



Buckinghamshire County Council

Report School Organisation Committee

Date 24 September 2003
Title Statutory Notice: Verney Avenue School: Closure of School
Author Strategic Manager Schools/Chief Education Officer
Contact Officer Andrew Tusting (01296) 383524 or Paul Holmes (01296) 382696

Electoral Divisions Affected Cressex and Frogmoor

Recommendation

The School Organisation Committee is asked to consider the proposal to close Verney Avenue School with effect from 31 December 2003 and to agree whether or not to determine the statutory notice.

Supporting Information

This paper brings to the committee the statutory proposal that Verney Avenue School should close with effect from 31 December 2003. This proposal has been publicly consulted upon and the statutory notice, along with relevant supporting information, was published on 26 June 2003.

A pack of documents relating to the proposals including a copy of the statutory notice is enclosed with this report.

The formal objection period closed on 26 August 2003. The Local Education Authority received one statutory objection to the proposal and a copy of the letter is provided. As an objection has been made to the proposal it cannot be determined by the Local Education Authority; the School Organisation Committee is required to determine the proposal under Schedule 6 para.3 (1) to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The Secretary has confirmed that the published proposals conform to the requirements of the Education (Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 1999 and the supporting documents, which are attached, conform to the said 1999 regulations.

The relevant guidance from the DFES "Guidance on Statutory Notices" is attached as Appendix 4.

Background

Verney Avenue School is a secondary school for pupils with a statement of moderate learning difficulties (MLD). The school is in the Cressex area, adjacent to the Chiltern Gate School, which is a school for pupils of primary age with statements of either MLD and/or EBD (Emotional and behavioural difficulties).

Some discussion took place between the LEA and the school concerning the long term viability of the school, prior to the decision to consult on the proposal that the school close. When the decision to consult was made, the view was taken that to allow proper time for the formal processes to be completed, the earliest date for which closure could be proposed was 31 December 2003.

Following the public consultation the LEA received requests from parents requesting that their children be placed at alternative schools from September, the start of the academic year.

Staff and their association or union representatives were concerned that for those seeking alternative employment to be available from the start of the academic year would greatly enhance the opportunities available to them.

The LEA, taking into account parental preference, and the interests of the pupils, agreed to offer pupils alternative placements, with effect from September 2003; there are no children attending Verney Avenue School this term. Staff successful in securing alternative employment have been released with effect from 31 August 2003. Details are included in the prescribed information attached

Resources Appraisal

The resource implications are as outlined in the supporting documents.

Background Papers

See attached

Prescribed Information and as appendices:

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | April 2003 Consultation Document |
| Appendix 2 | Report to Cabinet Members: May 2003 |
| Appendix 3 | Map of Verney Avenue area |
| Appendix 4 | Extract from 'decision makers guide' |
| Appendix 5 | Statutory Notice |
| Appendix 6 | Letter of objection |

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in the 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 383636 or 01296 383610) or via e-mail to rpopat@buckscc.gov.uk or sbutt@buckscc.gov.uk.