

## **MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE OF CABINET**

**Held remotely via MS Teams on THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2020 at 3.30pm**

### **Present: -**

Councillor Farthing in the Chair

Councillors G Miller, Stewart and Williams.

### **In Attendance: -**

Julienne Collinson (representing the Assistant Director of Law and Governance), Alan Rowan (Retained Education Functions Lead, Neighbourhoods) and Gillian Kelly (Governance Services).

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor G Walker.

### **Minutes**

1. RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

### **Revocation of Decision to Discontinue Pennywell Early Years Centre**

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report requesting the revocation of the Committee's previous decision in November 2019 to discontinue Pennywell Early Years Centre.

Pennywell Early Years Centre was a maintained nursery school in the St Anne's ward and the School Organisation Committee of Cabinet had previously approved a proposal to discontinue the nursery. This decision was taken on the basis that, post discontinuance, the Pennywell Early Years Centre provision and staff would be

amalgamated within the educational offer at a neighbouring school, Academy 360. This amalgamation was due to take place on 1 April 2020.

Laidlaw Learning Trust, the sponsor of Academy 360, had withdrawn from its proposal to amalgamate Pennywell Early Years Centre within its Trust on 31 March 2020. Given that the requirement for nursery places in the area remained, the implementation of the proposal to discontinue the centre would be unreasonably difficult and was no longer considered appropriate.

The statutory proposal to revoke the previous decision to discontinue the Pennywell Early Years Centre was published by the Council on 9 July 2020 and the statutory notice period ended on 6 August 2020. The notice was published on the Sunderland City Council website, the Pennywell Early Years Centre website, in the Sunderland Echo and displayed at the centre itself.

The following groups were also consulted: -

- Parents of pupils attending the Nursery
- Current staff
- The local Church of England diocese
- The local Roman Catholic diocese
- The Secretary of State for Education

The Council received no responses to the notice.

Councillor Williams asked how the Pennywell Early Years Centre would now move forward and the Chair noted that when the decision to amalgamate was made in November, the staff of the centre had been supportive of the proposal but had also been content to maintain their current provision. The Retained Education Functions Lead confirmed this and highlighted that nursery provision was currently being reviewed across the city.

Having considered the proposal, it was: -

2. RESOLVED that the statutory proposal to revoke the decision to discontinue Pennywell Early Years Centre be approved.

(Signed) L FARTHING  
Chair