

# HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET**  
**MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2004 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Agenda Item No.

**2**

## **STEVENAGE PRIMARY REVIEW**

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

Report Authors:

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Executive Member:- Robert Gordon

### **1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To inform the Cabinet of the outcome of public consultations on the proposals for the:

- the closure of Longmeadow Infant and Junior Schools, Shephall Green Infant and Nursery and Burydale Junior Schools on 31 August 2005 and the opening of a new 3 f.e. primary school on 1 September 2005 in the south of the town; and
- the closure of either Pin Green or Bedwell Primary School on 31 August 2005, in the centre of the town.

1.2 For Cabinet to decide whether to:

- (i) authorise the Director to publish statutory notices to effect these changes;
- (ii) take no further action; or
- (iii) initiate fresh consultation on any alternative suggestion(s).

### **2. Summary**

2.1 The Director's report to the Education Panel, informing it of the outcome of the public consultation on options and proposals for reducing surplus primary school places in Stevenage, is attached.

2.2 After considering the report and hearing further representation from key stakeholders at its meeting on 28 September 2004, the Education Panel recognised for the south of the town that:

- (i) there is a serious and growing problem of surplus primary places in South Stevenage and that maintaining the status quo is not an option;
- (ii) the benefits to teaching and learning of primary schools providing for the Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 phases;
- (iii) that, as smaller schools can be vulnerable to the financial and educational consequences of under-subscription, there should be a preference for larger schools in urban areas where the population permits;
- (iv) many of the objectors have been misled into believing that the proposal was for a school of 870 pupils;
- (v) some of the objectors are concerned about the possibility of larger classes and/or mix-aged classes to accommodate the year groups which might exceed 90.

2.3 The Panel recommended to Cabinet, for the south of the town, that it should:

- (i) agree, in principle, to the closure of Longmeadow Infant and Nursery, Longmeadow Junior, Shephall Green Infant and Nursery and Burydale Junior Schools and the establishment of a new 3 f.e. primary school based on the Burydale/Longmeadow site;
- (ii) receive a report from officers on the opportunities to maximise the value of land not required for the new school to establish whether that value could finance an entirely new building on the site – or a greater proportion of new build than that currently proposed;
- (iii) ensure that any investment in the refurbishment and remodelling of existing buildings will result in buildings fit for purpose and with an appropriate life expectancy;
- (iv) ensure that the internal layout of the buildings will provide for discrete Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 units within the new school;
- (v) consider whether it would be better to avoid the need for mix-aged classes either by introducing transitional arrangements that would limit each year group to 90 or by providing additional revenue resources to allow same-year classes of 30 or less;
- (vi) consider opportunities for providing extended school measures at the new school;
- (vii) undertake detailed discussion on school travel and road congestion on the problems relating to the Longmeadow site; and
- (viii) discuss the outcomes of these matters with the schools and, if appropriate, through further consultation with all the parents of current pupils before publishing any statutory notices.

2.4 The Panel recommended to Cabinet, for the centre of the town, that it should authorise the Director to publish a statutory notice to close Pin Green School on 31 August 2005.

2.5 The Panel also requested that the report to Cabinet referred to above should include the implications of expanding Moss Bury Primary School to 2 f.e.

### **3. Conclusions**

3.1 Cabinet is asked to consider:

- the outcome of the public consultation as set out in the Director's report to the Education Panel, attached; and
- the Education Panel's recommendations.

3.2 Cabinet is asked to decide whether:

- to authorise the Director of Children Schools and Families to publish a statutory notice to close Pin Green School on 31 August 2005;
- to request the report on Moss Bury School as recommended by the Panel; and
- to accept the Panel's recommendations in relation to the south of the town.