

Special Meeting of the Select Committee on Children's Services – 9 September 2008

Call-in of delegated decision DCS/28/2008

Opening statement by the Director of Children's Services

1. The background to Decision DCS/28/2008, which declared the whole site of the former Cradley High School surplus to requirements, goes back to the earlier decision to close the school.
2. The school closure consultation document and meetings made clear that the entire school, including facilities used by the community, was being proposed for closure, but that consideration would be given to maintaining community facilities if appropriate arrangements could be identified and put in place.
3. Once the decision had been made to close the school, the position was that community facilities provided by the school would close when the school closed, unless alternative arrangements could be identified.
4. The key elements of community use related to leisure and sports facilities. For this reason, discussions were held with the Leisure Services Division of the Directorate of the Urban Environment as well as other potential stakeholders and users.
5. The Directorate of the Urban Environment identified that significant capital and revenue resources would be required to operate the existing facilities as a stand-alone Leisure Centre, and that such resources were not available.
6. Following discussions at the Halesowen Area Committee and elsewhere, it was agreed to consult further on the future provision of leisure and sports facilities on the school site. Consultations were held with the general public and with users of the facilities.
7. It was made clear on every occasion that the consultation was not concerned with whether such facilities were desirable, but whether capital and revenue resources could be located to make such provision viable. No such proposals were brought forward.

8. All users of the sports and leisure facilities have been satisfactorily relocated to other premises.

9. In the light of no viable proposals being brought forward to maintain the community use of sports and leisure facilities at Cradley High School, following extensive consultation over a significant period, the Cabinet Member was advised, and decided, to declare the whole school site surplus to requirements.

John Freeman
Director of Children's Services
4 September 2008