

HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2005

PRESENT

Schools

Dr Dena Coleman
Peter Fielden
Alan Gray
Paul Rosen
Sally Somerville
Michael Taylor

Church of England

Alick Burge
Roger Martin
Jon Reynolds

Roman Catholic Diocese

Mike Pittendreigh
Alan Scouller

HCC

Robert Gordon [Chairman]
David Billings
Tanis Kent
Seamus Quilty
Ian Simpson
Richard Smith
Julian Taunton

Learning and Skills Council

David Tofts

In attendance:

Dinah Tuck
Jim Dalton
Lindsay Martin
Richard Jameson

Secretary to the Committee
Assistant Director CSF Planning
Senior Planning Manager School Places
observer [nursery school representative]

Members of SOC were reminded of the need to keep an open mind on the issues under discussion, unfettered by previous considerations.

1. Apologies, membership and attendance

Apologies had been received from Paul Goggins from the RC group.
Seamus Quilty attended as alternate for David LLoyd [LEA group].
Mike Pittendreigh attended as alternate for Sally Livesey [RC group].

2. Annual report on pupil numbers and the composition of the Schools Group

Members noted the Secretary's report on pupil numbers and the LEA review of the composition of the Schools Group in light of the Education [School Organisation Proposals][Miscellaneous Amendments][England] Regulations 2004.

They noted that Richard Jameson had been appointed as the representative of the Nursery Schools and was attending the meeting as an observer.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2005 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Establishment of Hertsmere Jewish High School in Borehamwood

The Chairman welcomed visitors to the meeting and explained the procedures by which the SOC operated.

The following members of SOC indicated that they had expressed views or been party to discussions on this matter previously but would address the issues afresh at this meeting.

Robert Gordon, Seamus Quilty, Richard Smith and Julian Thornton from the LEA group

Jon Reynolds from the CE group had attended a consultation meeting.
Dena Coleman declared a personal interest and withdrew from any discussion or vote on this item.
Malcolm Gordon, Rebecca Hilsenrath, Jonathan Arkush and Alison Shaw made a presentation to the SOC on the Hertsmere Jewish High School Trust proposal to establish a new voluntary aided school for 1000 pupils aged mainly between 11-18 in Borehamwood. Copies of the slides used in the presentation were circulated to SOC members for reference. The Trust confirmed that on 11 March 2005 they had exchanged contracts to acquire the site conditional on SOC approval.

The Trust's presentation highlighted:

Need for Jewish denominational secondary places

The financial position of the Trust with DfES grant support

Commitment to community cohesion and partnership with other providers including collaborative agreements with Hertswood School and Oaklands College

Potential effect on school journeys

Curriculum and educational standards including the proposed SEN Unit which would be the subject of separate consultation and statutory notices

Views of other parties and the consultation undertaken with schools, residents and other interested parties

The LEA indicated their support for this proposal and confirmed that their research showed the new school would not adversely impact on community schools in the area.

The Trust's commentary and presentation covered their response to the issues raised in the one letter of objection received to the statutory notice.

SOC members sought clarification on:

Proposed admission arrangements and the potential for non Jewish children to be admitted

Open access to adult and community use of the buildings and sports centre, including Saturdays
Collaboration with local schools and College in 14-19 provision and in particular the extent of the consultation with Hertswood School in Borehamwood

Trust's agreement to become part of the Hertfordshire co ordinated admissions scheme and to collaborate over casual admissions and provision for excluded pupils

Religious syllabus which will include teaching about other faiths

Potential home to school transport savings

Potential net cost to the LEA

Following discussion within their groups the all five groups present voted to approve the Hertsmere Jewish Trust proposal.

The Schools and LSC groups emphasised the need for collaboration with local providers.

The SOC therefore approved the establishment by the Hertsmere Jewish High School Trust of a new voluntary aided school for 1000 boys and girls mainly between the ages of 11-18 on the site of the former Hillside School in Borehamwood with effect from September 2006, subject to planning permission being obtained.

6. Establishment of a Primary Support Base at Berry Grove Primary School Watford.

The SOC noted that the LEA had determined to establish a primary support base at Berry Grove Primary School in Watford with effect from 1 September 2005 and to discontinue the EBD Unit at the former Lea Farm Junior School with effect from 31 August 2005.

7. Longdean School Hemel Hempstead: establishment of Speech and Language Unit

The SOC noted that the LEA had determined to establish a secondary support base for pupils with speech and language difficulties at Longdean Secondary School, Hemel Hempstead with effect from 1 September 2005.

8. Future meetings

The following meeting dates were agreed.

10am on Wednesday 25 May 2005 to consider proposals for south Stevenage primary provision, and establishment of nursery class at Bayford VC primary school.

10am on Wednesday 6 July 2005

Enlargement of St Clement Danes School Chorleywood.

Possible amalgamation of Summercroft Infant and Junior Schools in Bishops Stortford,

Possible amalgamation of Holy Rood RC Infant and Junior Schools in Watford

Establishment of nursery class at Tonwell St Mary's VC primary school.

9. Retiring members

The Chairman noted that Sally Somerville[Schools group] and Julian Taunton[LEA] were retiring from the SOC and thanked them for their contribution to its work.

The meeting closed at 11.30am