

Cabinet – 18 April 2007

Determination of Statutory Proposals to Close Daw End Special School and Open New Schools for Primary and Secondary Age Pupils

Portfolio: Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services

Service: Education Walsall

Wards: All

Key decisions: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

Summary of report

No objections have been received to the proposals to close Daw End Special School and to open new schools for primary and secondary age pupils. In view of this, Cabinet is recommended to approve these statutory proposals for implementation from 1 January 2008.

Recommendations

- (1) That the statutory proposal to close Daw End Special School from 31 December 2007 is approved;
- (2) That the statutory proposal to establish a new primary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties with 30 places (including 6 assessment places) for pupils aged 4 – 11 years at the Priory site from 1 January 2008 is approved;
- (3) That the statutory proposal to establish a new secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties with 56 places for pupils aged 11 – 16 years in the Manor Farm building from 1 January 2008 is approved.
- (4) That the Daw End Special School building on Floyds Lane is declared surplus to educational requirements following the relocation of pupils to the Manor Farm building.

Resource and legal considerations

In autumn 2004, a review of specialist SEN provision in the Borough was undertaken and a report on the outcome of consultation was considered by Cabinet on 22 December 2004. Implementation of the various strands is being taken forward on a phased basis using Targeted Capital funding made available by the DfES and supplemented by Walsall Council.

In the case of Daw End School, originally it was hoped that a replacement school building could be provided on land adjacent to the existing Daw End building. However, in the intervening period, there had been a strengthening shift nationally away from all-age schools towards separate schools for primary and secondary pupils. The report considered by Cabinet on 29 November 2006 outlined the background regarding the availability of accommodation in the Manor Farm building for the proposed new school for secondary aged young people with SEBD (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties) and a proposal to increase accommodation in the Priory building for primary aged children with SEBD. Additional information was also provided regarding the sum of £2 million from the Targeted Capital allocation which had been identified by Cabinet should these proposals be implemented.

In the light of this, Cabinet approved consultation on proposals to close Daw End School and to establish separate schools for primary and secondary aged pupils. A report on the outcome of consultation was considered by Cabinet on 17 January 2007 and statutory proposals were subsequently published on 26 January 2007 and a statutory 2 months representation period followed. During this period further meetings were held with parents, staff and governors to discuss the proposals. .

As the proposed changes are inter-dependent, the statutory proposals are linked and therefore all must be determined by the same body (Cabinet if there are no objections; the School Organisation Committee if objections are received) at the same time.

No objections to the proposals were received during the representation period and in these circumstances it is for Cabinet to determine the statutory proposals.

Cabinet is recommended to approve the statutory proposals to:

- close Daw End Special School from 31 December 2007;
- establish a new primary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties with 30 places (including 6 assessment places) for pupils aged 4 – 11 years at the Priory site from 1 January 2008;
- establish a new secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties with 56 places for pupils aged 11 – 16 years in the Manor Farm building from 1 January 2008.

It is anticipated that, overall, the total number of staff required at the new primary and secondary schools from January 2008 would be similar and that this would normally include the staff already delivering education at Daw End School. However, it may be that some members of staff decide to seek retirement or a post elsewhere. Every effort would be made to help staff find alternative jobs.

The approval of these statutory proposals will mean that the Daw End Special School building on Floyds Lane is no longer required and Cabinet is recommended to declare it surplus to educational requirements following the relocation of pupils to the Manor Farm building.

Once a date for the building to be declared surplus to educational needs is known, the Estates Section of Property Services will assess whether the Council has any other uses that the building may be capable of housing. Should another use not be identified Property Services will arrange for the services to the building to be terminated and all

windows and doors will be secured and boarded to prevent unauthorised access or damage. This work will be arranged to take place immediately following the vacation of the building.

Following an assessment of the site area, should it be deemed necessary the grounds will also be fenced to prevent any illegal or unauthorised use of the grounds.

Citizen impact

These proposals would result in the provision of significantly improved learning environments for pupils with SEBD, some of whom are very vulnerable. Pupils are currently being taught in accommodation that is in very poor condition and is unsuitable for delivering education in the 21st century.

Community safety

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

The local community will be protected from fly tipping as areas that are vulnerable as a result of the closure will be fenced to prevent illegal or unauthorised access.

Environmental impact

Schemes to refurbish / remodel accommodation would use sustainable resources wherever possible and designs would incorporate developments to reduce the impact on the environment.

Performance and risk management issues

The condition and suitability of the accommodation used by pupils at Daw End School is such that the proposed investment is essential in order to ensure continuity of education.

Equality implications

The proposals provide an opportunity to provide significantly improved learning environments for pupils with SEBD in the local community and contribute to further promoting disability equality in Walsall.

Consultation

On 29 November 2006, Cabinet approved the consultation on proposals to reorganise special school provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The consultation period commenced on 30 November 2006 and ended on 31 December 2006. A consultation document was circulated to parents, staff and governors at Daw End School and were circulated to all stakeholders and neighbouring authorities. The documents were also made available to the general public and were posted on the Education Walsall website. Consultation meetings were held at Daw End School on 6 December 2006 with parents, staff and governors.

A detailed report on the outcome of consultation was considered by Cabinet at the meeting on 17 January 2007. After full consideration of the issues and the consultation responses, Cabinet decided to approve the publication of statutory proposals to introduce the proposed changes from 1 January 2008.

Statutory proposals to this effect were published on 26 January 2007 and this was followed by a 2 months representation period during which objections could be made. A further round of meetings was held during this period. No objections were received during the representation period.

Vision 2008

Approval of these statutory proposals would contribute to the delivery of Walsall's vision for 2008 – Section 4 Make Our Schools Great – by providing significantly improved learning opportunities for pupils with SEBD in Walsall.

Background papers

Cabinet report: Outcome of Targeted Capital Bid for Schools, 30 November 2005

Cabinet report: Targeted Capital Allocations, 12 July 2006

Cabinet report: Daw End School, 29 November 2006

Cabinet report: Outcome of Consultation on the Provision of Special School Provision for Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 17 January 2007

Author

Susan Lupton

Strategic Leader: School Organisation, Admissions, Capital & Asset Management

☎ 01922 686231

✉ susan.lupton@we.serco.com

Signed:



Executive Director: David Brown
Date: 5 April 2007

Signed: 

Managing Director, Education Walsall
Date: 5 April 2007

Signed:



Councillor Zahid Ail
Portfolio Holder
Date: 5 April 2007