

**CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS
MAY 2018**

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

(i) PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Details of decision:

There were six questions received from members of the public. As these all related to the proposal to close Ripley CofE Primary School, the Cabinet Member took these questions as part of the item. The questions and responses are attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Reasons for decision:

To respond to the public questions.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Education – 8 May 2018)

(ii) PROPOSAL TO CLOSE GREEN OAK CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Details of decision:

It was agreed that;

1. Statutory notices to close are not published.
2. The proposal to close the school is halted whilst further options that have arisen during the informal consultation process are fully explored.

Reasons for decision:

1. During the informal consultation, further options for the future of the school have arisen which require further time to be fully explored.
2. Outcomes for children at the school are improving. This is demonstrated through year 6 2017 outcomes comparative to 2016, the intervening Ofsted Monitoring Report and progress so far in the current academic year.
3. The numbers of children on roll at the school will help to maintain its future viability.
4. The places are required to meet future demand for school places. Closing the school would result in a significant capital cost to the Council for re-providing the places at alternative settings.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Education – 8 May 2018)

(iii) PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RIPLEY CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Details of decision:

It was agreed that statutory notices to close are published.

Reasons for decision:

1. No appropriate options for the future of the school have arisen during the informal consultation.
2. Outcomes for children at the school are being affected by the very low number of children on roll and the quality of teaching is variable.
3. The numbers of children currently on roll at the school (41) are problematic for future viability.
4. Projections for future need for school places indicate that future cohorts can be accommodated in adjacent areas.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Education – 8 May 2018)

CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND BUSINESS SERVICES**(iv) DISABILITY CHALLENGERS, ST JAMES' AVENUE, FARNHAM- SECURING AN OVERAGE RECEIPT****Details of decision:**

It was agreed that:

1. Surrey County Council approves payment of the amount as set out in the Part 2 report as a contribution towards Disability Challengers costs in connection with the preparation and sale of part of the land.
2. Surrey County Council delegates to the Chief Property Officer, in consultation with the Member for Property & Business Services, the ability to enter into an appropriate update of the Overage Deed, in connection with any subsequent disposal of land retained by Disability Challenge such that it is fair and equitable to both parties.

Reasons for decision:

Surrey County Council (SCC) imposed an overage clause within the 2005 sale of land in order to ensure that any sale of the part or the whole by the purchaser, with an alternative higher value use would enable SCC to participate in such an uplift in value, in the event a disposal was entered into within a defined period.

Recently Disability Challengers (DC) have sought to safeguard their longer term future on the site by disposing of an underutilised part of the site to fund repairs and a refurbishment of buildings on the balance of the site.

SCC suggested further feasibility and viability exercises be undertaken to explore the potential for the provision of new sustainable and fit for purpose facilities for the charity on a smaller foot print, thus releasing a larger site area for redevelopment.

The opportunity to pursue this option was tested with the local planning authority but planning policy would not support the density of development required to enable such a

reprovision to be viable. As a result, DC expended significant additional legal and other professional costs and a diminution in the capital receipt secured as a result of the delays.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Property and Business Services – 8 May 2018)

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND BUSINESS SERVICES

(v) PETITIONS

Details of decision:

That the response, attached to this report as Appendix 2, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To respond to the petition.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Children and Cabinet Member for Property and Business Services – 8 May 2018)

INVESTMENT BOARD

Details of Decision:

The Investment Board approved that Surrey County Council acquire the freehold interest in Park Lodge, Dorking

Reasons for Decisions:

The purchase is approved as a strategic acquisition being adjacent to the council's existing investment at Pixham Lane, Dorking. The investment will deliver an ongoing income to the Council, enhancing financial resilience in the longer term.

(Decision taken by the Investment Board – 17 April 2018)

Public Questions and Responses, submitted by Catherine Bremford

Q1. Can you provide evidence that the full consideration was given to Ripley Primary Schools special status as a rural school?

Accepting that the school has a designated rural status we can confirm as stated in the report, there are 2 schools that are less than 2 miles from Ripley primary school and a further 10 within 3 miles and therefore no students would be expected to travel more than a reasonable distance should Ripley close.

Under half of children remaining on roll at Ripley in years R to 5 reside in the village and will need to travel from the village for school. SCC is aware of its obligations to transport students where necessary as stated in the report.

Q2. Do you accept that neither SCC, the RSC nor the Diocese have fully explored all other alternatives (other than GST) to closing the school?

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) together with the Diocese are responsible for identifying and agree a suitable multi-academy trust (MAT) to take on the school. The Council understands that some MATs have approached the RSC, but none so far have been considered appropriate, for example, due to not being able to protect the religious character of the school.

Federations and amalgamations have also been options that the Governing Body have had open to them over recent years. The Council have encouraged these options to be explored but so far none have been deemed viable.

Q3. How does SCC ensure that all stakeholders such as Parish Councils, Borough/District Councils and Councillors and parents and residents at neighbouring schools are consulted? Please provide evidence that Ripley Parish Council, Guildford Borough Council and Councillors, and resident and parents at neighbouring schools and other stakeholders were consulted in the case of Ripley Primary School.

The aim of an informal consultation is to gather people's thoughts on the proposal. Local county councillors for whom education lies within their remit were fully briefed by the Cabinet Member. Notification of the consultation was sent to a wide range of stakeholders on 5th March 2018, including the Parish Council and Guildford Borough Council. A public meeting was held on 13th March at which representatives of the Parish Council were in attendance. The published minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 15th March state that notification of the consultation was received and a copy of the notification is included in the appendices to the minutes.

Maintained schools within 3 miles of the school were notified of the consultation and asked to circulate details to parents and carers. 185 local residents and 45 parents of children attending other schools responded to the consultation, as stated in the report for this meeting.

The report summarises the responses to the consultation. Responses will also be available for the Cabinet Member to refer to at the meeting. Only 121 respondents were current or future users of the schools. Although we recognise the community support for the school, it is not viable with such small take up of places.

If the proposal moves forward to statutory consultation, public notices will be placed in local press to ensure all are aware. Please do advise of any specific email addresses for notification of the statutory consultation, if that would be helpful.

Q4. If information presented proves that figures in the recommendation report are misleading/inaccurate, would you discard these inaccurate figures? Do you accept that the LA pupil planning forecast figures and the housing plans (2017-18) were grossly inaccurate (refer to accurate figures in Long Term GBC future housing forecast in the latest Local Plan)? Do you therefore accept that these figures should not be the basis for the decision about the future need for the school and Ripley CofE should be given more time to explore options?

School place planning has to be looked at across the county and not one area in isolation alone. Across the county projections are within 1% accuracy. However, these are estimates and they are estimates that change regularly as updated data on demographics, housing and pupil migration comes forward.

In the associated paragraph regarding this question (5), the enquirer's basis for inaccuracy of the figures is based on the number of children taking up places in Send and Ripley in September 2017. It should be noted that not only children from Send and Ripley joined the schools in that year, but also children from outside of the area.

A point widely raised in both responses received and at public meetings has concerned the identification of additional housing in the area that will have consequent implications for the demand for school places in the area.

Irrespective of the outcome of the consultation the Council retains the statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places within its boundaries, and this includes providing places to meet the demand of additional housing in an area. If school places were required in the future in the locality, new provision at the existing school site could be explored. As the site has an education covenant its future uses are limited to that extent.

The Council is fully aware of the Wisley development which may come forward, subject to planning permission being granted. As stated in the report for this meeting, the development at Wisley would include a primary school if the development were to proceed. The same is applicable to the potential strategic development Gosden.

Q5. How can a school be issued with a Warning Notice for poor leadership and management and leadership when the LA (in this case SCC/Education Consultants such as Babcock), are responsible for failing to provide the adequate support?

A local Governing Body of any school is responsible for its management. In the case of Ripley school the chair of governors was told a Formal Warning Notice may be issued due to concerns around these duties not being fulfilled adequately and therefore a strategic direction for the school not being established.

Q6. Hypothetically, if a school is under threat of closure and the Diocese refuses to allow a MAT to take the school on, is there anything that the DfE or a local body could do to prevent the school from closing, or does the Church have the final say?

There is a memorandum of understanding between the National Society (Church of England) and the DfE. Within this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) is obliged to consult with the Diocese with regard to any proposed academy sponsor to safeguard the religious character of schools.

Ripley School, as a CofE school within the Diocese of Guildford, falls under these arrangements. The MOU states that there may be circumstances where the RSC or the Diocese regard closure of a school (LA maintained or academy) as the only viable option.

Mrs Mary Lewis
Cabinet Member for Education
8 May 2018

APPENDIX 2

Cabinet Member for Children and Cabinet Member for Property and Business Services

8 May 2018

LAKERS YOUTH CENTRE PETITION:

‘Help us rebuild our youth centre

On 2 January 2018 Lakers Youth Centre was severely damaged due to a fire. This was a well-used and liked youth centre and accessed by many young people from across Woking. Please support us with our petition’

Submitted by: Sandie Bolger

Signatures: 113

Response:

The Council fully recognises the importance that these community buildings play in generating and providing a social engagement area for encouragement and support to communities. We thank the supporters of this petition which continues to highlight and raise to us as Members the wider role the Council has in supporting local residents.

We are able to advise that there is an ongoing review and establishment of a wider council business case to identify what the potential options are for this site and that working in conjunction with key stakeholders the Council will move swiftly forward with a decision around what the future provision could look like.

Tim Oliver
Cabinet Member for Property and Business Services
8 May 2018

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children
8 May 2018

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