



Buckinghamshire County Council

Report School Organisation Committee

Date 9 April 2003

Title Consultation procedure relating to the possible closure of Verney Avenue School, High Wycombe

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Electoral Divisions Affected

All

Summary

To update the School Organisation Committee on the Consultation Procedure relating to the possible closure of Verney Avenue School, High Wycombe.

Recommendation

The committee is asked to note that the consultation process on the possible closure of Verney Avenue School has started. To confirm that if objections are received after the Statutory Notices have been published these will be presented to the Committee at their meeting on Wednesday 10 September.

Supporting Information

1. Verney Avenue School, High Wycombe is a Special School that caters for secondary aged pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties.
2. Committee members will be aware that the Local Education Authority has proposed closing Verney Avenue School in High Wycombe.
3. The consultation document that has been prepared makes it clear that the rationale for the proposal is based on three main factors:
 - 3.1 The school has in recent years experienced a significant reduction in its pupil roll as outlined in the figures below:

Year	Roll
2000	96
2001	90
2002	79
2003	67
2004	33

- 3.2 In Buckinghamshire, as mirrored across the country, there has been a reduction in the need for Moderate Learning Difficulties places as the numbers of pupils with this type of statement has reduced. LEAs have a statutory duty to keep under review their arrangements for providing school places for SEN pupils and this rationalisation is part of that process.
- 3.3 The closure would be part of the County Council's overall strategy for Special Educational Needs, which involves matching the provision of Special School places to predicted needs.

Process

1. In line with agreed County Council procedures a report to the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and Schools was published on 14th March, which outlined that a consultation was proposed to take place on a proposal to close the school.
2. As no objections were received, a consultation document was prepared and distributed to appropriate consultees on the 31st March. (attached)
3. The consultation process will involve all interested parties to the process. These include parents, staff, Social Services, Learning Skills Council, teaching associations and relevant Health Authorities.
4. During the consultation period meetings for all staff and parents will take place.
5. This initial consultation period expires on the 9th May. There is then a two week period where any responses to the consultation are responded to and then a Cabinet Key Decision Paper is published.
6. If appropriate, Statutory Notices will be published by the 13th June. The consultation period will run until the 15th August.
7. If objections to the proposal are received in this period then a report will be presented to the School Organisation Committee to allow them to make a decision at the meeting on 10th September.

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper which you would like the Committee to consider please inform the Secretary to the School Organisation Committee. This can be done by telephone (01296 383710 or 383610) or e-mail to rpopat@buckscc.gov.uk or cgray@buckscc.gov.uk