

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	12th September 2012	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2469
TITLE:	Determination of the Statutory Notice to Alter the Lower Age Limit at Camerton Church School	
WARD:	Bathavon West, Peasedown, Timsbury, Paulton, Radstock.	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 Main Consultation Document Appendix 2 Complete Proposal Appendix 3 Statutory Notice Appendix 4 Equalities Impact Assessment		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Governing Body of Camerton Church School has consulted on and published a proposal to alter the lower age limit of the school from age 4 to age 3 by the addition of Early Years provision that would be run by the school. At the end of the six week statutory notice representation period (22 August 2012) a decision is required to determine the proposal.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

2.1 The lower age limit of Camerton Church School should be altered from age 4 to age 3 by the addition of Early Years provision to commence on 1 October 2012.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the Council. The revenue implications for staff will be paid from the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 3.2 There are no immediate capital implications arising from this proposal at this stage. However, if pupil numbers at the school increase in the future as is hoped they will, then the use of the temporary building for Early Years rather than its original intended purpose as a classroom may necessitate the provision of additional accommodation. This would be a legitimate call on a future years Basic Need capital funding.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone, including:

- The people most in need are supported to live full active lives.
- Children and young people enjoy their childhood and are prepared for adult life.
- Schools develop and extend their role in the local community.
- There are activities and opportunities to help young people to make a positive difference to their lives and communities.

Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live, including:

- Reduced inequality between communities across Bath and North East Somerset.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Sunflower Pre-school is currently managed by the voluntary Pre – School Committee who lease a temporary building on the Camerton Church School site. The committee has decided it will cease to operate from the end of term in July 2012 and therefore the provision would be closed.
- 5.2 In order to ensure that the provision can continue, the governing body of Camerton Church School propose to incorporate the pre-school into the school with the aim of ensuring the continuing provision of quality pre-school provision for the Camerton community and local area.
- 5.3 The Governing Body aim to build on the success of the pre-school and to ensure children receive quality Early Years provision and also to further increase numbers in order to make the provision more economically viable. This should also help to further increase numbers of children coming through from the pre-school entering Reception at Camerton Church School at age 4, thus contributing to the future viability of the school.
- 5.4 The inclusion of the pre-school as a part of the school will improve opportunities for children to access wider educational opportunities, make appropriate progress and achieve their potential. Children would be taught by a specialist early years qualified teacher.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

- 6.2 If the proposal is not approved, the provision will have to close and valuable Early Years places in Camerton in Bathavon West ward will be lost. The provision is popular and well used and is needed in this more isolated rural community by local families who would otherwise have to travel further away to access Early Years provision and who would not necessarily be able to do so unless they have access to a car. There is no other provision for local residents within walking and/or pram-pushing distance.
- 6.3 There is also a risk that the recent increase in numbers of Reception children seen at Camerton Church School might decline again if there was no longer any Early Years provision operating from the school site, helping to feed children into Reception, which would have a negative impact on the long term viability of the primary school itself.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found. The report is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 7.2 This proposal is not expected to have an impact on the equality areas of gender, transgender, race or sexual orientation
- 7.3 The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on the equality areas of:
- Age - the provision will ensure that good quality provision for Early Years age children is continued on this site and in this community.
 - Disability - the provision will be fully inclusive and children with disabilities and SEN will be able to access the provision.
 - Religion/belief - the Early Years provision will be at a Christian school. The school is Voluntary Controlled and the Christian ethos is not a factor or a requirement for entry into the Early Years provision which will admit children of all religions and beliefs and those with no religious beliefs.
 - Socio-economic disadvantaged - there is evidence of a higher than average level of socio-economic disadvantage in this area of the Authority. The Super Output Area (SOA) that includes Camerton is within the top third of SOAs as measured by Indices of Multiple Deprivation. . Access to good quality Early Years provision is likely to lead to enhanced life chances and improved educational outcomes for children who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Local provision is also needed as families living in this area do not necessarily have the ability to travel out of the local area to access provision further away, via their own or public transport.
 - Rural - the provision meets a specific need for local families living in this more isolated rural community who would otherwise have to travel further away to access Early Years provision and who would not necessarily be able to do so unless they have access to a car. There is no other provision for local residents within walking and/or pram-pushing distance.

8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 The proposal is for the school to take over running an existing pre-school provision currently run on a voluntary basis by a management committee and that will have to close if an alternative solution is not found as the committee has decided to cease to operate. Therefore capacity and sustainability in the local area should not be an issue as no new places are being created that might have a negative effect on the viability of other provision locally.
- 8.2 It is anticipated that the proposal will ensure that this age group of children have continued access to local high quality education, and an opportunity to enter the school as Reception children at age 4.
- 8.3 The pre-school operating from the school site has already served to increase the number of pupils leaving the Early Years provision and going on to apply for a Reception place at Camerton Church School and the expectation is that this would continue and hopefully increase further as a result of the school running the provision in the future.
- 8.4 The existing pre-school provision meets a specific need for this rural community and provides a valuable local resource for parents living in this rural area. There are few places available in neighbouring pre-schools and local families would require transport in order to reach them.
- 8.5 No objections to the proposal were raised during the consultation period. No responses were received during the six week representation period following publication of the statutory notice.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 No other options were considered – there is insufficient capacity in the local community to form a committee to continue to run the pre-school on its current basis. Also the inclusion of the pre-school as part of the school to be run as a high quality provision with qualified early years teacher input is expected to improve educational outcomes for children and increase numbers.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Ward Councillors; Parish Council; Trades Unions; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer.
- 10.2 The school posted copies of the consultation document to consultees and also emailed information to consultees. The school held a public meeting for parents at the school and the pre-school. The school also placed information on the consultation on its website. All staff and governors at the school, the pre-school staff and management committee, families of pupils at the school, families of pupils at the pre-school, the Church of England Diocese, the local MP, the local parish council, other local schools, other local pre-schools, ward councillors, the Local Authority and the local community Stay and Play group and local childminders were consulted. The consultation document contained details of how people could respond to the consultation.

10.3 The school sent the consultation document and the statutory notice to Trade Union representatives representing staff at the school and asked them to send their comments to the Local Authority, should they have any.

10.4 The statutory notice was published in a local newspaper serving the area, posted at five public locations in the village and at the two school entrances, outlining the proposal and explaining how interested parties could comment on the proposal.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Corporate; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations.

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Paul Crossley
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	