



meeting	CABINET	
date	7 June 2006	agenda item number

## REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### **Colston Bassett CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. This report seeks the approval of Cabinet to consult with the staff, governors and parents of the above-named school and other interested parties about the discontinuance of the school.
2. This proposal is a key decision as defined by the category 'Opening, merging or closing schools' in the Constitution and was first published in the Forward Plan in May 2006.

#### **Information and advice**

##### **Background**

3. Following a special meeting of the Colston Bassett CE primary school governing body on 29 March 2006, the governors approached the LA with a view to initiating a formal process of consultation with the school's staff, governors, parents/carers of pupils and any other interested parties deemed appropriate.
4. This rural school is located in the Rushcliffe education area and comprises of two class bases, providing a net capacity of 56. During the 2006/07 school year there are 32 pupils projected to be on roll at the school. This takes account of there being no intake into the school's reception year in September 2006. By 2009/10, pupils on roll could potentially fall to 19.
5. The school is currently operating with a permanent headteacher in post together with 1.5 fte teachers, one full-time teaching assistant, one part-time clerical and other ancillary staff.
6. The nearest schools within a two mile radius of Colston Bassett are Cropwell Bishop and Langar CE primary schools.
7. Several factors have led the governors to seek the LA's assistance in looking at what options were available to them in making sure that the

educational needs, of both current and future children at the school, would be best met.

8. Of those factors which the governors have recently shared in a letter to all its parents of pupils, the key ones are:
  - falling pupil numbers
  - changes in educational requirements placing greater demands on staff to adequately deliver the curriculum to smaller numbers of children
  - other larger schools in locality more able to offer additional facilities like pre-school and after-school clubs
  - the headteacher is due to retire in July 2007 and finding a replacement might prove difficult
9. Options that have been considered by the governors include:
  - school to continue with no change
  - amalgamation/federation with another school
  - closure
10. Having considered the information provided to them by representatives of the LA, the governors have decided that the long term interests of the children of Colston Bassett, and surrounding villages that feed into their school, would best be met by closure of the school.
11. This decision is supported by the LA's representatives who attended the special meeting on 29 March to discuss the above-mentioned options with the governing body.

### **Statutory and policy implications**

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Attention is however drawn to the following:-

### **Personnel implications**

13. Whilst there are no personnel implications arising directly from this report, the governors of Colston Bassett CE Primary School will be supported by Education Officers to ensure that decisions about staffing in the school are made in accordance with employment law and the Authority's previously determined policies.

### **Financial implications**

14. There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, should approval be sought for the publication of statutory notices, any subsequent report would include financial implications.

## **Equal opportunities implications**

15. Equal opportunities issues for staff will be addressed within an agreed standard format.

## **Implications for service users**

16. If the recommendation is accepted, pupils on roll at the school at the time of closure will be offered alternative places as appropriate.

## **Corporate Property Implications**

17. This property is leased to the County Council by way of a 10 year lease which expires on 12 July 2011. The Lease may only be terminated prior to this date by negotiation with the Landlord, there being no guarantee that the Landlord will actually agree to an early surrender date. The County Council will remain responsible for the rent and all other outgoings until the expiration or sooner determination of the Lease. At this time the Authority will also be responsible for any outstanding dilapidations to the premises.
18. The Authority also holds a licence of Colston Bassett Village Hall for use by the School. This Licence may be determined by way of 28 days notice to the Village Hall Committee. The Authority has no repairing liability at the Village Hall.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

19. That:-
  - (1) consultations be approved with the staff, governors and parents/carers of Colston Bassett CE Primary School and other appropriate interested parties to consider its discontinuance.
  - (2) a further report be submitted to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultations with recommendations for action.

## **COUNCILLOR JOYCE BOSNJAK**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

## **Reasons for recommendation**

20. This is perceived as being in the best interests of both the school and the Colston Bassett and surrounding communities.

## **Other options considered**

21. These are set out in this report.

### **Legal Services' comments (LM/13.4.06)**

22. Cabinet has delegated authority to discharge the County Council's functions as Local Education Authority for the provision of education.

### **Director of Resources' financial comments (NDR)**

23. The financial implications are set out in the report.

### **Background papers available for inspection**

1. Minutes of the special governing body meeting held on 29.3.06
2. Letter from Colston Bassett School's Chair of Governors to parents of pupils (including pupil numbers on roll analysis)

### **Electoral division(s) affected**

Cotgrave

M19C1549