

Committee:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date:	<b>11 March 2008</b>
Title of Report:	<b>Award of the Raising Attainment in the Hastings Schools Collaboration Contract following the completion of the evaluation of tenders</b>
By:	<b>Director of Children's Services</b>
Purpose of Report:	<b>To seek agreement for the award of the 'Raising Attainment in the Hastings Schools Collaboration' Contract to Ninestiles Plus</b>

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**Recommendation:**

**The Cabinet is recommended to approve the award of the Raising Attainment in the Hastings Schools collaboration contract to Ninestiles Plus, subject to the finalisation of contract terms to the satisfaction of the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Law and Personnel**

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**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 The financial appraisal relating to the proposal contains exempt information and is set out in the confidential report elsewhere on the agenda.

**2. Supporting information**

2.1 Improvements to educational standards are urgently required in the Hastings community. Key Stage 4 attainment is of particular concern, being included in the lowest listed within England's most deprived areas. The three 11-16 schools in Hastings – Hillcrest, The Grove and Filsham Valley have found it particularly challenging to achieve the pace of improvement necessary to keep up with national and East Sussex rates of improvement at Key Stage 4 in particular. The gap in levels of attainment at Key Stage 4 between these three schools and local statistical neighbour and national averages has widened in recent years. All three schools share similar but not identical challenges in relation to deprivation, parental preference and staff recruitment and retention, hence their inclusion in this Contract.

2.2 Improvement strategies targeted at individual school level and across the area by a range of agencies have had limited impact. In December 2006, the County Council sought funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to launch an initiative requiring the three schools to collaborate more closely and effectively than hitherto, in order to find a radical solution to their legacy of underachievement. The DCSF supported the Council's plans and initially provided £150,000 in 2006/07 and a further £350,000 in 2007/08.

2.3 The County Council convened meetings with the headteachers and lead governors of each of the three schools in March and July 2006. Following these meetings, the three governing bodies formally agreed to collaborate in the preparation of a contract specification to seek a lead partner school with whom they could work to bring about rapid and sustainable improvement to levels of pupil attainment. The headteachers and chairs of governors of the three schools have been closely involved in all developments at all stages. The bidders' pack with full background information and Contract specification is available to Members in the Members' room.

2.4 Two organisations submitted bids for this contract – The Bishop Bell CE School from Eastbourne and Ninestiles Plus, a company owned by Ninestiles School in Birmingham. Following a detailed technical evaluation of the tenders, including tenderers' presentations and interviews, Ninestiles Plus has received the highest score of 76.1%. The other bidder, The Bishop Bell CE School,

scored 72.6%.

2.5 The Contract Evaluation Team (see Appendix 1) is in agreement that Ninestiles Plus should be awarded the contract in accordance with the Council's Standing Order 8.2 ( Restricted Procedure).

### **3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

3.1 The Cabinet is recommended to approve the award of this contract in accordance with Contract Standing Order 13.

3.2 The recommendation for the selection of Ninestiles Plus is based on its experience in leading and being solely responsible for improvement in three different partner schools, all of which were in areas of deprivation and all of which were the most improved schools in their local authority in the first and second years of this leadership. The headteacher of Ninestiles School, Sir Dexter Hutt, will be the Executive Leader of the three schools, and he has a proven track record of rapid and sustained improvement of schools (including Ninestiles) in more challenging circumstances than those presenting in Hastings.

3.3 Outstanding attributes of Ninestiles as a lead school is evidenced both by Ofsted inspection and sustained raw GCSE results of 70% 5+ A\*- C or above for the last six years. Ninestiles Plus has a large and broad improvement support team with experience and expertise at senior and middle level leadership and subject specific expertise.

3.4 Ninestiles Plus has demonstrated a clear commitment to significantly and rapidly raising Standards, with a willingness to commit to both raising Hillcrest's performance targets for 2009 and each school's performance in 2010 and 2011 to being in the top quarter of all similar schools nationally.

3.5 The contract price would be within the resources agreed. Ninestiles Plus have agreed to commence work on the Contract on 17 March 2008, even though it officially commences on 1 April for three years. Full operational responsibility for running the Collaboration across the three schools commences from September 2008, with an option to extend the Contract to September 2011 at the same price.

3.6 Governance arrangements for contract monitoring by Children's Services Department Senior Management Team members will be established for the contract duration.

**MATT DUNKLEY**

Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: Councillors Birch, Tutt and Waite

Background documents:

**Contract Evaluation Team:**

External Consultants

David Potter, Adviser to DCSF on School Improvement/Ofsted Inspector  
Rob Higham, Research Fellow in the London Centre for Leadership, Institute of Education  
Vivienne Barton, Children's Services Consultant  
Peter Clarke, DCSF

ESCC Officers

Matt Dunkley	Director, CSD
Penny Gaunt	Deputy Director, CSD
Jane Carter	Manager, Contracts Management Team, CSD
Rachel Buckenham/Susan Page	Senior Contracts & Procurement Officers, Contracts Management Team, CSD

Participation in evaluation of presentations

Hastings Core Group Membership:

- Vivienne Barton, ESCC Consultant
- Jenny Jones, Headteacher/Vic Kempner, Chair of Governors, The Grove
- Peter Midwinter, Headteacher/Carole Dixon, Chair of Governors, Filsham Valley School
- Lindsay Hart, Headteacher/Ken Hales, Chair of Governors, Hillcrest School

Greg Roberts, Manager, Strategic Finance, Resources Division, CSD  
Jonathan Ruddock-West, Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic, Law and Personnel, ESCC  
Tony Watson, UNISON  
Roy Bellingham, NASAWT