

LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor Bob Standley on 23 December 2019 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes.

Councillor Bill Bentley spoke on item 4 (see minute 24)

Councillor Sylvia Tidy and Councillor Roy Galley spoke on item 5 (see minute 25)

22 DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 4 NOVEMBER 2019

22.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019.

23 REPORTS

23.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

24 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF BROAD OAK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

24.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services, together with consultation responses, including those received after the closing date, regarding the outcome of the consultation on the proposed closure of Broad Oak Community Primary School and the recommendation of next steps.

24.2 The Lead Member **RESOLVED** – to approve the publication of a statutory proposal for the closure of Broad Oak Community Primary School on 31 August 2020

Reason

24.3 While recognising the level and nature of objection to the proposal, the case for the closure of Broad Oak continues to be strong. The challenge of the school's deficit budget remains and will be made worse by the reduction in pupil numbers at the school since the consultation was launched. The situation of significant surplus places in the Heathfield area, and at the school in particular, remains. No solutions or actions have been identified in the consultation process to address these critical issues.

25 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF FLETCHING CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

25.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services, together with consultation responses, including those received after the closing date, regarding the outcome of the consultation on the proposed closure of Fletching CE Primary School and the recommendation of next steps.

25.2 The Lead Member **RESOLVED** – to halt the consultation on the proposed closure of Fletching CE Primary School and for the school to remain open.

Reason

25.3 The consultation responses overwhelmingly object to the proposed closure; there is a clear strength of feeling that the impact on current pupils and the local community would be significant. Substantial fundraising has been undertaken by the community which largely addresses the school's predicated budget deficit in 2019/20 and 2020/21. Pupil numbers at the school have largely been maintained despite the consultation and governors believe that pupil numbers will begin to increase in the coming years as a result of house building in the area, notably in Uckfield.

25.4 The local authority however, remains of the view that the school continues to be vulnerable and its budget deficit has only been addressed on a short-term basis through one-off funding and therefore concern remains about the lack of any ongoing committed funding to support the school beyond next financial year. The current forecasts for the school do not suggest it will attract many more pupils from out of area than it has in the past and in-area demand for places remains low. Despite these factors, and taking into consideration the improved short term budget position, the Lead Member is recommended to halt the consultation on the closure and the school remain open.