



meeting CABINET

date 14 November 2007

agenda item number

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

The Future of The Newark High School and The Grove School

Purpose of report

1. This report details the results of the recent consultations on the future of The Newark High School and The Grove School.
2. This report also seeks the approval of Cabinet to publish statutory notices proposing to close The Newark High School and at the same time expand The Grove School.
3. 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 March 2007.

Information and advice

Background

4. At its meeting on 18 April 2007, Cabinet gave its approval for the formal consultation with the staff, governors and parents/carers of Newark High and other interested parties about a range of options that could be considered in discussions about the school's future. Over the next five years the school roll is predicted to fall to below 300 pupils which raises serious issues of viability as a secondary school.
5. Following consultation, at its meeting on 4 July 2007, Cabinet gave its approval for further consultation with the staff, governors and parents/carers of The Newark High School, The Grove School and other appropriate interested parties on the future of The Newark High School. This consultation would be based on the proposal from The Grove School governing body suggesting the closure of The Newark High School along with an offer of a planned expansion of their own school.
6. A consultation leaflet was produced in a partnership between the Local Authority and the head teachers of both The Newark High School and The Grove School. Copies of these leaflets were distributed during the

week commencing 24 September 2007, for issue on 1 October 2007, to:

- Every school in The Newark High School family of schools;
 - Every school in The Grove School family of schools;
 - Every school in the Magnus School family of schools;
 - Orchard Special School;
 - The Nottinghamshire Learning Centre, based at the Grove;
 - The Travellers Education Centre at Friary Court;
 - The Hawtonville Family Centre
 - The Grove Leisure Centre;
 - The Newark town library.
7. A number of leaflets were also distributed to statutory consultees, as well as other interested parties. The recognised trades unions have been kept fully informed of the proposals.
8. A range of consultation events and meetings took place during the consultation period: 1 October to 1 November 2007.

St Peter's CE Primary School, Farndon

- a drop in session for pupils, parents, staff and governors of all schools in the Newark area along with other members of the community.

Hawtonville Junior School, Newark

- a drop in session for pupils, parents, staff and governors of all schools in the Newark area along with other members of the community.

John Blow Primary School, Collingham

- a drop in session for pupils, parents, staff and governors of all schools in the Newark area along with other members of the community.

The Newark High School

- a drop in session for pupils, parents, staff and governors of all schools in the Newark area along with other members of the community;
- Meetings with staff and governors.

The Grove School

- a drop in session for pupils, parents, staff and governors of all schools in the Newark area along with other members of the community;
- Meetings with staff and governors.

9. Although pupils were welcome to attend any of the drop-in sessions, specific consultation events were arranged at their schools for pupils attending The Newark High School and The Grove School.

The Proposal

10. The Local Authority is proposing to close The Newark High School at the end of the summer term 2008. The Local Authority also proposes to enlarge The Grove School, Balderton, to include The Newark High School catchment area from September 2008. This will mean The Grove School adding the High School's site and buildings to its own in Balderton and operating, in the first instance, on two sites.
11. It is suggested that the admission number of The Grove School rises from 180 to 225 for Year 7 pupils in September 2008. This will enable additional pupils living in the Newark High School's catchment area to be provided with a place at The Grove School. All those pupils on roll at the High School in other years will automatically transfer to the roll of The Grove School in September 2008, although they will not necessarily transfer to the Balderton site. Pupils on roll at the enlarged Grove School will benefit from having a larger range of courses available, including the specialist applied courses which are well established at The Newark High School.
12. The head teachers at The Newark High School and The Grove School believe that "the idea for an enlarged Grove School that maintains the excellent provision offered by The Newark High School was borne out of a spirit of partnership that already exists between the two schools. The vision behind the split site school is one that will provide young people in Newark, Balderton and the surrounding villages with a school that can offer sustainable and successful educational provision."
13. The outcome of the consultation is set out in **Appendix 1**.
14. Emerging from this consultation, as in the previous consultation, is a recognition that due to the pupil numbers on roll, and the continuing reduction in numbers predicted over the next few years, Newark High School cannot continue in its present form. The offer from the governors at The Grove School to enlarge their school, as described above, at the time The Newark High School closes is widely regarded as the best option for the communities involved.

Statutory and policy implications

15. 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

16. Whilst there are no personnel implications arising directly from this report, the governors of Newark High School and The Grove School will be supported by officers to ensure that decisions about staffing in the school are made in accordance with employment law and the Authority's previously determined policies.

Equal opportunities implications

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

RECOMMENDATION

18. That:-
 - (1) Cabinet notes the responses from the recent consultation on the future of The Newark High School and The Grove School.
 - (2) Cabinet agrees that The Newark High School should close from the end of the summer term 2008 and that The Grove School should enlarge from September 2008.
 - (3) Statutory notices are published as soon as possible proposing to close The Newark High School and enlarge The Grove School.
 - (4) A further report is submitted to Cabinet at the end of the statutory notice period with a recommendation for action.

COUNCILLOR JOYCE BOSNJAK

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

Reasons for recommendation

19. This is perceived as being in the best educational interests of both the schools and the surrounding communities. Closing and enlarging a school requires statutory notices to be published under the provisions of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Other options considered

20. These have been set out previously and included continuing to support The Newark High School in its present form and considering a formal amalgamation or federation. The recommended option is the only realistic way forward for these two schools at this time.

Legal Services' comments (LM/30.10.2007)

21. 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' financial comments (NDR)

22. The financial implications of any subsequent action will be set out in the report to be submitted to Cabinet at the end of the statutory notice period.

Background papers available for inspection

- (1) The leaflet explaining the options open for consideration.
- (2) Notes of questions and views expressed and discussed at the consultation meetings.
- (3) Written responses received during the formal consultation period.

Electoral division(s) affected

Balderton
Collingham
Newark East
Newark West

M19C1941