

Cabinet – 18 June 2008

Shelfield Sports and Community College – Proposed Academy

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| Portfolio: | Councillor Zahid Ali |
| Service: | Children's Services |
| Wards: | All Walsall Wards but particularly Rushall/Shelfield. |
| Key decision: | No |
| Forward plan: | No |

1. Summary of report

This report responds to the recommendations from the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel following its call-in of the decision by Cabinet on 16 April 2008 to approve consultation on the proposal to close Shelfield Sports and Community College on 31 December 2008, subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State to approve the opening of the school as an Academy from 1 January 2009.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the decision of the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel to support the Cabinet decision made on 16 April 2008: *'that approval be given to consultation on the proposal to close Shelfield Sports and Community College on 31 December 2008, subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State to approve the opening of the school as an Academy from 1 January 2009'* subject to the results of the consultation being presented to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel for consideration before they are presented to Cabinet.

3. Report Detail

- 3.1 The Cabinet decision of 16 April 2008 was called in for scrutiny for the following reasons:
- lack of details as to the consultation process
 - how will this affect the overall strategy for secondary education in the Borough
 - impact on neighbourhood schools
 - lack of details as to capital and state benefits
 - lack of consultation with scrutiny

- 3.2 Members heard that the six week consultation period should have commenced on 28 April 2008 but this had been delayed due to the call-in. Members were keen not to delay the consultation process any further by delaying the implementation of the Cabinet decision. However, Members felt that there were few opportunities to formally engage with this type of issue and wider concerns around Academy Status Schools were raised as part of the ensuing discussion.
- 3.3 As part of the discussion, Members heard from the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Shelfield School, as well as representatives from Education Walsall and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. Members raised concerns over the potential admissions policy, the loss of local democratic control, the pay and conditions of teachers, the effect on neighbouring schools and access by local pupils should the school become an academy.
- 3.4 Members agreed that the Headteacher and Governors want what is best for pupils and agreed to the formal consultation taking place with the proviso that the Panel were allowed to consider the results before Cabinet.
- 3.5 The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services stated he would be happy for the results of the consultation to be brought to Scrutiny and that Cabinet would examine any planned changes to the school on its becoming an academy.

Background Papers

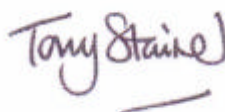
1. Report to Cabinet on 19 March 2008 – Shelfield Sports and Community College – Proposed Academy.

Author


Susan Lupton
Strategic Leader: School Organisation, Admissions, Capital & Asset Management
☎ 01922 686231
✉ susan.lupton@we.serco.com



David Brown
Executive Director
5 June 2008



Tony Stainer
Managing Director, Education Walsall
5 June 2008



Councillor Zahid Ali
Portfolio holder
5 June 2008