

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting5th November 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

BSF proposed closure of Blakeston School, The Norton School and Thornaby Community School

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report relating to the closure of Blakeston School, The Norton School and Thornaby Community School.

It was explained that The Strategy for Change Parts 1 and 2 agreed by Cabinet and approved by government agencies included proposals to replace Blakeston School and The Norton School with an Academy located in Stockton, and to replace Thornaby Community School with an Academy on its present site. The closure of any maintained school required a statutory process of consultation and decision making.

Cabinet was provided with a summary of the responses received to an initial consultation process and recommended the publication of statutory public notices proposing closure.

Cabinet noted that the publication of a Statutory Notice would be followed by a period of six weeks in which any person may make representations in writing for or against the proposal. At the end of that period the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, would make a conditional decision on the school closure proposals pending the signing of funding agreements for the proposed Academies.

Members noted that the Academies would be established by a separate process involving a funding agreement concluded between the proposed sponsors and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. Those Academies would adopt a new sponsorship model. The principal sponsor of the Academy in Stockton would be NHS Stockton (previously known as Stockton-on-Tees Primary Care Trust). The principal sponsor of the Academy in Thornaby would be Teesside University. Co-sponsors of both Academies would be the Borough Council and a consortium of the two further education colleges in the borough. Both Academies would receive new buildings funded by the BSF programme,

but the sponsors intended to propose that both Academies should open initially in the existing buildings of the predecessor schools in order to bring about change as early as possible.

RESOLVED that

1. a Public Notice be issued describing a proposal to discontinue Blakeston School and The Norton School with effect from 31st December 2010;
2. a Public Notice be issued describing a proposal to discontinue Thornaby Community School with effect from 31st August 2010;
3. authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children Education and Social Care in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to nominate an officer to represent the Council as co-sponsor in concluding funding agreements for the proposed Academies with the Secretary of State.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 lays down a statutory procedure that must be followed when major changes to school organisation are under consideration. The Authority must first consult those persons most likely to be affected by the change. Having taken account of the views expressed in consultation, the next stage is to publish a Statutory Notice of the Authority's intention to proceed with the proposals.

Academies are not maintained schools and are established by means of a funding agreement concluded between the sponsors and the Secretary of State. The Authority, as a co-sponsor of each of the proposed Academies, will need to nominate a representative to be a party to those agreements.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As per report

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Cook declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item entitled BSF proposed closure of Blakeston School, The Norton School and Thornaby Community School as he was a governor of Blakeston

School. Councillor Cook left the meeting room during discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item entitled BSF proposed closure of Blakeston School, The Norton School and Thornaby Community School as he was a governor of The Norton School. Councillor Cook left the meeting room during discussion and voting on the item.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

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

Not later than Midnight on Friday 13th November 2009

Proper Officer
10 November 2009