

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **23 November 2009**

By: **Director of Law & Personnel**

Title of report: **Statutory Consultation: Closure of Hillcrest, The Grove and Filsham Valley schools**

Purpose of report: **To inform Scrutiny Committee members of the report being taken to Cabinet on 24 November outlining the statutory consultation on the closure of Hillcrest, The Grove and Filsham Valley schools**

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**Recommendation: the committee is recommended to consider and provide comments on the recommendations presented in the Cabinet report relating to the proposed closure of Hillcrest, The Grove and Filsham Valley schools**

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## **1. Background Information**

1.1 The University of Brighton (lead sponsor) and British Telecom and East Sussex County Council (both co-sponsors) are sponsoring the development of two new academies in Hastings and St Leonards. The proposal is that these academies, known as Academy East and Academy West, will replace three of the current secondary schools: Hillcrest, The Grove and Filsham Valley by 2011.

1.2 The proposal for the two new academies is currently in its Feasibility Phase. Outline plans for the academies (known as Expressions of Interest) were agreed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) during the summer. This paved the way for formal consultation to take place.

1.3 Between 7 September and 19 October 2009 the local authority consulted on:

- closing Hillcrest School (to make way for Academy East); and
- closing The Grove and Filsham Valley School (to make way for Academy West)

1.4 During the same period additional consultation was carried out by the sponsors on their proposal to open the two academies.

1.5 A report regarding feedback from the statutory consultation to close Hillcrest, The Grove and Filsham Valley Schools is being considered by Cabinet on 24 November. This report has been included on the agenda to give Committee members an opportunity to provide comments on it before the Cabinet meeting on 24 November 2009. The Cabinet report was not available for publication when this Scrutiny Committee agenda was produced. It will therefore be circulated to members prior to the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

1.6 The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has previously met with the sponsors on two occasions (9 March and 1 September 2009). This has enabled the committee to hear from and question the sponsors on the proposals to develop the two academies.

## **2. Conclusion and Recommendations**

2.1 By bringing the Cabinet report to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee it allows scrutiny an opportunity to consider and provide comments to Cabinet prior it making a decision on 24 November.

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Local Members: All Background Docs: Cabinet reports dated 07 July 2009 and 25 November 2008