

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting10th August 2006

1. Title of Item/Report

Proposed Amalgamation of Roseberry Infant School with Roseberry Junior School

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet at its meeting held on 18 May 2006 agreed to consultation being carried out on the possibility of amalgamating Roseberry Infant School with Roseberry Junior School to form a single primary school with nursery.

A consultation paper was widely circulated and meetings were held for parents and for school staff. The idea of amalgamation was also discussed at meetings of the governing bodies of the two schools, and in a joint meeting of governors and staff from both schools.

That joint meeting acknowledged a need to improve collaboration between the schools, which had declined during a period of temporary leadership at Roseberry Junior School. The principal concern expressed was that an amalgamation would need careful planning and preparation to avoid any adverse impact on standards of education and behaviour. Impending changes in leadership at Roseberry Infant School would make the timing of any amalgamation an important issue. There were also practical issues related to the use of separate buildings some distance apart. A small number present at the meeting opposed the principle of amalgamation, and whilst it was likely that other staff members who were not present would take a similar view, the consensus in the joint meeting was that amalgamation in September next year would allow sufficient time to prepare, agree and implement an action plan for the future of these schools as a single primary school.

Among the small number of parents who responded there was general support for the idea of amalgamation.

The conclusion reached from the consultation exercise was that whilst there was around 400 children who attended these two schools and the nursery at Roseberry, only four people attended the parents' meetings. One other parent sent an email message of support for the idea of

amalgamation. No parent expressed outright opposition to the idea of amalgamation, and it was therefore reasonable to believe that any who were strongly against amalgamation would have made an effort to say so. The joint meeting of governors and staff was well attended, and produced a clear consensus, but not every governor or member of staff was able to attend.

Cabinet was asked to agree to the publication of a Statutory Notice that would in effect give all parents, governors and staff members a second opportunity to comment on the proposed amalgamation, as well as opening consultation to the general public. A draft Notice was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree that a Statutory Notice be published inviting comment on a proposal to:

cease to maintain Roseberry Infant School and Roseberry Junior School with effect from 31 August 2007;
and to establish in the same premises a Community Primary School, with nursery, on 1 September 2007.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Sections 28 to 31 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (modified in some details by the Education Act 2002) lay down a statutory procedure governing major changes to school organisation. Taking account of all views expressed during consultation with interested parties, the Authority may publish a formal proposal by means of a Statutory Notice inviting comment from any person.

This would be followed by six weeks in which any person may comment in writing. After the expiry of that six-week period, the Authority could determine to implement the amalgamation only if no written objections had been received. If there were objections, the proposal would normally be determined by the School Organisation Committee, taking account of all written comments (and the Authority's observations on them) and having regard to statutory guidance issued to decision-makers by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. Any decision of the School Organisation Committee would be final. Should the Committee fail to agree, the proposal would be referred to an independent Adjudicator for decision.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

By no later than midnight on Friday 18th August 2006

Proper Officer
15 August 2006