

# **Policy Review and Development Panel**

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall  
3 November 2008 at 6:00pm

**The Policy Review Panel deals with** reviewing policies and issues at the request of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder, or pro-actively identifying issues that may require review; dealing with those issues either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, monitoring progress of these Groups and assessing their final reports.

# Information for Members of the Public

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# Terms of Reference

## Policy Review and Development Panel

- To review strategies and policies at the request of the Cabinet either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, and to make recommendations back to Cabinet for decision.
- To review issues at the request of a Portfolio Holder either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups and to make recommendations back to the Portfolio Holder for decision.
- To monitor progress of Task and Finish Groups and assess their final reports prior to their submission to either the Cabinet or the Portfolio Holder.
- To proactively identify issues that may require review and improvement and to seek Cabinet's agreement as to whether and how they should be examined.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL  
POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL  
3 November 2008 at 6:00pm**

**Members**

Chairman : Councillor Young.  
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Barlow.  
Councillors Bentley, Davies, Hardy and Knight.

**Substitute Members** : All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

**Agenda - Part A**

(open to the public including the media)

**Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally brief and the last Agenda Item is a standard one for which there may be no business to consider.**

**Pages**

**1. Welcome and Announcements**

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched to off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

**2. Substitutions**

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

**3. Urgent Items**

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal

interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

## **5. Have Your Say!**

(a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter not on this agenda.

## **6. Minutes**

**1 - 3**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2008.

## **7. Essex County Council Consultation on Secondary Education in Colchester**

**4 - 35**

At the request of Councillor Dopson, the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships, to consider and provide

recommendations to support the Portfolio Holder's response to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

See consultation document entitled Raising achievement through the transformation of secondary schooling in Colchester

See report by the Head of Life Opportunities

The Panel to receive a presentation from Mr Jonathan Tippett in his capacity as both:

- Chair of the North Essex Association of Secondary Heads in Essex and
- Executive Headteacher of the Thomas Lord Audley School and Language College and Executive Headteacher of the Alderman Blaxill School.

## **8. Work Programme 2008/09**

**36 - 39**

See report by the Head of Corporate Management.

## **9. Exclusion of the public**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

## **POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

### **30 SEPTEMBER 2008**

*Present:-* Councillor J. Young (Chairman)  
Councillors Barlow, Hardy and Knight.  
*Substitute Members:-* Councillor Lewis for Councillor Bentley  
Councillor Maclean for Councillor Davies.

#### **13. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Policy Review and Development Panel held on 14 May and 16 June 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### **14. Town Centre Management Arrangements**

The Panel received a briefing paper setting out the current position regarding Town Centre Management arrangements and the progress of the consensus-building process with key partners in the business community.

Nigel Myers, Enterprise Manager, attended the meeting to assist members in their discussions.

Mr Myers acknowledged the importance of retail in the Colchester economy and it was hoped to create 2,000 new jobs in this sector by 2021. The rejection of the Business Improvement District initiative had resulted in the decision to close Colchester Town Partnership, as a result of which the responsibility for the Christmas lights and Colchester in Bloom had reverted to the Borough Council. It was explained that the reference to a fund raising event in paragraph 6.3 of the report would take place on 21 November 2008, not 14 November, as indicated.

Ron Levy, on behalf of the Colchester Retail and Business Association (CORBA), addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), explaining that CORBA had participated in recent meetings facilitated by the Enterprise Manager which had been productive and laid good foundations for the future. He supported the objectives identified in the report, particularly that of increasing the footfall to attract more people to the town centre.

Paul Bentham, the Manager of the Red Lion Shopping Centre, attended the meeting and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. Paul explained that he had recently been appointed in Colchester following a period at Luton's Arndale Centre. He had an ambitious 4 – 6 year plan to build on the existing good mix of independent and national stores and to improve on Colchester's current status as a Regional destination centre.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business, attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel.

*RESOLVED* that the arrangements put in place to deliver the Christmas lights and Colchester in Bloom, together with the work being undertaken to build a business consensus in the town following the closure of the Colchester Town Partnership be noted.

## 15. Home / Remote Working Policy

The Panel considered a report by Georgina Blakemore, WWW Programme Manager, on the details of the draft Home / Remote Working Policy which had been formulated to enable and support managers in the implementation of flexible working practices as part of the Way We Work Change Programme.

The Policy included:

- A statement on home/remote working;
- The objectives;
- Guidance on the assessment of the suitability of posts for home/remote working;
- The Council's health and safety obligations;
- Variation of terms of conditions to reflect the change of working practices;
- Management responsibilities;
- Information and data security and
- Insurance/liabilities.

In addition a Guidance document had been compiled to support the policy, strategy and best practice as well as being a comprehensive guide to working flexibly.

Georgina explained that the former Enterprise and Communities service area were piloting flexible working within the organisation and, with 30 team members had managed to reduce their workstation requirements to 15. Georgina circulated to Panel members an example of a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) which had proved beneficial for staff involved in travel, such as Museum staff travelling between Ipswich and Colchester. She also displayed a tablet laptop which was being used by Building Inspectors and a digital pen as piloted by the Food Safety Team.

Jessica Douglas, Strategic HR Manager, attended the Panel to assist members in their discussions relating particularly to customer service issues, health and safety implications and security consequences.

Nigel Myers, Enterprise Manager and one of the team members involved in the Flexible Working pilot, attended the meeting and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. He felt home working required a high degree of organisation and motivation. He had initially been concerned about the reduced personal contact with his own team members but concluded that the project had empowered team members to make decisions on their own initiative. His team members had indicated a clear preference in favour of home working.

The Panel gave particular consideration to the following issues:

- The measures necessary to prevent feelings of isolation and loss of team dynamics;
- The mechanisms used, such as objective setting, to ensure performance is not adversely affected;
- The impact on traffic in terms of reduced car journeys by staff;
- Cost implications.

*RECOMMENDED* that the contents of the Home / Remote Working Policy be endorsed.



## 16. Work Programme 2008/09

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Corporate Management giving details of the work programme for 2008/09 which had been updated to reflect the areas of work identified by the Panel at its previous meeting.

In addition Cabinet had agreed that the Panel be requested to investigate the following issues by means of the setting up of Task and Finish Groups:

- Night – Time economy;
- 20 mph Speed Limits and
- Certain issues relating to the Mayoralty.

Cabinet also noted that this Panel had agreed to set up a Project Board / Liaison Group on Historic Town Centre Improvement, comprising both Borough and County Council members. This was an ongoing piece of work to which Project Manager was being recruited and appointed.

*RESOLVED* that the revised Work Programme for 2008/09 be noted and the following arrangements be agreed in respect of the three Task and Finish Groups:

(i) Night-time Economy Group –

- An officer to be appointed to project manage the work of the Group,
- Membership to consist of one councillor from each of the political Groups (likely to be Naish, Davies, Barlow and an Independent to be confirmed),
- Other members to be one or two young persons / students (possibly from the University and the Institute) and Adrian Coombs, Colchester Police;

(ii) 20 mph speed limit –

- Membership to be determined at a later date pending the outcome of a technical report to the next meeting of the Panel;

(iii) Certain issues relating to the mayoralty –

- Membership to consist of one Councillor from each of the political groups with a mix of Councillors in terms of years of service,
- Investigation to be in the context of the current Mayoral 'structure',
- Issues identified as requiring investigation are:
  - Updating of the Gifts and Regalia Books,
  - Bulk purchase / setting up a cellar book of wine for mayoral functions,
  - Regalia insurance cover and the purchase of replica regalia,
  - Setting up of a Mayoral Support Group.

# Raising achievement through the transformation of secondary schooling in Colchester

Options for consultation







## Introduction

Essex County Council is committed to delivering world-class learning opportunities for the pupils of Colchester, which is why we are undertaking a major consultation on secondary education in the town.

This consultation will consider three options including the development of federations, trusts and educational improvement partnerships as well as the potential benefits of academies.

During the consultation we conducted last year, which focused specifically on south Colchester, there was significant enthusiasm expressed by a range of stakeholders, including Headteachers, governors and parents, for the council to consider the town as a whole.

Given this level of interest, the council has now taken the sensible step of opening out discussions to consider secondary education throughout the whole of Colchester.

It is important to understand the context in which this consultation is being held, including:

- **persistent and ongoing concerns about standards in some schools;**
- **forecasts of pupil numbers in the town and the implications for the viability of some of the schools;**
- **the development of potential federative and trust arrangements and academies.**

Given these challenges, it is important to make clear that the current situation is not an option. We are determined to deliver an excellent education for pupils in Colchester. However, this can only be achieved with change.

We are sure that everyone in Colchester shares the desire to provide the town's young people with the finest education possible, which is why we want you to be involved with assisting us to make this change.

It is important that as many people as possible contribute to the consultation so that we can come to the right option and ensure the best possible solution for the town's pupils together.

**Lord Hanningfield**  
Leader, Essex County Council



## 1. Overview

- 1.1 Essex County Council has agreed to the development of new options and proposals intended to raise achievement and transform secondary education across Colchester. This is a response to issues raised by parents, schools and stakeholders during the consultation in November 2007 to January 2008 on proposals to close the Alderman Blaxill and the Thomas, Lord Audley Schools and replace them with an 11–16 academy on the site of the latter.
- 1.2 Essex County Council is taking a wider approach than previously in developing these options and proposals. We will consider the implications for the whole town and the broader district, drawing upon lessons learned elsewhere, to avoid developing a solution in one part of the town that creates a problem elsewhere. We will also seek to create a long-term sustainable solution. Essex County Council will draw in various stakeholders including local secondary schools, Colchester Institute, the University of Essex, Colchester Sixth Form College, the Garrison, other interested partners (e.g. the Colchester 14–19 Area Planning Group) and local parents and young people.
- 1.3 This paper sets out a number of options for discussion with stakeholders and partners in Colchester. However, because the school improvement agenda is so important, the County Council wishes to make it very clear that the current situation is not a sustainable option. We are determined to ensure the provision of an excellent education for all learners in Colchester and will work with partners to achieve that. The options put forward address the important need to secure resilience in terms of pupil numbers and standards of education for all the secondary schools in Colchester and the wider community benefits that would accrue as a result of this.
- 1.4 We have developed a number of robust options for public consultation this autumn.



## 2. Background

2.1 This section outlines the background to proposals intended to transform secondary education in Colchester in light of the vision for Essex set out in EssexWorks. This includes the specific priority ‘Increasing educational achievement and skills’ and its associated pledge that in 2008–2009 Essex County Council will introduce radical initiatives to ensure diverse, high quality secondary schools in every area of the County. It sets the scene for the development of options in Colchester in the context of:

- concerns about standards in some of the schools;
- forecasts of pupil numbers in the town and the implications of these for the viability of some of the schools; and
- the potential development of different types of school models such as federative and trust arrangements and academies (see Annex 1 for an explanation of these models).

2.2 The options will be developed in the light of discussions with stakeholders and partners in the town and with officials at the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

### 2.3 School Standards

2.3.1 Essex County Council is concerned about educational standards in Colchester.

2.3.2 **Alderman Blaxill School** was placed in Special Measures<sup>1</sup> following an OfSTED inspection in May 2007.

Essex County Council’s concerns about the situation at Alderman Blaxill School have led to the replacement of the Governing Body with an Interim Executive Board and the appointment of the Headteacher at The Stanway School as the Executive Headteacher with effect from 1 January 2008.

These robust actions, which at the time were not met with universal local approval, resulted in progress being reported in the second OfSTED monitoring inspection of the school on 20 and 21 February 2008. Judgements about the progress made since the first visit took into account what would have been feasible in the time available. Satisfactory progress in improving the school had been made ‘in the last few weeks’, but not enough to counter to the inadequate progress of the previous six months. At the third monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 June 2008 progress since the February visit was satisfactory, but progress overall since being subject to Special Measures was inadequate.



Pupil numbers were lower in September 2008 than in the previous academic year and only 26.1% of pupils achieved 5+ A\*-C GCSE passes including English and Mathematics in the 2008 examinations.

- 2.3.3 **The Thomas, Lord Audley School** is making progress under the same Executive Headteacher appointed to Alderman Blaxill School and was removed from Special Measures in September 2007 but, because of long term underachievement, was given a Notice to Improve<sup>2</sup> by OfSTED. An OfSTED monitoring inspection of the school took place on 1 May 2008 and the outcome was that ‘the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the standards achieved by students’. The Notice to Improve still applies.

Pupil numbers were lower in September 2008 than in the previous academic year and the numbers admitted to Year 7 were lower than anticipated. The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A\*- C GCSE passes including English and Mathematics in 2008 was 32.3%.

- 2.3.4 **Sir Charles Lucas Arts College** was placed in Special Measures in November 2005 shortly after the arrival of a new Headteacher who agreed with the issues OfSTED raised. The new Head engaged with Essex County Council and set about driving the necessary changes. The school was removed from Special Measures in November 2007. The report graded the school as satisfactory in each of the 26 inspection judgement areas. The report acknowledged that standards were still not high enough, especially at Key Stage 4. Consequently the school has continued to receive support. Within the community, Essex County Council is concerned to address some of the underlying issues affecting the school’s ability to reach the national floor target for GCSE<sup>3</sup>. The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSE passes including English and Mathematics in 2008 was 29.9%.

## 2.4 Pupil numbers

Essex County Council is concerned about the number of surplus places in secondary schools in Colchester and the forecast that this will increase by 2013. The Draft Essex School Organisation Plan 2008–2013 shows a fall in pupil numbers in Colchester with a surplus of 1105 places by 2013. Even allowing for the maximum number of pupils that might be generated by new housing there would still be more than 400 surplus places. Most of the surplus places are forecast to be at the three schools at which there is also concern about educational standards (see Table 1).



**Table 1**

School	Net Capacity	Pupil	Forecast 2013	
	2008 (2013*) if different	Numbers 2008	Pupil Numbers	Surplus Places(*)
Alderman Blaxill	662	457	330	+ 332
Thomas, Lord Audley	1050	712	582	+ 468
Sir Charles Lucas	1226	995	805	+ 421
Gilberd	1350	1273	1351	- 1
Philip Morant	(1625*)	1610	1656	- 31
St Helena	1000	1018	994	+ 6
Stanway	(1120*)	1064	1117	+ 3

(\*) Based on capacity figures in draft School Organisation Plan for 2008 - 2013 using increased capacities for Philip Morant and Stanway.

2.4.2 In line with the above predictions, the actual numbers on roll at Alderman Blaxill, Thomas, Lord Audley and Sir Charles Lucas schools at January and May 2008 showed a fall in total numbers on roll and therefore an increase in surplus places since 2007 (see Table 2). The provisional on roll figures for October 2008 have continued to fall. (see Table 3).

**Table 2**

School	Net Capacity 2007	Pupil Numbers			Surplus (over) Places		
		2007	Jan 2008	May 2008	2007 2008	Jan 2008	May
Alderman Blaxill	662	559	457	451	16%	31%	32%
Thomas, Lord Audley	1050	773	712	717	26%	32%	32%
Sir Charles Lucas	1226	1076	995	987	12%	19%	19%
Gilberd	1350	1264	1273	1272	6%	6%	6%
Philip Morant	1510	1617	1610	1598	(7%)	(7%)	(6%)
St Helena	1000	1002	1018	1013	0%	(2%)	(1%)
Stanway	985	999	1064	1065	(1%)	(8%)	(8%)





**Table 3**

School	Net Capacity	Provisional numbers and capacity	
	2008	Pupil Numbers Oct 2008	Surplus (over) Places Oct 2008
Alderman Blaxill	662	376	43%
Thomas, Lord Audley	1050	666	37%
Sir Charles Lucas	1226	920	25%
Gilberd	1350	1305	3%
Philip Morant	1559	1618	(4%)
St Helena	1000	998	0%
Stanway	1128	1092	3%

2.4.3 It is predicted that, without additional pupils from housing, the surplus places at the three identified schools would increase to 50%, 45% and 34% respectively in 2013. These figures are based on the number of pupils who will be of secondary school age living in the area and historical patterns of admissions to the schools. Surplus places at the schools have arisen mainly as the result of many local parents being successful with preferences for their children to attend other schools.

2.4.4 When the forecast for 2013 is adjusted to take account of housing development, the roll at Alderman Blaxill School could increase by up to 225 pupils. However, much will depend on a number of factors:

- **the timing of the construction and occupation of the new homes;**
- **the number of families moving in during the early stages of the development;**
- **the ages of the children in the families moving in; and**
- **the parents' preferred choice of school.**

The adjusted and unadjusted forecasts are summarised in Table 4



**Table 4**

Forecast 2013	Pupil Numbers without housing	Surplus Places without housing(*)	Pupil Numbers with housing (max)	Surplus Places with housing (min) (*)
Alderman Blaxill	330	+ 332	555	+ 107
Thomas, Lord Audley	582	+ 468	614	+ 436
Sir Charles Lucas	805	+ 421	808	+ 418
Gilberd	1351	- 1	1429	- 79
Philip Morant	1656	- 31	1657	- 32
St Helena	994	+ 6	1212	- 212
Stanway	1117	+ 3	1178	- 58

*(\*) Based on capacity figures in draft School Organisation Plan for 2008-2013 using increased capacities for Philip Morant and Stanway.*

2.4.5 Alderman Blaxill School is in Special Measures and this is likely to have a negative effect on admissions to the school with many parents continuing to express preferences for other schools. In January 2008 only approximately 33% of children of secondary age living in the priority admission area of Alderman Blaxill School actually attended the school.

2.4.6 The pupil number forecasts for Colchester as whole indicate that over the course of the next 10 years there could be a requirement for a maximum number of 10,275 places. This figure includes those pupils it is anticipated might be generated by the new housing planned for the town. If there are no additional pupils generated from this new housing then the maximum number of places required falls significantly to 9,520. These two figures could therefore be regarded as the upper and lower planning limits for pupil places in the town. In 2008 there are 9,518 pupils on roll at secondary schools in Colchester town. Colchester secondary schools can currently accommodate 10,365. These figures indicate that there are currently circa 847 spare places available in the town.



### 3. A town-wide approach to transforming secondary education in Colchester

- 3.1 In taking a town-wide approach to transforming secondary education in Colchester, we wish to make very clear that the current situation is no longer an option. We are determined to ensure an excellent education for all learners in Colchester and we will work with stakeholders and partners to achieve that. Therefore, we have developed options for the way forward that address:
- **the currently low and forecast falling roll at Alderman Blaxill School and the poor standards at the school;**
  - **the currently low and forecast falling roll at Thomas, Lord Audley School and the need to sustain the satisfactory progress now being made there;**
  - **the forecast falling roll at Sir Charles Lucas Arts College and the concerns about the school's ability to reach the national floor target for GCSE;**
  - **the overall supply and quality of secondary school places in Colchester; and**
  - **the difference in standards between the secondary schools in Colchester especially between Alderman Blaxill, The Thomas, Lord Audley and Sir Charles Lucas schools and the others.**
- 3.2 The options developed for consultation include the provision of an academy or academies in Colchester to replace one or more of the schools. The development of the options considers the potential benefits and disadvantages of academy provision including the implications of academies on other schools in the town<sup>4</sup>. Essex County Council believes securing an academy in Colchester is desirable for improving educational achievement as well as being more likely to help secure funding for other secondary schools in the town<sup>5</sup>.
- 3.3 The options developed also explore the possibilities of federations between schools in Colchester in order to improve standards at weaker schools. They also consider the development of trust arrangements as an overall management model for secondary schools in Colchester or the development of an Education Improvement Partnership (EIP). Annex 1 provides details on academies, trusts, federations and EIPs.
- 3.4 The options also take into account the possibility of securing significant additional funding for new, remodelled and refurbished school buildings whether as part of or separate from any development of an academy or academies.



## 4. Proposals and options for consultation

- 4.1 During the previous consultation there was interest from various stakeholders in developing a Colchester-wide solution. Several Colchester Secondary Headteachers responded to the original consultation that they would welcome, as a group, the opportunity to be part of an ongoing wider consultation regarding the future of secondary education in Colchester which takes into account the views of all stakeholders and the needs of all learners.

Essex County Council has listened to the views expressed and will take the opportunity to discuss with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors, the future of secondary education in Colchester as a whole. This document sets out some options for consultation.

- 4.2 Essex County Council will also continue to involve key organisations and stakeholders who are prepared to both steer and take a direct interest and involvement in the future pattern of education. We value their involvement to date and the commitment to raising aspirations and achievement for the benefit of Colchester as a whole.

- 4.3 The County Council has developed options for consultation based upon a wider approach than previously, drawing in various stakeholders, including the local secondary schools, Colchester Institute, the University of Essex, Colchester Sixth Form College, the Garrison and other interested partners as well as local parents and young people. We will also explore the interests of these stakeholders in models such as federations, trusts and education improvement partnerships as well as looking at the potential benefits and disadvantages of academies. The nature and scale of the proposals requires a full and wide-ranging public consultation with all interested parties. The overall purpose of the proposals is to secure resilience in terms of pupil numbers and to improve standards of education available to all secondary school students in Colchester and the wider community benefits that would grow as a result of this. There will be continuing consultation and liaison between Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council, and the Primary Care trust and voluntary sector to ensure that any complementary projects are co-ordinated as fully as possible. This activity will continue and help to ensure that the different investment schemes are used as effectively as possible, for the benefit of the town and the community.

Essex County Council will seek the agreement of the DCSF to exercise flexibility in the timing and development of Building Schools for the Future (BSF)<sup>6</sup> in Colchester and bring forward its implementation to as soon as possible.

- 4.4 **Option 1 – to close Thomas, Lord Audley and Alderman Blaxill schools and offer places to pupils living in their priority admission areas at the five schools that ring those areas and to redevelop Sir Charles Lucas Arts College as an academy.**



This is a proposal that would create a long-term, sustainable solution for Colchester as a whole and as such is Essex County Council's preferred option. It is to close Thomas, Lord Audley and Alderman Blaxill schools and offers places to pupils living in their priority admission areas at the five schools that ring those areas, i.e. Philip Morant, St Helena, Stanway, The Gilberd and Thurstable. This would require the phased closure of Thomas, Lord Audley and Alderman Blaxill to minimise the effects on existing pupils. It would also require the closure of the schools to new pupils from September 2010 and giving all pupils living in their admissions areas priority for the other schools.

Essex County Council would ensure that their admissions arrangements reflected the need for these children to be given priority to attend one of the five schools. After Looked After Children the admission criteria would therefore need to give high priority to these children followed by siblings and other existing criteria.

The benefits of this option are that pupils are placed in one of five better performing schools with improved chances of success whilst these schools would benefit from very significant investment to provide new buildings and facilities. There are arguments against this option around taking the two schools out of their communities. However, these are the choices that many parents are already making in expressing preferences for their children to attend other schools. It could be concluded that it is the view of these parents that the two schools are not succeeding and this is clear from their falling pupil numbers and the low standards of education being achieved. Furthermore, Essex County Council would be seeking to secure more good school places by seeking an expansion of the better performing schools in the area as well as increasing choices for parents.

Any movement of existing pupils from the closing schools would need to be carefully managed to avoid disrupting the education of those moving and of those in the schools they would be moved to. However, it should be possible to work to lessen these effects and these are the choices some parents are making already for existing pupils. Any closure of schools would require a re-assessment of the travel patterns of pupils but it would be possible to consider and, where necessary, assist with the transport arrangements for pupils and for families with children attending more than one school.

As part of this option Essex County Council would also bring forward plans to propose the development of the Sir Charles Lucas Arts College as an academy. This would strengthen the position of the existing school and enable it to continue to serve the Greenstead community.

It will be necessary to assess whether the other schools have enough space to be expanded to accommodate the additional pupils they would have to take, which the BSF funding would support. Disposal of the Alderman Blaxill and the Thomas, Lord Audley sites



and assets would be an issue but the County Council could press for these to be used for the benefit of the other Colchester schools or retain them in part to provide a community resource in their areas.

**4.5 Option 2 – to progress the closure of Alderman Blaxill School and consider the development of a number of federative and trust arrangements in Colchester without the opening of an academy or academies.**

Essex County Council will facilitate with the schools the hard federation (see Annex 1 for general details of federations) of the Stanway School and Thomas, Lord Audley School to serve south Colchester and proceed with the closure of Alderman Blaxill School. In parallel with these proposals Essex County Council would undertake a complete rebuild/remodelling/refurbishment (subject to survey) of Thomas, Lord Audley School and complete the building work at Stanway School under BSF. Alderman Blaxill School would be closed over a phased period. Appropriate arrangements would be made for children currently attending the school to continue their education supported by the linked Stanway School and Thomas, Lord Audley School. Children due to start at the school in Year 7 in September 2009 would be offered places at Stanway School or Thomas, Lord Audley School. From 2010 the priority admission area for Alderman Blaxill would be included in the priority admission area of Thomas, Lord Audley.

As part of a **Colchester-wide approach** Essex County Council will seek to broker a proposal to federate Gilbert School and Sir Charles Lucas Arts College. As part of the move to federation we would undertake a complete rebuild/remodelling/refurbishment (subject to survey) of both schools. There would be a strong expectation that very serious consideration is given to the relocation of Sir Charles Lucas to accommodate changed priority admissions areas.

We will also seek to broker proposals to federate Philip Morant School and St Helena School. Again it would be part of the proposals to undertake a complete rebuild/remodelling/refurbishment (subject to survey) of both schools.

Within this model none of the schools would become academies. However, as an alternative to federation an individual school's Governing Body might express an interest in exploring this option.



It is also the intention to propose that the three federations comprising of six schools would also operate collaboratively as part of a **Colchester Education trust**. The Colchester Institute, Colchester Sixth Form College, the University of Essex and the Garrison would be invited to be part of the trust in the first instance. If the trust was to **evolve into an Education Improvement Partnership** it might be possible to incorporate other schools and partner organisations into it.

We need to be sensitive to the position of Thurstable School in this proposal and option. The school should, as a minimum, be invited to be part of the trust otherwise it could become isolated. It may also wish to consider joining the federative arrangements described above.

The development of the three federations and a trust (or Education Improvement Partnership) would be the basis of a whole town approach to education issues in Colchester.

As part of discussions with schools and other local stakeholders, we would carry out further work on:

- **transport arrangements, particularly for those pupils living in Shrub End;**
- **the identification of other potential co-sponsors or partners for the schools and the trust;**
- **further discussions with representatives of the Garrison to take forward their desire to support forces children;**
- **the exploration of possible community uses for the Alderman Blaxill School site should it become surplus and subject to a direction by the Secretary of State as to its future use;**
- **and**
- **discussions with all schools in the Colchester area on a wide approach to education and community wellbeing in the town.**

#### **4.6 Option 3 – to re-organise all the non-selective and non-denominational secondary schools in Colchester town and re-open them in new or existing premises, in new or existing locations, (using BSF funding) in some cases with new names.**

All, some or none of the schools could become academies. Revise the admission arrangements and consider fair banding so that the schools serve the needs of the sectors of the town in which they would be located. Operate the schools as a trust (with the other partners previously identified) with overall responsibility for the quality of the education provided in the town and the viability of each individual school.

The model could be to have a small, trust office at the centre and campuses offering educational services in the broadest sense arranged around the town to meet demand



and local needs. Post 16 provision would continue to be provided by the Institute (in new buildings) and the Sixth Form College in the centre of town and also on the campuses as required.

There could be six secondary non-selective and non-denominational secondary schools (with or without sixth forms). Each would serve an approximate 60-degree sector (a Learning Zone) around the central trust office (North East/East/South East/South West/West/North West). Alderman Blaxill and Thomas, Lord Audley schools might not be retained separately because they are so close to each other and could be replaced with one school serving that sector of the town. St Helena could be relocated to serve a sector currently with no school. Sir Charles Lucas could be relocated so that its current catchment area was split between at least two schools to help to address some of the underlying issues affecting its ability to reach all the national floor targets for GCSE.

Mapping the current secondary schools (but their names and locations might change) on to the sectors would give:

- **NE**     **The Gilberd**
- **E**       **Sir Charles Lucas**
- **SE**     **Alderman Blaxill and Thomas, Lord Audley (replaced by one school)**
- **SW**     **Philip Morant**
- **W**       **The Stanway**
- **NW**     **(relocated 'St Helena')**

The admissions arrangements and careful definition of the sectors or Learning Zones would ensure that each school enrolled a 'fair' cross section of pupils. This would be a particular challenge in the East/South East sectors.

Thurstable School is again outside this model and would continue to serve its existing priority admissions area. It could be a member of the trust and contribute to its development and enjoy the centrally provided support from the trust office and from other partners.

The numbers of sixth form pupils currently attending Philip Morant School would have to be accommodated at the Colchester Sixth Form College and Colchester Institute if it were decided that no school would have a sixth form. The Sixth Form College might have spaces because of the opening of the South West Ipswich South Suffolk (SWISS) Sixth Form Centre and the new sixth form at Notley High School, both of which might impact on student numbers there.





Six secondary schools, each of approximately 1200 pupils, (discounting the Grammar Schools and St Benedict's) would meet currently forecast need in Colchester town in 2012. With 1200 pupils each school would be of a size that could be sensibly expanded if additional pupils were generated by the new housing that might be built in parts of the town.

- 4.7 A number of other options were considered as part of this consultation but were discounted. For details and reasons why they were discounted please see Annex 2.

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## Notes

- 1 Special measures is the term used by Ofsted following an inspection when a school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.
- 2 Notice to Improve is the term used by Ofsted when schools are “requiring significant improvement because they are performing significantly less well than they might be expected to considering the school’s circumstances. A school which is currently failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, but has the capacity to improve, will also be in this category.”
- 3 The national floor target is for at least 30% of pupils to achieve 5+ A\* – C GCSEs including English and Mathematics.
- 4 It should be recognised that for both the main political parties academies are considered a key plank of education policy and instrumental in driving up standards.
- 5 Through brought-forward Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding.
- 6 The Department for Children, Schools and Families describes Building Schools for the Future (BSF) as “the biggest ever schools buildings investment programme. The aim is to rebuild or renew nearly every secondary school in England.”



## 5. Proposed schedule

<b>17 June 2008</b>	Cabinet meeting to agree the paper ‘Raising achievement through the transformation of secondary schooling in Colchester’ – The Cabinet was requested to comment on the intention to consult on proposals and options to deliver this initiative		
<b>July 2008 – October 2008</b>	Informal discussions with stakeholders and potential partners to develop proposals and options for consultation		
<b>17 October 2008</b>	Leader and officers to meet with Headteachers and Governors of the following schools:		
	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>The Stanway</b></p> <p><b>Alderman Blaxill</b></p> <p><b>St Helena</b></p> <p><b>Philip Morant</b></p> <p><b>St Benedict’s</b></p> <p><b>Colchester County High</b></p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Thomas Lord Audley</b></p> <p><b>Sir Charles Lucas</b></p> <p><b>Gilberd</b></p> <p><b>Thurstable</b></p> <p><b>Colchester Royal Grammar</b></p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>The Stanway</b></p> <p><b>Alderman Blaxill</b></p> <p><b>St Helena</b></p> <p><b>Philip Morant</b></p> <p><b>St Benedict’s</b></p> <p><b>Colchester County High</b></p>	<p><b>Thomas Lord Audley</b></p> <p><b>Sir Charles Lucas</b></p> <p><b>Gilberd</b></p> <p><b>Thurstable</b></p> <p><b>Colchester Royal Grammar</b></p>
<p><b>The Stanway</b></p> <p><b>Alderman Blaxill</b></p> <p><b>St Helena</b></p> <p><b>Philip Morant</b></p> <p><b>St Benedict’s</b></p> <p><b>Colchester County High</b></p>	<p><b>Thomas Lord Audley</b></p> <p><b>Sir Charles Lucas</b></p> <p><b>Gilberd</b></p> <p><b>Thurstable</b></p> <p><b>Colchester Royal Grammar</b></p>		
<b>November 2008</b>	Public meetings and meetings with stakeholders to consult on the options		
<b>December 2008</b>	Appraisal of the options in light of the responses to the consultation and preparation of a Cabinet paper		
<b>January 2009</b>	Cabinet takes a decision on a single option to take forward for formal consultation		
<b>February 2009</b>	Formal consultation on the single selected option		
<b>March 2009</b>	Appraisal of the option in light of the responses to the consultation and preparation of a final Cabinet paper for decisions on the proposals		



## 6. How you can make your views known

The consultation period will end on 19 December 2008. Consultation meetings have been arranged for:

**Monday 17 November at 7.00 p.m. at Alderman Blaxill**

**Wednesday 19 November at 7.00 p.m. at Thomas Lord Audley**

**Tuesday 25 November at 7.00 p.m. at Sir Charles Lucas**

**Tuesday 9 December at 7.30 p.m. at Colchester Community Stadium**

Anyone with an interest in the proposals is invited to attend one of these meetings.

In addition you may wish to write to us with your comments. This will assist the County Council in reaching a clear understanding of the views held. You may use the form attached, or write separately to the address provided on the form, or email to [admin.strategy@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admin.strategy@essex.gov.uk).

The information contained in this leaflet can be made available in alternative formats on request: large print, Braille, audio tape or disk. We can also translate this document into other languages and provide clarification on any information contained in this document.

The County Council will consider all views submitted by the end of 19 December 2008.

Essex County Council handles information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 and is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. Your answers to this consultation will only be used to assess the community's view of the proposals for secondary education in Colchester and not for any other purpose. We will not give information about you to anyone outside Essex County Council.

## Response form

### Raising achievement through the transformation of secondary schooling in Colchester

Please indicate by a ✓ your view on the options.

- I support Option 1** – to close Thomas, Lord Audley and Alderman Blaxill schools and offer places to pupils living in their priority admission areas at the five schools that ring those areas and to redevelop Sir Charles Lucas Arts College as an academy.
- I support Option 2** – to progress the closure of Alderman Blaxill School and consider the development of a number of federative and trust arrangements in Colchester without the opening of an academy or academies.
- I support Option 3** – to re-organise all the non-selective and non-denominational secondary schools in Colchester town and re-open them in new or existing premises, in new or existing locations (using BSF funding), in some cases with new names.

Please provide any supporting information as to why you support/do not support the options.



Please use the reverse of this sheet as necessary.



Name:

Address:

Interest Group:

(eg parent, teacher, member of the local community etc)

**Please return this form by 19 December 2008 to:**

School Organisation and Planning  
Essex County Council  
Schools, Children and Families Directorate  
PO Box 4261  
County Hall  
Chelmsford CM1 1GS

or use the FREEPOST envelope provided.

Alternatively, email [admin.strategy@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admin.strategy@essex.gov.uk) to make your views known.

Thank you for your response.



## Annex 1

**Academies** – these are publicly funded independent schools catering for pupils of all abilities. A wide range of sponsors, including educational foundations, universities, colleges, business, private school trusts and faith communities, establishes them. Generally, they replace existing poorly performing schools, although some are wholly new schools in areas that have experienced low education achievement. All academies have specialisms. The Government has indicated its commitment to establishing 400 academies, with at least 200 open or in the pipeline by 2010.

**Federations** – the (then) DfES guidance on federations (2003) refers to the fact that the concept of federations has been around for some time – i.e. groups of schools working together to share ideas, best practice and combine management structures. The 2002 Education Act defines a federation as two or more schools with a joint governing body. The DfES guidance defines a federation as “a group of schools with a formal agreement to work together to raise standards”. Schools may federate either:

- **by using the new governance arrangements under the Act; or**
- **by having a formal contract between them with identifiable targets.**

In a **‘soft’ federation** two or more schools work collaboratively together for their mutual benefit, sharing good practice, ideas and perhaps staff. Both schools retain their separate governing bodies, Headteachers, budgets, etc. In a **‘hard’ federation** all the above would happen but the schools move to having one federated governing body and one (usually Executive) Headteacher.

**Trusts** – trust Schools are maintained Foundation Schools supported by a charitable trust. They:

- **are part of the maintained family of schools with funding on the same basis as other maintained schools and subject to the same accountability regime;**
- **are similar to Voluntary Aided and existing Foundation Schools with Foundations – the trust holds the school’s land and buildings, the governing body employs staff and sets admissions arrangements (in accordance with the law and the Admissions Code);**
- **must adhere to the National Curriculum and the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions document; and**
- **must establish Parent Councils if the trust appoints the majority of the governing body.**

There are now 42 trust schools up and running and many more on the trust schools programme that sees schools harness the energy and experience of external partners to raise standards. Schools create long term partnerships with universities, businesses, charities and other schools to improve local education. Partners from all sectors have confirmed their involvement in the trust



programme. These are as diverse as The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Barnardo's, Microsoft, the Co-operative Group, and Unilever. The DCSF believes all schools should be looking to the world of business, charities, higher and further education to improve standards and strengthen leadership. The number of schools currently working towards trust status is more than 390.

Following the Budget the Government announced its ambition that all schools should have at least 30% of students achieving five good GCSEs (A\*-C grade), including English and Maths by 2011 and that trust schools would be very helpful in meeting that challenge. Trust applications focusing on school improvement would therefore be given highest priority in the June 2008 round.

Two examples of recently announced trusts demonstrate the approaches that are being taken to address issues similar to those encountered in Colchester.

Heritage Park Community School, Sheffield, has formed a trust with Barnardo's, Sheffield College, Sheffield Youth Offending and Connexions. Barnardo's will provide expertise in supporting the most vulnerable pupils, and developing links with support agencies both on and off site. Sheffield College will provide opportunities for the staff to support the 14-19 curriculum, and also projects for post 16 courses. Sheffield Youth Offending will bring expertise in managing the most vulnerable pupils, offering alternative provision, as well as knowledge of the legal system. Connexions will support the most vulnerable students in the NEET (not in education, employment or training) category in transition into work or college.

Danum School Technology College in Doncaster, is partnering the Armthorpe School and Doncaster College. The trust will be a distinctive focal point for the borough with respect to raising aspirations. The raising of standards for all students, though particularly socially disadvantaged pupils, will be key. Collaboration between the schools and college will be developed further through the formality of trust arrangements, utilising each school's current areas of specialism (The Arts and Sport, Technology) and developing others to deliver an effective and tailored 14-19 curriculum. Disadvantaged communities in the town centre will benefit from the services and expertise of the public sector partners in the trust.

**Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs)** – these take on specified functions and appropriate funding to enable them to carry out those functions delegated from the Local Authority. Schools and other organisations in the EIP are collectively accountable for delivering particular services and meeting defined targets. These arrangements do not detract from the continued responsibility of local authorities to secure the quality of school education in their areas. Local authorities retain their duty to support and challenge schools causing concern and retain their powers of intervention, for example when a school is placed in special measures, even when an EIP is supporting the school. However, if arrangements are clearly expressed, there is scope for groups of schools to take on significantly enhanced roles and funding from the local authority.



## Annex 2

### Options considered for consultation and discounted

#### 1. To develop a federation and/or trust arrangement of the three schools in south Colchester

The detailed response to the original consultation of the federation of Stanway and Thomas, Lord Audley Schools Joint Strategy Committee raised a number of overarching policy, development related and people and management related issues. It stated specifically that it had not formed a view on the proposal to close Alderman Blaxill School as it had never considered its characteristics or performance. It confirmed that the Thomas, Lord Audley School Governors are very positive about their federation with Stanway School and will be continuing to strive for improvements to the existing school.

The formal response was ‘that in light of the information available at this stage we are unable to support the proposal to close Alderman Blaxill and Thomas, Lord Audley Schools and to establish an academy on the Thomas, Lord Audley site’. It added they would welcome being involved in a more detailed and costed Colchester-wide proposal, taking on board all the issues raised within their response to enable them to form a well-reasoned and argued response which they could recommend to their parents, pupils and staff.

Building on the views of the Joint Strategy Committee an option would be to consider the merits of a federation of the three schools in south Colchester led by the Executive Headteacher and supported by a trust. It would be necessary to assess whether there would be sufficient capacity in such a federation and from the trust to address:

- **the more recent satisfactory progress, but the overall inadequate progress at Alderman Blaxill School since it was made subject to Special Measures;**
- **the need to continue to secure recent improvements at Thomas, Lord Audley School; and,**
- **the need to maintain and improve the performance of the Stanway School.**

It would also be necessary to assess the actual and projected pupil numbers in the area that would be served by such a federation to consider its overall viability and that of the individual schools within it. Essex County Council and the federation could develop trust arrangements with the range of relevant and interested partners identified in option 2 above.

It is anticipated that this option would enjoy some public support but Essex County Council would need to be assured that it addressed the issues of **pupil numbers** and **standards of education**. This option would only work with certain very strong caveats, milestones and targets built into its development. The current federation’s Joint Strategy Committee would also have to be persuaded





of the case for incorporating Alderman Blaxill School into the existing federative arrangements.

Whilst this option can be seen as having some merits in providing a possible solution to the issues in south Colchester it would not address the town-wide issues of pupil numbers and standards of education and has therefore been discounted.

**2. To develop a federation and/or trust arrangement for two schools in south Colchester and associate the third school with it**

The hard federation between Stanway School and Thomas, Lord Audley School is already established. This does not include Alderman Blaxill School, which sits between them geographically, and does not resolve the problem of decreasing pupil numbers and the pupil number forecasts at Thomas, Lord Audley School. It is a possible option for the existing federation to continue and for the schools to continue to support Alderman Blaxill School without federating with it. However, this is unlikely to secure long term resilience in terms of **pupil numbers** and **standards of education** for the schools.

This option has been discounted because it is too much like the current situation and therefore unlikely to bring about the required improvements.

**3. To progress the closure of Alderman Blaxill School and Thomas, Lord Audley School and consider their replacement with a new school with or without the opening of an academy**

**Option A** – Essex County Council could take forward similar proposals for secondary education in south Colchester as those set out in the original consultation and decide to approve the closure of Alderman Blaxill School and the Thomas, Lord Audley School on 31 August 2009. This would be followed by the preparation and submission to the DCSF of an Expression of Interest to establish an academy on the site of the Thomas, Lord Audley School on 1 September 2009 or elsewhere in south Colchester.

It is known from the responses to the original consultation that this option does not enjoy broad public support and the opening of an academy on the Thomas, Lord Audley site was not considered appropriate by the DCSF in the circumstances at the time. However, the Secretary of State has recently decided to secure the closure or a ‘structural’ solution (academy, trust or federation) for any school judged unlikely to achieve the 30% floor target for 5+ A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths by 2011. The Government’s expectation is that by 2011 all schools will be above the floor target, with any stuck below it being closed or replaced by an academy or National Challenge trust. This has resulted in the need to consider this option again.



Any option that involves the closure of Alderman Blaxill is contentious. This option containing an academy proposal is additionally contentious because of some anti-academy feeling and the original proposal to open an academy on a site in a neighbouring community. The option might be less contentious if a way could be found of keeping some provision on the Alderman Blaxill School site to serve the family of schools in south Colchester or Colchester as a whole.

This option has been discounted because it is the same as the original proposal and received only limited support during the previous public consultation.

**Option B** – close Thomas, Lord Audley and Alderman Blaxill and using BSF funding replace them with a single new school (not an academy) on a new site that would enable it to serve those communities currently in the priority admissions areas of the predecessor schools. Members believe a site might be made available on the Garrison redevelopment.

This option has been discounted because it is similar to the original proposal to replace both schools with an academy. This met some opposition because pupils from Shrub End would need to travel to Monkwick. If a new school were built on the Garrison redevelopment the reverse would be true.

**4. To develop plans to rearrange the governance and organisation of all non-selective secondary schools in Colchester to be organised under the leadership of a Colchester Education trust but without the simultaneous development of federation arrangements proposed in Option 2**

The trust could also include Colchester Institute and Colchester Sixth Form College. The Sixth Form College is designated as ‘outstanding’ by OfSTED. The University of Essex, together with the Garrison, and other relevant and interested parties could join the trust.

The first task of the trust would be to address standards of education and pupil numbers in secondary schools in Colchester, in particular at Alderman Blaxill, Thomas, Lord Audley and Sir Charles Lucas schools. The trust would need to decide what approach to take with the three schools, on their existing or new sites, with or without the development of an academy or academies.

This option has been discounted because even if a trust of this type could be established it would need significant additional capacity and expertise drawn from all partners to do what was needed. It would be expected to succeed in an area where Essex County Council has so far been unable to secure majority agreement to its proposals for action.



## 5. To develop other Colchester-wide solutions

Several respondents to the original consultation raised the possibility of considering alternative proposals in Colchester around the possible federation of schools. One suggestion was that Alderman Blaxill School might be federated with the Philip Morant School; but the response from that school did not mention this possibility. The Alderman Blaxill School Parent and Community Forum suggested the federation of Alderman Blaxill School with another school, but felt it would be for the County Council to determine which school this should be. Essex County Council is of the view that it is unlikely to be able to identify any other Colchester secondary school with sufficient capacity to bring about the significant improvements required at Alderman Blaxill School, willing to do so through federation. However, it would be an option to consider with Headteachers and Governors, if any other school was willing to enter into such a federation with Alderman Blaxill School.

This option has been discounted because initial soundings have suggested that no other school would be willing to enter into federation with Alderman Blaxill School.



**The information contained in this leaflet is published by Essex County Council.**

You can contact us in the following ways:

**By post:**

School Organisation and Planning  
Essex County Council  
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PO Box 4261  
County Hall  
Chelmsford CM1 1GS

**By telephone:**

01245 436 726

**By email:**

[admin.strategy@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admin.strategy@essex.gov.uk)

**Visit our website:**

[www.essex.gov.uk/colchesterschools](http://www.essex.gov.uk/colchesterschools)

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Published October 2008



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





## Policy Review and Development Panel

Item

7

3 November 2008

Report of	Head of Life Opportunities	Author	Gareth Mitchell ☎ 506972
Title	Essex County Council Consultation on Secondary Education in Colchester		
Wards affected	All Wards		

**This report seeks the panel's recommendations regarding Essex County Council's Consultation on Secondary Education in Colchester.**

### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 At the request of the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships, the panel is requested to consider the Essex County Council Consultation on Secondary Education in Colchester and provide recommendations to support the Portfolio Holder's response to the consultation on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 In order to support the panel's deliberations Mr Jonathan Tippett, has been asked to make a presentation to the Panel in his capacity both as Executive Headteacher of the Thomas Lord Audley School and Language College and Alderman Blaxill School, and as Chair of the North East Association of Secondary Heads in Essex.

### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 As the district local authority, the Council recognises the importance of educational performance in improving the life opportunities of local children and young people.
- 2.2 The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships will respond to this consultation on behalf of the Council in keeping with the provisions of the Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members. The Portfolio Holder has asked the Policy Review and Development Panel to consider the consultation options and provide recommendations to support her formal response.
- 2.3 As a signatory to the Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA), the Council has agreed to 'have regard' to the LAA targets that relate to education. The Council is also working in partnership with other agencies towards the achievement of more local Life Opportunities targets relating to educational attainment through the Colchester Public Service Partnership. These targets are set out at the end of this report.

### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The panel could choose not to provide recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships to support her response to the consultation. To do so would be to miss the opportunity for panel members to provide input to a consultation on options that will have a significant impact on the life of the borough.

## **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1 Arrangements had been put in place early in the Municipal Year for the Panel to undertake a review of Educational Attainment in Colchester at its meeting on 3 November 2008. On Monday 20 October 2008, Essex County Council published a public consultation on secondary education in Colchester which seeks public responses to three options aimed at ensuring the delivery of an excellent education for all pupils in Colchester. As a consequence of this current situation it has been agreed that the opportunity be taken for the Panel to provide recommendations to the Portfolio Holder on the consultation. A copy of the consultation document has been included in this agenda. The consultation closes on 19 December 2008.
- 4.2 The consultation document emphasises the following contextual factors for the proposals:-
- Persistent and ongoing concerns about standards in some schools;
  - Forecasts of pupil numbers in the town and the implications for the viability of some of the schools;
  - The development of potential federative and trust arrangements and academies
- 4.3 The three options for consultation are as follows:-
1. to close Thomas, Lord Audley and Alderman Blaxill schools and offer places to pupils living in their priority admission areas at the five schools that ring those areas and to redevelop Sir Charles Lucas Arts College as an academy.
  2. to progress the closure of Alderman Blaxill School and consider the development of a number of federative and trust arrangements in Colchester without the opening of an academy or academies.
  3. to re-organise all the non-selective and non-denominational secondary schools in Colchester town and re-open them in new or existing premises, in new or existing locations (using BSF funding), in some cases with new names.
- 4.4 Option 1 is Essex County Council's preferred option.
- 4.5 Annex 1 of the consultation document provides an explanation of the different types of school models mentioned in the consultation document.
- 4.6 Annex 2 of the consultation document sets out the other options that were considered for consultation and discounted.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 In addition to Mr Tippett, other Headteachers and/or representatives of any groups affiliated with the schools have been invited to attend the meeting and make contributions, together with representatives from the Sixth Form College, Colchester Institute, the University of Essex, the Garrison, the National Union of Teachers and Essex Primary Heads Association.
- 5.2 A representative from Essex County Council has been asked to attend the meeting. It is not known, at the time of writing the report whether this request will be met.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Panel receive representations from the various contributors and then formulate recommendations on the options contained in the consultation document for the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships to consider.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

- 6.1 Opportunities for Young People in one of the Key Aims in the Council's Strategic Plan.

## **7. Consultation and Publicity Considerations**

- 7.1 Invitations to this meeting have been extended to various groups as indicated in paragraph 5.1 above and details of the meeting have been made available on the Council's web site. Arrangements have been made for a press release to be issued. The consultation document itself has details of public meetings at various locations in Colchester in November and December 2008.

## **8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

- 8.1 Access to good quality education is recognised as a key determinant of future life opportunities.

## **9. Standard References**

- 9.1 There are no particular references to the financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.



## ESSEX LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT AND LIFE OPPORTUNITIES TARGETS

The Council has signed-up to 'have regard' to the following Local Area Agreement targets that relate to education:

- 79: Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19
- 117: % 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
- 72: Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy
- 73: Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Threshold)
- 74: Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3 (Threshold)
- 75: Achievement of 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Threshold)
- 78: Achievement of 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Floor)
- 83: Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3
- 92: Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest
- 93: Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- 94: Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- 95: Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- 96: Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- 97: Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- 98: Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- 99: Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2
- 100: Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2
- 101: Children in care achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)
- 87: Secondary school persistent absence rate
- 87A: Primary school persistent absence rate

The Council is also working in partnership with other agencies towards the achievement of more local Life Opportunities targets relating to educational attainment through the Colchester Public Service Partnership:

1. Improve the number of schools where less than 65% of pupils achieved KS2 level 4 or above in English by 2 schools by Dec 08
2. Improve the number of schools where less than 65% of pupils achieved KS2 level 4 or above in Maths by 2 schools by Dec 08
3. Improve the percentage of half day sessions missed in primary schools from 5.2% to 4.9% and secondary schools from 7.7% to 7.1%
4. Reduce the difference between boys' and girls' attainment in reading at KS2 by 2%



## Policy Review and Development Panel

Item

8

3 November 2008

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Corporate Management</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Amanda Chidgey</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Work Programme 2008/09</b>		<b>☎ 282227</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

This report sets out the current Work Programme 2008/2009 for the Policy Review and Development Panel.

### 1. Decision Required

- 1.1 The Policy Review and Development Panel is asked to consider and confirm, as appropriate, the Panel's work programme for 2008/09, as attached.

### 2. Introduction

- 2.1 At each meeting of the Panel, the opportunity can be taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances and in the light of any new requests.

### 3. Current Situation

- 3.1 The work involved in the Waste and Recycling Review has meant that the decision making timetable for this issue has been amended. The results of the Options Appraisal are now due for consideration by this Panel on 19 January 2009. This will be followed by submission of the results to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel on 20 January 2009, followed by consideration by the Cabinet on 28 January 2009.
- 3.2 In view of the revised arrangements for this meeting to provide for the consideration of the Secondary Education consultation, the decision has been taken to defer the other scheduled items for this meeting to the meeting taking place on 19 January 2009. The Work Programme has therefore been updated to reflect the issues identified above.
- 3.3 At the time of writing the report, work is progressing on the nomination of representatives to the Task and Finish Groups relating to the Mayoralty and Night time Economy, appointment of lead officers / project managers and in setting up meeting dates.
- 3.4 The current situation regarding Councillor membership of the Groups is as follows:

Night Time Economy Task and Finish Group –  
Councillor Naish (confirmed),  
Councillor B. Oxford (confirmed),  
Councillor Davies (awaiting confirmation),  
Councillor Barlow (awaiting confirmation),

20mph speed limit Task and Finish Group –  
Councillor Ford (confirmed),  
Councillor G. Oxford (confirmed),  
Councillor Bentley (awaiting confirmation),  
Name of Liberal Democrat Councillor awaited.

Mayoralty Task and Finish Group –  
Councillor Naish (confirmed),  
Councillor Hardy (awaiting confirmation),  
Names of Liberal Democrat and Independent Councillor awaited.

#### **4. Alternative options**

- 4.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

#### **5. Standard References**

- 5.1 There are no specific strategic plan references or financial, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety, health and safety, publicity and risk management implications in this matter.

Policy Review and Development Panel  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09**

	<u>16 June 2008</u>	<u>18 August 2008</u>	<u>30 September 2008</u>
<b>Policy Initiatives</b>		Night-time Economy - briefing paper to include the Annual Partnership Plan and possibly determination of Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Group; Historic Town Centre Improvement - briefing paper to include pedestrian improvements and the town centre environment and possibly determination of Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Group;	Town Centre Management - briefing paper on future arrangements.
<b>Review of Corporate Policies</b>		Housing Strategy - final review prior to resubmission to Cabinet	Flexible Working - review of corporate policy;
<b>Task and Finish Groups</b>			20mph speed limits within the urban areas of the Borough Certain issues relating to the Mayoralty. Night Time Economy

	<b><u>3 November 2008</u></b>	<b><u>19 January 2009</u></b>	<b><u>2 March 2009</u></b>
<b>Policy Initiatives</b>	Secondary Education - Educational Attainment in the Borough with invitation to guest speakers (now consideration of ECC consultation on Secondary Education in Colchester).	Climate Change Sustainability Issues / Neighbourhood Working - briefing paper.	
<b>Review of Corporate Policies</b>		Waste and Recycling Review - result of Options Appraisal	
<b>Task and Finish Groups</b>		20 mph technical assessment	Night Time Economy Mayoralty Issues

**Items to be scheduled:** Equality and Diversity - review of corporate policy.