

REPORT OF THE:

DATE:

**CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL
TO CABINET**

18 MARCH 2009

**REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY
SCHOOL – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE**

Background

On 22 October 2008, Cabinet rejected a proposal to close Sneyd Community School. In rejecting the closure proposal, Cabinet tasked the Children's and Young Peoples Scrutiny and Performance Panel to review the future options for the school. Cabinet resolved:

'That the matter be referred to an early meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel for full consideration of all options available to the school and that the full implications of the community uses be considered in conjunction with any proposal coming forward in relation to the school.'

After debating the options alongside the additional information made available to them, Members of the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel felt that this issue would benefit from the close scrutiny of a working group. Therefore, the Sneyd Working Group was established.

The Sneyd Working Group held three meetings and discussed the options for the future of Sneyd Community School in detail. The Working Group drew a series of conclusions on the options available for Sneyd and these are detailed below:

Option A – Establish a National Challenge Trust

The Working Group recognise that the National Challenge Trust model is relatively new, however, in light of evidence provided by officers at its 15 January and 3 February meetings, the Working Group feel that new legislation may increase the viability of this option for Sneyd Community School.

Option B – Establish an Academy on the site: 11-19 years

The Working Group concludes that a small Academy would not be appropriate for Sneyd. A large Academy may be more acceptable to the DCSF and would secure education provision on the Sneyd site. However, the financial viability and the impact of this size of Academy on neighbouring schools as well as the education provision for the borough overall would need to be carefully considered before this option could be taken forward.

Option C - Close the school; significantly enlarge another school (Frank F Harrison); establish a 14-19 specialist Academy alongside 14-19 or 16-19 provision so that learning continues on the Sneyd site

The Working Group felt that this was an interesting and potentially very exciting option but concluded that further investigation into the viability of this option would be required to enable a suitable model to be presented to the DCSF and OSC should this option be pursued.

Option D – Co-operative Trust Model

The Working Group conclude that further investigation into this option would be required to determine it's viability, but based on current evidence this may be the weaker option for Sneyd.

Recommendations

Having considered the report of the Sneyd Working Group to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel, the following recommendations are made to Cabinet

That:

- a) Cabinet pursue a solution that ensures the continuation of education provision on the site of Sneyd Community School, supported by further investigation into viable solutions between Council Officers, representatives of Walsall Children's Services Serco, the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC)**
- b) This solution for the continuation of education provision on the site of Sneyd Community School must:**
 - 1. be financially viable**
 - 2. be devised with particular attention paid to its impact on all schools within the north west area of Walsall**
 - 3. meet the needs of the local community**

A more detailed report, responding to these recommendations, will be submitted to Cabinet on 22 April 2009.

This form provides an accurate record of the meeting of the above named Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Chair of Scrutiny name: Councillor Eddie Hughes

