

STOCKPORT COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET– SUMMARY SHEET

Subject: Woodford Development - New School Governance Decision Affecting the Queensgate Primary School Option

Report to Cabinet

Date: 20th July 2021

Report of: (a) Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services & Education, Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning & Governance

Key Decision: (b) Y

Forward Plan

General Exception

☒

Special Urgency

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(Mark with a Y if applicable)

Summary:

As a part of the new Woodford housing development (building 920 homes), the developer is obliged via a section 106 agreement, to have constructed a single form entry (FE) primary school building and pass the freehold to the Council for no consideration. The site requires a decision as to how the school is governed.

The purpose of the report is to update the Cabinet following the Cabinet meeting on 29 June 2021 and the early response to the pre-proposal consultation which commenced on 1 July 2021.

The report of 29 June 2021 outlined the 2 options available to Local Authority regarding the management and governance of the new Woodford Garden Village school. As per that report, the Local Authority can recommend that an existing community school transfers to the new site and is expanded or the site is offered, through a competitive process, as a free school/academy.

Since the Cabinet decision of the 29 June 2021, significant opposition has already been received to the option of relocating Queensgate to the new site. This has been evidenced from the online pre-proposal consultation survey, letters of concern from concerned parents and residents and directly from ward members (including via a petition).

Accordingly, this report recommends that the decision of 29 June 2021 be rescinded and a new decision taken as outlined in the recommendations contained at the end of this report which is that the relocation of the Queensgate Primary School to the Woodford Development site is no longer an option for consideration by the Council and that Cabinet agrees to offer the single form entry Primary mainstream school through a free school presumption process.

The decision to be taken is a Key Decision by the Cabinet pursuant to the council's constitution and a General Exception Notice has been published in this regard as to why 28 days' notice of the decision could not be provided.

Comments/Views of the Cabinet Member: (c)

At all stages of this pre-engagement process the Council have said that it wanted to hear from those involved in the process - particularly parents and carers.

It is clear from the majority response received so far to the pre-proposal consultation that Queensgate parents value their existing school and don't wish to relocate to a new facility but rather keep Queensgate in its current location.

Recommendation(s) of Cabinet Member: (d)

In view of the above, it seems clear that the only option for the Woodford Garden Village school is the free school presumption route which will work towards the appointment of a multi-academy trust sponsor and the school become a single form entry primary academy school from September 2022.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee (if decision called in): (e)

Children & Families and CRMG

Background Papers (if report for publication): (f)

Contact person for accessing
background papers and discussing the report

Officer: Geraldine Gerrard
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'Urgent Business': (g)

No

Certification (if applicable)

This report should be considered as 'urgent business' and the decision exempted from 'call-in' for the following reason(s):

The written consent of Councillor _____ and the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer/ Borough Treasurer for the decision to be treated as 'urgent business' was obtained on /will be obtained before the decision is implemented.
