

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **School Organisation Sub-Committee**
held on Friday, 26th April, 2013 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor D Topping (Chairman)

Councillors Rachel Bailey and J Clowes

COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors Mrs Rhoda Bailey and S Corcoran

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Baxter (Democratic Services Officer)
Maureen Hills (Lawyer-Education)

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was moved and seconded that Councillor D Topping be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Topping be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interest of openness in relation to the proposal to expand Wheelock Primary School, Councillor Mrs R Bailey declared that as Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services she had given permission for the issue of the statutory public notice for the expansion of the School.

3 PROPOSED EXPANSION OF WHEELOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL, SANDBACH

Consideration was given to the proposal to expand Wheelock Primary School, Wheelock, Sandbach.

The proposal for expansion had been made in response to a shortfall in the number of Primary School places in the Sandbach area due to population changes. Details were included in the full proposal attached as an appendix to a report prepared by the Strategic Director, Children, Families and Adults.

Following the decision of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families Services of 15 October 2012, an extended formal consultation had been undertaken between 22 October 2012 and 4 February 2013 on a proposal to expand Wheelock Primary School, Wheelock, Sandbach from 210 places to 315. The outcome of this process was considered by the Cabinet Member on 4 February 2013, whereupon permission was given to issue a statutory public notice for the expansion of the school to increase its capacity from 210 pupil places to 315.

Following publication of the public notice a statutory 4 week representation period commenced on 22 February 2013 and concluded on 22 March 2013. Fifteen objections had been received details of which were given in the report.

On behalf of the Proposer, Barbara Dale, the School Admissions and Organisation Manager attended the meeting and was questioned by Members of the Sub Committee.

Councillor S Corcoran attended the meeting and made a number of comments to the Sub Committee.

In addition a letter written by an objector to his local MP, Fiona Bruce was also read out at the meeting.

In accordance with the Sub Committee's procedures Members then considered the matter in private, in particular they considered:

- the statutory school organisation process followed by the Proposer to date and were satisfied that the documentation demonstrated that the procedures and documentation complied with both the law and the guidance;
- whether the need for creating additional primary school places had been proven and, given the increasing numbers of children being born in the area and the planned housing developments in the Sandbach area, Members concluded that the evidence did show that there was a shortage of Primary school places;
- the strong presumption by the Government that proposals to expand successful and popular schools such as Wheelock should be approved;
- the Sub Committee also noted that Cabinet had already approved sufficient funding to deliver this proposal;
- the effect that this proposal was likely to have on transport and traffic problems in the area. They discussed how the school and the Proposer could work more effectively to manage the difficulties generated by this traffic, but decided that these concerns were not sufficient to justify refusing the proposal. These were problems that would be fully explored as part of the planning permission process.

The meeting then reconvened in public and the Chairman announced the decision.

RESOLVED

That the expansion of Wheelock Primary School, Wheelock, Sandbach from 210 school places to 315 with a proposed implementation date of September 2014 be approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.10 pm

Councillor D Topping (Chairman)