

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2003 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Agenda Item No.

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THE FUTURE OF FLAMSTEAD END INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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Executive Member: Robert Gordon
Local member: Frank Escott

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with the results of the consultation about the proposed amalgamation of Flamstead End Infant and Junior Schools in August 2003 which closed on 6 January, and to inform Cabinet that the proposal received the unanimous support of the CSF Resources Panel at its meeting on 15 January 2003.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The key issue is that the Governing Bodies of the two schools have asked the County Council to undertake consultation about the possible amalgamation of the schools. The Governors view amalgamation as an opportunity to strengthen the already strong performance of these popular and oversubscribed schools. The proposal does not, therefore, suggest any change to the size of the proposed amalgamated school.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 In light of the overwhelming support which the proposal to amalgamate the two schools enjoys, Cabinet is invited to consider publishing statutory notices to close Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools and open a new primary school with provision for the same number of pupils.

Background

4. Results of consultation

- 4.1 The consultation document is attached as an appendix to this report. 46 responses to the consultation exercise have been received of which 37 were from parents with children at one or both of the two schools. Of the total of those responding, 40 agreed with the proposal to amalgamate (87%), one did not express a view and five (11%) were against. Of the 37 parental responses, all but three agreed to the proposal, two governors responded both of whom agreed with the proposal, and five members of staff responded, three of whom agreed with the proposal while the remaining two did not.
- 4.2 The reasons given by the five respondents who did not agree with the proposal related to the financial effects of amalgamation, the fact that there is not a hall which would be large enough for the whole of the new school to meet in, and that competition between the two schools maintained standards.

5 Financial implications

5.1 School Budget Shares

The school funding formula contains provisions supporting amalgamations of this nature which provides for budget protection for the first three years following implementation. Thereafter the amalgamation will lead to revenue budget savings in lump sum funding of £16,000 in 2005/06 and £55,000 in the long term.

5.2 Revenue - Redundancy and early retirement costs

The maximum redundancy and pension costs resulting from the amalgamation would be £45,000 in 2003/04 and £2,000 per year in subsequent years. This takes account of all posts where automatic transfer on amalgamation is not possible and which must be advertised nationally. It would be expected that a significant number, if not all of these staff would be appointed to equivalent positions in the new school thereby reducing these costs or possibly avoiding these entirely.

5.3 Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Grants

Currently there are a number of additional DfES grants which come to the school. These include the School Standards Grant and resources from the Standards Fund (which includes some capital funding devolved to schools). Elements of these grants are distributed on a “per school” basis. Where this is the case, following amalgamation, the new school would qualify for one per school allocation rather than two. Based on the current pattern of these grants the reduction in the schools’ allocation resulting from amalgamation would be approximately £33,000.

5.4 Overall Revenue Position

In the medium term, this proposal will lead to a significant revenue saving. However, we need to identify a mechanism to fund the £45,000 severance costs in 2003/04.

5.5 Capital

No commitment to capital outlay has been given to the governors during their preliminary consideration of this amalgamation proposal. Any outlay is likely to be small, to the extent that the schools could be encouraged to deploy Delegated Formula Capital to cover any modest initial requirements. Once a new Head (designate) is in place, more detailed consideration of premises development can take place and any proposals would then fall to be considered in the capital programme planning process in the usual way.

Background information referred to by the author:

Consultation Document, November 2002
Resources Panel Report, 15 January 2003