

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda

Item

No. 5

TO: Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 4 November 2010

RE: Sneyd

Purpose

To provide an update on the process of closing Sneyd Community school between 11 September and 22 October 2010.

1. Introduction

Formal reports have been made to Cabinet at its meetings on:

22 October 2008, 22 April 2009, 15 July 2009, 13 August, 21 October 2009 and 13 January 2010.

Reports have been made to Scrutiny at its meetings on:

30 October 2008, 20 November 2008, 18 December 2008, 18 March 2009 and 24 July 2009, 12 March 2010, 15 June 2010, 20 July 2010 and 27 September 2010.

This report provides an update for the period between 11 September and 22 October 2010. The school was closed between Monday 25 and Friday 29 October (half term).

2. Closure Date

Cabinet's decision to close the school agreed a phased closure with the current Year 8 pupils remaining as the single year group in the school during the academic year 2011/12.

The current Year 8 is now standing at 40 pupils.

Given the small size of this cohort it has been decided to ask Cabinet to agree to change the implementation date to close the school totally in August 2011 with both the existing Year 8s and existing Year 9s transferring to new schools on 1 September 2011.

Cabinet meets on 17 November 2010.

3. Pupils

3.1 Pupil numbers

Date	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Total Y7-11	Y12	Y13	Y14	Total Post-16	Grand Total
Oct-2008	113	128	149	185	225	800	61	37	1	99	899
Jan-2009	110	127	148	183	226	794	59	37	1	97	891
May-2009	108	123	149	184	231	795	54	34	1	89	884
01-Oct-2009	70	99	93	144	186	592	40	21	3	64	656
21-Jan-2010	67	95	65	138	184	549	41	21	3	65	614
01-Mar-2010	64	93	64	138	184	543	41	21	3	65	608
21-Apr-2010	63	91	54	137	185	530	38	18	0	56	586
05-May-2010	62	91	54	137	185	529	35	18	0	53	582
08-Jun-2010	62	90	52	137	185	526	35	18	0	53	579
16-Jun-2010	62	81	32	137	185	497	35	17	0	53	549
23-Jul-2010	58	72	23	135	185	473	32	17	0	49	522
13-Sept-2010	-	42	43	-	135	220	-	11	-	11	231
29-Oct-2010	-	40	42	-	135	217	-	11	-	11	228

3.2 Mid Year Admissions

4 applications (2 from Year 8 and 2 from Year 9 pupils) are currently being processed by the midyear admissions team.

3.3 Year 13

The 11 Year 13 pupils have applied to transfer to the roll of Pool Hayes where they are receiving their education.

4. Uniform and Travel

Walsall Children's Services – Serco agreed for the 09/10 Year 9 pupils leaving Sneyd in August 2010 to pay a £50 contribution towards the cost of their new uniform and to consider paying for home to school transport for pupils who did not qualify under Walsall's transportation policy for the academic years 10/11 and 11/12.

Walsall Children's Services – Serco has exceptionally agreed that for the 10/11 Year 9 pupils leaving Sneyd in August 2011 to attend another Walsall school to pay a one off sum of £50 contribution towards the cost of their new uniform and to consider paying for home to school travel for pupils who will not qualify under Walsall's transport policy for the academic years 11/12 and 12/13.

If Cabinet agrees to accelerate the closure to August 2011 these arrangements will be extended to the current Year 8 pupils for the academic years 11/12, 12/13 and 13/14.

5. Staff

All redundancies and early retirements (voluntary and compulsory) at the end of the academic year 2009/10 were completed in line with Council processes. One member of staff undertook a trial period and was successfully redeployed to a post within the Council.

The process for a further staffing reduction to take place on 31 December 2010 has concluded and notices have been issued (two appeals have been lodged). Originally it was envisaged that 19 posts would be deleted. However, following a full assessment of the needs of the school 15 posts have been identified for redundancy.

HR will continue to work to support the 15 staff to find alternative employment.

6. Finance

WCS Serco is continuing to work with the new management of the school to maintain its financial viability and to continue to deliver quality education provision for the remaining pupils. Additional resources have been identified to support education projects during the 2010/11 academic year.

Based upon the current staffing complement and the resources expected to be available for the 2010/11 academic year (subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review on school budgets), the school should remain solvent until 31 August 2011.

However, this is not the case should the school remain open for a further academic year. The school's budget for the last five months, that is April to August 2012, would be based on a maximum of 40 pupils. The funding generated by such low pupil numbers could provide a shortfall of up to £400k, dependent on how many of the current staff remained at the school until the end of August 2012. This shortfall would need to be met from the Total Schools Budget, therefore reducing the funding available for the other schools and pupils in the borough.

7. Curriculum

Connexions has provided the information on the destination of the Year 11 and Year 12 summer leavers showing that 139 leavers have been placed, 18 are NEET and 19 unknown. Although 37 are unplaced, the numbers are very positive.

8. Governance

The IEB continues to meet with the Chair working with the Head teacher and Walsall Children's Services – Serco's Heads of Service.

9. Press

The Council's and Walsall Children's Services – Serco Press Officers are working together to be proactive about designing positive press releases about the school.

The local press has been responsive to these releases. The appearance of the Cabinet report on the forward plan was reported in the press.

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