

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children and Adult Services
Learning and School Effectiveness
Children and Families

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness – Councillor Nick Bennett, the Lead Member for Children and Adult Services – Councillor David Elkin and the Lead Member for Children and Families – Councillor Colin Belsey on Tuesday 6 March 2012 at County Hall, Lewes

Councillors Ensor, Field, Livings, Howson and Ost spoke on Item 4 (see minute 35)

33. REPORTS

33.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are contained in the minute book.

34. MINUTES

34.1 Councillor Bennett approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2012.

35. INTERESTS

35.1 Councillors Livings and Howson declared a personal interest in Item 4 in that they were former governors of Hoddern Junior School, but they did not consider this interest to be prejudicial.

36. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF PEACEHAVEN INFANT SCHOOL AND HODDERN JUNIOR SCHOOL

36.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which reported a change to the prescribed process for school organisation proposals, which affects the proposal involving Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School.

36.2 The Lead Members had previously, at their meeting on 8 November 2011, approved the publication of statutory notices following the consent of the Secretary of State to publish proposals for a new community school without running a competition.

36.3 The County Council made an application to the Secretary of State on 6 December 2011, for approval to publish statutory notices to establish a new community primary school in Peacehaven without running a competition.

36.4 The Education Act 2011 contained a provision which rescinded the need for an education authority to have the consent of the Secretary of State to publish statutory notices for proposals to replace a maintained infant school and maintained junior school with a new community school without running a competition. This provision came into force on 1 February 2012.

36.5 Given the change in the legislation, the Secretary of State can no longer determine the County Council's application, so the decision taken on 8 November 2011 is now redundant. The County Council can publish the proposals under section 11(A3) Education and Inspections Act 2006.

36.6 The local members for Peacehaven informed the Lead Members that no-one had raised the issue at their surgeries, and highlighted their concern regarding standards at the schools.

36.7 The members present discussed the need for clear communication of the benefits of the proposed amalgamation and the impacts of the proposal on class sizes, in the light of concerns raised during the informal consultation stage. It was confirmed that the final decision on the proposal would be taken by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

DECISION

36.8 RESOLVED to (1) authorise the withdrawal of the Section 10 application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school; and

(2) authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012, and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012; and

(3) delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required, with notification of any proposed amendments to the Lead Members and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Reason

36.9 The change in the legislation effective from 1 February 2012 and the County Council's continued belief that amalgamation is the right way forward to ensure improved standards and quality of provision in Peacehaven.