

CABINET

Thursday, 26 November 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	Finance & Best Value
	Councillors	S Holbrook	Corporate Resources
		G Davies	Housing & Community Safety
		P Davies	Children's Services & Lifelong Learning
		G Gardiner	Environment
		S Kelly	Community & Customer Engagement
		M McLaughlin	Social Care & Inclusion
		R Moon	Culture, Tourism & Leisure
		J Stapleton	Regeneration & Planning Strategy
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor	J Quinn	Streetscene & Transport Services

190 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet on 5 November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

191 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor G Davies declared a prejudicial interest in Item No.3 on the agenda – Committee Referral – Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Review of Secondary School Places Phase I (Minute No. 197 refers), by virtue of being a Governor of Park High School. He left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor S Kelly informed that he would be leaving the room whilst the next item of business was under discussion because when the decision to close Ridgeway High School was called-in, he had attended the call-in meeting and expressed his views. Consequently, he had pre-determined himself.

192 COMMITTEE REFERRAL - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1

A special meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee was held on 3 November 2009, to consider the call in of Minute 143 of Cabinet (1/10/09) relating to the above by the Conservative Group. Councillor P Davies informed that new information had been brought to his attention since the decision the Cabinet had made on 1 October 2009. He recommended that the Council should continue to support Ridgeway High School and that a report detailing options to re-organise Secondary Education in Wirral be presented to the Cabinet in due course.

RESOLVED- That

(1) Cabinet notes the resolutions discussed at the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 November 2009;

(2) Cabinet reiterates its determination to tackle the surplus places issue in secondary education in order that public money is spent wisely and pupils receive the best possible education;

(3) Cabinet notes the concerns expressed by parents and Governors of Ridgeway High School about its closure and the wishes of the governing body that it cannot agree to a proposal that would ultimately see the closure of Ridgeway High School;

(4) In view of these representations, Cabinet believes that the ‘3 into 2’ model which would see the closure of Park High, Rock Ferry High and Ridgeway High Schools and their replacement with two new Academies should be formally withdrawn’;

(5) Whilst Cabinet notes the professional view of the Director of Children’s Services remains that the ‘3 into 2’ model is the best solution to tackle the issue of surplus places and the gender imbalance in Birkenhead, the Authority pledges to continue to give its full support to Ridgeway High School through school improvement activities as it has always done;

(6) In light of the above, there is clearly a need to identify a new options for reorganising secondary education in Birkenhead in order to reduce surplus places. Cabinet is also mindful of the window of opportunity available to attract significant additional funding from the current government for improving secondary education in Birkenhead;

(7) Cabinet, therefore, agrees to revert to the original ‘2 into 1’ model, which it agreed on 6 November 2008, and to recommence discussions and pre-consultation on the closure of Rock Ferry High and Park High in order to establish a new mixed Academy for pupils on either the Park High site or a new site, i.e. Borough Road Playing Fields. The Director is requested to consult with representatives of Park High School and Rock Ferry High School and representatives of residents from the Tranmere Hall and Mount Estates and with Shaftsbury Youth Club on the siting of the new Academy and report back to Cabinet on 9 December 2009;

(8) Cabinet also asks the Director to begin discussions with other key stakeholders on the ‘2 into 1’ model outlined above. This should include working with the Office of the Schools Commissioner and the Department of Children, Schools and Families to form a sponsor team and produce a new Statement of Intent. The Cabinet’s view is that the previous Mixed Academy sponsor team should be put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

(9) The Director be also authorised to undertake pre-consultation on the closure of predecessor schools;

(10) A further report, including the new Expression of Interest (EO1) be brought back to the Cabinet as a matter of urgency. It is proposed that if the Cabinet approves the EO1 it will also approve commencement of consultation on closure of the two schools as part of the Feasibility Stage; and

(11) In view of the urgency of this item, the Cabinet agrees to waive the call-in process.