

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting2nd November 2006

1. Title of Item/Report

Proposed changes to Abbey Hill and Westlands Schools

2. Record of the Decision

Members were reminded that, at its meeting held on 7 September 2006, Cabinet had received a report on the outcome of a review of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Members agreed that consultation should take place on proposed changes including:

a) the enlargement of Abbey Hill School Technology College to create 40 additional places for pupils aged 11-19 with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD);

b) the removal of provision for pupils with ASD from Westlands School;

All the responses received from parents and carers, school staff and governors, health authorities and neighbouring local authorities had been positive. Some concerns were expressed about the impact of change on individual pupils, but no opposition to these changes had emerged. Members were therefore asked to agree the publication of a Statutory Notice, formally proposing the changes for pupils with ASD.

Consultation was continuing on proposed changes to provision at Westlands School and King Edwin School for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulty (BESD). It was explained that this would be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet. A draft Notice was circulated for Members' attention.

RESOLVED that Statutory Notice be published inviting comment on proposals to:

1. increase with effect from 1 September 2008 the number of planned places at Abbey Hill School Technology College from 230 to 270;

2. discontinue with effect from 31 August 2008 provision at

Westlands School for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

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) laid down a statutory procedure governing major changes to school organisation. Having taken account of all views expressed during consultation with interested parties, the next step was to publish a formal proposal by means of a Statutory Notice inviting comment from any person.

This would be followed by two months in which any person may comment in writing. After the expiry of that period, the Authority could determine to implement the proposal 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

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal prejudicial interest in this item, as he was a Governor of Abbey Hill School. Councillor Cunningham left the meeting for the duration of the discussions and voting on this matter.

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item, as she was a Governor of King Edwin's School.

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

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

By no later than Midnight 10th November 2006

Proper Officer
08 September 2006