

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY 25 JUNE, 2001 AT 10.00 A.M.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MONDAY 25 JUNE, 2001 AT 2.15PM

Agenda Item
No.

1

**REDUCTION IN STANDARD NUMBER OF
WATCHLYTES PRIMARY SCHOOL, WELWYN GARDEN CITY**

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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Local Member:- Bob Mays

1. Purpose of the report

To consider the publication of a statutory notice seeking a reduction in the standard number of Watchlytes Primary School, Welwyn Garden City.

2. Summary

2.1 Consultation has supported the school governing body's proposal to reduce the standard number of this community primary school to 30.

2.2 Publication of a statutory notice and reference to the Hertfordshire School Organisation Committee are now required to pursue implementation.

2.3 Owing to the urgency of this matter it has not been possible to put the matter to a meeting of the CSF Select Committee. Comments have been invited from Select Committee Spokesman. Any comments received will be reported to the Cabinet.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Cabinet and Executive Committees are asked to authorise the implementation of this proposal

1. Background

- 1.1 Following a request from the governing body, the former Director of Education in consultation with the Executive Member (Schools) authorised consultation on a proposal to reduce (from 38) to 30 the standard number of Watchlytes School.
- 1.2 Consultation was agreed on the basis that there are sound educational reasons to avoid mixed-age classes and there were sufficient primary school places available in the area to respond to forecast future demand.
- 1.3 A consultation letter (Appendix A) was circulated to parents and to local primary schools. It sets out the background to the proposal and the governors' reasons for seeking the change.
- 1.4 As set out in the letter a consultation meeting was held on 19 March 2001. The Area Planning Manager, Chairman of Governors, Headteacher, governors and staff were present to respond to questions.

2. Consultation outcomes

- 2.1 The consultation meeting was attended by 6 parents. They were supportive of the initiative being taken by the school, particularly in the light of the building's restricted internal space.
- 2.2 No local primary schools have responded.
- 2.3 One letter of response has been received; it is neutral about the proposal but sought clarification about the implications for families with future sibling links. Officers have responded, referring to the priorities within the admissions rules for community primary schools.

3. Next steps

- 3.1 In order to implement this proposal the next step would be to authorise the Director of Children, Schools and Families to publish a statutory notice seeking the standard number reduction.
- 3.2 The statutory notice would run for a two month period. Thereafter, as all standard number changes require the approval of the Hertfordshire School Organisation Committee (SOC), the Director will also need to be authorised to submit the proposal to the SOC with comments, on behalf of the LEA, upon any objections that might be received.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Cabinet and Executive Committees are asked to authorise the implementation of this proposal.