

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of  
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Monday,  
10th July, 2017

**PRESENT**

Chairman:  
p Councillor Ray Bolton

Vice-Chairman:  
p Councillor Roz Chadd

**Councillors:**

p Jackie Branson	p Kirsty Locke
p Zilliah Brooks	a Russell Oppenheimer
p Fran Carpenter	p Neville Penman
p Steve Forster	p Jackie Porter
p Marge Harvey	a Robert Taylor
p Wayne Irish	p Malcolm Wade
p Gavin James	p Michael Westbrook

**Co-opted Members:**

p Caroline Edmondson: Primary School Parent Governor Representative  
a Andrew March: Secondary School Parent Governor Representative  
VACANT: Special School Parent Governor Representative  
a Jeff Williams: Church of England Schools Representative  
VACANT: Roman Catholic Schools Representative

**At the invitation of the Chairman:**

p Councillor Peter Edgar – Executive Member for Education  
a Councillor Keith Mans – Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services

**BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recordings for broadcasting purposes.

**10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Russell Oppenheimer, Robert Taylor and from Andrew March. Councillor Pal Hayre was in attendance as the Conservative Deputy.

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the

circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

Councillor Zilliah Brooks declared that her granddaughter was due to begin attending Cranbourne Business and Enterprise College in September 2017. Councillor Gavin James declared that his sister had previously been employed as a teacher at both Fort Hill Community School and Cranbourne Business and Enterprise College.

## **12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was noted that Councillor Fran Carpenter had been present at the meeting on 14 June 2017.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **13. DEPUTATIONS**

The Committee did not receive any deputations at this meeting.

## **14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman did not have any announcements at this meeting.

## **15. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST TO EXERCISE CALL-IN POWERS**

The Committee received a report (Item 6 in the Minute Book) from the Directors of Transformation and Governance and Children's Services following a request by a quorum of members of the Select Committee to exercise call-in powers in respect of a decision by the Executive Member for Education to amalgamate Fort Hill Community School and Cranbourne Business and Enterprise College in Basingstoke.

The Chairman outlined that the role of the Select Committee would be to determine whether it wished to recommend to the Executive Member that he reconsider his decision taken on the school amalgamation at his meeting on 19 June, as outlined in Appendix 1.

The Head of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer introduced the report and the purpose of the meeting. The process of call in as laid out in the Constitution, at Appendix 4 within the papers, was explained and Members were referred to the reasons for the call-in provided in Appendix 3.

The Monitoring Officer's view was that the 19 June decision of the Executive Member for Education was in line with the budget and policy framework and that, therefore, the option open to the Select Committee was to consider whether or not to ask the Executive Member to reconsider his decision. The Monitoring Officer further outlined an aspect of the role of the Select Committee, which was to hold the Executive to account. However, this did not mean the Select Committee had the power to direct the Executive. Statutory guidance advised that the Executive should take into account the views of the Select Committee, but that it was free to take into account other factors in its decision making process and make other determinations.

The Chairman gave the Members the opportunity to ask questions of the Officers and then moved to debate. During the discussion, the following information was heard:

- That the basis of the decision to amalgamate the two schools was threefold and incorporated declining pupil numbers (with only 35 applications for the September 2017 Year 7 intake out of a possible 220 within the catchment area), declining pupil funding (which was based upon the low pupil numbers) and relatively weak educational standards (significantly reduced funding in the future resulting in a further reduction in the curriculum offer and inadequate educational provision).
- That significant and thorough consultation had taken place in the lead in to the decision to amalgamate and that this had been in line with County Council procedures and statutory guidance from the Department for Education.
- The Governing Body had supported the decision to amalgamate the schools.
- That GCSE results and pupil progress at Fort Hill Community School had been consistently poor; despite the best efforts and support of Children's Services and that the school had experienced a high turnover of staff. Discussion was held regarding the reasons for the high turnover and how the career choices of those within the teaching profession were likely to be driven by the opportunities for professional development which were more accessible at larger, high performing secondary schools.
- That, ultimately, the reason behind reduction in pupil numbers at Fort Hill Community School was because parents had chosen to send their children to other local schools. Again, it was discussed how this was linked to the low pupil progress rate and that this was likely to have impacted negatively upon parents' choice over where to send their children for schooling.
- That the Fort Hill Community School site would be retained for a period of two years, from September 2017, and made available to the Governing Body should they wish to use it. It was confirmed that negotiations were planned with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council regarding future use of the site for community infrastructure following the two year period.
- That travel and transport support between the two school sites would be offered to Fort Hill pupils in years 8 and 9 for a two year period from September 2017. This support would be extended to pupils in years 10 and 11 if the Governing Body decided to discontinue the use of the Fort Hill site.

- That the housing demand and requirement for future development in the Basingstoke area had been taken into consideration as part of the overall decision. Any further requirement for secondary education provision within the area would be addressed at a later stage, in future years, once the scope of the educational requirement was known.
- That school uniform was a matter for the Governing Body to coordinate and that they were looking into how best to support parents with obtaining any new items of uniform.
- Discussion was held regarding education provision and schooling within the Basingstoke area generally and it was confirmed that there was a capacity of roughly 200-300 pupil places per year group across the Basingstoke area.

Some members expressed that they were not happy with the decision to amalgamate the two schools and that the data used to inform the decision had not been well interpreted in their view.

At the discretion of the Chairman, the Executive Member for Education addressed the Committee. He noted that the process leading into the decision to amalgamate had been thorough, had not been rushed, had involved extensive consultation and significant analysis of the influencing factors. The Executive Member noted that he had not taken the decision lightly and that all other options had been thoroughly pursued. He paid tribute to the existing staff of both schools. The Executive Member also thanked officers for handling the entire process with honesty and integrity.

In line with the option open to the Select Committee, the Chairman proposed that a vote should be taken on the recommendation in the report that the Select Committee should consider whether or not to request the Executive Member for Education to reconsider his decision as set out in the Decision Record attached as an Appendix to the report.

The recommendation was voted upon as follows:

- 10 members of the Committee voted in favour of not requesting the Executive Member to reconsider his decision.
- Three members of the Committee voted in favour of requesting the Executive Member to reconsider his decision.
- Three members of the Committee abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive Member for Education should not be requested to reconsider his decision as set out in the Decision Record attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

---

Chairman, 20 September 2017