

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting24th April 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Reorganisation of Education for Children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

2. Record of the Decision

Members were presented with a reported regarding the reorganisation of education for children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). It was noted that consultation had taken place on a possible proposal to close King Edwin School and develop Westlands School as the single specialist centre in the borough for students with BESD. The proposal arose from a review of provision for students with complex needs carried out in 2006.

A consultation paper was distributed to interested parties and meetings were held at King Edwin School for parents and carers and for school staff. The issue was also discussed at a meeting of the Interim Executive Board, the body acting as governing body for the school.

Members were informed that parents and staff expressed concerns over potential disruption to the education of vulnerable young people who found any change of routine unsettling. The timing of the proposal was also questioned. Some parents were not convinced that Westlands School would offer a better service for their children. Members of staff at King Edwin contrasted their own position – facing potential redundancy – with the security of Westlands staff, and suggested an alternative proposal involving closing both schools and establishing a single new BESD school.

The consultation carried out was the first stage of statutory consultation, and it was noted that if it was agreed to proceed to the second stage of consultation, the results of that consultation would be presented to Cabinet in July 2008. Members took into account the outcome of the first stage of consultation before considering whether to proceed to the second stage by publishing a Statutory Notice.

RESOLVED that a statutory Public Notice be issued describing a proposal to close King Edwin School on 31 August 2008.

3. Reasons for the Decision

1. Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 required that local authorities with responsibility for education kept under review their arrangements for special education provision. A review of provision for pupils with complex needs was carried out in 2006/07. One of the conclusions following the review was that provision for specific types of need should be located on a single site where possible.

2. Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 laid down a statutory procedure that must be followed when any proposal to close a maintained school was under consideration. Before deciding whether to publish a Statutory Notice, the Authority must first consult those persons most likely to be affected by the change and must take account of the views expressed.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Cllr Cunningham declared a personal/non-prejudicial interest as a member of a governing body.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

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

By no later than midnight on Friday, 2nd May 2008

Proper Officer
28 April 2008