

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

24 APRIL 2008

**REPORT OF CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

COUNCIL / CABINET DECISION

Children & Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Cunningham

SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN

1. Summary

The Children and Young People Select Committee's investigated a decline in pupil numbers in primary schools in Stockton Borough which means that pupil numbers in secondary schools are now beginning to decline. It is expected that it will be necessary to remove up to 1500 secondary places.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended to Cabinet that:

1. Consideration is given for the Parent Partnership Officer and the Independent Choice Adviser to be closely aligned in order to further improve the advice given to parents.
2. CESC and DNS introduce appropriately timed formal meeting arrangements to improve each others awareness of planning proposals and the impact this has on school places.
3. A 'traffic light' system is introduced and increased use of project management techniques are used by CESC and DNS to show when developments are likely to have a significant impact on school places.
4. CESC ensure that spatial planning information is used effectively to inform the School Organisation Plan.
5. CESC determine arrangements that will improve the information, distribution and consultation process for the next stage of the BSF process.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

In order to assist the determination of school need and location based on the changing demographic nature of Stockton Borough and to ascertain the accuracy of information used for formulating consultation for the BSF programme.

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 judgement 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 considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must 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 (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

1. Planning pupil places has become more important as overall pupil numbers decline across the country and requires local knowledge and interpretation of data. The gathering and analysis of this data and information can be complex and difficult.
2. It is recognised that accurate information needs to be available. The Committee was therefore asked to scrutinise the information being received to ensure confidence in the process especially as decisions were beginning to be made for the Building Schools for the Future programme.

3. The primary source of information is the School Census taken electronically in January each year. The Committee also heard that parental preference significantly affects the size of the Y7 group at a number of schools and that the location of housing is also a main factor which can determine the variability between schools.
4. A major factor that had also to be considered during this review was the imminent impact of consultation that had begun for Building Schools for the Future (BSF), a long-term capital programme to transform educational opportunities by refurbishing or replacing secondary school buildings. The methods of consultation on options for school organisation under BSF were examined with regard to the Council Plan 2007 – 2010 objectives *“Continue to raise standards in schools and improve levels of attainment and achievement across key stages for all children”* and *“Ensure parents, carers (incl. young carers), children and young people are actively engaged in service development and review”*.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

No direct financial implications

Legal

None

RISK ASSESSMENT

This scrutiny report 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

Any change in the pattern of secondary education provision is likely to have some implications for the environment.

Community Safety and Well-Being

No significant impact

Health

No significant impact

Economic Regeneration

No significant impact

Education and Lifelong Learning

The aim of Building Schools for the Future is to transform educational opportunity.

Arts and Culture

No significant impact

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

When an Equality Impact Assessment is carried out it will need to consider the suggested recommendations.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

The Lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and senior officers from CESC were consulted on the scope and project plan.

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Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Not ward specific

Property

The investment of £150 million through the BSF programme will have a significant impact on the secondary school estate at a later stage.