



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council has agreed that this can be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with S100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, in order that this matter can be resolved within the necessary timescale

Z149

Cabinet 30 July 2008

Transfer of land following Suffolk Schools Organisation Review: Clements Community Primary School, Haverhill

1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.1 Suffolk County Council is undertaking a review of the schools structure in the Haverhill area. The proposal is to replace the current three tier system with a two tier structure. As a result, primary and upper schools will be enlarged, where possible, to accommodate additional school years.
- 1.2 The existing Clements Community Primary School does not have the capacity on site to accommodate an additional two school year groups and the County Council is looking at options to provide a new school in the vicinity of the existing school. One potential option proposed by the County Council is to negotiate a land transfer with the Borough Council that would enable the construction of a new school on land at Puddlebrook, adjacent to the Clements housing area and the creation of a public open space on the existing Clements school site that would then come into the Borough Council's ownership.
- 1.3 The proposed solution would ensure the retention of the primary school close to the existing Clements community and provide additional publicly accessible open space within the Clements housing area. The officers consider that this should be pursued.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to:-
 - (1) authorise the Head of Property Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Asset Management, to enter into negotiations with Suffolk County Council with a view to agreeing terms for the transfer of land between the County Council and Borough Council to enable the relocation of Clements Community Primary School to the Puddlebrook playing fields and the creation of public open space on the existing Clements Community Primary School site; and
 - (2) report the outcome of these negotiations and make a recommendation to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

3. Corporate Objectives

3.1 The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-

- (a) Corporate Priorities: *'Improving the safety and well being of the community':
'Securing a sustainable and attractive environment' and
'Creating a prosperous local economy';*

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4. Key Issues

- 4.1 Suffolk County Council has commenced a review of school organisation in Suffolk following a decision by the County Council's Cabinet to move from a three-tier educational system of first, middle and upper schools to a two-tier system of schools organised around a primary/secondary structure. The re-organisation will result in an extended age-range for existing first schools (taking their age range from 4 to 9 years to 4 to 11 years). The age range for upper schools will become 11 to 16/18 years depending on local circumstances.
- 4.2 Schools in the Haverhill locality were amongst the first group to be reviewed. On the basis of this work and extensive public consultation, proposals were considered by the County Council's Cabinet in March 2008 and published in April this year. The County Council's Cabinet considered representations on the Haverhill proposals on 24 June 2008.
- 4.3 One particular issue that has arisen in Haverhill relates to the capacity of the Clements Community Primary School. The School is situated on a land-locked, steeply sloping site in the heart of a densely populated area. There is very little opportunity to expand the footprint of the site to accommodate two extra year groups. The building is old and, whilst well maintained, is in need of significant refurbishment. Access to the school is poor. The County Council has concluded that it is necessary to seek an alternative site for the school which would allow these problems to be addressed.
- 4.4 The County Council's discussions with local stakeholders identified the Borough Council owned Puddlebrook Fields as a possible suitable location for a new school. It would:-
- (a) keep educational provision on the estate (and thereby 'keep faith' with the community) and enable the community to have a new 'fit for purpose' school with good pedestrian access;
 - (b) facilitate close links with the children's centre and local health professionals at the nearby surgery potentially providing better integrated support for a community judged to be deprived; and
 - (c) make the school more important and visible to the community and encourage joint use of its facilities.
- 4.5 The School Organisation Review team has been working closely with the Borough Council's officers and has identified the opportunity for a 'land swap' to facilitate the new school by exchanging the Puddlebrook site for the existing school site on Clarendon Road. Depending on valuations, there is the possibility that land known as Parkside, adjacent to the Puddlebrook Field, and owned by Suffolk County Council, may be included as part of the swap. The swap would be mutually advantageous and would enable the Borough Council to seize a rare opportunity to acquire green open space for community use in the middle of the Clements estate. The County Council is seeking to open the new school in September 2012.
- 4.6 The County Council is seeking approval in principle from the Borough Council to the land swap and to the start of detailed survey work to determine the feasibility of the school's relocation to the new site. The formal processes of site valuation, application for planning consent, detailed design work and so on would follow.
- 4.7 The transfer of the Clements School site to the Borough Council offers the opportunity for the local community to get involved in how the space is managed and used, perhaps through facilitated community engagement at an early stage which would allow local residents to decide what the space could be used for.

5. Other Options considered
5.1 The Borough Council could decide not to enter into discussions with the County Council. This would probably result in the new school being located much further away from the community that it serves.

6. Community impact <i>(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)</i>
6.1 <u>General</u>
6.2 The retention of a primary school in the Clements area of Haverhill will maintain an important community facility within this area.
6.3 <u>Diversity</u>
6.4 There are no direct impacts on diversity resulting from the recommendations in this report.

7. Consultation
7.1 Consultation has not been undertaken by officers on the content of this paper as the matter is being handled by the County Council.

8. Resource implications <i>(including asset management implications)</i>
8.1 There are minor resource implications for the Borough Council resulting from the recommendation limited to officer time negotiating with the County Council.
8.2 Full valuation assessments will be undertaken and a future report will set out in full the financial implications.

9. Risk Assessment <i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>
9.1 There are no risks affecting corporate, service or project objectives arising from the recommendations in this report.

10. Legal or policy implications
10.1 There are no adverse legal implications arising from this report or recommendation.

Wards affected	All Haverhill	Portfolio Holder	Economy and Asset Management
Background Papers		Subject Area	Property Management