

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Executive  
18 February 2009.

**Report of** Director of Transformation

**Subject** Earlham School – consultation on closure, and re-opening  
as an Academy

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### Purpose

To seek Executive views on the County Council's proposal to close Earlham School, and turn it into an Academy.

### Recommendations

That Executive:

- (1) notes the findings of the Scrutiny Committee discussions at its meeting on 12 February 2009;
- (2) discusses and agrees a proposed formal response to the Norfolk County Council's consultation;
- (3) delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise a response by the revised deadline of 20 February 2009.

### Financial Consequences

There are no financial consequences to this report.

### Risk Assessment

The potential risks of establishing an Academy will be explored in discussions with the Scrutiny Committee on 12 February. These will be reported to the Executive.

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet all of the City Council's strategic priorities. Educational attainment is also one of the key priorities set out in the City Council's bid for unitary status for the city.

**Executive Member:** Councillor Sands - Children and Young People

**Ward:** All

### Contact Officers

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## Report

1. Norfolk County Council recently sent out a consultation letter seeking views on a proposal to close Earlham School on 31 August 2009, and re-open it from September 2009 as an Academy. They are seeking views by 13 February 2009.
2. Ed Balls, Schools Secretary, has recently agreed to the expression of interest to transform Earlham High School into an Academy. This means that detailed plans can be drawn up as part of a feasibility study, to be considered alongside responses from the public consultation.
3. Following this initial consultation a report will then go before Norfolk County Council's Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 11 March 2009 and full County Council on 6 April 2009. There will then be a further six week consultation before a final decision is made on 15 June 2009
4. It is important that the City Council responds to the consultation. For some time the Council has had concerns about the levels of educational attainment in city schools, and Earlham School has been one of the areas of highest concern. Our proposal for a unitary council for Norwich has identified educational attainment as one of the new council's highest priorities, and full Council recently adopted the "Campus Norwich" concept which would provide for a collective and inclusive approach to education across the whole city area. It is therefore important to ensure that any changes to current educational arrangements will fit with our high aspirations for all children in the city area.
5. The City Council's Scrutiny Committee has arranged for a full discussion on the County Council proposal at its meeting on 12 February, including questions to many of the key proponents for the change. The Executive will therefore wish to take note of the findings of the Scrutiny Committee before deciding on a formal response on behalf of the City Council.
6. Given that this Executive was not meeting until 18 February, Norfolk County Council has kindly agreed to extend their deadline for our response until Friday 20 February. We therefore propose that, following discussions at the Executive on 18 February, the Executive delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise a response by this revised deadline.