

11 September 2008

11. REPORTS OF CABINET

(b) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

Malvern Hills Primary School – OFSTED Report and Options for the Future

Proposed Closure of Lickhill Primary School and Expansion of Stourport Primary School

1. HMI inspected Malvern Hills Primary School in June 2008 and again placed the school in Special Measures through its report published on 8 July 2008. There has been a long history of difficult and turbulent times at the school, and despite the best efforts of all concerned the recovery of the school has not been maintained.
 2. The possible options for the future of this school include:
 - Governors and staff preparing an action plan for the recovery of the school;
 - Federation with a successful school;
 - Closure of the school with effect from December 2008;
 - Closure of the school with effect from August 2009.
 3. The Cabinet has agreed that consultation takes place on the potential closure of Malvern Hills Primary School and that a report be brought to the Cabinet in September 2008 on the results of the consultation.
 4. The Cabinet has considered responses to a statutory notice on the proposals to close Lickhill Primary School and expand Stourport Primary School. Objections had been made to both proposals.
 5. Issues raised by objectors include pupil numbers, site issues, safety of the proposed site, vulnerability of Lickhill staff, standards of attainment, nursery provision and extended services, children's centres, choice and diversity and the consultation process. The response of the Director of Children's Services to the issues raised was included in the Cabinet report.
 6. As part of its consideration, the Cabinet has noted the comments on and the objections to the Public Notices. It has agreed that Lickhill Primary School be closed on 31 August 2011 and Stourport Primary School be expanded to a Published Admission Number of 60 with effect from 1 September 2011. The expanded Stourport Primary School will move into new purpose-built premises on the site of the former Lickhill Middle School to open on 1 September 2011.
- (Note – The Cabinet's decision has been called-in. Lickhill Primary School Governing Body has also appealed the

Policy on the Use of Temporary Accommodation at Schools

Building Schools for the Future

Revision of the Council's Local Development Scheme

Cabinet decision to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator).

7. In response to a Notice of Motion, the Cabinet in March 2007 requested that a policy position statement be brought back to them following the announcement of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) capital funding allocations for the period 2008/11.

8. Of the Council's 203 mobile classroom units for school use currently on school sites, 58 have been installed in the last 3 years, all of which have been as part of the Wyre Forest Schools Review implementation. However, apart from this, the general trend in the number of temporary units has been downwards over the last 8 years. During the last 3 years 22 mobiles have been removed, with a further 16 planned for removal by the end of the 2008/09 academic year.

9. The Cabinet has agreed that where there is demonstrable long-term need, and subject to the necessary funding being available, the policy of the Council is to replace temporary accommodation on School sites with permanent build. Where the need is only short term (e.g. demographic cycle or schools re-organisation) then temporary classroom accommodation is to be used.

10. On 26 March 2008 the Cabinet approved an application being made to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Partnerships for Schools (PfS) for early entry into the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme in relation to Wyre Forest Secondary Schools and new Special School.

11. The DCSF and PfS have confirmed that 8 Authorities had been selected for early inclusion within the BSF programme. Worcestershire has been placed in the first group of 4 Authorities to be brought forward.

12. The Cabinet has welcomed the Council's early entry into the BSF programme in relation to Wyre Forest Schools. A further report will be received following the confirmation of the scope of the programme agreed with PfS. The Cabinet has reaffirmed the Council's commitment to the BSF programme and agreed the Governance arrangements for the project. Mrs E Eyre, as Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Young People, will lead the Project Board and Mr A Hardman will deputise for her.

13. The Council is required to produce a Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (LDS). This is a public statement setting out details of which local planning development documents the authority would produce, in what order and when. The initial Scheme was submitted in 2005 and a revised Scheme in 2006. A revision to update it, roll it forward and set a new timetable for the

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health in Worcestershire

Speed Management Strategy and Speed Limit Review

preparation of a revised Waste Core Strategy (WCS) was needed.

14. A key element of the revised LDS is that the Council will concentrate on preparing the WCS with the aim of adopting it in May 2012. GOWM has offered to support the Council as far as possible in the development of the Strategy but success in meeting the timetable is not without risk.

15. Progress on implementing the LDS and compliance with the timetable will be reported annually in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each December.

16. The Cabinet has approved the revised LDS for submission to the Secretary of State, to become operative on 29 August 2008 unless the Secretary of State intervened within the four-week period following submission of the Scheme.

17. The Cabinet has agreed a Joint Commissioning Strategy between health and social care for adult mental health and well-being in Worcestershire. The strategy sets out four commissioning themes spanning health and social care, each with realistic and achievable commissioning intentions:

- Mental health promotion and mental well-being;
- Primary and community mental health care;
- Specialist mental health care; and
- Tertiary services.

18. The Strategy has been subject to comment and scrutiny by service users, carers and the voluntary and community sector; this had made a significant contribution to the tone and content of the final document.

19. The Strategy will be implemented as part of the 2008/9 commissioning work-plan for the Council, in partnership with the Worcestershire Primary Care Trust.

20. The Department for Transport (DfT) expects Local Highway Authorities to undertake a review of all speed limits on A and B Class Roads and to implement any required changes by 2011. The Cabinet has considered a report outlining the key elements of the draft Strategy for Worcestershire.

21. The Cabinet has approved the Draft Speed Management Strategy for stakeholder consultation and has noted the ongoing Speed Limit Review.

22. The key policies contained in the draft Strategy are:

- 20mph zones

Money Matters

Bromsgrove Property Review and Town Centre Regeneration

- Vehicle activated signs (VAS)
- Infrastructure and engineering remedial works
- Road safety education, training and publicity
- Speed enforcement
- Speed limit review

Details of the draft policies are set out in the draft Strategy, which was circulated to all members as part of the Cabinet agenda papers.

23. The Director of Financial Services reported on Financial Progress during 2008/09 to date. He concluded that:

- the call on general reserves is likely to be higher than planned because energy cost pressures are proving to be greater than could have been anticipated;
- the Council's general reserve at over £12.7 million is adequate to meet an additional withdrawal this year;
- with the exception of pay and energy costs, good progress is being made to implement this year's revenue programme including efficiency measures; and
- the Medium Term Financial Strategy would need to be adjusted in the light of the increasing inflationary pressures facing the Council.

24. The Cabinet has endorsed the conclusions of the Director of Financial Services concerning:

- (a) the financial standing of the Council;
- (b) external audit progress;
- (c) the funding application to the Government to meet the cost of responding to last year's floods;
- (d) the Annual Efficiency Statement; and
- (e) the action taken to submit the Council's Primary Strategy for Change to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

25. Officers have been working with public sector partners to explore the potential benefits of addressing service problems by a collaborative approach to a number of replacement facilities in Bromsgrove town centre that where appropriate could support the delivery of joint services and promote the revitalisation of the town centre. The County Council potentially had an interest in all of the public sector facilities currently under review, either as the body responsible for the service or as the owner of land that could provide a suitable replacement site.

26. The proposed public service developments would make a key contribution to the regeneration of the town centre and are a key component of the Bromsgrove District Council

Corporate Asset Management Plan 2008

Enhanced Two Tier and Joint Working in Worcestershire

Area Action Plan (AAP). These deliverables together with the proposed new public buildings would bring benefits to the County Council in line with the priorities in its corporate plan.

27. An estimate of the net capital investment required from the County Council over the next 5 years is of the order of £5million, with the investment needed from Phase 3 onwards, particularly in respect of the County Council's costs of the proposed new combined County Council, District Council and Office of Work and Pensions office, Contact Centre and Library. This commitment is not anticipated to be required before 2011 and is additional to existing capital programme approvals. The annual cost to the revenue budget of this additional borrowing (on a 20-year annuity basis) would be £410,000.

28. The project carries three significant risks - failure of the partnership approach, insufficient public funding and inability to attract inward investment. It is believed that the significant risks have been identified and appropriate management and monitoring procedures have been put in place to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the delivery of the project.

29. The Cabinet has endorsed a number of recommendations of the Director of Corporate Services to enable the proposals to be taken forward.

30. The Cabinet has approved the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) 2008. This is a key element of the framework of policies designed to ensure that the Council manages its property assets as efficiently and effectively as possible and makes the most effective and informed capital spending decisions.

31. The Leaders and the Chief Executives of the County Council and the 6 District Councils have started to look at opportunities for Enhanced Two-Tier Working. The intention is to complete a high level analysis indicating the scale of possible service improvement and change required to deliver this. When this is done, a further report detailing the findings from this work, will be submitted to Cabinet.

32. The County Council is also willing to work with smaller groupings of Councils to improve services and deliver better value for money. Worcester City and Malvern Hills have indicated a desire to work more closely with the County Council.

33. Any initial options will be developed in greater detail, including potential costs and savings, service improvement and efficiencies, impact on staff, service users, local communities and partners. This will require input from each service area, to ensure County Council standards and objectives are safeguarded and furthered. Detailed options will be brought back to Cabinet in the autumn for

decision about which, if any, should be further progressed. Consultation will be undertaken before final decisions are made about implementation.

34. Resources will be required to research the options above. The County Council and the 6 District Councils had made a bid to the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (WMRIEP) for funding and other support.

35. The Council will look at all opportunities as they presented themselves and the Cabinet noted recent developments at Malvern Hills District Council. The Council's position remains that it was ready to work with any District Council where there were real possibilities for improvement. The outcome of any further work will be brought back to members.

36. The Cabinet has noted the current position, supporting the proposed "enhanced two-tier" work programme with the Chief Executives and Leaders of the six District Councils, as set out in the report, and supporting the exploration of other joint working arrangements involving the County Council and smaller groupings of District Councils including, but not restricted to, possible joint working with Worcester City and Malvern Hills District Council.

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Corporate Services) the following are background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17 July 2008.