

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES - CLLR LAURA MAYES

SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

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REFERENCE: CS-005-13 Approved

**PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE MAINTAINED NURSERY AT ST
DUNSTANS, CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
SCHOOL**

Purpose of Report

The previous delegated decision report set out the background to and results of consultation undertaken between Wednesday 9th January and Wednesday 20th February 2013 (Appendix1). Following the consultation the report recommended that the Governing body of St Dunstan School should publish a notice for statutory proposals to close the Maintained Nursery at St Dunstan C.E. V.C. Primary School. Lionel Grundy the previous Children's Services Cabinet member agreed this decision on the 28th February 2013 and used his delegated powers to move to statutory notice.

This second report follows the statutory notice period and recommends closure of the maintained nursery. The member is asked to make this decision and if the decision is made to close there will not be a requirement to go to Cabinet for a decision.

Consultation

The consultation document attached at Appendix 2 was published on 9th January 2013.

In total 41 consultation responses were received. Of these 19 (46%) agreed with the proposed closure of the Nursery and 22 (54 %) disagreed.

Of the 24 responses from parents of children currently at the school, 9 (4.5%) agreed with the proposed closure and 12 (6%) disagreed. 89% of school families consulted did not respond.

Of the 6 prospective parents who responded, 1 agreed with the proposed closure and 5 disagreed.

The school considered that the number of responses is too small to be statistically significant. A summary of responses is attached at Appendix 3

6. A public meeting was held at the school on Wednesday 23rd January 2013. Minutes attached at Appendix 4.

The Chair of the Governors wrote a report for the member to consider on the 28th February. Appendix 5.

1. For the nursery to remain open
2. For Cabinet to make a decision to go to Statutory Notice
3. For the Cabinet member for Children's Services to use his delegated powers to move to Statutory Notice

Mr Grundy considered the report on the 28th February 2013 and made the decision to proceed with option 3. He felt that it was in the best interest of the school to close the Nursery and that the declining numbers over the previous years had been an important factor in this decision. Numbers had declined from 44 to 10 in recent years. The officer explained that the alternative preschool on-site could accommodate children from the local area as it was expanding and in addition there are some surplus spaces in other preschool, childminder and nursery provision in the town. Furthermore, the school is not in a position to fund any deficit in the nursery costs and it is not legal for it to do so. The staff in the nursery will be retained within the main school team.

The Governing body of the school moved to statutory notice on the 25th April for a six week period until the 6th June. The school did not receive any objections or comments during this period.

Options Considered

1. For the nursery to remain open.
2. For the Cabinet member for Children's Services to seek a Cabinet decision to close the nursery.
3. For the Cabinet member for Children's Services to use her delegated powers to close the nursery following the statutory notice period.

Reason for Decision

The officer recommends closure of the maintained nursery due to there being no further objections during the statutory notice period. The officer has spoken to the Chair of Governors and the school is fully supportive of this decision based on the previous reasons presented to Lionel Grundy and the original consultation results.

DECISION MADE

I approve the decision to close the Nursery following the statutory notice period. This decision was published on the 28th June and will take effect from the 8th July, 2013.

The following supporting documents are attached:

CS-005-13 - Appendix 1 Report to Cabinet Member 26th February 2013

- CS-005-13 - Appendix 2 Consultation Document
- CS-005-13 - Appendix 3 - Summary of Consultation Documents and Reports
- CS-005-13 - Appendix 4 Minutes of the Public Meeting as part of the Consultation 23rd January
- CS-005-13 - Appendix 5 Letter from Chair of Governors to Cabinet Member

Date: ...26th June, 2013.....

Cllr Laura Mayes
Cabinet Member for Children's Services