

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

20 APRIL 2006

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION / KEY DECISION

Children and Young People Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Cunningham

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ROSEWORTH

1. Summary

This report describes the outcome of consultation on a proposal to close both Redbrook Primary School and Roseworth Primary School and establish a single community primary school in a new building funded with an 80% grant awarded from the DfES Targeted Capital Fund. The remaining 20% would be funded from Council resources.

The new school would be constructed on part of the site occupied by Roseworth Primary School to open in September 2008 with 420 full-time places and an integrated 39-place nursery as part of a foundation unit. The new school would be planned to contribute to the delivery of integrated services for children and families in consultation with other service providers in the Roseworth area.

The proposal was described in a consultation paper circulated to parents, school staff and their representatives, school governors, the Anglican and Catholic dioceses and neighbouring schools. Meetings were held at both schools for parents, staff and their professional representatives. The consensus at all meetings agreed that the proposal would be likely to bring significant benefits for the children of the Roseworth estate.

Concerns were raised over planning issues, particularly the location of the school entrance and the impact on neighbours of parents delivering and collecting children by car. This will be addressed at the design stage, taking account of the results of a Transport Impact Assessment. It is very likely that appropriate conditions would be attached to the granting of planning permission for a new building.

One organisation representing some members of staff sought confirmation that the new school would be a community school (like those to be replaced) so that staff would remain in the employment of the Council. This is the intention of the proposal, subject only to any change in legislation.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to agree that a Statutory Notice be published inviting comment on the Authority's proposal to:

1. close Roseworth Primary School and Redbrook Primary School on 31st August 2008;
2. establish on 1st September 2008 a new community primary school for 420 children, plus a 39-place nursery, in new premises to be constructed on the site of Roseworth Primary School.

A draft Notice is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

Any proposal to change school provision is governed by a statutory process laid down in Sections 28 to 31 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (modified in some details by the Education Act 2002). Following consultation with interested parties, the Authority is required to publish a Statutory Notice of its proposal, in a newspaper and at the sites in question.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgment of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

Methods of Consultation

1. A written paper setting out the rationale for the proposal was circulated to:
 - a. Parents of children attending the two schools or their nurseries;
 - b. All teaching and support staff of both schools;
 - c. Members of the governing bodies of both schools;
 - d. Headteachers of neighbouring schools;
 - e. Ward Councillors for Roseworth;
 - f. The Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses;
 - g. Unions and professional associations representing school staff;
 - h. The Member of Parliament for Stockton North.

The paper was also placed on the Borough Council website.

2. Meetings were held:
 - a. For parents at Redbrook Primary School on 31st January;
 - b. For parents at Roseworth Primary School on 1st February;
 - c. For staff at Redbrook Primary School on 30th January;
 - d. For staff at Roseworth Primary School on 2nd February.
3. The proposal and responses to consultation up to that point were also discussed at meetings of the governing body of Roseworth Primary School on 15th March and Redbrook Primary School on 30th March.

Responses to Consultation

4. The two parents' meetings were arranged at different times of day and were open to parents of children attending either school. A total of 16 parents attended. At both meetings there was a general acknowledgement of the benefits of this proposal for children:
 - a. the improved learning environment and facilities offered by new premises;
 - b. integration of Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in a single building;
 - c. no need to continue mixed-age classes;
 - d. enhanced curricular and extra-curricular opportunities with a larger staff team;
 - e. economies of scale allowing more resources for children's learning;
 - f. improved access and site security measures.
5. One area of concern was that the Redbrook site should not become derelict. The Council would always wish to see its assets used for the benefit of local communities. A full review of all buildings and sites used by Children, Education and Social Care is currently taking place in preparation for integrated service delivery, and it is likely that an appropriate use for the Redbrook site will be identified.
6. Several parents and a resident adjacent to the Roseworth site asked about the entrance to the new school, and the likely impact on neighbours. A new entrance for road traffic will be needed (because the present school will continue to operate while the new building is under construction) and its location will be subject to local consultation as part of the planning process. Separate pedestrian and cycle entrance points will be provided in accordance with a School Travel Plan to be developed as part of the design process.
7. One parent asked whether a larger school might mean larger classes and less individual attention for children. One of the headteachers pointed out that current budget constraints require some mixed-age classes in excess of thirty. School budgets

are largely determined by pupil numbers, and a larger school is likely to be able to spend proportionately more of its resources on staff and less on building maintenance, particularly as new buildings must now be designed with life-cycle costs in mind.

8. The two meetings of staff were attended by 48 staff members and four representatives of unions and professional associations. A senior officer of the Council's Human Resources team explained the procedures normally followed when a proposal of this kind is implemented. A temporary governing body would appoint all staff for the new school (probably during 2008), and the Council would ask that body to ring-fence all posts initially to existing staff of the two schools. Individuals might choose to seek posts elsewhere in the meantime. Every effort would be made to avoid any compulsory redundancy, and officers would work closely with staff and their representatives to secure the best outcome possible in each individual case. Some members of staff found the prospect of two years of uncertainty unsettling.
9. Only one written response has been received. A staff organisation sought clarification that the proposed new school would not be procured under a private finance initiative, perhaps requiring a private-sector facilities management service. The present proposal is for a community school, so that all staff would be Council employees. That intention would not be changed unless it were required by new legislation.
10. The two governing bodies expressed their support for the proposal.

The next steps

11. Should members agree to the recommendation in this report, a Statutory Notice would be published in the press and at the school gates. This would be followed by six weeks in which any person may respond in writing. After the expiry of that period, if no written objections have been received, the Authority may itself determine whether to implement the proposal by delegated decision. If any objections were received, the proposal would be referred to the School Organisation Committee for decision.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

12. The DfES award is intended to cover 80% of the capital costs of the new school. The remainder (£835,825) can be met from within the Authority's planned capital programme budgets for the next three years.
13. Annual revenue savings in excess of £80,000 would be released by the closure of Redbrook as a separate school. This money would be shared among all primary schools according to the Authority's agreed funding formula.

Legal

14. The proposal falls under Sections 28 and 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and Schedule 6 to that Act, both as modified by the Education Act 2002. The consultation process described in this report, and the draft Statutory Notice comply with statutory requirements.
15. Construction of new premises will be subject to the granting of planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. An application will be submitted after consideration of a Transport Impact Assessment and further consultation with residents.

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. A risk assessment has been carried out. The proposal is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Environment

17. A new school building will incorporate sustainable design elements to reduce future maintenance costs and energy consumption.

Community Safety and Well-Being

18. As part of the design and planning process, a Transport Impact Assessment will be carried out and a school travel plan will be developed.

Education and Lifelong Learning

19. The proposed new school will contribute to raising standards. Higher pupil numbers (in comparison with the existing separate schools) will allow improved efficiency in staffing and class organisation.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

20. As detailed in the report.

Name of Contact Officer: John Hegarty
Post Title: Planning and Policy Development Officer (CESC)
Telephone No. 01642 526477
Email Address: john.hegarty@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers

School Organisation Plan 2006-09 available on the Council website. This document sets out the Authority's policies in relation to school organisation.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Roseworth Ward: Councillor B Inman and Councillor K Leonard

Property

The two existing schools consist of five separate buildings, all of which have issues of condition or suitability. Both schools have a double mobile classroom unit. The education Asset Management Plan Statement of Priorities includes a commitment to remove or replace temporary classrooms where possible. This proposal would accomplish that, replacing all existing buildings with a single new building, 80% funded by Government support. The redundant buildings might be demolished or adapted to the requirements of other services of the Council or its partners.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

In respect of

Roseworth Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees and Redbrook Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with Section 28(1) and Section 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Local Education Authority (LEA) intends to:

- I. cease to maintain from 31 August 2008 Roseworth Primary School and Redbrook Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees;
- II. establish on 1 September 2008 a new Community Primary School for 420 boys and girls between the ages of 3 to 11.

The new school will be established in new premises to be constructed close to the existing buildings of Roseworth Primary School at Rudyard Avenue, Stockton-on-Tees. Every pupil on roll at the two schools on 31st August 2008 will be allocated a place at the new school.

The Admission Authority of the proposed school will be Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Local Authority. The number of boys and girls to be admitted to the reception class of the main school at age 4½ in September 2008 and subsequent years will be up to 60. Up to 78 boys and girls aged 3 years and above will be admitted to the nursery. It is intended that the school will have a capacity of 420 full-time places plus 78 part-time nursery places (equivalent to 39 full-time nursery places).

Transport arrangements to the two sites will be determined in the light of a transport impact assessment commissioned by the Authority. The two schools already have co-ordinated access arrangements, and these will be developed into a formal travel plan with the support of the Authority's School Travel Plan Champion.

Within six weeks after the date of publication of these proposals, any person may make representations (either for or against the proposals by sending them in writing to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Children, Education, and Social Care (Ref: JH), PO Box 228, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1XE. If any objections to the proposal are received (and not withdrawn in writing) within the representation period, the Local Authority will send to the School Organisation Committee for the area copies of all comments received, together with the Authority's observations on them.

Ann Baxter, Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

1 May 2006

Explanatory Notes

1. The purposes of this proposal are to support higher standards in teaching and learning, improve cost-effectiveness and provide opportunities for the delivery of integrated services for children and families in the Roseworth community.
2. Parents of children attending the schools have been notified of and consulted on the proposal by letter and at public meetings held on 31 January and 1 February 2006.
3. The Admission Number of the school will be 60. This is the number of pupils that must be admitted in the reception year if applications are received. The admission zones of these two schools will combine to become the admission zone for the new primary school. Parents may express a preference for any school.