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**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN AN ACADEMY FOR DARLINGTON**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor Chris McEwan, Children’s Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director(s) - Margaret Asquith, Director of Children’s Services**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To put forward the Expression of Interest in an Academy for Darlington, to replace Eastbourne School.

**Information and Analysis**

2. Darlington has been invited to express an interest in the Academies programme.
3. The attached Expression of Interest (**see Appendix A**) documents the reasons why the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) should support an Academy to replace Eastbourne School. The attached Expression of Interest is based on an electronic template from DfES, with standard sections which we are unable to alter, and sometimes do not fit the text accurately.
4. The Church of England, through the Diocese of Durham, has agreed to be the sponsor of the Darlington Academy. The Diocese of Durham will establish the Darlington Academy in conjunction with David and Anne Crossland and Darlington Borough Council. David and Anne Crossland have confirmed 50% contribution of the total £1.5million required by DfES from the Church of England.
5. The Church of England has a long history of involvement and leadership in education nationally, and there is a longstanding partnership with Darlington Borough Council. The Church of England is a main sponsor in the Academies programme nationally, with 3 Academies already open, 7 Expression of Interest documents submitted, and 30 other “serious conversations” ongoing with Authorities nationally.
6. David and Anne Crossland are working in conjunction with the Church of England to establish a Darlington Church of England Academy. The Crosslands want to put something back into the community and also to contribute to make a difference in children’s lives. Helping children has been a consistent theme in charitable work throughout their lives. Mr Crossland left Burnley Grammar School with 3 poor O levels, and then began working life in a travel agency in Burnley, expanding within 8 years with his own company, launched as Airtours. By 2002, Airtours was relaunched as MyTravel with a multi-million pound turnover. By 2003, Mr Crossland retired. The Crosslands have an ambition to work with the Church of England on a total of 3 Academies. One in Rochdale, which is due to submit its Expression of Interest; Darlington would be the second; and a third location is under

consideration. They are also working in partnership with the Church of England on a further school improvement programme in Rochdale, bringing together a Roman Catholic and a Church of England secondary school into one new build school. The Crosslands want the Church of England to be the Darlington Academy sponsor, but they wish to be an active partner, with 2 seats on the Management Board and facilitating strong links with local and national businesses.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

7. The Secondary Head Teachers and Principals of the two colleges in Darlington have contributed to the Expression of Interest. The Expression of Interest has been considered at a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on 24th April 2006 and their comments have been included as far as possible into the Expression of Interest, the Committee's formal response is attached at **Appendix B**.
8. The relevant Trade Unions have been consulted on the Expression of Interest. They raised queries about the effect which the 14-19 curriculum choice may have on the deployment and employment of teaching staff, although it was also recognised that this was applicable not only to the Academy Expression of Interest, but to all Secondary Schools as the 14-19 agenda develops, and unions will be involved in this debate.

### **Legal Implications**

9. This report has been considered by the Legal Services Manager for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Legal Services Manager considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.
10. If the Expression of Interest is agreed and the Academy progresses, the Council is required to confirm that it is content with the preferred site and that there are no others under consideration, and also that it will transfer the site for the school at nil cost to the Academy, prior to the Academy opening.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

11. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. Creating an environment where young people can thrive and grow into responsible adults can have a significant long term impact on crime rates in Darlington.

### **Council Policy Framework**

12. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

### **Decision Deadline**

13. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

## **Key Decisions**

14. This is a key decision for two reasons. Firstly, if the Department for Education and Skills approves the Expression of Interest, significant funding for the new build Academy would be invested into Darlington, and secondly, a new Academy would necessitate the formal closure of one of our schools (Eastbourne).

## **Recommendations**

15. It is recommended that Members:
  - (a) agree the Expression of Interest for submission to the Department for Education and Skills;
  - (b) if the Expression of Interest is agreed, approve that work be undertaken to progress through the feasibility stage.
  - (c) confirm agreement with the identified site and that no others are under consideration:  
and
  - (d) agree the site will be transferred at nil cost to the Academy prior to the Academy opening with terms to be agreed to the Funding Agreement for the Academy.

## **Reason**

16. To allow the Expression of Interest to be submitted to the Department for Education and Skills and further work on feasibility to progress as appropriate.

**Margaret Asquith**  
**Director of Children's Services**

## **Background papers**

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Expression of Interest

Appendix B – Comments from Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee (24/04/06)

M Asquith : Extension 2099