



Report to Cabinet Member for Achievement and Learning

Decision to be taken on or after 30 July 2007

Decision can normally be implemented at least 3 working days after decision has
been signed.

Cabinet Member Report No. AL13.07

Title: Outcome of public consultation and publication of Statutory Notice on future organisation of Special education at Furze Down School

Date: 30 June 2007

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Electoral Divisions Affected: Winslow, Buckingham North and Buckingham South

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Children's Services

Summary

In April 2004 the Local Authority published a Statutory Notice and held a public consultation stating that from September 2007 Furze Down School would change from being a 5-19 special school to become an 11-19 aged special school. The proposed change was linked to the creation of a Complex Primary Special School in Aylesbury

However it subsequently became clear that there was a need for a 5-19 aged community special school providing specialist provision to be retained in the north of Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire County Council and Furze Down governing body therefore consulted on a proposal to reverse the Statutory Notice published in April 2004 and to instead allow the school to remain as a 5-19 aged community special school

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Achievement and Learning takes a decision to agree to Furze Down Community Special School remaining as an all-age community special school so that it does not change on 1 September 2007 to become a secondary special school

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

In April and May 2007 the Local Authority in partnership with the governing body of the school undertook a public consultation that:-

The school should retain its status as an all-age community special school serving mainly the North Buckinghamshire community and provide education for children from 5 years of age through to 19 years of age with a range of difficulties including, cognition and learning, communication and interaction, physical and sensory and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.

Furze Down intends to seek specialist status in the "Communication and Interaction" strand, catering for students with speech and language delay, impairments or disorders and specific learning difficulties. Some students, in addition, will have needs on the autistic spectrum and/or moderate to severe learning difficulties. Their communication needs are diverse and complex and they will include students for whom language and communication difficulties are compounded by sensory and physical impairment. There will be some students who will present challenging behaviour and others who will experience mental health difficulties at some time in their school careers.

Furze Down School would not therefore become a 11-19 secondary special school but would remain as a 5-19 special school

A consultation document was distributed to parents, staff, the local community and other partners. 42 responses were received and of these 41 or 98% were in favour of the proposal and 1 or 2% were against. A statutory notice was also published at the same time and no objections were received to the statutory notice.

There was therefore overwhelming support for the proposal put forward by Buckinghamshire County Council and the governing body.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

Other alternatives were considered however the school has the staffing structure in place to educate and support the children at the school now and those that will be attending in the future.

One of the factors in leaving the school as an all-age community special school was that it meant that children from the north of Buckinghamshire would not have to travel down to Aylesbury or even further to attend school, thus reducing travel times, the potential stress on children and costs

C. Resource implications

There are no immediate resource implications for the County Council and the school's budget is based on the anticipated number of children in the age-

range 5-19 years and there are therefore no resource implications for the school from the proposal.

Having a community all-age special school in the north of Buckinghamshire reduces the potential transport costs as children from the north of the county will not have to be transported long distances at considerable cost. There are obvious environmental benefits as well in reducing travelling distances.

D. Value for Money (VFM) Self Assessment

Effectiveness B. The proposal if agreed would mean the BCC had taken action that would improve the outcomes for the local communities and reflects the support for the proposal indicated in the consultation responses

Efficiency C. The proposal will build on good practice in supporting children with SEN

Economy E The information is not available to ascertain how this proposal would impact on our unit costs nationally

E. Legal implications

Advice has been sought from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and they agreed to the wording of the Statutory Notice.

F. Property implications

There are no immediate property implications arising from the proposal

G. Other implications/issues

There are no HR implications arising from the proposal

H. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views

Background paper 2 gives a detailed summary of the responses to the consultation exercise.

I. Communication issues

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the consultation and of the Cabinet Member decision.

Background Papers – available on request

Paper 1	Consultation document
Paper 2	Analysis of responses to the public consultation
Paper 3	Copy of the Statutory Notice

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 that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 27 July 2007. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383610), Fax (to 01296 382538), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk

CABINET MEMBER REPORT NO. AL13.07

DECISION TAKEN:

I have taken into account any representations received concerning the contents of this report.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DECISION NOT TAKEN:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Reason: _____

For Reference

(Officers should sign below once the report has been finalised for printing and return to Democratic Services, Room 124, Old County Offices)

Professional advice supporting the decision was provided by the following Officers

Name	Signed	Date
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