
Select Committee on Children's Services – 24 March 2010

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Progress on Children's Services – Key Developments

Purpose of Report

1. To present the latest Key Developments to the Select Committee members outlining current happenings within Children's Services.

Background

Pensnett High School

2. The Consultation responses in relation to the Council's issuing of the statutory notice ended on 5 March 2010. A report for the Cabinet is being prepared for the meeting of the 17 March 2010. The Cabinet will then decide the future for Pensnett High School.
3. Since 21 January 2010 Select Committee, officers have been scoping how a possible closure would be managed. This exercise is being undertaken in consultation with parents to ensure that all practicable steps are taken to maintain the quality and continuity of pupils' learning.
 - By the 10 March meeting with the parents of all pupils will have been undertaken
 - The scoping exercise is exploring the following options for pupils
 - Years 7/8 transfer to other schools by 1 September will be considered. A transition programme will be planned for the summer term
 - Year 9 to remain on Pensnett site within an innovative and new Learning Centre as part of the Council's Vision 2025 Learning Strategy. They will undertake their two year 14-16 courses. Core subjects, e.g. English, Maths, Science plus popular 'option' subjects on site. As with all other pupils in the borough there are options to attend college courses, accept places on courses at other schools, or to be offered alternative provision centred on the needs of the pupils.
 - Year 10 will remain on site and all existing courses will continue within an innovative and new Learning Centre as part of the Council's Vision 2025 Learning Strategy.

4. All pupils will continue to benefit from the additional support provided by the Local Authority Services.

Building Schools for the Future

5. Dudley worked very hard from November 2008 to January 2010 to review its Secondary educational needs and develop an educational visioning statement and evidence for its Building Schools for the Future submission.
6. The submission was supported by the Secondary Heads and partners who had taken part in the development of the final documentation.
7. The BSF submission was sent to the Department for Children, Schools and Families on 29 January as requested.
8. Subsequently the LA were asked to attend a BSF Feedback meeting in London on 15 February where we received very positive feedback on a substantial number of elements in the submission.
9. During the course of the meeting additional information was requested.
10. We were informed there would be a Ministerial announcement by the end of February to name the 6 authorities out of the 19 that would be offered Building Schools for the Future. However, this did not take place. On 8 March we were informed that Dudley had not been successful in entering into Wave 7 of Building Schools for the Future.
11. We are obviously very disappointed; however, the Borough is determined to deliver its Vision for Learning and will seek capital funding wherever this is possible to do so. Developing many aspects of our ambitious plan can be started within the resources we currently have access to.

Finance

12. There are no direct financial implications of this report. Any subsequent decisions will be the subject of a future report and the detailed financial implications will be noted at that time.

Law

13. The law relating to the contents of the report is mainly governed by the Education Acts.

Equality Impact

14. This report takes into account the Councils Equality and Diversity Policy.

Recommendations

15. That the Select Committee members endorse the work by the Directorate of Children's Services.



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List of Background Papers