
MEETING	DECISION SESSION - CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES
DATE	27 FEBRUARY 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLOR LOOKER (CABINET MEMBER)

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests she may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

17. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 5 February 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/OTHER SPEAKERS

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak from members of the public but that Councillor Warters had registered to speak in respect of agenda item 4 – The Future of the Derwent Schools Federation and Osbaldwick Primary School.

Councillor Warters stated that he had been asked by residents to speak on their behalf at the meeting. He raised the following points:

- The timing of the meeting was inconvenient for many parents who worked or who had to collect children from school.
- An assurance was sought that the proposal was not the first stage in closing one of the sites. He expressed concern that the projections in respect of pupil numbers were too optimistic and did not take account of the amount of student accommodation in that area. Residents were concerned that this may lead to the eventual closure of the Osbaldwick site.

- Concerns had been expressed that there had been no agenda or minutes in respect of the consultation meetings that had been held.
- Requests had been made that consideration be given to providing free sweatshirts to all pupils and not just those transferring from Derwent. This would ensure that all pupils began on an equal footing.
- Could consideration be given to the extension of a 20mph zone along Osbaldwick Lane?

19. THE FUTURE OF THE DERWENT SCHOOLS FEDERATION AND OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Cabinet Member considered a report that provided details of the responses to the recent public consultation concerning the proposals to close Derwent Schools and to expand Osbaldwick School in order to create a two form of entry school, using both the existing sites.

The consultation document had noted that, in addition to closing Derwent and expanding Osbaldwick, four other options had been considered with the governing bodies of both schools. These options were:

- Close Derwent and transfer the pupils to other schools in the area.
- Close both Derwent and Osbaldwick and then create a new school.
- Federate Derwent with Osbaldwick under one Head Teacher and one Governing Body.
- Apply to the Government for Derwent to become a sponsored Academy.

An additional response that had been received from the Governing Body of Tang Hall Primary School was read out at the meeting. The Cabinet Member noted the response and the points raised.

Referring to the issues raised under item 3 (minute 18 refers), the following comments were made:

- The point raised regarding the timing of the meeting was accepted. The final decision on the proposal would, however, be made at a Cabinet meeting which would commence at 5.30pm.

- The proposal was not the first stage of a plan to see the closure of the Osbaldwick school site. The Local Authority accepted that there were difficulties in accurately predicting pupil numbers but was confident that the data on which the projections had been made was sound. It was not possible to give a “cast iron guarantee” that the Osbaldwick site would continue, as this would restrict the Governing Body of the school years ahead, nevertheless an assurance could be given that the proposal was not the first step in the closure of the Osbaldwick site.
- There had been an agenda for the public meetings - this comprised of a presentation on the options followed by a question and answer session. All questions and answers had been recorded.
- Issues in respect of uniform were being considered by the Governing Body.
- The request for consideration to be given to the extension of a 20mph zone along Osbaldwick Lane would be discussed with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability.

The Cabinet Member stated that she had attended the consultation meetings and generally the comments were positive and some very pertinent questions had been raised and would be taken on board. She stated that whilst she regretted the closure of schools, this proposal would lead to the expansion of a popular and successful primary school. Its leadership was being retained and it would continue to provide high quality education. The arrangement would provide tremendous opportunities to develop a very dynamic school which would benefit the children in the areas of Derwent and Osbaldwick.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the feedback and responses received to the consultation document, as detailed in Annexes 2, 3 and 4 of the report, be noted.
 - (ii) That Public Notices be published in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to discontinue Derwent Schools Federation from 31 August 2013 followed by a six-week statutory representation period. The notices will include the proposed

expansion of Osbaldwick Primary School, and the changes to catchment area of Tang Hall Primary School described at para 31 above.

- (iii) That, following the representation period, Cabinet be requested to consider any further observations and comments received and decide whether to proceed with the proposals.

REASON: To ensure the provision of high quality and sustainable primary education in the local community.

Councillor J Looker, Chair
[The meeting started at 3.30 pm and finished at 3.50 pm].