

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00pm, 1 DECEMBER 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mrs Brown (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Hawkes, Opposition Spokesperson

Other Members present: Councillors Duncan and Kemble

PART ONE

49. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

49a Declarations of Interest

49.1 There were none.

49b Exclusion of Press and Public

49.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the Act'), the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press or public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

49.3 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

50. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

50.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2008 be approved and signed by the Cabinet Member as a correct record.

51. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

51.1 There were none.

52. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

52.1 **RESOLVED** - All the items were reserved for discussion by the Cabinet Member.

53. PETITIONS

53.1 There were none.

54. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

54.1 There were none.

55. DEPUTATIONS

55.1 The Cabinet Member reported that one deputation had been received. It concerned a request to oppose the proposed merger of St Luke's Infant and St Luke's Junior Schools. The Cabinet Member invited Mr P Hendrick, as the spokesperson, to come forward and address the meeting.

55.2 Mr Hendrick presented the Deputation (see Appendix 1 to the minutes).

55.3 Mr Hendrick concluded: "St Luke's Infant's and Junior's are state schools, they are great schools. Ofsted think so too. The council must take some credit for this success alongside the staff and pupils for letting them get on with their job without unnecessary change. Let's celebrate and learn from the success of these schools. Why risk all this for some uncertain and unproven gains."

55.4 The Cabinet Member invited Councillor Ben Duncan to speak in support of the deputation.

55.5 Councillor Duncan thanked those parents who attended the meeting to present the Deputation and thanked the Cabinet Member for the opportunity to speak.

55.6 Councillor Duncan echoed the sentiments expressed by the Deputation and supported their case. He stated that he recognised many of the educational advantages in merging schools; however, he did not feel this was applicable in the case of St Luke's Infant and Junior schools. Councillor Duncan urged the Cabinet Member to not authorise the merger.

55.7 The Cabinet Member invited Councillor Kemble to speak on this item.

55.8 Councillor Kemble spoke in support of the proposed merger of St Luke's Infant and Junior Schools, highlighting the fact that the amalgamation would provide a better school for the city and its children in the longer term.

55.9 The Cabinet Member thanked everyone for their contributions, in particular Mr Hendrick for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the Deputation.

55.10 In her response to the Deputation, the Cabinet member stated:

“As you know, the Council’s Merger Protocol states that when a head teacher of an infant or junior school leaves, the Council will consider merging the two schools. I can assure you that there is no blanket policy – all the schools are considered individually depending on the particular circumstances. As you know, some mergers go ahead and others do not.

The Council does believe there can be advantages in the creation of all-through primary schools and I will reiterate these again briefly. They are written into the report: greater continuity in teaching, pupil care and development under a single head teacher and teaching staff. The school could offer a greater range of teaching skills across the whole age range; there can be greater flexibility in deploying staff and resources and practical advantages to parents. A very positive feature of schools catering for pupils from 4-11 is the social interaction between the pupils.

These advantages are set out fully in the report. The main argument against the merger seems to be the size, but, although the proposed new school would become one of the largest primary schools in the city, this has to be considered against the fact that the two existing schools are within the same building with just one door between them. There would be little, if any, disruption as the schools currently operate from this one building and that would not change. The infant school has a separate entrance and playground from the junior school and this could continue.

There are many schools nationally that are of a similar size and larger that have outstanding results. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that combining schools with good and outstanding Ofsted assessment would produce anything other than an extremely successful school. Both schools were praised for their caring attitude to the children in their last Ofsted inspections so I am sure that the children will remain well cared for and happy.”

55.11 **RESOLVED** – That the Deputation was considered and noted by the Cabinet Member.

56. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

56.1 There were none.

57. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

57.1 There were none.

58. NOTICES OF MOTION

58.1 There were none.

59. ST LUKE’S INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL MERGER

59.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Children’s Services concerning St Luke’s Infant and Junior School merger. The report sought the agreement

to proceed to the next stage of the statutory process which was the publication of the required statutory notice (for copy see minute book).

59.2 The Head of Capital Strategy and Development Planning referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report and clarified that the statutory notices would be published by 12 January 2009 and not 2 December 2008, as indicated in the said paragraph.

59.3 She further rectified that, on paragraph 4 of Appendix 1 to the report, where it read "*The proposal is linked to the prescribed alteration set out in Part 2, to create an all through primary school with an extended age range of 3 to 11 (see part 2 of this notice)*" it should read "*The proposal is linked to the prescribed alteration set out in Part 2, to create an all through primary school with an extended age range of 4 to 11 (see part 2 of this notice)*".

59.4 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That the proposal to amalgamate St Luke's Infant and Junior Schools be noted and endorsed.
- (2) That the publication of the required Statutory Notices to progress this proposal be agreed.
- (3) That the results from the statutory consultation process be referred to Cabinet Member Meeting on 2 March 2009 for decision.

60. EXPANSION OF BALFOUR JUNIOR SCHOOL

60.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Children's Services concerning the expansion of Balfour Junior School by one form of entry. The report sought the agreement to proceed to the next stage of the statutory process which was the publication of the required statutory notices (for copy see minute book).

60.2 The Opposition Spokesperson stated that she welcomed the standardisation of the forms of entry for both schools. She indicated, however, that as a result of this expansion of Balfour Junior, she had one matter of concern and that was in relation to Hertford Infant and Junior schools. She sought reassurance that careful attention would be given to Hertford schools over this process.

60.3 The Assistant Director, Schools, Central Area and School Support, agreed that Hertford Infant and Junior were the two nearest schools to the Balfour schools. He explained that officers were currently in conversations with the Hertford schools' governing body to find out how the schools can be best supported over this process.

60.4 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That the proposal to expand Balfour Junior School by one form of entry be noted and endorsed.

- (2) That the publication of the required Statutory Notices to progress this proposal be agreed.
- (3) That the results from the statutory consultation process be referred to Cabinet Member Meeting on 2 March 2009 for decision.

The meeting concluded at 4.25pm.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2009