

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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, 23 April 2009, commencing at 10:30 am.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Adams (Area Children's Services Officer, Ashford & Shepway) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes - 12 March 2009

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009 be agreed as a true record.

2. Fleetdown Infant & Nursery and Fleetdown Junior Schools, Dartford - Proposed Amalgamation

(Item 4 – report by Mr Grahame Ward, Director, Operations)

(Mr David Hart, Operations Support Officer was present for this item)

(1) This report provided the results of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School, Dartford. The report also provided details of the Secretary of States decision on the Council's application to publish proposals for a new school, without running a competition as provided for in Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

(2) In the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of issues to which officers responded. On the question of capital funding Mr Adams said that although it had not been possible to include this proposal in the current capital programme none the less all best efforts would be made to secure the necessary funding. The proposed amalgamation would be eligible for support from the reorganisation fund and also some funding may be available from the Primary Capital Programme. Officers from the Capital Strategy Unit would be meeting with the new headteacher and the interim governing body in order to better understand the schools priorities.

(3) Mr Adams also said that it would be the responsibility of the interim governing body to determine the staffing structure but that staff of both schools would transfer into the new school, with an alignment of posts once the new school had been established. Mr Adams said that Paragraph 6 of the report should be amended as it

was not the case that the two current deputy headteachers would be retiring. He also placed on record an apology that in recording the fact that a minute's silence was held at the public meeting held on the 11 February 2009 in memory of the teacher from the Junior School who had died tragically in a motor accident, the name of that teacher Mrs Barbara Du Preez had not been recorded in the notes of the public meeting.

(4) Following further consideration of this matter the Advisory Board agreed to the issuing of a Public Notice for the amalgamation of Fleetdown Infant & Nursery and Fleetdown Junior Schools, Dartford.

3. Proposed Closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and its replacement as a Primary School within the Folkestone Academy

(Item 5 – report by Mr Graham Ward, Director, Operations)

(1) This report presented the results of a public consultation on the proposal to close Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and replace it with a Primary phase within the Folkestone Academy. Mr Adams outlined the key issues arising from the public meeting and consultation exercise and said that officers would be working closely with the two governing bodies on the ongoing development of this proposal.

(2) In response to a range of questions raised by Members Mr Adams said that the Park Farm Primary School buildings would be replaced by a new provision located on the same site but separate to the Folkestone Academy. However whilst the Primary and Secondary elements of the school would be discrete, with separate identities, opportunities would exist for expectations and structures to be common throughout, thereby supporting transition through the phases. It was also confirmed that the Academy would adhere to the Code of Practice on Admissions and would be expected to play a role within the Local School Partnerships. With regard to staff, Mr Adams said that the Governing Body was the employer of the staff at Park Farm School and that the Folkestone Academy Trust was the employer of staff within the Academy. Consultation with Park Farm staff had been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of TUPE and discussions were ongoing with the DCSF regarding funding for TUPE costs and the funding for any necessary redundancies.

(3) With regard to SEN provision Mr Adams said that Park Farm already had a good record of supporting SEN pupils and it was considered that the all-age Academy would be able to place additional resources into SEN at the Primary level. Further it was considered the proposal would lead to the better development of existing working practices and in partnership with other agencies provide additional support. In response to a question about whether Members should have a report on how successful other all-through Academies had been before reaching a decision on this proposal, Mr Adams said that a study of other Academies offering all-through provision could be undertaken but that consideration of this proposal could not reasonably be deferred until the outcome of that review was known.

(4) Following further consideration of the proposals the Advisory Board agreed with one abstention that a Public Notice should be issued for the closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School, subject to its replacement within the Folkestone Academy.