

15th March 2021**Agenda Item: 9****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND
SKILLS****MANNERS SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, AVERHAM, NEWARK – OUTCOME
OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL FOR CLOSURE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Committee of the responses received to the stage two consultation seeking views on the proposal to close Manners Sutton Primary School and seek approval of the closure of the School from 31st August 2021.

Information

2. Manners Sutton Primary School is a small school with a published admission number of eight serving the village of Averham in the Newark District. The school is maintained by Nottinghamshire County Council (the Council). The last Ofsted inspection of the school (January 2018) rated the school as 'good'.
3. In recent years there have been significant concerns about declining pupil numbers at Manners Sutton Primary School. Over the recent past, this small rural school has experienced a decline in pupil numbers. At the time of the most recent Ofsted inspection in January 2018, 34 pupils were on the school's roll. By the time of the last statutory school census, undertaken by the school in January 2020, there were 23 pupils on roll.
4. In September 2020 the Council was informed by the Headteacher of Manners Sutton Primary School that the school had opened for the 2020/21 academic year with zero pupils on roll. The school has not admitted any pupils since.
5. Throughout this consultative process, the Council has followed the guidance and process set out by the DfE in their publication, *Opening and closing maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers*, November 2019.
6. On 30th November 2020, the Children and Young People's Committee approved the undertaking of a formal consultation to seek views on a proposal to close Manners Sutton Primary School.
7. The consultation period opened on 4th January 2021 and closed on 31st January 2021.

8. During the consultation period 18 responses were received. 16 of the responses were received from residents of Averham, one was received from the Averham, Kelham and Staythorpe Parish Council and one from Newark and Sherwood District Council.
9. Of the responses, four agreed with the proposal to close Manners Sutton Primary School, seven disagreed with the proposal and seven offered comments but neither agreed or disagreed.
10. Of the seven responses that disagreed with the proposal, six described the loss of the school site as a community facility as a key rationale. The future use the school site is a connected but separate issue from the proposed discontinuation of Manners Sutton Primary School.

Community use of the Manners Sutton Primary School site

11. Residents of Averham currently have access to the school playground for recreational activities and the community have, in the past, used an extended section of the building for community meetings.
12. The room that has been used for community meetings was built in 2001 and jointly funded by the Council, Npower (Staythorpe Power Station) and the DfE. The Council's officers have sought usage data for the facilities from employees of Manners Sutton Primary School. The school playground is regularly used by residents for recreational activities, however there is no record of the community utilising the school building within the last 12 years.

Other Options Considered

13. Throughout the consultative process the Council has considered other options including:
 - Continue with no change
 - Academisation
 - Federation
 - Amalgamation.
14. The stage one consultation, which was open from 5th October 2020 until 15th November 2020, asked interested parties to state their preference on which of the options should be adopted for the future of Manners Sutton Primary School and to give supporting comments. Four responses were received, three recommended closure.
15. With no, or very few, pupils on roll, the Council's officers feel that Manners Sutton Primary School would encounter significant financial and operational difficulties. The continuation of the school with no change is therefore deemed not to be viable.
16. Academisation, federation and amalgamation would require another school or a multi academy trust to work with Manners Sutton Primary School, none of which have been forthcoming.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

17. Following analysis of the responses received to the stage two consultation and due to serious concerns of officers regarding the viability of Manners Sutton Primary School in the future, it is recommended that the Council closes Manners Sutton Primary School from 31st August 2021.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

19. If the decision is made to close Manners Sutton Primary School, the building will become vacant. The cost of securing and maintaining the school site will be paid for by the Council's Property Department until a decision on its future use is taken. When proposals for an alternative use or disposal of the site have been determined these, along with any financial implications, will be reported to Policy Committee.

Human Resources Implications

20. The following posts will potentially be impacted by the proposed closure:
- 1 Assistant Head Teacher
 - 1 Administrator
 - 2 Teaching Assistants
 - 1 Mid-day Supervisor.
21. Work is being undertaken with the Governing Body to address the various contractual issues which will arise if the school closes using the existing agreed policies and procedures around redundancy and redeployment with appropriate consultation and involving the recognised trade unions.

Implications for Service Users

22. There are currently no pupils on roll at Manners Sutton Primary School.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Committee approves the closure of Manners Sutton Primary School from 31st August 2021.

Marion Clay
Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

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Constitutional Comments (KK 16/02/21)

23. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (SAS 01/03/21)

24. If the decision is made to close Manners Sutton Primary School, the building will become vacant. The cost of securing and maintaining the school site will be paid for by the Council's Property Department until a decision on its future use is taken. When proposals for an alternative use or disposal of the site have been determined these, along with any financial implications, will be reported to Policy Committee.

HR Comments (AW 17/02/21)

25. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. If a decision is taken to close the school, appropriate consultation will continue with the recognised trade unions and every effort will be made to redeploy staff into suitable alternative posts in line with the agreed human resources procedures.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Manners Sutton Primary School, Averham, Newark – proposed consultation regarding closure – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 21st September 2020](#)

Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Opening and closing maintained schools; Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers', November 2019

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Farndon and Trent Division

Councillor Sue Saddington

C1451