

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

3 September 2007

The meeting commenced at 9.00 am at the Avondale Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Pam Hargreaves (Deputy Mayor)

Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)

Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Officers:

Paul Walker, Chief Executive

Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services

Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services

Paul Briggs, Assistant Director, Children's Services

Peter McIntosh, Project Manager, Children's Services

Graham Frankland, Head of Property and Procurement Services

Tony Brown, Chief Solicitor

Alastair Rae, Public Relations Officer

Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher

75. Building Schools for the Future: Stage Three Consultation *(Director of Children's Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision (Tests (i) and (ii) apply)

Purpose of report

To request Cabinet to note the outcomes of the third stage of consultation in preparation for Building Schools for the Future.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services introduced the report and its recommendations. The Assistant Director of Children's Services reminded Members that Hartlepool was to be admitted to the BSF programme in 2007 as a Wave 5 Authority, subject to adhering to the timescale indicated in its submission in October 2006. The total amount of BSF funding

available to spend on Hartlepool schools was likely to be between £80 million and £90 million including Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Consultation had been undertaken across three stages from September 2006 until July 2007 and a summary of responses were included within the report with a detailed summary attached by way of appendix.

Following the consultation, the key issues raised and a range of possible options were presented to the Project Board on 16 August 2007 for consideration. The Project Board agreed the following recommendations in relation to these key issues:

The Proposed Closure of Brierton Community School – The Project Board recommended that Cabinet authorise the publication of a statutory public notice in the form of a proposal to discontinue Brierton Community School with effect from 31st August 2009.

Projected pupil numbers for St Hild's Church of England Secondary School – The Project Board recommended that Throston Primary School be named as a partner primary school to both St Hild's and High Tunstall, pending a review of primary school provision that will begin in autumn 2007.

Jesmond Road Primary School – The Project Board recommended that the streets within the Jesmond Road Primary School admission zone which were identified at Appendix 2 should be partnered with High Tunstall College of Science, pending a review of primary school provision that will begin in autumn 2007. The remaining streets within the Jesmond Road Primary School admission zone should be partnered with Dyke House School.

Lynnfield Primary School – The Project Board recommended that Lynnfield Primary School be named as a partner primary school to both Dyke House School and High Tunstall College of Science, pending a review of primary school provision that will begin in autumn 2007.

St Aidan's Church of England Primary School – The Project Board recommended that St Aidan's Church of England Primary School be named as a partner primary school to both Dyke House Secondary School and Manor College of Technology, but further to discussions with the Church of England Diocesan, the Director of Children's Services recommended that St Aidan's Church of England Primary School is confirmed as a partner primary school to Dyke House School, pending a review of primary school provision that will begin in autumn 2007.

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School – The Project Board recommended that Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School continues to be identified as a partner primary school to Dyke House School, pending a review of primary school provision that will begin in autumn 2007.

Rift House Primary School – A consensus could not be reached by the Project Board, therefore Cabinet was asked to determine the most

appropriate transfer arrangements for pupils leaving Rift House School at age 11 and the following options were suggested:

- (a) proceed with partner primary proposals in respect of Rift House School without modification
- (b) amend the partner primary proposals whereby Rift House School becomes a partner primary school for Manor College

Other issues examined within the report included the timing of the closure, support for Brierton pupils and their families, provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and support for Brierton staff. Subject to Cabinet approval, the next steps in the process were listed along with the costs associated with the potential closure of Brierton Community School.

In addition to the above, the Project Board requested that consideration be given to inviting Councillor Pamela Hargreaves to join the Board in light of the relevance of her professional role with children and young people of the area to the Board's work. However, it was suggested that there was no need to modify the Project Board at this current time. The Project Board was thanked for their input and for summarising the vast information available for consideration by Cabinet.

Members were aware that a school closure was a crucial decision that would have a huge impact on pupils in the town but that this was an exciting opportunity for the education provision for future generations of the town. It was noted that within the summary of responses to the consultation, there were some excellent suggestions from young people and it was hoped that these would be considered as part of the transitional arrangements. It was recognised that the consultation process had demonstrated that the Authority was taking a pragmatic approach to the whole process and that views had been listened to and taken on board with some amendments being suggested in relation to the proposed partner primary arrangements.

In order to secure the viability of all schools, Members were keen that the resources available through the BSF programme be fully utilised to ensure that all schools were operated at the same level and that none were perceived as inferior to others. In response to a Member's suggestion that the Brierton land be reserved for future education and community use, it was noted that subject to Cabinet's decision, it would be difficult at the present time to agree a future use of land at Brierton and that all options would need full consideration when this was more appropriate.

With Cabinet's permission, Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher addressed Members. Councillor Akers-Belcher requested reassurances from Cabinet that transport arrangements for children in the Brierton area and a review of catchment areas be examined and that the commitment to the children in the area be continued. In response The Mayor indicated that any decision would take into account the needs and priorities of children across the whole town to ensure that the best opportunities as possible were made available to all children.

In relation to Rift House Primary School and the options proposed above, it was noted that there were concerns about children from the Rift House

area walking to High Tunstall School because of the congestion which already existed on Catcote Road.

Further detailed information was sought on the next steps of the process, in particular how the remaining schools would be developed and how resources were to be allocated. The Assistant Director informed Members that subject to the decision at this meeting, technical advisers would be engaged to identify how resources would be allocated and a programme for the implementation of this.

Decision

(1) That Cabinet authorises the publication of a statutory public notice in the form of a proposal:

- to discontinue Brierton Community School with effect from 31st August 2009
- to approve a two stage closure of Brierton Community School and associated arrangements for transfer of pupils from Brierton to other schools, as described in the Stage 3 consultation document
- to approve the transfer of additionally resourced provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder from Brierton Community School to Manor College of Technology,

(2) That Cabinet approves the partner primary school proposals specified in the Stage 3 consultation document, subject to modifications recommended by the BSF Project Board and Director of Children's Services.

(3) That Cabinet approves modifications to the partner primary proposals as recommended by the BSF Project Board and Director of Children's Services.

(4) That Cabinet approves that partner primary proposals proceed in respect of Rift House School without modification with the provision of transport from the Rift House Estate to High Tunstall College of Science, pending a review of primary school provision that will begin in autumn 2007.

(5) That Cabinet approves the Director of Children's Services to consider as part of the pending review of the Home to School Transport Policy, any transport issues arising from the closure of Brierton School.

(6) That no modification is made to the current membership of the Project Board.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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