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To: Cabinet – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Subject: The John Wallis Church of England Academy

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report seeks approval to submit the Feasibility study (outline business case) for The John Wallis Church of England Academy to PfS and the DfE to progress to the next stage and to issue a Future School Notice to Willmott Dixon (preferred bidder for Batch 2 Academies) to develop a proposal for the Academy.

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## **Introduction**

1. (1) The John Wallis Church of England Academy, Ashford, was formed on 1st September 2010 from the former Ashford Christ Church High School.

(2) The four sponsors of the Academy are The Diocese of Canterbury, Benenden School, Kent County Council and Christ Church Canterbury University (CCCU).

(3) The Academy serves the Stanhope Estate in South Ashford which has the highest concentration of deprivation in Ashford, equal to some of the more deprived pockets of East Kent's coastal towns.

(4) The Academy is located on the Stanhope Campus which also houses Linden Grove Primary School, The Ray Allen Children's Centre and the former South Kent College buildings (which are mainly derelict). The site sits at the heart of a £200m PFI rebuild of the Stanhope housing estate.

(5) Following the change of Government, the development of this academy was put on hold while the funding available was reconsidered. Following site visits by the DfE and the adoption of a new approach to

calculating the funding, there was a significant reduction in the funding available. The original funding would have allowed 71% new build and 29% refurbishment of the school facilities. This is no longer possible with the reduced budget. Details of the funding allocated are included in appendix 1

## **Process and Programme**

2. (1) The BSF and Academies team, with Gleeds as technical advisors and Studio E as Architects, have been working with the Academy to develop initial options for redeveloping the site. This has taken into consideration the state of the existing buildings to determine what facilities could be re-furbished and which need to be replaced.

(2) These initial options have been costed to demonstrate which would be affordable using the results of a number of initial surveys. The new build rate used to cost the options is based on a rate advised by the DFE as part of the cost saving exercise carried out by the DFE when determining the funding allocated. The rate for refurbishment is based on the conditions survey. It is unlikely that this rate will be able to achieve the same standard as was achieved under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

(3) Work has been carried out to look at how the redevelopment could be phased to reduce the need for temporary accommodation during the build period.

(4) The options have been discussed with the relevant planning authorities, Kent Highways and Sport England. This has allowed us to determine the deliverability of the schemes, as well as affordability.

(5) A control option has been chosen to develop in more detail. This option will be put forward in the Feasibility study (a streamlined version of Outline Business Case previously produced at this stage in a projects development) to demonstrate how the funding could be used to deliver an affordable scheme to meets the Academy's requirements.

(6) The Feasibility study will be issued to Partnerships for Schools (PfS) for their review and approval to move forward with the project. Once this approval is received the scheme will be passed onto Willmott Dixon.

(7) This will be passed on via the process set out in the 'Future Schools Agreement' which forms part of the contract for Skinners Kent Academy. This requires a package of information about the scheme to be provided to Willmott Dixon who will use this as the starting point for developing a scheme.

(8) There will be a programme of engagement meetings with the Academy to develop a scheme up to planning stage. At this point the scheme will be issued, like a bid, to the BSF and Academies team to evaluate and clarify that this meets the Authority's requirements. Once the BSF and Academies team,

with our technical advisors, and the Academy are satisfied with what is being offered by Willmott Dixon, the scheme will be submitted to planning. There will be an opportunity for a Member to be involved in the evaluation process.

(9) Once the application is submitted, Willmott Dixon will continue to develop the scheme in detail so that they can produce contractor's proposals for the Design and Build Contract.

(10) Before KCC can enter into a contract with Willmott Dixon, a Final Business Case will be submitted to PfS to confirm that they will be funding the scheme. At this point cabinet will be asked to authorise the submission of this business case and to authorise the signing of the contract with Willmott Dixon.

(11) It is estimated that it will take at least six months for Willmott Dixon to develop the scheme to the level required to enter into the contract. This however could take significantly longer if the planning process becomes complicated.

(12) The current target is to sign contracts in summer 2012 so that the construction works can be completed in early 2014.

### **Related Issues**

3. Further details about the scheme including financial information can be found in appendix 1. Appendix 1 is exempt- not for publication - Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, refers

### **Next Steps**

4. The Feasibility study will be issued to PfS and amended as required by them. Once approved, the project will be issued to Willmott Dixon to develop their proposal.

### **Recommendations:**

5. (1) Members of the Cabinet are asked to AUTHORISE the submission of the Feasibility study for The John Wallis Church of England Academy to PfS and DFE.

(2) Members of the Cabinet are asked to AUTHORISE the issue of a Future School Notice to Willmott Dixon (preferred bidder for Batch 2 Academies) to develop a proposal for the Academy within the affordability parameters set by Cabinet and to progress through the next stage of the process to develop detailed designs, progress the planning application and finalise contracts.

(3) to NOTE that the BSF, PFI and Academies Board will be updated on progress and final approval to enter into contracts will be sought from Cabinet

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*Additional Documents: Appendix 1*

*Other Useful Information: N/A*