

CABINET MEETING 03042014 – EXTRACT OF MINUTES

The full minutes can be found on the county council website at:

<http://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MId=7296&Ver=4> .

148. PROPOSED CLOSURE OF SOUTHFIELD TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE AND STAINBURN SCHOOL AND SCIENCE COLLEGE AND THE PRESUMPTION OF A NEW ACADEMY IN WORKINGTON

Minutes:

Cabinet considered a report of the Acting Corporate Director – Children’s Services which provided feedback from a consultation undertaken from 20 January 2014 to 3 March 2014, in relation to the potential publication of a statutory proposal for the closure of Southfield Technology College and Stainburn School & Science College in order to establish a single secondary academy in Workington.

Members noted that any decision they took to publish a statutory notice, would trigger the beginning of a formal ‘representation period’, during which, interested parties could submit their views on the proposals. Following the end of this period, Cabinet would be required to make a decision on whether or not to implement the proposals.

If Cabinet decided to publish statutory proposals it was intended that a report to enable Members to make a decision on whether or not to implement the proposals would be presented to Cabinet in July 2014. Final implementation of the proposals would be conditional upon the Secretary of State signing a funding agreement for a new academy to replace the schools; this would ensure that the schools would not close if there were no institution formed to replace them.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services acknowledged that the proposal was a difficult one for all concerned, pupils, staff and members but ultimately pupil numbers could no longer sustain two secondary schools in Workington and the situation was likely to be exacerbated by the opening in September 2014 of the UTC which would attract more pupils away from the existing schools.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Care Services acknowledged this was a very sensitive issue for children and parents alike and the Council was faced with doing its best and taking positive action to change the situation for the better.

The Leader emphasised that the County Council was faced with having to take some positive action as the situation was becoming unsustainable and there were limited options available given a range of factors including the financial viability of at least one of the schools. The proposal in the light of the challenges faced by the schools was an attempt at finding a positive way forward. Additional support provided to the schools had uncovered that the biggest issue for parents was the continuing uncertainty around their future.

Cabinet confirmed that they remained open to all possibilities and the publication of statutory proposals did not imply any final decision had been taken about the way forward.

Having considered the Guidance for Decision Makers which was included at Appendix A to the report it was

RESOLVED,that Cabinet agree to the publication of a statutory notice proposing the closure of Southfield Technology College and Stainburn School and Science College, Workington in order to establish a single secondary school in Workington.