

PROPOSED PATHFINDER TRUST FOR SCHOOLS IN ROCHFORD DISTRICT

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals being considered for a Schools' Pathfinder Trust in Rochford District and seeks Members' view thereon.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Two of the secondary schools in the District, King Edmunds and Fitzwimarc, working with the County Council, are considering the establishment of a Schools' Pathfinder Trust in the District. Whilst they would be the principal school partners, the other two secondary schools in the District, Greensward and Sweyne Park, would also be involved, but would have associate status.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

Why Set Up a Trust?

- 3.1 The schools and the County Council believe that under the "Every Child Matters" agenda, a Trust arrangement may offer an enhanced opportunity to work collectively at the District level on developing and promoting learning across the community, sharing and developing best practice, and utilising the collective resources on offer to provide a wider community benefit. In other words, a Trust arrangement would provide the structure locally through which the secondary schools, as a key community resource would work together and with partners on the wider educational, social and environmental agendas across the District. The Trust would be linked in closely with the Local Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Group and also the County's two TASCC teams operating in the District, connecting in through the existing Local Development Group arrangements, thus involving the primary schools in the area in this development.

Who would be involved?

- 3.2 Initially, the Trust would involve King Edmund, Fitzwimarc and the County Council, with Sweyne Park and Greensward as associates. Local primary schools would also be encouraged to join in. The District Council is invited to participate as a partner, along with the Learning and Skills Council, and an institution of higher education.
- 3.3 Longer term, a wider stakeholder forum would be created, involving the Primary Care Trust, the Police, the Adult and Community Education Service, Business Link, etc.

Timing

- 3.4 Some initial preparation work has already been carried out and a joint meeting of Governing Bodies from the schools is getting together today to further consider the proposal. Providing there is individual and collective agreement to the proposal, informal consultation will commence in October and the statutory consultation period will commence early in the new year. The intention would be that the Trust is formally established from April 2008.

The District Council's Role

- 3.5 Subject to the individual schools signing into the arrangement, the District Council will be asked for its views on the proposal. Also, it will be asked whether it would in principle be prepared to join the Trust as a partner. Other than Member and staff time, there should be no resource commitments resulting from our membership.
- 3.6 From a Council perspective, such a structure offers the Authority the opportunity to engage with the secondary schools collectively across the District and help shape the wider agenda that the Trust has been set up to address. Such a body should be useful in terms of delivering the wider community agenda and developing local initiatives around community safety, youth and education provision, wider opportunities for learning and the community's use of facilities.
- 3.7 It would therefore seem sensible to offer support for the development of a Trust arrangement and be involved at the earliest opportunity in helping to establish its operation.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Board **RESOLVES** to offer the Council's support to the principle of establishing a Pathfinder Trust for Schools in the Rochford District and to indicate the Council's willingness to become a partner in such an arrangement.

Paul Warren

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Background Papers:-

Rochford District Pathfinder Schools Trust; Vision and Outcomes – paper produced by Steve Leverett at ECC, 9th January 2007.

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