

<b>Report to :</b>	<b>EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD</b>
<b>Date :</b>	25 October 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Bob Berry, Interim Assistant Executive Director, Learning
<b>Subject :</b>	<b>FREE SCHOOL APPLICATION IN TAMESIDE</b>
<b>Report Summary :</b>	The following report provides an update on the Free School application by Laurus Trust/Cheadle Hulme High School in Tameside.
<b>Recommendations :</b>	That the content of the report be noted.
<b>Links to Sustainable Community Strategy :</b>	The new school will make a contribution to the borough's strategic aims with respect to economic regeneration.
<b>Policy Implications :</b>	This is in line with council policy.
<b>Financial Implications : (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)</b>	<p>It should be noted that the Council is working in collaboration with the Department For Education, the Education Funding Agency and the Laurus Trust to identify a preferred site location within the borough for the free school to ensure the site location addresses the requirements of all parties. An evaluation of the associated financial impact on the Council's medium and longer term financial strategy will be required once a site has been identified and agreed. There is a clear risk to the Council that a planned capital receipt may no longer materialise once the site has been agreed. This may impact on the Council's future capital investment proposals. In addition, there may be further recurrent financial implications due to a potential loss of business rates or council tax revenue dependent on the identified site. The impact of these implications will need to be evaluated once the site has been identified alongside the assumptions included within the Council's medium and longer term financial planning.</p> <p>An associated implication relates to the Tameside secondary schools that were constructed via Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts within the Building Schools for the Future initiative. All pupil places within these schools need to be occupied to ensure the appropriate level of delegated section 251 budget is received as a contribution towards the financing of the schools' annual cost of the PFI contracts. It should be noted that currently some schools within PFI contracts either have or are projecting deficit balances within the current three year period. A contributing factor of these deficit balances has been lower prior year pupil year groups compared to the respective whole school capacity intake.</p> <p>A significant increase in secondary aged pupil numbers within the borough is projected to materialise over the next few years. Whilst the addition of the proposed Free School within the borough will assist the Council in ensuring that sufficient places are available for the projected pupil number</p>

increase over the medium term, there is a clear risk that in future years the schools within PFI contracts may then be exposed to reduced pupil numbers on roll due to the additional secondary school place capacity within the borough. This may then impact on the resourcing of the annual PFI contract contributions by these schools via their delegated section 251 budget allocations as previously explained.

**Legal Implications :**  
**(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

Under the Education Act 2011 Secretary of State can use any land in which a freehold or leasehold interest is held by the local authority and which has been used for any school (including any academy) in the last 8 years for a free school or use the funding from the disposal to create one.

**Risk Management :**

If the new school is not built the council faces considerable reputational damage if there are not sufficient school places.

**Access to Information :**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Bob Berry, Interim Assistant Executive Director, Learning



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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The following report provides an update on the Free School application by Cheadle Hulme High School in Tameside.

## **2 UPDATE**

- 2.1 Since the last Education Attainment Improvement Board the local authority has continued to engage with the Regional Schools Commissioner, the Education Funding Agency, and the senior leadership of Cheadle Hulme High School.
- 2.2 The aim of the meetings that have taken place has been to ensure that all strategic planning in relation to the new school are in the best interests of Tameside MBC.
- 2.3 On August 26 2016 The Principal of Cheadle Hulme High School, Linda Magrath, met with the Director of Childrens' Services, Stephanie Butterworth, and also present was the Interim Assistant Executive Director for Education, Bob Berry. At the meeting the educational achievements of Cheadle Hulme High School were discussed, as well as the educational vision for the school in Tameside. A further meeting to be held at Cheadle Hulme High School, which would include representation from the Directorate of Place, as well as representatives from the Education Funding Agency was planned.
- 2.4 This meeting took place at Cheadle Hulme High School on the afternoon of Thursday 15 September 2016. Damien Bourke, Assistant Executive Director for Development, Growth and Investment, attended along with the project manager from the office of the Regional Schools Commissioner, and also planners from the Education Funding Agency.
- 2.5 The key aim of the meeting was to have an initial discussion about the viability of certain sites in the Ashton area of Tameside. Although the Education Funding Agency are in possession of maps detailing available sites in Tameside, they are not in possession of the most up-to-date information relating to the ownership of those sites, nor any current or potential plans for their use, all of which was provided by the Assistant Executive Director, Development, Growth and Investment.
- 2.6 At a second meeting held in Ashton on 10 October 2016 the potential sites were scrutinised in more detail. An emerging challenge for the group is the fact that, given the size of the new school, it is highly unlikely to be completed by September 2018, so a temporary site for Year 7 students will also need to be provided.
- 2.7 The Board should note that the Laurus Trust are happy to work with Tameside MBC in the naming of the school, the 'Ryecroft School' that has appeared in some documentation is purely to be seen as a working name.

## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the Board are kept up to date with developments.