

Cabinet - 1 March 2006

School sites surplus to education requirements

Portfolio: Councillor Eddie Hughes, Children's Services

Service Area: Education Walsall

Wards: Aldridge Central & South, Darlaston, Paddock, Willenhall South

Forward Plan: Yes

Summary of report

Following changes in school organisation, the following school sites have been identified as surplus to education requirements.

Recommendations

- (1) Cabinet declare the Three Crowns, Redhouse, Moxley Infants, Clothier Street, Lakeside and Little London JMI School sites surplus to education requirements.
- (2) Cabinet direct legal services to begin applications to DfES for reuse of school playing fields

Resource and legal considerations

During the last two years, Cabinet and the School Organisation Committee have made a number of decisions in relation to school organisation which will result in a number of school sites no longer being required for their current purpose.

Details of these sites, and the dates from which they are expected to become vacant, are provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1: School Sites Surplus to Requirements

School Site	Notes	Dates
Three Crowns	School closes 31 August 2006	31 August 2006
Redhouse Primary	School closes 31 August 2006	31 August 2006
Moxley Infants	Moxley Infants and Dorothy Purcell Junior amalgamated and reopened as Moorcroft Wood Primary on 1 September 2005. The school is to be single-sited on the Dorothy Purcell site and it is proposed to complete the work for September 2006.	31 August 2006 subject to completion of scheme

Clothier Street Primary Lakeside Primary Little London JMI	These schools will close on 31 August 2006 and reopen as Fibbersley Park Primary on 1 September 2006. The scheme to provide a new school building on a site on Noose Lane has been delayed and it is expected that pupils will move to the new building in September 2007.	31 September 2007 subject to completion of scheme to provide the new building.
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Consideration has been given to the possible use of these sites for other education purposes and, in the absence of any identified alternative education need, Cabinet is asked to declare these sites surplus to education requirements. This will enable the Council to consider the future use of these sites.

There are a number of restrictions on the disposal of school playing fields and council officers will advise upon this as needed.

All applications for disposal made after 16 July 2001 are referred to an independent advisory panel known as the School Playing Fields Advisory Panel. This Panel provides the Secretary of State with independent objective advice on the extent to which applications to dispose, or change the use of, school playing fields meet published criteria.

Where the Secretary of State approves an application to dispose of school playing fields, details of the timescales for the proposed capital investment are required. The DfES monitors progress to ensure that new or improved sports or educational facilities, as set out in the application, are delivered.

The implications of this legislation will vary from site to site depending on the extent to which there is land which has been identified as playing fields. Data relating to this is submitted periodically to the DfES as part of the Asset Management Plan.

Citizen impact

The immediate closure of the schools helps to reduce vandalism and new facilities on these sites can support these projects.

Community safety

Action will need to be taken to ensure that vacated sites and buildings are secure and cannot be accessed.

Environmental impact

There are no direct impacts as a result of this report.

Performance and risk management issues

These sites are no longer required for education purposes. Their declaration as surplus will enable the Council to effectively manage its property portfolio.

Equality implications

The rationalisation of the provision of school places enables residents to have access to education for their children in viable, sustainable schools.

Consultation

The closure of these schools have all been properly consulted upon.

Vision 2008

The declaration of these sites as surplus to education requirements would contribute to the delivery of Walsall's vision for 2008 – Section 4 Make Our Schools Great – by rationalising the Education property portfolio and enabling resources to be more effectively managed.

Background papers

DfES Guidance Ref DfE-1017-2004 Revision: Nov 2004: The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for City Academies.

Contact officer

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Signed:



Executive Director: David Brown

Date: 17 February 2006

Signed:



**Managing Director, Education Walsall
Helen Denton**

Date: 17 February 2006

Signed:



Portfolio Holder: Councillor E. F. Hughes

Date: 17 February 2006