

**CITY OF YORK
SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT BURNHOLME COMMUNITY
COLLEGE ON 24 APRIL 2006**

Members Group:

†Councillor Keith Aspden
*Councillor Viv Kind
†Councillor David Livesley
*Councillor Carol Runciman
*Councillor David Scott

Governor Group:

*Mr Steve Brereton
*Mrs Jona Ellis
*Mr Barrie Ferguson (Chair)
†Mrs Lynne Heslop
*Mr Jim Porteous

Teachers

*Ms FM Barclay
†Ms L Johnson
*Ms B Reagan

Headteachers:

*Mrs Jenny Smith
†Mr John Harris
†Mrs Sue Williams

Diocese (Church of England):

*Dr A Lees
*Dr David Sellick
†Mr David Thewlis

Diocese (Catholic Church):

†Reverend Michael Bayldon
†Ms Carolyn Duffy

Learning and Skills Council:

†Ms Liz Burdett

*Indicates member present
†Indicates apologies received

In attendance:

Patrick Scott, Director of Learning Culture and Children's Services
Kevin Hall, Assistant Director (Resource Management)
Maggie Tansley, Head Planning and Resources, Learning Culture & Children's Services
Jake Wood, Policy Officer, Learning Culture & Children's Services

22. CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP.

It was reported that there were the following changes in membership

Liz Burdett, Regional Director, Learning and Skills Council to replace David Harbourne
Mrs J Smith, School (Headteacher) had retired
Ms L Johnson, School (Teacher) had resigned

23. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES.

Apologies were received from: Councillor Aspden, Councillor Livesley, Ms Liz Burdett, Mrs S Williams, Carolyn Duffy and Mr David Thewlis.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised that any declarations of interest in relation to business on the current agenda should be made under this item. The following general personal interest was declared:

Mr B Ferguson – Chair of Governors at Woodthorpe School.

He exercised his right to remain in the room and took part in the discussion.

25. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Officers updated that the report on Special School and Secondary School numbers together with School Admissions noted in the minutes for discussion at todays meeting had been delayed.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2005 be approved and signed as a correct record.

26. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that no members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

27. PROPOSALS FOR THE MERGER OF LOWFIELD SCHOOL AND OAKLANDS SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report which informed them of the outcome of the recent consultation following the publication of statutory notices proposing a new secondary school on the west side of the city.

Members were reminded that the proposal had been driven by the decline in pupil numbers on the west side of the city and also the need to radically improve the condition of the existing buildings. It was proposed that a new school would open on the existing Oaklands school site to accommodate students from both schools once they were closed. The report also made reference to the proposed expansion and relocation of Manor School which was also subject to consultation.

Consideration was also given to Annex 1 which summarised the proposals for the expansion and relocation of Manor School and Annex 2 an information leaflet prepared for parents, carers, pupils and the local community which provided background information on the proposals for a new secondary school for the west of York.

The Committee viewed a DVD which featured students, staff and governors of Lowfield and Oaklands Schools and which described the proposals and explaining the need for the change. It was noted that the DVD had been used during the consultation events.

Officers confirmed that as no objections had been received to the proposal the local education authority, rather than the School Organisation Committee were permitted to make the final decision at a meeting of the Executive. In view of the importance of the proposals it had been thought appropriate for the SOC to consider the matter and to inform the Executive of its views. In answer to questions Officers explained the timescales for the changes with a 2 phase building programme over 2 to 3 years during which both sites would be used to minimise disruption to pupils.

The following was raised at the meeting:

- Compliments to Officers on the consultation work and the well prepared DVD.
- Need to use this experience to keep all consultees in touch with progress, school naming etc
- As this was a merger of schools and there was a need to examine staff surveys from previous mergers to ensure that any changes necessary were made and staff were part of the changes.

RESOLVED: i) That the Committee note that Statutory notices were published on February 24th proposing the following changes to school organisation in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998:

- In accordance with section 29(1) of the Act to discontinue Oaklands School, Cornlands Road, Acomb, with effect from 31 August 2007.
- In accordance with section 29(1) of the Act to discontinue Lowfield School, Dijon Avenue, Acomb, with effect from 31 August 2007.
- In accordance with section 28(1) of the Act to establish a new Community Secondary school for 1050 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 from 01 September 2007. The number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 11 from 01 September 2007 and in subsequent years will be 210. The new school will open on 1 September 2007, and will operate initially on a split site basis on the sites of Oaklands and Lowfield Schools.
 - ii) That the Committee note that the proposals are supported by the governing bodies of both schools.
 - iii) That the Committee note that no objections were received during the six week statutory

“representation” period following publication of statutory notices.

- iv) That the Executive be advised that the School Organisation Committee support the proposals for the merger of Lowfields and Oaklands Schools and that they look forward to the building of a new school on the west side of the city.

28. MANOR SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

The Committee received a verbal report from the Director of Learning Culture and Children’s Services who updated the Committee on the proposed Manor School Redevelopment.

He explained that following consultation support had been given for the replacement of Oaklands and Lowfields with a single school and the expansion of Manor School. It was proposed to expand Manor School from 624 to 900 pupils and to replace the existing building with new school building. The site at Millfield Lane had been considered as the only viable site option as there was no other suitable site in the Priority Action Zone covered by Rufforth Primary, Carr and Poppleton Ousebank Schools. A £13.5 million grant had been received towards the £17million costs

Members were informed that local views had been sought on the use of the Millfield Lane site which was situated in Green Belt. Although only 15% of the site would be used for the school buildings the remaining land would be used for school playing fields and recreational open space.

It was reported that there had been no real objections received from residents at the Ward Committee meetings but there had been some concern regarding access and the increased volume of traffic. Lesser concerns had related to the nature of the design, possible problems resulting from light pollution, community use of the site and the use of the existing site for development. The only other strong view related to the possibility of developing a Sixth Form on the site. It was pointed out that in the Strategic Area Review it had been decided to keep the current pattern of post 16 Education in the area and that there was no money or land available for this provision.

Following consultation there would be statutory consultation and public notice given of the proposed increase in school numbers which would be followed by a planning application and further consultation. It was pointed out that the Diocese had worked in a dual role with the authority during the process.

The following points were raised at the meeting:

- Had account been taken of the increased number of pupils in the schools catchment area arising from development of the existing school site?

- When the sale of the existing school site took place the Diocese would ensure that the money went towards the financing of the new school.
- That the access to the new site would be via Millfield Lane.
- The school was its own admission authority which could set its own policy but that there were still constraints. The current policy admitted 60% of pupils on faith grounds which would continue but it was felt that the number of community places would increase considerably.

RESOLVED: i) That the Officers be thanked for their update on the redevelopment of Manor School.

ii) That Officers prepare a report on projected primary school numbers for schools in the catchment area together with the possible impact on the new school.

29. FUTURE OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

A verbal report was given on the Education and Inspection Bill which would receive royal assent in November. One of the provisions of the Bill was the abolition of the Schools Organisation Committees with decisions being taken directly by local authorities.

Officers referred to the Local Admissions Forum which dealt with similar business to SOC but from a slightly different point of view. It was pointed out that the Forum possibly needed to be more high profile with a review being undertaken of its role. It was pointed out that it would be possible to give further consideration to the combination of the two bodies to provide some continuity and expertise before November.

Members commented as follows

- Agreement that there had been some duplication of roles with both bodies having similar membership.
- That the Schools Organisation Committee should be disbanded in the Autumn term.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

30. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING - 2006

Special School numbers, Secondary School numbers, a report on projected school numbers and the impact on Manor School and a report on the possible forum that should come into place if SOC was abolished were to be discussed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That Officers in liaison with the Chair arrange the date of the next meeting of the Schools Organisation Committee in September 2006.

SIGNED

Mr Barrie Ferguson, Chair

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.15 pm.