



meeting CABINET

date 10 January 2007

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Colston Bassett CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School Section 29 Notice

Purpose of report

1. This report seeks the approval of Cabinet for the implementation of the proposal to discontinue the above-mentioned school with effect from 31 August 2007.
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. A formal proposal was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 September 2006 and under the provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the LA is required to publish a Section 29 Notice. An appropriate Notice was subsequently published on 6 October 2006 which proposed that Colston Bassett Primary should be discontinued from August 2007.
4. There is a six week period following the publication of Notices during which objections and comments can be made.
5. The Notice expired on 17 November 2006 and one letter commenting on the proposal was received. A copy of this letter is available as a background paper to this report.
6. At its meeting on 13 September 2006, Cabinet was informed that, as this proposal involved the 'voluntary controlled' sector', the final decision on the proposal would be made by the Nottinghamshire School Organisation Committee. On subsequent clarification of the statutory requirement on such proposals, and in the absence of any

objections, the decision on the above proposal falls to Cabinet to determine.

Statutory and policy implications

7. 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

8. The governors of Colston Bassett CE Primary School will be supported by LA 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

9. Closure of the school would provide savings of £69,000 in a full financial year largely from savings in block funding and small school support. This funding is provided by the Government's Dedicated Schools Grant and the savings must therefore be retained within the Schools Budget. The savings would not be available to off-set any additional costs on school transport because, under the national funding arrangements, home to school transport is not within the Schools Budget.
10. Should approval be given to implement this proposal, a budget will be allocated for the period April to July 2007. This will be retained centrally and any costs accruing from the school will be offset against this financial resource.

Equal opportunities implications

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

Implications for service users

12. At the time of writing this report, there are currently no pupils on roll at the school. Any pupils on roll at the school at the time of closure will be offered alternative places as appropriate.

Resources (Property Division) implications (TS)

13. This property is leased to the County Council by way of a ten 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. The Landlord has been made aware of the situation at the School and is presently exploring other options for the building prior to giving a view on accepting a surrender of the lease.

14. The Authority also holds a license of Colston Bassett Village Hall for use by the School. This license 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

15. That the proposal contained in paragraph one of this report to discontinue the above-mentioned school with effect from 31 August 2007, be approved by Cabinet.

COUNCILLOR JOYCE BOSNJAK

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

Reasons for recommendation

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

Other options considered

17. These were previously reported to Cabinet on 13 September 2006. The proposal contained within this report is the preferred option.

Legal Services' comments (LM/6.12.2006)

18. Cabinet has the delegated authority to approve the recommendations in the report in order to discharge the County Council's functions as Local Education Authority.

Strategic Director of Resources' comments (NDR)

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

Background papers available for inspection

Letter dated 16 November 2006 from residents of Colston Bassett.

Electoral division affected

Cotgrave
M19C1699