to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people in the area served by Sidney Stringer school. The City Council will only proceed with a proposal for an Academy if it is consistent with this objective.

5.2 Corporate Parenting

The City Council will only consider an Academy on the basis that Looked After Children have first priority in the Academy's Admission Policy. This would also be a requirement from DfES.

5.3 Finance

The £2 million sponsorship requirement will be found as follows by the Sponsors:

	<u>£000</u>
City College	925
Coventry City Council	1000
Coventry University	50
Jaguar Cars	25
Total	2000

Under the rules of the Academy programme £500,000 of this sum needs to be paid at the time that the funding agreement between the DfES and the Sponsors is signed. This is likely to be in approximately 18 months time, depending on the time taken for the approval of the Expression of Interest, the public consultation and the completion of the DfES feasibility work. The remaining £1.5million need to paid within 5 years of that date.

The City Council's contribution will be funded as part of the medium term financial strategy and detailed budget setting processes covering the years concerned.

The time profile for the sponsorship contribution gives the City Council and other sponsors a significant time frame to plan for and fund the sponsorship, should the project go ahead.

In overall revenue terms the operation of the Academy (excluding the sponsorship contribution) will be broadly neutral to the City Council. The Academy will be funded directly by DFES on broadly the same basis as the City Council allocates funding to its secondary schools through the local Fair Funding Formula. The City's Dedicated Schools Grant, from which it resources its funding to schools, would be reduced by the numbers of pupils on roll at the Academy.

Building the new school as an Academy as opposed to using Building Schools for the Future will also have a potential significant revenue benefit. New schools under BSF will be built under the Private Finance Initiative and are likely to have a significant affordability problem that will need to be funded by the City Council and/or schools in the City. This problem does not arise with Academies.

The DfES will also fund the majority of the technical, financial and legal costs incurred in bringing the project to fruition – these would otherwise have fallen on the City Council as part of the Building schools for the Future project, assuming that the Council gets BSF funding and would otherwise use that approach to rebuild the school.

In capital terms, the formula share of capital allocated to the City under Building Schools for the Future would be reduced by the "share" represented by the number of pupils at Sidney Stringer.

The building of the new school and its future operation and maintenance would not be the financial responsibility of the City Council. The financial input would be limited to its contribution as one of the consortium of sponsors.

The City Council and City College will need to work together in future to ensure that both parties have the resources and capacity to deliver not only the Academy, but the wider shared Vision for the Learning Quarter.

5.4 Human Resources

If Sidney Stringer were to become an Academy all staff except the head teacher employed by the school at the point of transfer would be protected by the TUPE Regulations and would transfer to the employment of the Academy on their current terms and conditions. Any subsequent changes to this would need to go through the normal processes of consultation and negotiation.

5.5 Impact on Partner Organisations

Secondary schools in Coventry operate within a series of federations between themselves, Further Education Colleges, the universities and other providers. Such partnerships are essential to the delivery of effective education and are encouraged by DfES. The City Council and the other sponsors will ensure that the proposed Academy would be a full and active participant in these arrangements.

5.6 Property Implications

An Academy would be an independent school and a separate legal entity from the City Council. To establish an Academy it would be necessary to transfer the required land from the City Council to the Academy Trust on a 125 year lease for a peppercorn rent. This would include both land on the new Learning Quarter and relevant areas of the existing Sidney Stringer school site.

5.7 Trade Union Consultation

If the Expression of Interest is submitted and approved, there will be extensive public consultation on this issue, including specific meetings with Trades Unions.

6. Timescale and expected outcomes

Subject to the approval of this report the Expression of Interest will be submitted to the DfES for Ministerial decision. If the outcome is positive, a formal public consultation will need to take place on the proposed closure of Sidney Stringer, and the opening of a new Academy. The outcome of that consultation will be reported back to Cabinet and the City Council for a final decision.

Depending on the progress of the Education and Inspection Bill, the decision may also need to go to the City's School Organisation Committee. The Bill proposes the ending of these Committees, with their powers reverting to local authorities. It is not clear at this stage whether and when this part of the Bill will be enacted.

In parallel to the consultation, the DfES through Partnerships for Schools will commence a detailed feasibility study. The outcome of this will be the detailed funding agreement between the DfES and the sponsors for the construction of the new school.

At this very early stage, it is anticipated that the new school may be capable of completion by September 2010.

Key Decision	Yes	
Scrutiny Consideration (if yes, which Scrutiny meeting and date)	SCRUCO 6th December 2006	
Council Consideration (if yes, date of Council meeting)		No

List of background papers

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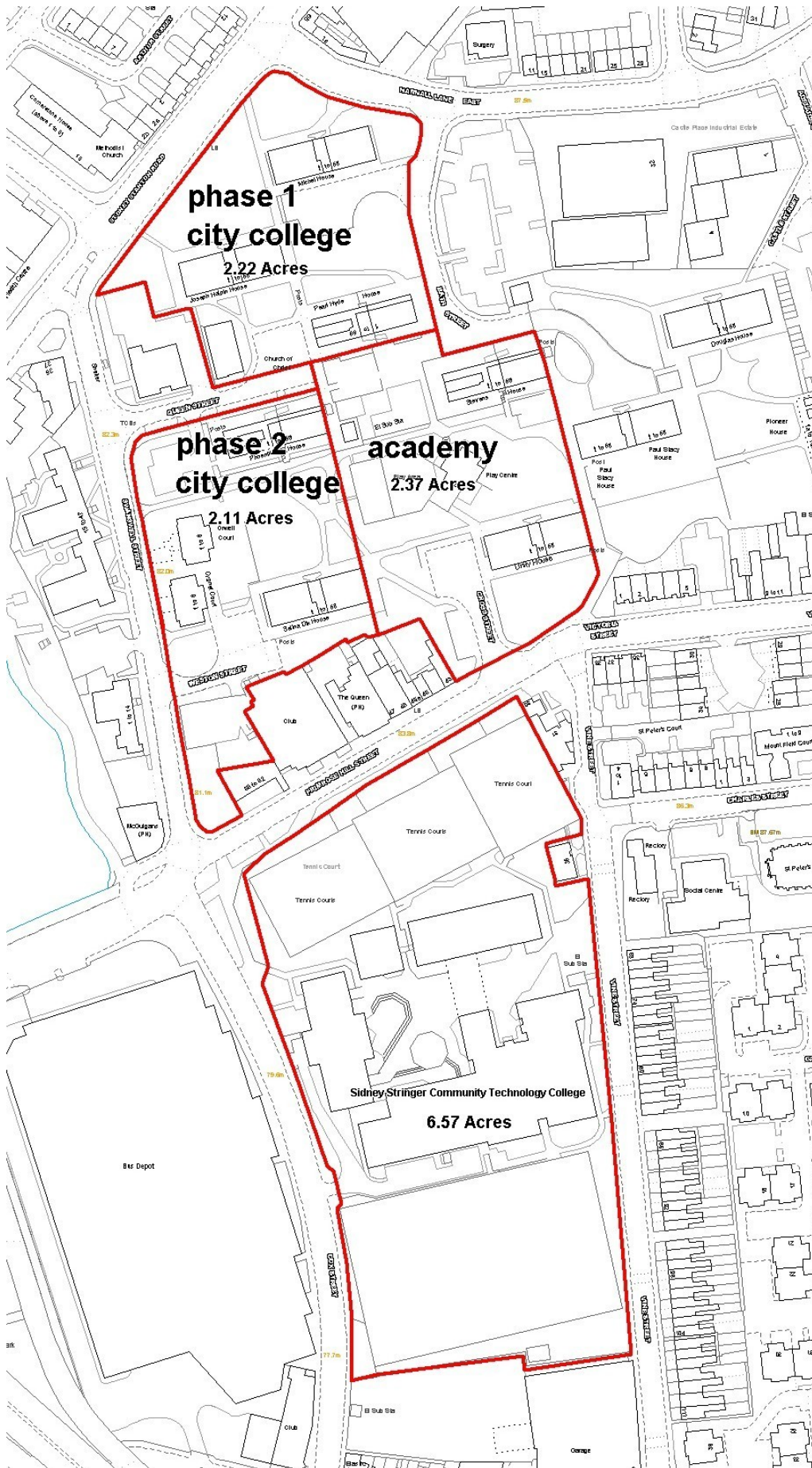
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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Location

None



The Sidney Stringer Academy Summary of Proposal

27th November Draft – not yet final or approved

1.1

Provide a brief summary of the project (refer to size and location of Academy, age-range of pupils, specialism and sponsor):

This is a proposal for a new 11-18 Academy which would replace the existing Sidney Stringer School. The Academy site would be located in the new Swanswell Learning Quarter, which forms part of the proposed Swanswell Regeneration area close to Coventry City Centre. The regeneration area is a large project (68 hectares) that will include educational, cultural, sporting, retail, commercial and housing elements.

This proposal has been made after an earlier informal consultation had been conducted locally by the City Council based on the closure of both Sidney Stringer and the nearby Barrs Hill schools and the establishment of a single academy. Key feedback from that consultation was the need to recognise the distinct communities served by the two schools and this Expression of Interest has responded to that consultation point. This amended proposal, which proposes a single Academy to replace Sidney Stringer School, has been enabled also by recent patterns of inward migration into Coventry (currently at the rate of 100 pupils a month) and recent agreements to provide significant housing growth in the city centre, which has resulted in the development of Barrs Hill school being pursued separately.

The lead sponsors for the Sidney Stringer Academy is City College Coventry, a large general F.E. college and the City Council. Other sponsors are Coventry University and Jaguar Cars.

City College Coventry is replacing its three current sites with a single state-of-the-art new build in the Swanswell Learning Quarter. At a cost of c£50M, it is one of the biggest capital projects in further education. Phase 1, the Advanced Construction & Technologies Centre, will be open in September 2007, with Phase 2 following in 2008. The new Academy would be built on an adjoining site. The co-location of the FE College and the Academy on this site will form the focus of a Learning Quarter, providing a wide range of educational opportunities including Early Years, Youth, Adult and Community Learning. The site is immediately bordered by Coventry University who are strong supporters and co-sponsors of the project.

The proposed Academy site will have an admission limit of 7 FE (210 pupils). Its specialism will be ***Design and Technology***.

Engineering and Design and Technology remain a key feature of the local economy with significant skills shortages in these areas. This specialism also reflects the business base of Jaguar Cars, one of the consortium partners who still maintain a research, development and design centre in the City, and Coventry University. Furthermore, City College also specialises in engineering and transport technologies and serves an impressive employer client base, which includes Jaguar, Land Rover, BMW, Aston Martin, Peugeot, Stagecoach, First Group, Arriva, Go-ahead and National Express. It also runs programmes in various fields of design, including computer games, 3D graphics and fashion. Coventry forms part of the Regional Development Agency's "High Technology Corridor". The College will offer academy pupils

access to the highest quality specialist facilities, staff and a range of employers.

The Sidney Stringer Academy Educational Vision 15 October Draft

The Academy will replace the current Sidney Stringer School and will be located in the new Swanswell Learning Quarter, which forms part of the proposed Swanswell Regeneration area close to Coventry City Centre.

The Learning Quarter is to be created by the co-location of City College and the Academy on this site, together with a wide range of educational facilities including Early Years, Youth, Adult and Community Learning. Coventry University immediately borders the site and is a strong supporter and co-sponsor of the project.

Many pupils come to the existing school with significant disadvantage such as low income homes where English is not the first language; where the parents themselves have not had access to further or higher education; and for some their lives have been characterised by frequent moves and traumatic events. An LSC Strategic Area Review (StAR) Data Report for Coventry identifies 15% of ethnic minorities with poor literacy skills and 12% with poor numeracy basic skills compared to the city averages of only 5 and 6% respectively. Furthermore, the StAR Report cites St Michael's ward (where the school is situated) as having the lowest proportion of people qualified to levels 1 and 2 in the city.

The new Academy, as an integral part of the Swanswell Learning Quarter, offers a unique opportunity to improve further achievement and attainment in this, one of the most deprived areas in the country. By accessing and complementing the wide range of specialist facilities, staff and employer links and experiences sourced through the neighbouring college, pupils will be much more engaged in a wider range of high quality learning experiences. There will also be a wider and clearer range pathways for progression for young people into F/HE and employment and particularly in the skills shortage areas of engineering, design, and transport technologies. Because of its location more ethnic minority and immigrant pupils in particular will be encouraged to participate in the technology curriculum.

More generally, collaboration between the Academy and the College in the sphere of vocational qualifications will be of enormous benefit and is entirely consistent with Government policy for 14-19 education. The school already works as part of a federation of five schools, City College and other training providers to offer a broad range of opportunities to young people, and these links will be considerably strengthened by this proposal.

The Academy will address underperformance by providing an innovative and personalised curriculum across the 11-19 age range. The Academy will explore creative and flexible ways of timetabling the Curriculum, and will build on the Post 16 city wide timetable and extend common timetable to KS4 across the Federation to ensure access to the wider range of provision.

The Academy will also develop a more personalised curriculum by constructing a range of creative and vocational curricular pathways. This will enable the Academy and local partners to be at the forefront of the implementation of the school 14-19 strategy, in particular specialised diplomas and the Foundation Learning Tier. Some of these pathways will be linked to the chosen specialisms of design and technology including construction and engineering. Other strengths will be based on the expertise of key city centre partners, including City College, the health sector, the Centre for the Performing Arts, leading retailers, the central museum, theatre and library facilities and the Coventry Sports Centre.

The Academy will also forge links with these key city centre partners in order to develop innovative programmes for promoting high quality PE and sports provision and facilitating creativity across the curriculum. These programmes will help to motivate and engage students, leading to higher achievement across the curriculum. They will also enable the Academy to develop new and interesting ways of involving the local community in the life of the school.

The new Academy will make full use of the latest high quality ICT facilities to provide a relevant and personalised curriculum. This will support the development of an enquiry-based curriculum and enable students to develop the more independent study skills that are required by higher education and employers through a virtual learning environment. Full use will be made of interactive whiteboards, computer-aided-design and manufacture facilities and Internet-based resources across the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning.

Academy staff will also use the latest ICT facilities to track students' progress across each key stage and monitor the performance of underachieving groups. This will enable the Academy to develop innovative practice in setting appropriate curriculum targets and communicating effectively with parents and students. This will be supported by a comprehensive mentoring programme and targeted intervention strategies. ICT links will be developed across the North West Federation to facilitate curricular links and tracking of student progress.

Students and parents will be fully involved in decisions about the development of the new school and will be provided with key opportunities to participate in both the life of the school and discussions about the needs of this diverse city centre community. The Academy will therefore ensure that there is a consistent focus on developing the skills associated with active citizenship.

The Academy will address underachievement by exploring fresh ways of looking at achieving curriculum continuity and progression across the different key stages. Priority will be given to working with primary schools to secure more effective ways of building on each student's individual curricular targets, especially in the core subjects. Emphasis will also be given to ensuring that there is appropriate progression to higher and further education, training and work, including through Aimhigher.

An Innovative Curriculum based on Excellence for All

To be successful in bringing about a transformation in the learning and qualifications of students, we will be innovative in the pursuit of what works. The new Academy will:

- Make available services beyond the conventional school day, week, term and year
- Be characterised by transformational learning relationships, between staff and students.
- Be more diverse in what is offered and what is valued.
- Extend learning beyond the classroom and school site
- Network and collaborate nationally and internationally with other schools, to develop partnerships and projects, which promote the subject curriculum and the wider curriculum of personal growth, and development.
- Develop home school learning based e-networks as a norm accessible to all students.
- Support learning at any time through the development of an online curriculum
- Make genuine and productive relationships with parents and carers
- Promote family learning opportunities and qualifications
- Help co-ordinate family support services with the statutory and voluntary partners
- Promote community support and higher quality communication.

Alongside these general and underpinning approaches we will offer more specialised programmes, in particular the specialised diplomas to successfully engage *all* our students so that *all* succeed.

The most appropriate courses are likely to emerge following a wide consultation with the Learning and Skills Council, the FE colleges and other schools in the 14-19 collaboration. We will work closely with other partners in the feasibility stage on this aspect of the broader curriculum offer.

Although we do not intend to designate the Academy as a specialist sports college we do intend to have excellent provision. We intend to use our a strong provision of design, technology and ICT to support the engineering and performing arts curriculum including the scientific analysis of health and fitness and the production of digital media teaching materials.

Our proposal for an Academy builds on the strengths of strategic partners in the engineering and higher education sectors. We will promote the benefit and expectation of continued learning at every stage and at every opportunity to our parents and their children and to all prospective students and their parents. We believe that if we can gain support for our shared expectations and aspirations at an early stage the benefits to each student and to the whole school community will be immense.

Our new curriculum will be broader than is currently offered at the school. We will have a broad mixture of traditional academic programmes and significant numbers of vocational courses at key stages four and five. Working in partnership with schools in the NW Federation and City College we will participate fully in implementing the Specialised Diplomas so that we meet young peoples entitlement to access all 14 Diplomas by 2013. From 2008, we will lead for the Federation in ICT, providing rich opportunities for young people from across the Federation to create technology solutions to meet business requirements. Also for 2008 will contribute to the collaborative delivery of Creative and Media and Health and Social Care and support our students in access high quality diploma provision in construction and the built environment and in engineering, led by City Council. Our aim is to guide all students onto programmes where they are engaged, but also challenged to succeed. All of our students will access at least one vocational programme. The balance between general and applied programmes will vary for each student and with the increased flexibility we will be able to demonstrate in a practical way the vision of personalised learning.

Our aim here is to seek significant increases in post sixteen participation and improvements in the provision for students who are not currently fully engaged in their learning.

Linking again to our technology rich provision the teaching accommodation will need to be flexible, where this is possible. We will need lecture theatres to support classroom activities. Learning areas would vary in size to meet the most appropriate delivery arrangements. This will be a key part of the architects' brief in the design of the new Academy.

Our Specialisms of Design and Technology

Design and Technology prepares pupils to participate in tomorrow's rapidly changing technologies. They learn to think and intervene creatively to improve quality of life. This specialist subject calls for pupils to become autonomous and creative problem solvers, as individuals and members of a team. They will be required to look for needs, wants and opportunities and respond to them by developing a range of ideas and making products and systems. They will combine practical skills with an understanding of aesthetics, social and environmental issues, function and industrial practices. As they do so, they will reflect upon and evaluate present and past design and technology, its uses and effects. Through design and technology, all pupils can become discriminating and informed users of products, and become innovators.

The nature of design and technology is such that it should provide opportunities for pupils to engage in activities that are challenging, relevant and motivating. This should give pupils enjoyment, satisfaction and a sense of purpose, and enable them to feel they can play a constructive role in a technological society. Any design and technological activity should be a learning experience whereby pupils' repertoire of knowledge, skills and understanding is extended and applied in increasingly more diverse and sophisticated ways.

Design and Technology enhances the community and industrial dimensions of the curriculum. The subject raises pupil's self-esteem through the successful

The Sidney Stringer Academy 15 October Draft
completion of real tasks thus preparing them for the world of work in a technological society.

Using ICT to transform the curriculum offer

Although our specialisms will be design and technology, our course provision at all key stages would reflect a strong emphasis on the effective use of ICT and new technologies. It would build on the current school's outstanding performance in Mathematics. We aim, through the provision of broad programmes, implemented in partnership with other providers, to develop young people with the skills relevant to future IT professionals, entrepreneurs, business managers and for future work in a technology-enabled environment. Excellent facilities – resources, equipment and accommodation will enable delivery of high quality applied and practical teaching and learning.

Our aspiration is for a new Learning Resource Centre to be at the heart of the school and equipped with state of the art ICT and digital media facilities. The Centre would be open for extended periods including at least two hours before and after the “taught” curriculum during the week. We would also hope to see the Learning Resource Centre open in the school holiday periods and for parts of some weekends.

In addition to the state of the art central Learning Resource Centre we would expect all designated teaching areas to be ICT rich so that wherever students are learning, they always have access to ICT facilities. Outside the designated teaching spaces we would hope to have shared spaces where ICT facilities are available to students on a drop-in basis at any time outside the specific teaching periods. Our vision would be to have a range of ICT “pods” at several nodal points throughout the school, including near or in the dining facilities, so that independent and small group work would be facilitated. We intend to use ICT network support staff in cost effective ways to support students in understanding how they can best use technology to aid their wider learning programmes.

Our new ICT proposals will promote different learning styles, which will allow more personalised learning. For most students there will be a balance of timetabled provision including learning in a classroom in groups, learning in a lecture environment, learning in small groups using online access to the curriculum and peripatetic teacher support and self supported individual learning.

Our aim is to establish the whole of our curriculum online at the earliest opportunity. We will do this in collaboration with other providers in the federation. Ultimately the vision for our students is that they will be able to access their learning opportunities 24/7 through a learning platform.

This means of course that our first task with our new students, and indeed with all students throughout their time at the Academy, is to *promote learning how to learn*. New investment in the latest ICT and Digital Media technology will allow us to develop this further.

The Sidney Stringer Academy will also have multi-media suites, a TV and film making studio and lecture theatres.

Management, Leadership and Governance to Raise Standards

City College Coventry is categorised as a “widening participation college” deriving a high proportion of its students from disadvantaged post code areas. Its social inclusion was rated as good by OFSTED. The College also boasts a good record of improvement in its student success rates over the past three years, and particularly in its key technology areas of Engineering, Vehicle Technologies and Construction where apprenticeship success rates, at 66%, are now well above national averages. These successes have been based on good strategic governance and senior management, which was identified as a key strength by OFSTED. The college will lead on the provision of specialised diplomas in construction and the Built Environment for 14-19 year olds in the Federation. Several members of its governing body work in the key industries, which the college serves. As a lead sponsor, the College would seek to bring to bear, in collaboration with other key partners, this expertise and experience in the governance and management of the Academy.

Coventry City Council has a strong track record in the management, leadership and governance of the education sector in the City which has been recognised in two LEA Inspections, two 14-19 inspections and most recently, in spring 2006, through a Joint Area Review. Inspectors findings were that "where improvement is required, the council is good at identifying timely action to bring this about" and " a key feature of the council's school improvement work is the very strong collaborative partnerships with the between schools". There are no schools in Coventry in special measures, with serious weaknesses or with a notice to improve.

The Academy will want to draw on these backgrounds, along with the wider experience of Coventry University and Jaguar to create a Governance framework that can combine a thorough knowledge of the area and sound existing partnerships with a real ability to innovate in raising standards.

The Academy will include staff, parents and members of the Community on its Governing Body, to ensure that its work is grounded on a real understanding of local need.

The context of the Learning Quarter, embodied in the make up of the Governing body provides an enormous opportunity to raise standards and enhance the educational experience, particularly across the 14-19 sector.

The Academy would be an extended School and would seek to underpin community involvement by including parent and community representative on its Board of Governors.

A centre of learning for all ages at the heart of the community

The Sponsors, and Coventry Council as a “foundation partner”, are clear that in proposing the new school we do not see the Academy as “just a school”. We aim to bring forward practical proposals, which demonstrate our view that a truly successful school is a school which develops the whole child and also contributes in a practical way to develop the local community. In short, our new Academy aims to be an exemplar as an Extended School.

In our proposals we would aim to create an Academy that was providing learning opportunities for families and other adults using the facilities available

The Sidney Stringer Academy 15 October Draft
for our core 11-18 students. We intend to work closely with the Local Authority and Learning and Skills Council to identify gaps in the current provision of courses and guidance to the wider community served by the Academy. We expect as part of this work to promote family learning and adult education for the whole community.

The Academy would, as part of its mission, seek to promote citizenship in a practical way for its students. Our aim is for all our students to be active volunteers during their time at the Academy in a wide range of community projects. Community work will be in different areas such as work with the elderly and the disadvantaged. Our aim would be to have many links with the voluntary sector as part of our extended school focus.

In particular, if we are to help all students achieve we know that those with the greatest challenges can be identified in the primary sector. We intend to work closely with primary partner schools and make our resources (both staff and facilities) available to them so that those students who are behind in their learning are boosted with our intervention support. Stronger work on Literacy and Numeracy would be a key aspect of this work. ICT support will also be available to support our intervention with younger learners and will draw on our specialism in that area. We would look to establish at the earliest stage, ideally in the Feasibility Stage, a local forum for work with partner Primary schools. We intend to build on that forum with practical steps, which will combat disadvantage and raise standards for students in the crucial transition years.

For higher education we are clear we want all our students to be aware of and appreciate the opportunities that higher education might bring them. We will work closely with Coventry University through Aim Higher to provide direct contact for our students with lecturers, students and facilities in the universities. We will be arranging for all our students, and their parents or carers, as part of the school curriculum, to learn about further and higher education and for this wider learning to include visits and possibly curriculum projects with those institutions.

We also believe that for our students to succeed we need to “extend the Academy upwards”. This does not intend to suggest that we wish to compete with existing further and higher education providers. Rather, we see our role as involving stronger guidance for our students, the development of partnerships with the City College which engage all our students in learning so they can succeed and gain qualifications. As an Academy we intend to develop our partnership with Coventry University. We would want to increase access to our Learning Resource Centre which will have state of the art ICT and digital media facilities to promote independent learning for adults.