

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Rugby Area Committee
Date of Committee 24th May 2007
Report Title Bishop Wulstan Catholic School,
Rugby – Transitional arrangements
for pupils

Summary This paper gives information about the closure of Bishop Wulstan School and the associated arrangements for pupils and staff.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision] No

Background papers

- School Organisation Framework document 2005/10
- Cabinet reports 12.1.06, 9.3.06, 13.7.06, 12.10.06, 2.11.06, 23.11.06, 9.2.07 and 8.3.07
- Rugby Area Committee reports 21.9.06 and 7.3.07

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s) Cllr John Vereker – Caldecott
Cllr Ian Smith – Caldecott

Other Elected Members Spokespersons for information:
Cllr Richard Grant
Cllr Jill Dill-Russell
Cllr John Whitehouse

- Cabinet Member Cllr John Burton
- Other Cabinet Members consulted Cllr Izzi Seccombe
- Chief Executive
- Legal Richard Freeth – *“fine”*
- Finance
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals All stakeholders
School Organisation Committee 9.5.07

FINAL DECISION **YES**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Rugby Area Committee – 24th May 2007

Bishop Wulstan Catholic School, Rugby – Transitional arrangements for pupils

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendation:

That the Area Committee consider and comment on the transitional arrangements for pupils and staff following the decision to close Bishop Wulstan School.

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 9th May 2007, the Warwickshire School Organisation Committee (SOC) determined to cease to support Bishop Wulstan Catholic School with effect from 31st August 2007. The decision was unanimous and so is final and binding on all parties. The purpose of this report is to formally notify local members of the SOC decision and inform members of the provisions for pupils and staff.

2. Arrangements for pupils and staff

A dedicated project manager, previously employed in a senior position at Bishop Wulstan School, has been appointed to oversee the implementation of transitional arrangements and to be the point of contact for parents/carers.

2.1 Pupils

Clearly in any process of closure the highest priority is to protect the education of the pupils currently in the school.

Four meetings have been held with the parents/carers of pupils currently in Bishop Wulstan School by year group, and also one-to-one sessions were offered to parents/carers of children due to transfer to secondary schools in September, to explain the arrangements for providing alternative schools.

Discussions have been held with all the secondary schools in Rugby and with Trinity School who have all agreed to co-operate with the County Council to meet, as far as possible, the preferences of parents/carers. In most circumstances, these schools, where necessary, have agreed to admit above Planned Admission Numbers (in line with paragraph 140 of the Admissions Code of Practice). All secondary schools in Rugby are located within a radius of less than three miles from Bishop Wulstan School.

Parents/carers were asked to express a preference of alternative school and at the time of drafting this report, some 95% of pupils have been offered a place at their first preference school. Of those not achieving a place at their preferred school, five had sought a place at a selective school but their performance in the 11+ test did not qualify them for a selective place. They have been offered a place at their preferred non-selective school. The parents/carers of two other boys have requested selective places at Lawrence Sheriff School and appeals are to be held in June.

The County Council is clearly anxious to ensure continuity of curriculum for pupils in the middle of GCSE courses. For pupils in Y10, the County Council has arranged that these pupils should be taught together on the site of Bishop Wulstan School while transferring to the roll of Ashlawn School. Parents/carers have been asked if they want to make use of these arrangements or seek places in alternative schools. At this time 61 of the 85 Y10 pupils have indicated that they wish to take up this provision.

Where parents/carers wish to send their child to another Catholic school, e.g. Trinity School in Leamington, free transport will be provided in line with the Council's existing Home to School Transport Policy and practice.

Full induction programmes have been planned, including visits and information packs.

All secondary schools within the Rugby area have well established Learning Support Departments and are currently successfully including pupils with a wide spectrum of special educational needs. All schools subscribe to the county's Learning and Behaviour Support Service, which enables them to access specialist teachers and teaching assistants to meet the needs of those pupils with learning and behaviour needs. Schools can access specialist staff in relation to low incidence needs (i.e. Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Physical or Medical) via the Integrated Disability Services (Teaching and Learning). These are free to schools. These services, where appropriate, will already be involved with pupils at Bishop Wulstan and this will continue into any receiving school. For some students, at the instigation of the school, alternative curricula are being developed in conjunction with the Pupil Reintegration Unit.

For those pupils with the most significant need (i.e. those with statements of special educational needs) officers from the Authority's Assessment, Statementing and Review Service will liaise directly with receiving schools to

ensure that all provision necessary to meet the needs of those pupils is in place for their transfer. This includes funding and access to specialist staff and services.

Although there are sufficient school places in Rugby to accommodate all the pupils requiring places in September 2007, it is accepted that additional places will be required.

2.2 Staff

A series of meetings have been held with staff since the formal consultations began. These meeting have been on both a whole staff and individual staff member basis. Notices must be sent out to staff by 31st May 2007. This is clearly a difficult time for many staff and the Authority will continue to support staff to identify redeployment opportunities and advise on financial packages available.

3. Summary

Following the decision to close Bishop Wulstan School the County Council recognises that this is a difficult period for staff and pupils and is working to secure education for pupils and alternative employment opportunities or financial packages for staff.

MARION DAVIS
Strategic Director for Children,
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21st May 2007