

## **THE PROPOSAL TO BRING FORWARD THE CLOSURE OF RYELANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL TO 31 AUGUST 2007.**

As you will be aware we have recently carried out a public consultation on proposals to address the issue of surplus places in the Hoddesdon and Wormley area. As part of this, you were consulted on the proposal to close Ryelands Primary School on 31 August 2008.

Following this public consultation, Cabinet agreed to:

- expand Sheredes Primary School from 1.5FE (45 places) to 2 FE (60 places) from September 2008 (increase in reception from September 2007)
- reduce Forres from 1.5FE (45 places) to 1 FE (30 places) from September 2008 (with some flexibility to delay if appropriate)
- and was minded to close Ryelands Primary School, but deferred formal decision pending receipt of the outcome of the recent OfSTED inspection.

Copies of the Ofsted report for Ryelands School have been distributed to parents. OfSTED has placed the school in the category of Special Measures and as a result the County Council is writing to consult you on the proposal to bring forward the closure date to 31 August 2007. When a school is placed in Special Measures, the Local Authority has a more pressing responsibility to act swiftly in the best interests of both the school and its pupils.

The purpose of this new consultation is to invite your views on the proposal to bring forward the closure date of Ryelands School to 31 August 2007. You are invited to make comments on the proposal, by writing (freepost) to:

Ryelands Proposal  
CSF School Access  
Freepost HJ71  
Hertfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
Hertford  
SG13 8YD

These views will be reported to Cabinet, on 18 December 2006, when a decision will be made on whether to proceed with this proposal. **The closing date for comments is Thursday 7 December 2006.**

The Governors of Ryelands Primary School are holding a meeting for parents on Monday 13 November 2006 to discuss the outcome of the Ofsted inspection. Officers from the review team will also be there to give parents/carers, staff and governors the opportunity to discuss the date for closure.

## **Further information that has been provided for parents/carers and staff**

### **Pupils: current reception to year 4**

There are enough reception to year four places between St. Catherine's C of E, Westfield and Forres Primary Schools to accommodate all the children in those year groups currently at Ryelands.

There are also a few places available at Roselands, Cranbourne and Sheredes Primary Schools.

If the decision is made to close Ryelands on 31 August 2007, the local admissions team will work to support parents and carers through a carefully managed admissions process. This would happen in the spring term 2007.

### **Pupils: current year 5**

St. Catherine's C of E Primary School has agreed to offer a place to every pupil currently in year 5 at Ryelands Primary School, from 1 September 2007. Any parent/carer not wishing to accept this place could apply to any school with a place available at that time.

### **Pupils: Primary Support Base**

Officers are looking at the possibility of moving the primary support base to another local school as soon as possible. (This does not need to wait for the outcome of the consultation on the closure date for the school).

### **Staff**

Officers from CSF Human Resources will work with staff to discuss any implications for them with this revised proposal. All permanent staff contracts are protected until 31 August 2007.

### **Timescale**

Public consultation: 9 November – 7 December 2006

Cabinet meeting: 18 December 2006 (decision whether or not to proceed with Statutory notices)

Statutory Notices: 22 December 2006 – 19 January 2007 (4 weeks)

School Organisation Committee: 6 February 2007.

If there are no objections the Director will make the decision on 26 January 2007. If there are objections the final decision will be made at the School Organisation Committee on 6 February 2007.

The decision to close any school is not undertaken lightly by the Local Authority and we appreciate that it is a difficult time for everyone. Officers will work closely with the schools involved to try to make the transition process run as smoothly as possible.

**Justin Donovan**

**Deputy Director (Chief Education Officer)  
Children, Schools and Families**