

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 12 March 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr R B Burgess (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Angell, Mr C J Capon, Mr A D Crowther, Mr M J Northey and Mr A R Poole

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Adams (Area Education Officer Ashford & Shepway), Mr M Doole (Area Education Officer Thanet & Dover) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.

(Item 2)

Mr M J Northey declared an interest in Item 4 on the Agenda – Proposal to add a sixth form to the North (Community School), Ashford and took no part in the discussion on that item.

2. Minutes - 8 January 2009

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2009 be agreed as a true record.

3. Proposal to Add a Sixth Form to the North (Community) School, Ashford

(Item 4 - Report by Director – Operations)

(1) This report presented the results of the public consultation on the proposal to add a sixth form to The North School, Ashford.

(2) Mr Adams said he believed that through extending the age range of the school, the quality of provision, for the 11-16 age group would improve. Younger pupils would have on-site older students to act as role models, be able to access new curriculum pathways to keep them engaged in education and training beyond the age of 16 years and would also have on-site older students to act as role models. The wide range of courses that the school would be able to offer would also enhance the learning experience of pupils and aid their future employment prospects. Mr Adams said that one of the chief concerns which had been raised during the of the public consultation exercise, was around the number of car parking spaces available for sixth form students and the possibility of traffic problems due to an increase in the number of traffic movements within the vicinity of the school. In order to address these concerns, a School Travel Plan would be developed and that would specifically

look at the measures needed to address the post-16 parking issues. There would also be a need to provide residents with information about the possible numbers of post-16 students who might be driving to and from the school and to provide information about the proportionate number of students who would be using cars.

(3) Mrs Elizabeth Tweed attended the meeting and spoke as the Local Member. She said that the case to establish sixth form provision at the school was well made and she was in full support of the proposal. She said The North School would be disadvantaged if it was not able to offer a sixth form together with a wider range and mix of courses. She said she understood the concerns which had been expressed by local residents about parking and possible congestion problems and said she welcomed the fact that these would be looked at as part of the development of a School Travel Plan. She also said that she hoped measures would be taken in order to promote and encourage the use of public transport.

(4) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board spoke in support of the proposal, but raised some concerns around car parking provision and the potential for traffic congestion in and around the school. Members therefore asked officers to look at ways to reducing the traffic impact of the proposal and also to take appropriate measures to promote the greater use of public transport. Subject to these views, the Advisory Board AGREED to the issuing of a public notice to add a sixth form to The North (Community) School, Ashford.

4. The Proposed Relocation of The Foreland (Community Special) School to the Hartsdown Technology College site

(Item 5 - Report by Director – Operations)

(1) This report sought the views of the Advisory Board on the proposed relocation of The Foreland (Community Special) School in Broadstairs to be co-located with Hartsdown (Community) Technology College on the Hartsdown site in Margate. In presenting this report, Mr Doole said that the Foreland School already had well established and thriving links with Hartsdown Technology College. Both schools were in need of improved facilities and accommodation and co-location onto the existing Hartsdown Campus would deliver a cost effective solution with substantial learning benefits for all students. The proposal was strongly supported by the Headteachers' and Chairs of Governors of both schools who had been actively involved in formulating and developing the proposal. Mr Doole said that as part of the consultations, Mr Hayton as one of the local County Members had objected to the proposal on the grounds that he was in principle against the co-location of mainstream and special schools.

(2) Mr Burgess spoke as a local county Member and said that the new buildings would enhance the existing collaborative work whilst at the same time allowing the schools to remain separate, albeit on the same site. Hartsdown had been steadily improving over recent years and progressing up the schools table and as it continued to grow it was providing excellent educational facilities and provision. Mr Burgess saw this as an opportunity for both schools to do even better and he was therefore fully supportive of the proposals.

(3) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of issues to which officers responded. Mr Doole emphasised that the schools would remain discrete with their own governing bodies and Headteacher and

their co-location would simply enable them to share the use of improved and better resources and buildings. Mr Doole also said that there would be provision for a small number of nursery places within the site and he believed those children attending the nursery would benefit by being close to a facility which was able to offer special provision. He also said that The Foreland School was designated a district Special School and was therefore complementary to other local provision.

(4) Following further discussion the Advisory Board AGREED that a public consultation exercise should be undertaken on the proposed relocation of The Foreland School from its existing site at Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs, to be co-located with Hartsdown Technology College on the Hartsdown Site, Margate.

5. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status

(Item 6 - Report by Director – Operations)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.