

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 May 2024 at Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Councillors Gerard Fox and Steve Murphy spoke on item 4 (see minute 10)

6. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 9 MAY 2024

6.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2024.

7. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

7.1 There were none.

8. URGENT ITEMS

8.1 There were none.

9. REPORTS

9.1 A copy of the report referred to below is included in the minute book.

10. BURFIELD ACADEMY AND PHOENIX ACADEMY

10.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services regarding Burfield Academy and Phoenix Academy.

10.2 It was noted that there was a typographical error with the numbering of the paragraphs in section 1 of the report. This should read as follows:

- Paragraph 1.4 should read as 1.5; and
- Paragraph 1.5 should read as 1.6.

10.3 Following discussion with Members present, the Lead Member requested for the inclusion of a revised travel plan regarding the children moving to the Phoenix Academy site and the potential impact this may cause. Officers undertook to include this in the local authority's response to the consultation.

DECISIONS

10.4 The Lead Member RESOLVED:

- 1) to approve the local authority responding to Step Academy Trust's consultation on the amalgamation of Burfield Academy and Phoenix Academy, confirming that it does not object to the proposal.
- 2) to acknowledge that the final decision is not for the local authority who are consultees.
- 3) that the regional school commissioner and the Department for Education (DfE) be asked to take account of the strong feelings of the parents and pupils of Burfield and Phoenix academies as detailed in the emails and petitions submitted; and
- 4) to request that any decision by the DfE takes fully into account the emerging Wealden Local plan and current housing provisions already granted.

REASONS

10.5 The proposed amalgamation of the two schools, and the subsequent reduction in capacity in the area, would be unlikely to put pressure on school places in the short term. The proposal will mean that instead of two schools with low numbers there will be one school with pupil numbers close to their Published Admission Number (PAN). This is likely to provide educational benefits to pupils, due to the Trust being able to provide a greater breadth of curriculum, pupil support and extra curricula opportunities.

10.6 The planning issue with regard to the "Kiss and Drop" facility is seen by the local authority as a catalyst for the merger proposal and not a major reason in itself.

10.7 On the basis of the projected pupil numbers in Hailsham and surroundings areas the local authority does not object to the proposed merger.