

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3rd March 2015

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE BY TUDOR GRANGE ACADEMY SHORT, SHARP REVIEW – FURTHER FEEDBACK

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Phil Mould, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism. |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | No, though he did participate in the Executive Committee's decision about the group's first recommendation. |
| Relevant Director | Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive. |
| Ward(s) Affected | No specific ward relevance. |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the action that has been taken in response to the recommendations that were proposed by the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review.
- 1.2 The report also provides Members with an opportunity to note that this report is due to be submitted for consideration in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) Good Scrutiny Awards 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE

- 1) **to NOTE the submission of the final report produced by the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Awards process for 2015; and**
- 2) **that the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 The Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review was launched in August 2014. The review was undertaken at the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to address concerns raised by local residents in email correspondence regarding changes that Tudor Grange Academy Redditch proposed to make to the school's admissions process.
- 3.2 Five Members were appointed to the review; Councillors P Witherspoon (Chair), C Gandy, P Hill, D Thain and N Wood-Ford. The review was completed in November 2014.

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- 3.3 At the end of the review Members proposed three recommendations. The first of these recommendations requested that the Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council write to the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for Schools to request that specific guidance be provided to schools regarding changes to the age range of pupils when operating in a three-tier education system. This recommendation was approved by the Council's Executive Committee on 16th December 2014.
- 3.4 Two further recommendations were proposed for the consideration of Worcestershire County Council as the local education authority. Worcestershire County Council considered the group's proposals and Members were advised in January 2015 that the Council had approved one of the recommendations in an amended form, though had rejected the other recommendation.

Recommendation 1: Letter to the Secretary of State for Education and Minister of State for Schools

- 3.5 The Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for Schools in January 2015. A response was received from the Right Honourable David Laws MP, Minister of State for Schools, in early February.
- 3.6 The letter acknowledges receipt of the group's report and notes the concerns that had been raised by parents and schools for the consideration of the group. Reference is made in the response to the need for schools to engage in effective consultation when proposing to make changes and to seek to address any concerns before implementing their proposals. The letter also advises that there is an expectation that schools will work with local authorities to ensure that proposals do not disrupt wider local arrangements. In conclusion the letter advises that the Minister of State for Schools has asked departmental officials to review current guidance to ensure that expectations are clear in the context of three-tier arrangements.

Recommendation 2: Borough Councillors' involvement in the changing relationship with local schools.

- 3.7 Worcestershire County Council has recently been consulting on a new commissioning framework for educational services. Under this commissioning framework the Council will have a changing relationship with local schools. The Council is keen to explore new opportunities to involve Councillors, including Borough Councillors in Redditch, in this process.
- 3.8 As part of this process Officers from Worcestershire County Council delivered a briefing to Members on the subject of the changing school landscape on Friday 27th February. All Borough and County Councillors representing the Borough of Redditch were invited to attend this briefing. At the time of writing the briefing had

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not yet taken place, though it is anticipated that future opportunities to involve Borough Councillors in this process will be discussed during the meeting.

CfPS – Good Scrutiny Awards

- 3.9 Each year the CfPS, a national body and charity which focuses on scrutiny, accountability and good governance in the public sector, hosts a good scrutiny awards event. Local authorities are eligible to submit scrutiny reviews for consideration as part of the awards process. The CfPS then selects a shortlist from all of the entries that have been received. Redditch Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny process has previously been recognised in the good scrutiny awards; the Neighbourhood Groups Task and Finish review received a commendation in 2010.
- 3.10 Participation in the Good Scrutiny Awards can help to raise the profile of good scrutiny work. The Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review could be considered to be a good piece of scrutiny work due to the constructive response that has been received from both a Government Minister and from Worcestershire County Council. The Chair of the Short, Sharp Review has therefore asked to submit the report in the awards.

Financial Implications

- 3.11 There will be the cost of Officer time to prepare and submit the application forms for the good scrutiny awards, though it is not anticipated that this will be significant.

Legal Implications

- 3.12 There are no legal implications directly relating to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.13 There is no guarantee that any entries submitted in the Good Scrutiny Awards will be shortlisted by the CfPS. However, Members should be aware that if the review is shortlisted for an award the Council would need to produce an A1 poster to support the application. Officers have confirmed that this should be possible to produce within existing resources.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 The review was launched in direct response to concerns raised by the community. By submitting the review in the Good Scrutiny Awards Members could help to maintain the high profile of the subject at a national level.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No risks have been identified.

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5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

CfPS Good Scrutiny Awards Criteria

CfPS Good Scrutiny Awards Submission form

Letter from the Rt Hon David Laws MP (February 2015)

The final report of the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review

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