

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2153

Review of Secondary Schools in Keynsham

<p>The Issue</p>	<p>In March 2008 full Council approved a strategy for the future of secondary schools in Bath & North East Somerset. In May 2008 Cabinet agreed to consult on proposed changes to Keynsham schools, specifically the closure of Broadlands Community School and the expansion of Wellsway Community School to create a single secondary school for Keynsham. A public consultation exercise on this proposal was undertaken between March and May 2010 and this report sets out the results of the consultation.</p>
<p>Decision Date</p>	<p>21-Jul-10</p>
<p>The decision</p>	<p>RESOLVED (unanimously) (1) To NOTE the results of consultation on proposed changes to Keynsham secondary schools; (2) To AGREE that there are no changes to Keynsham secondary schools; (3) To INFORM the governing bodies of Broadlands and Wellsway schools that the Council has no plans to undertake further reviews in the foreseeable future.</p>
<p>Rationale for decision</p>	<p>The strategy for secondary schools agreed by Council states that the future structure of secondary provision in Bath & North East Somerset should reflect the numbers of children from within the Authority. The high number of pupils coming into Keynsham, chiefly from Bristol, distorts the real level of need. The strategy also states that the local school should be the natural choice for parents. In Keynsham the majority of parents in both the Wellsway and Broadlands `catchment' areas, choose Wellsway as their local school. Wellsway which is centrally located in the Keynsham and Salford area occupies a large site with scope for expansion. On this basis there is a supportable case for a single school for Keynsham on the Wellsway site.</p> <p>The principles behind the proposal and on which consultation was undertaken remain sound. A single school for Keynsham could meet local need within Bath & North East Somerset and has the potential to deliver improved educational standards through increased curriculum opportunities and a larger post-16 provision. A single school for all Keynsham and Salford children would also improve social cohesion. There are also financial benefits through the generation of a capital receipt to invest in Wellsway to improve facilities and a reduction in planned maintenance through the closure of poor condition buildings.</p> <p>Set against these potential benefits there are potential educational and financial risks associated with the proposal. The potential for improved educational standards could be affected by the disruption to pupils and staff at both schools caused by the transition from two schools to one. Although staff and governors at both schools would try to ensure standards were maintained this may be more difficult to achieve when the consultation has clearly established that both school communities are</p>

	<p>strongly opposed to the proposal.</p> <p>The cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future programme means that the aspiration of building a 'new' expanded Wellsway school serving the whole of Keynsham will not be achieved, although some improvements to buildings could be made. The abandonment of the Regional Spatial Strategy makes it unlikely significant extra housing will be directed towards Keynsham. enabling pupils generated from planned new housing to be accommodated in both schools in the future, particularly at Broadlands..</p> <p>Whilst there are financial benefits through a reduction in planned maintenance and the generation of a capital receipt, there will be a significant loss of revenue through a reduction in overall pupil numbers impacting on both the overall schools and Children's Services budgets. Perhaps most importantly the public consultation has shown that people are overwhelmingly opposed to the proposal and that this view has been expressed by parents of pupils at both schools and also parents of pupils at Keynsham primary schools.</p> <p>Whenever changes to schools are proposed some people will oppose these and Members must weigh this against the potential advantages of the changes. On balance it is felt that given the level of opposition to the proposals for Keynsham and the risks associated with it as set out above, there should be no change to the organisation of Keynsham secondary schools.</p>
<p>Other options considered</p>	<p>The option of closing both schools and opening a new school serving Keynsham and Saltford on the Frys site has been suggested by some respondents. The closure of both Keynsham secondary schools could not be justified as Wellsway is a popular school with high standards serving pupils within Bath & North East Somerset. The Frys site does not provide a realistic option for a new school as it is not owned by the Council and is not centrally located for Keynsham and Saltford. The land required for a secondary school which would be a significant proportion of the Frys site earmarked for development and would have to be purchased. Even with the disposal of both present school sites there would be insufficient funding to buy the land needed on the Frys site and then build a new school likely to cost in the region of £25m.</p>