

Time began - 6.00 pm
Time finished - 7.00 pm

SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE 26 JUNE 2003

- Present:
- Group A (Local Education Authority)**
Councillors L Allen, J Hickson, Winter
 - Group B (Church of England Diocesan Board)**
David Edwards, Maxine Bull, Hannah Simmons
 - Group C (Catholic Diocesan Board)**
John Honey
 - Group D (Learning and Skills Council)**
Terry Laws
 - Group E (Schools Group)**
Carmel McKenna, David Cunningham, Jean Moss
 - Group F (The Local Community)**
Nirmal Pheasant, Ian Jennison, George Mighty

01/03 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Ahern, Wynn, Hird, Gerrard (Group A)
Robert Hobson, Chris Reynolds (Group C)
Mrs Robinson (Group E)

02/03 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

03/03 Declarations of Interest

Jean Moss declared a personal interest in the item on West Park Community School, as she was a Governor at West Park. (Minute 05/03 refers).

04/03 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2002 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to minute 23/02 being amended to "School Organisation Plan".

05/03 West Park Community School

The Committee considered proposals cease to provide sixth form provision at West Park Community School. Robin Constable, legal advisor to the Committee reported that following examination of the public notice some of the details that were required to be in the notice had not been included.

It was suggested that this was because amendments in 1999 regulations had not been picked up by the School. The details missing included alternative provision, interim proposals, additional resources and proposed transport arrangements.

Statutory guidance on invalid notices suggested that the course of action should be for the proposers to publish a revised notice and come back to the School Organisation Committee once the second consultation period had ended.

In light of this the Headteacher withdrew the proposal to enable him to consult further with school governors.

06/03 Statutory Consultation on the Viability of Allenpark Infant School

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Education, which set out proposals to close Allenpark Infant School from 31 August 2003. It was reported that the Council had received no objections to the proposals for the school closure during the two month statutory consultation period following the publication of notices on 3 April 2003.

At a meeting on 24 June 2003, Council Cabinet had recommend to the School Organisation Committee that the school be closed. Pupil numbers at Allen Park Infant School had fallen significantly and projections were that this trend would continue. Significant budgetary pressures were created in a school with falling pupil numbers, which would affect the extent and quality of education provision and impact on the schools ability to provide the full range of resources to implement the curriculum. The Director of Education suggested that considering the budget pressures and trend for falling pupil numbers the school would cease to become viable in the near future.

Pupil numbers at Allenpark Infant School have fallen over the last four or five years. In 1998 there were 100 pupils enrolled, the school currently had 51 pupils on role and it was projected that numbers would fall to 27 by 2005. Following discussions with the governors and a request to look at the future of the school, the Education Service produced a consultation document.

Children currently attending Alan park had been offered a choice of Moorhead Primary School whose normal area covered the school and where pupils generally transfer at Junior age, and Allenton Primary School. Sufficient places could be made available in with either school to meet any parental preference.

Although the schools recent OfSted inspection highlighted the positive work of the school it also illustrated the practical difficulties of school management with such a low number of pupils on role. The required information for the proposal was attached as appendix 2. The Statutory notice proposing closure, published on 3 April 2003, was attached within Appendix 2. No objections were received during the 2 month consultation period.

The Chairman of the schools governors, David Whitehead attended the meeting and addressed the Committee. He spoke against the proposals to close.

Resolved to approve the closure of Allenpark Infant School from 31 August 2003

07/02 Date of Future Meetings

It was noted that a meeting had provisionally been arranged on 2 October 2003. It was suggested that this should now be moved to the 6 November where proposals to create Hardwick Primary School would be considered. It was agreed that should the West Park Community School proposals need to be considered before then an additional meeting of the Committee should be held.

MINUTES END