

At a meeting of the SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE OF CABINET held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY 16 MAY 2019 at 2.00pm

Present: -

Councillor Farthing in the Chair

Councillors G Miller and G Walker.

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 to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Kelly and Stewart.

Proposed Re-organisation of Sunderland City Council's Pupil Referral Unit Provision

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report presenting proposals to re-organise Sunderland City Council's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provision and to increase the number of commissioned places to be delivered at the re-organised PRU.

Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit provision was currently organised into three separate provisions which were: -

- Key Stage 1 (Full Time and Part Time) – age range 4 – 7
- Key Stage 2 and 3 – age range 7 – 14
- Key Stage 4 – age range 14 – 16

Key Stage 1 provision was currently being provided from the Tudor Grove Centre, along with Key Stages 2 and 3. The Key Stage 4 provision was delivered from the Pallion Centre, which was refurbished in 2013 to accommodate the PRU.

In October 2018, Cabinet had agreed a proposal to refurbish the former New Bridge School at Springwell Dene with the intention of delivering the Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 PRU provision from that site from September 2019. The Committee were advised that the Key Stage 1 PRU reported to its own Management Committee, whereas Key Stage 2 and 3 and Key Stage 4, whilst separate provision, reported to a single Management Committee.

The Cabinet had approved a proposal in October 2018 to commence the School Organisation processes required to re-organise the City's three PRU provisions into one single school. The proposal was as follows: -

- Discontinue Sunderland's Key Stage 1 Pupil Referral Unit's registration from 31 August 2019;
- Discontinue Sunderland's Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit's registration from 31 August 2019;
- Alter Sunderland's Key Stage 2/3 PRU age range from 7-14 to 4-16, from 1 September 2019; and
- Increase the capacity of the Key Stage 2/3 PRU provision from 78 commissioned places to 172 places.

A pre-publication consultation exercise had taken place between 25 January 2019 and 25 March 2019 with parents of pupils attending the PRU, current staff, local schools and nurseries and trade union representatives. Seven responses were received, all supporting the Council's proposals. The notification of statutory proposals was published on 27 March 2019 and no responses to the notices were received during the four week statutory representation period.

The proposal would result in the following benefits: -

- Formalise management arrangements already informally operated across Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 provisions;
- Facilitate increased sharing of resources, management efficiencies and shared practice between Key Stage 1 provision and Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 provision;
- Facilitate the strengthening of existing Governing Body arrangements, with representation and expertise to be offered across all key stages;
- Facilitate the establishment of a new PRU management structure, offering consistent leadership across all key stages;
- Facilitate greater cross key stage working with increased interaction, where appropriate, between children attending PRU provisions from within the separate key stages;
- Lead to greater facilitation of transition between key stages for the minority of pupils who remain in PRU provision for extended periods of time; and
- Provide greater consistency between PRU delivery and proposed accommodation strategy, given the requirement to establish a new permanent delivery site for Key Stage 1 full and part time PRU provision.

Councillor Miller asked how many people would have been consulted as part of the process and the Retained Education Functions Lead advised that the consultation would have encompassed every staff member, every school in Sunderland, the trade unions, the diocese, parents and neighbouring authorities. Councillor Miller noted that if people did not respond, this implied that they were comfortable with the proposal.

Councillor Farthing stated that she felt that this was a positive change and was pleased to move the recommendations of the report.

Consideration having been given to the report and Committee Members having been in favour of the proposals, it was: -

RESOLVED that approval be given to the three related statutory proposals to: -

- (i) discontinue (close) the Key Stage 1 Pupil Referral Unit, Tudor Grove Centre, Portland Road, Sunderland, SR3 1SS and the Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit, Pallion Centre, Waverley Terrace, Sunderland, SR4 6TA with effect from 31 August 2019;
- (ii) alter the lower and upper age limit of the Key Stage 2/3 Pupil Referral Unit, Tudor Grove Centre, Portland Road, Sunderland, SR3 1SS from 7 – 14 years old to 4 – 16 years old with effect from 1 September 2019; and
- (iii) enlarge/increase the capacity of the Key Stage 2/3 Pupil Referral Unit, Tudor Grove Centre, Portland Road, Sunderland, SR3 1SS by increasing the number of available places from 78 to 172 with effect from 1 September 2019.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair

