

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Education held on Wednesday, 20 March 2019 at 5.00 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

Councillors Tom Coles

13. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Hockaday.

14. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Horton declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as the Vice Chair of Governors at Craneswater Junior School.

Councillor Coles declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a member of the Local Advisor Board of Penhale Infant School (thinking Schools Academy Trust).

15. Willows Centre for Children - end of statutory consultation to close and reopen the Centre under Solent Academies Trust

The Head of Sufficiency, Participation and Resources presented the report and highlighted the following areas:

- Willows Centre for Children was a maintained special school offering specialist early years and primary phase education to SEN children from a site next to Cliffdale Primary Academy (a special academy school for pupils aged 5 to 11). The Willows Centre for Children has 48 specialist places for nursery, reception and year 1 pupils. Pupils are placed at the Willows by the Local Authority.
- The Council and the Governors of the Centre had undertaken a pre-statutory consultation on a proposal to close the Centre and to deliver the specialist provision as part of an expanded Cliffdale Primary Academy, operated by Solent Academies Trust.
- The Centre was a good school, but as a very small one it faced increasing financial uncertainty.
- There was a continuing need for specialist nursery places in Portsmouth and the proposal would safeguard the future of the provision which would be provided going forward. Staff from the Centre would transfer to Solent Academies Trust under TUPE legislation.

RESOLVED:

The Cabinet Member:

- a) **Considered the response to the statutory consultation carried out on the proposal to close Willows Centre for Children.**

- b) Authorised the Director for Children, Families and Education to implement the proposal so that Willows Centre for Children closes at midnight on 31st August 2019 provided that the application to make significant changes to Cliffdale Primary Academy from 1st September 2019 is approved by the Secretary of State.**

The meeting concluded at 5.08 pm.

Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair