

CABINET MEMBER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, CULTURE AND LEISURE

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.**

Date: Tuesday, 13 March 2007

Time: 8.30 am

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of previous meetings held on 6th and 20th February, 2007 (copies herewith). (Pages 1 - 9)
4. Minutes of a meeting of the Clifton Park Restoration Project Board held on 2nd February, 2007 (copy herewith). (Pages 10 - 14)
5. Wentworth Meadows - Play Area Progress (report herewith) (Pages 15 - 17)
6. Proposal to close Rawmarsh St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School (David Hill, Manager, School Organisation, Planning and Development) (copies herewith) (Pages 18 - 44)
 - to consider that the statutory consultation on the proposal is begun and that a further report be brought to Members with the details of the outcome of the statutory consultation

Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following items are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council and to labour relations matters))

7. Culture and Leisure Services - Fees and Charges 2007 / 08 (report herewith) (Pages 45 - 79)
8. Disposal of Radioactive Objects from the York & Lancaster Regimental Museum (Guy Kilminster, Libraries, Museums and Arts Manager) (report herewith). (Pages 80 - 84)
 - to agree the disposal of three items from the collections of the York & Lancaster Regimental Museum

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting
Tuesday, 20th March, 2007 at 9.00 a.m.

LIFELONG LEARNING, CULTURE AND LEISURE
6th February, 2007

Present:- Councillor St. John (in the Chair); and Councillor R. S. Russell.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Austen and Littleboy.

115. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23RD JANUARY, 2007

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd January, 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

116. INTERNATIONAL LINKS COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the minutes of the International Links Committee held on 18th January, 2007 be received.

117. SUMMER 2006 KEY STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Learning Services which contained the details of the Key Stage 2 Assessment results for 2006, which informed of performance in Rotherham primary schools at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2006, and how they compared to the national average, and to statistical neighbours.

Rotherham had not maintained the improvements reported in 2005 at level 4+, however, some further improvements were made at level 5+.

The 2006 Key Stage 2 Level 4+ results were disappointing most particularly following the successes of the two previous years. Declines from 2005 were reported in all areas compared to a more variable profile nationally. Whilst the results in all curriculum areas had dropped from 2005 to 2006, the trend in performance from 2003 to 2006 was an improving trend in English, reading, writing and mathematics. However, there was a declining trend in science.

The results of 2006 at this level present an increased gap between Rotherham's attainment profile and that nationally. (English – 5%, Writing – 6%, Mathematics – 5% and Science – 5%).

The higher performance at Level 5+ did reflect some gains from 2005 (English and Reading), but these did not meet the improvements reported nationally. All Level 5+ results in Rotherham had exceeded those reported in 2004, except in science. L5+ Reading demonstrated the highest outcome to date. L5+ attainment remains some distance from those reported nationally. (English – 7%, Reading – 8%, Writing – 5%, Mathematics – 5% and Science – 7%).

The report included comparative performance data with regard to:-

- vulnerable and underachieving groups across English, mathematics and science since 2003
- Ethnicity
- Looked After Children

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received.

(2) That the declines in performance in Key Stage 2, most particularly when compared to results reported nationally and the improvements made in the previous two years, be noted.

(3) That all schools continue to be encouraged to improve their results, and strive to reflect outcomes, at least in line with national averages.

(4) That the Council's drive to reduce the number of schools below DfES floor target of 65%, improve boys' attainment and that of BME pupils and Looked After Children, be endorsed.

(5) That the Director of Learning Services submit a report to a future meeting on work carried out in schools to address issues highlighted, and the possible affect of this work on assessment results for 2007 and beyond.

(6) That the report be submitted to Cabinet and the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

118. POPE PIUS X CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL - LAND EXCHANGE WATH WARD

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Resources and Access on a proposal to exchange land between the Diocese of Hallam and the Council in order to clarify building and land ownership.

The new School sports hall has been built on land owned by the Diocese of Hallam and the Council.

Big Lottery Funding (New Opportunities Fund PE and Sport Programme) has enabled the Council to provide a new sports hall at the school. The land on which the new sports hall has been built was formerly used to accommodate two disused classrooms and a high jump and long jump pit. The pits are to be relocated on the School site.

The site for the sports hall was chosen due to:

- Land availability following demolition of dilapidated classrooms
- Good access for school and community use (level site for disabled access, close to car park and main school entrance)

The land used to build the sports hall is owned by the Diocese of Hallam and Rotherham Borough Council (559m²) which it is proposed will be

exchanged with a piece of land (559m²) owned by the Diocese of Hallam. The Diocese of Hallam land earmarked for exchange is currently used as a nature garden and overspill car park/hard standing. The school will continue to use the land exchanged on the same basis as the sports fields.

The DfES Schools Assets team have been contacted and they have confirmed that ministerial consents are not required for the exchange of land in this instance.

Resolved:- That the proposal that the Council and the Diocese of Hallam exchange a 559m² piece of land at Pope Pius X Catholic High School to enable the Diocese of Hallam to have sole ownership of the land beneath the sports hall (plus 1m around the periphery for maintenance) be approved.

119. FOUNDATION STAGE & KEY STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT RESULTS - SUMMER 2006

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Learning Services which set out in detail the assessment results of performance of Rotherham children in Foundation Stage and the end of Key Stage 1, in 2006.

All schools must conduct a form of statutory assessment at the end of each Key Stage (ages 5, 7, 11, 14 and 16). The Foundation Stage Profile is assessed when children reach the end of Foundation Stage (age 5). At the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7) children undertake Statutory Assessment Tasks (SATs) which, from 2005, was assessed by their teachers. Previously, these had been externally marked.

Assessment outcomes continue to show the weakest areas of capability are within Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL) with a particular weakness in writing (average score 5.2) compared to the highest level of capability in the areas of Mathematics (Numbers as Labels and for Counting), Personal, Social and Emotional (PSE) Development (Dispositions and Attitude) and Physical Development (PD) each of which reports a local average of 6.8.

Outcomes for 2006 report improvements in a number of key areas compared to those reported in 2005. These are:

- Emotional Development in the Personal, Social and Emotional scale (PSE)
- All aspects of Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL)
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW) and
- Physical Development (PD)

In addition, outcomes for Emotional Development in the PSE scale,

Reading in the CLL scale and KUW and PD have reported the highest results to date.

The differences in performance between girls and boys are evident at this initial stage of formal assessment. Girls outperform boys in all assessment scales. This continues to be most pronounced in Writing, with a gap of 0.7 and Creative Development (CD) with a gap of 0.8. The performance of girls and boys is most comparable in all elements of Mathematics and the Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW) Areas of Learning with a difference of only 0.2. However boys' performance was stronger than in previous years in the majority of assessment scales, with improvements shown in all aspects of CLL.

Rotherham continues to report an overall profile of a greater proportion of pupils working below the Early Learning Goals and a lower proportion of pupils working above the Early Learning Goals than nationally. This picture reflects the profile of disadvantage in Rotherham as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation and using those factors that affect children.

However, the gap has been narrowed in the majority of instances in 2006, most particularly when the proportion of pupils working above the Early Learning Goals is compared to those nationally. This continuing lower, but improving, profile in Rotherham presents significant challenges for Key Stage 1 provision in the drive to demonstrate overall performance, comparable with that nationally, by the end of this key stage. The improvements reported in 2006 should begin to contribute to this drive to improve standards.

In addition, the following data performance was provided and expanded upon at the meeting:-

- Foundation Stage summary from 2004 to 2006
- Overall Results for Key Stage 1
- Results for Vulnerable Groups
- Ethnicity 2004-2006

A question was raised and responded to with regard to the performance of children from EU communities.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received.

(2) That the drive to encourage all schools to continue to improve their results, and strive to reflect outcomes, at least in line with national averages, be endorsed.

(3) That the drive to improve standards, particularly in Communication, Language and Literacy, throughout these two key stages, together with the attainment of boys and other vulnerable and underachieving groups, be endorsed.

(4) That the report be submitted to Cabinet and the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

120. ADOPTION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OFF SANDY LANE, BRAMLEY

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Culture and Leisure which contained the details of a request received from Northern Counties Development Limited that consideration be given to the adoption of an area of public open space on a new residential development off Sandy Lane, Bramley.

The site comprises 0.214 hectares of public open space and has recently been landscaped to provide an area of amenity grassland and whip planting. A mature hawthorn hedge has been retained as a boundary feature along Sandy Lane. The footpath on the public open space has already been adopted by Highways. The area has been landscaped to a good standard and is suitable for adoption for grounds maintenance purposes. The land is situated adjacent to the Broadlands development at Bramley, where previously in 2001 the council adopted one hectare of public open space.

It is acknowledged that there is a presumption against the council adopting any land from developers at present pending completion of the Green Spaces strategy. However, it is advisable in this particular instance to secure ownership as this will allow both the management and maintenance of the previously adopted area and this new area to be undertaken together. Both areas form a continuous parcel of land that is well used by local residents for walking.

The only access to the land for maintenance purposes is through the existing public open space in the Council's ownership. If the adoption was not approved, a right of way access agreement would be needed with the developer in order for him to gain access to the land for maintenance purposes.

The current ground maintenance costs per annum are £125. It has been agreed with the developer that this would form the basis of a commuted sum for a ten year period i.e. £1250.00.

In addition, it has been agreed that any legal expenses incurred in drawing up the agreement would be borne by the developer.

Resolved:- (1) That the area of land off Sandy Lane, Bramley be formally adopted by the Council for grounds maintenance purposes from the developer Northern Counties Development Limited, subject to payment of a commuted sum to the Council equivalent to ten years maintenance.

(2) That the Director of RIDO be requested to arrange for the transfer by a deed of dedication of the public open space from the developer.

121. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

122. PANTOMIME TENDER AND CONTRACT FOR DECEMBER 2007-JANUARY 2010

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Culture and Leisure which set out the details of tenders submitted for the pantomime contract in relation to December 2007-January 2010.

Three tender submissions had been considered and all three companies had been interviewed. Over the Christmas period viewing of pantomimes produced by the short listed producers had taken place.

Resolved:- That, on the basis of the results of the tender evaluation with regard to value for money, quality of the product offered and the increased audiences and income over the last six years, the 3 Year Pantomime Contract (December 2007-January 2010) be offered to Spillers Pantomimes Limited.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council)).

123. PLAY AREA AT LEEWOOD CLOSE - STAGE TWO COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Culture and Leisure which contained the details of a Stage Two complaint Investigation regarding the siting of a play area in Leewood Close.

The Stage Two complaint had been received from two residents in October, 2006.

At the conclusion of the Stage Two investigation, it had been agreed that the issue would be reconsidered, with the evidence from the investigation being put before the Cabinet Member to help inform a review of the previously made decision not to move the play area.

Resolved:- That, in light of the findings of the Stage Two Complaint Investigation, a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member, Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure on the progress, if any, of recommendations made at the meeting of the Cabinet Member, Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure held on 3rd October, 2006. This

further information should focus on the exploration of a youth shelter and estimated costings, in particular, including efforts, both from the Council's point of view and other community initiatives that are being made to address this issue.

(Exempt under Paragraph 2 – Item consists of information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

CABINET MEMBER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, CULTURE AND LEISURE
Tuesday, 20th February, 2007

Present:- Councillor St. John (in the Chair) and Councillor Austen. Councillors Billington, Ellis and Thirlwall were in attendance for Minute No. 126.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Littleboy.

124. BIG LOTTERY FUND - COMMUNITY LIBRARIES PROGRAMME

The Manager, Libraries, Museum and Arts, reported that the Library and Information Service had the opportunity to submit a bid for funding to the Big Lottery Fund, Community Libraries Programme.

Grants of between £250,000 and £2M would be available with the average grant expected to be around £800,000 for projects running for up to three years. The Fund was intended to fund capital projects that were more than traditional library services and work with their communities. It would not cover projects solely for the general refurbishment of libraries or solely for increasing disability access.

Applications should be submitted by Noon on Friday, 30th March, 2007, with a decision being given in September. Before March, 2008, successful services would need to submit business, community engagement and capital project delivery plans.

Of the existing libraries, plans were being discussed, had been proposed or were in place to develop Aston, Brinsworth, Central, Rawmarsh, Swinton and Wath. Dinnington and Thurcroft community libraries were relatively recent builds/refurbishments and plans were in place to refurbish Kiveton Park and Maltby.

Of the remaining libraries, Mowbray Gardens was the most appropriate given its size, design, condition, the potential offered by its location and its current and potential usage. Options for development included:-

Services targeted at children and young people including involvement on the management board, design and delivery of services;
Access to other Council services;
Partnership with the PCT, GPs surgeries, Health Visitors etc.
Improved service to the residents of Herringthorpe e.g. provision of community transport, home delivery service;
Community facilities – meeting rooms, access to learning opportunities.

Resolved:- (1) That the Council, along with community and voluntary sector representation, submit a bid to develop Mowbray Gardens Library to provide additional space, services and support for children, families and older people.

(2) That community representation within the area be encouraged including community involvement in the development, delivery and management of the service.

(3) That the possible implications on both capital and revenue funding be noted with further reports being submitted for clarity at regular intervals.

125. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 ((Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

126. OPENING OF TENDERS - DESIGN AND BUILD OF NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE AND LIBRARY AT WICKERSLEY, ROTHERHAM.

The Cabinet Member opened three tenders received for the above Contract.

Resolved:- That the Manager, Libraries, Museum and Arts, evaluate the tenders for the design and build of new Community Centre and Library at Wickersley and report the details of the evaluation and selection process to a future meeting.

CLIFTON PARK RESTORATION PROJECT BOARD
Friday, 2nd February, 2007

Present:- Councillor St. John (in the Chair); and Councillor Austen.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed all those present and introductions were made.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hussain, Littleboy, McNeely, G. Smith, Wootton (The Mayor) and S. Wright.

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, gave a presentation and project overview of the Clifton Park Project – “Linking the Past with the Future”.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded a ‘Stage One’ pass and development grant of £290,000 in support of the Council’s £4.8 million bid for the Clifton Park Restoration Project. This allows a start to be made on the production of detailed proposals that need to be submitted as part of a Stage Two bid to the ‘Parks for People’ programme by October 2007.

The presentation covered:-

- Our Vision
- Why? – Strategic Context
- Why? – Meeting a need
- Parks for People & Objectives
- Rotherham Priorities
- Key Proposals
- Rotherham Alive/Rotherham Proud/Rotherham
- Learning/Rotherham
- Safe/Rotherham Achieving
- Revitalising Clifton Park

The key proposals of the Project were:-

- New activity area for young people
- High quality entrance and path network
- New toilets and kiosk
- Colourful garden areas to be restored
- New building for education, park management, bowlers and community use
- Management of the park
- Outdoor spaces for museum events
- Views of museum opened up

- Walled garden for community and school groups
- Improved paddling area
- New visitor facilities (under review)
- More events, more variety
- Easier access
- A base for the Friends Group
- Voluntary Ranger Scheme
- Apprenticeships
- Information and Interpretation
- New Education Programmes
- Site based staff
- Improved lighting and cctv
- Enhanced maintenance to Green Flag standards

The Project would:-

- Contribute to the Town Centre Renaissance
- Increase Tourism
- Increase business opportunities

In summary, the revitalisation of Clifton is:-

- A good thing for the people of Rotherham
- Give a total of £7.8 million inward investment in park and museum
- Be a beacon for the Borough

Agreed:- That the presentation be received.

4. PROJECT ORGANISATION

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, informed the meeting that the development of a Stage Two Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid required the production of detailed design proposals for all landscape and building works to RIBA/LI Stage E, and the following fully researched documents:-

- Ten-year Site Management Plan
- Business Plans for new buildings
- Audience Development Plan
- Volunteer Development Plan
- Training Plan

This work will be delivered by the Council supported by consultants, with a reporting structure as submitted.

Detailed survey and design work will be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary consultants team to be led by suitably experienced landscape consultants. A Project Manager will be appointed for the duration of the project to oversee the work of the consultant team, ensuring specifications, programmes and budgets are adhered to, and being

responsible for the preparation of regular progress reports required by HLF. A Planning Supervisor is required by the Construction (Design and Management) regulations and will also report to the Project Manager.

The Green Space Manager will co-ordinate all the activity outlined, assisted by the Operations Manager, and will provide the main point of contact for the Project Monitor appointed by HLF to advise the Council on the execution of the project and to prepare quarterly reports for HLF on project progress and in terms of flagging up any risks.

The Project Board will meet at regular intervals to review progress against the project programme and budget, and to steer and approve the development of project proposals on behalf of the Council.

Agreed:- That the report be received.

5. FINANCE

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, submitted a paper on the financial situation with regard to the Stage I allocation of the Project.

The cost approved by HLF for developing a Stage Two bid is £471,285. HLF has awarded a grant of £290,000 (62% of the approved cost). A projected breakdown of development costs was given, together with the various sources of funding to cover these costs.

In accordance with HLF funding criteria, there was no allocation for a Children's Play Area, funding for which would have to be sought separately.

Agreed:- That the report be received.

6. PROGRAMME

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, submitted a provisional programme to the Stage Two application.

The programme is required by HLF in order to grant the Council permission to start the project. However, it is acknowledged that this will be subject to review by the lead consultant when appointed, and as required thereafter.

At this stage, the critical elements of the programme are as follows:-

- Deadline for submission of Stage Two application – 16th October 2007. Decision not known until March, 2008.
- Permission to Start, expected by mid February, subject to completion and approval by HLF Monitor of revised cash flow, procurement statement, and description of roles and responsibilities.
- Appointment of Lead Consultants – expected to be early to mid April.

Note that this timing is governed by OJEU regulations and limits the time available for development of a Stage Two bid to six months. This is considered to be the principal risk to the project at this stage.

- Appointment of Project Manager – expected to coincide with appointment of the Lead Consultant.
- Appointment of Park Manager and officers – expected to take up posts around the same time as consultants appointed, subject to suitable candidates applying.

Agreed:- That the report be received.

7. CONSULTATION

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, submitted a paper on the programme of consultation with stakeholders, which it was pointed out would be an important part of the project.

In addition, consultation will also be important to explain the rationale behind certain design objectives, for example the removal of selected trees to re-establish historic sight-lines to and from the Museum. A number of workshops are proposed at key stages in the project as follows:-

- Shortly after consultants are appointed, to allow a review of existing proposals and identification of any additional issues to be considered in developing designs etc
- At completion of RIBA Stage C design for Garden House
- At completion of park masterplan and RIBA/LI Stage D detailed designs
- At completion of final draft detailed designs to RIBA Stage E, to allow comment prior to finalisation of Stage Two submission to HLF

It was expected this programme will be varied and added to by consultants to ensure that specific issues arising during the design process are properly considered. The Project Board will be the principal channel for informing and consulting with interested Members.

Agreed:- That the consultation process involve the Friends' Group, Area Assembly, Schools, Primary Care Trust, South Yorkshire Police and all Elected Members.

8. SELECTION OF LEAD CONSULTANTS

An advertisement was placed in the Official Journal of the European Union on 18th December 2006. A total of ten firms submitted Pre-Qualification Questionnaires by the deadline of 24th January, 2007. The questionnaire sought special information relevant to the Clifton Park project in addition to the generic questions used in all large scale Council procurement exercises.

The meeting was informed of both the short listed firms and unsuccessful firms.

The next step is to develop a detailed tender specification that will be sent to the short-listed companies when it has been approved by the HLF Monitor. OJEU regulations dictate that the short listed firms then have 40 days to submit their tender. After an initial assessment of submitted tenders, firms will be invited to give a presentation that will be the final stage in the selection process.

The Project Board will be asked to consider how Members might be represented during this selection process.

Agreed:- That the report be received.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting take place on Friday, 13th April, 2007 at 9.30 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure
2.	Date:	13 th March 2007.
3.	Title:	Wentworth Meadows - Play Area Progress
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

A further update is presented of progress towards making new leisure provision for young people on the Wentworth Meadows estate, Brampton, following complaints about their use of the play area at Leewood Close with attendant problems of nuisance to local residents.

6. Recommendations

- a) **That progress being made to provide alternative leisure provision for young people at Wentworth Meadows be noted**
- b) **That Ward Members be informed of this progress**
- c) **That Members receive a further progress report on the matter at the end of June 2007**
- d) **That Members consider the provision of children' play in the Leewood Close area in the light of the recent Stage Two complaints investigation**

7. Proposals and Details

A report to Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure submitted on 12th December 2006 described actions being taken to investigate the provision of new outdoor leisure facilities for young people living in the Wentworth Meadows estate in Brampton. A copy of this earlier report is attached for information. This is in line with a decision taken by the Cabinet Member in October 2006 to seek ways of addressing current problems of nuisance caused by young people at the Leewood Close play area by making suitable alternative provision for them in the vicinity of the estate, rather than by removing the play area.

Since the date of the last report, the concerns of local residents have been investigated within Stage Two of the Council's formal complaints procedure. This has led to a recommendation that the decision not to remove the play area be reconsidered, reported at the Cabinet Member meeting on 6th February 2007.

Steps continue to be taken to explore the possibility of providing alternative facilities for young people in or close to Wentworth Meadows, and a verbal report will be given outlining the latest position in this matter.

8. Finance

The cost of a minimal scheme to allow installation of a temporary shelter has been estimated to be around £27,000. Costs for providing a permanent shelter and MUGA are likely to be several times more than this. Maintenance of such a scheme would also have long-term revenue cost implications, although these have not yet been ascertained.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Any development on this site is likely to be subject to landowner agreement and Planning consent, and will also require broad support from key stakeholders and a sizeable proportion of the local population. The scheme will also depend on the necessary capital and revenue funding being identified.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposed development of facilities for young people at Wentworth Meadows estate will have the following policy and performance implications.

- Rotherham Alive: It will fill a gap in recreational provision for older children and should therefore lead to a higher quality of life and higher levels of activity for them.
- Rotherham Safe: A fundamental purpose of the project would be to reduce current anti-social behaviour and associated fear from the lives of people living around the existing children's play area on Leewood Close.
- Rotherham Proud: The development of proposals for this facility will involve young people and others living on the estate, and will therefore give them a chance to influence the sort of services available to them;
- Sustainable Development: Wentworth Meadows is a relatively isolated community, and the provision of decent facilities for people living there is an important for the sustainability of the community, particularly for younger people who are less likely to be able to travel independently to alternative facilities in neighbouring settlements.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The Planning Service, Young People's Service and Brampton and West Melton Partnership have been consulted prior to preparation of this report.

Appendix 1 – Report to Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure – 12th December 2006

Contact Name : Phil Gill
Green Spaces Manager
Telephone : (01709) 822430
e-mail: Philip.gill@rotherham.gov.uk

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure, Cabinet Member Meeting
2.	Date:	13th March, 2007
3.	Title:	Proposal to close Rawmarsh St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School
4.	Programme Area:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary:

The Local Authority and the Diocese of Sheffield are both concerned about the viability of Rawmarsh St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School. The report to the Cabinet Member Meeting on the 23rd January 2007 approved a pre-statutory consultation on a proposal to close the school with effect from 31st August 2007. Pre-statutory consultation meetings have been undertaken with the Governing Body, staff and parents. Copies of the consultation papers have also been sent to Ward Members and Head Teachers of neighbouring primary schools. This report details the outcomes of these pre-statutory consultations

6. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the statutory consultation on the proposal to close Rawmarsh St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School as described in the report is begun and that further report be brought to Members with the details of the outcome of the statutory consultation.

7. Proposals and Details:

It is proposed to close Rawmarsh St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School with effect from the 31st August 2007. The attached document which was considered at the meeting with the school's governing body held on 17th January and at the consultation meetings held with parents and with school staff. It covers the background to the proposals, including:

- the general viability of schools
- details of the pupil numbers at the school
- educational standards
- the availability of places elsewhere in other local schools.

The document also looks towards what would need to be done in order to arrange places for existing pupils at other local schools and signals the requirement to seek suitable redeployment opportunities for the school's staff if the school closed.

The paragraphs contained under the heading 'educational standards' give a background as to what has been happening at the school since 1998 following an inspection that judged the school as having 'serious weaknesses'. Since then there has been an 'unprecedented' level of central support for the school and although that has led to some improvements at various stages, the school has been 'unable to establish a secure trend of improvement'.

The school's inability to sustain a capacity to establish an appropriate quality of education for its pupils combined with falling pupil numbers has led to the decision by the Local Authority and the Diocese of Sheffield to move forward on the possible closure of the school.

A meeting was held at Rawmarsh St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School on the 17th January 2007 for the Governing body of the school. A meeting was held on the 1st February 2007 for staff and also on the same day for parents.

(The minutes of these meetings are attached to this report)

Copies of the consultation papers have also been sent to ward members. No comments have been received from ward members. A meeting was also held with the head teachers of the neighbouring primary schools in the area and a copy of the minutes of the meeting is also attached to this report

A number of issues were raised at these meetings and officers from the authority and the Acting Diocesan Director of Education responded to the questions asked.

The following comments address the main issues raised at the meetings:

- 1) The Governing Body who had fully supported the school for many years expressed disappointment that despite their best efforts to attract high quality staff to the school the appointment of long serving Head Teachers had been problematic. They acknowledged the support given to the school from the Local Authority had enabled the school to maintain educational standards but were aware that this could not continue to be maintained.
- 2) Concern was expressed at all the meetings that could not more have been done to support the school and that the appointment of good Head Teachers in the past had improved the performance and raised educational standards at the school. All meetings were advised of the extensive support given by the Authority's School Improvement Service to the school since 1998 when it had been inspected and had been judged to have serious weaknesses. The School Improvement Services (SIS) has put more support into this school than any other in the Authority; four Associate head Teachers had been linked to the school as well as intensive support from the (SIS) Consultancy Workforce, Behaviour Support Service, Educational Psychological Service and the LA Primary Learning Mentor. This level of support was unprecedented across the authority and the LA is unable to maintain this level of support.
- 3) Concern was expressed that more could have been done to provide a good quality Head Teacher. The advice given was that the school had always struggled to make an appointment and that when the Head Teacher post was last advertised none of the applicants had met the criteria for appointment leaving the LA having to step in to support the school with an Associate Head Teacher. The current Associate Head Teacher was due to leave at the end of the term and the LA advised that another would be appointed through to the end of the academic year.
- 4) Concern was expressed that once the current Associate Head Teacher left that the school would struggle to support the pupils until it closed. The appointment of a new Associate Head Teacher until the end of the year would continue the support and the LA would ensure that continuous support from the (SIS) service would continue to be available to the school.
- 5) Concern was expressed by parents and staff that money spent on the school building (the new main entrance) would have been better spent on supporting the school. The advice given was that the bulk of the funding for the school buildings (the school being a Voluntary Aided School) came directly from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) and was not available to spend on staff or other resources.
- 6) Concern was expressed by parents that they did not know the location of other schools and asked if there would there be the opportunity to visit before they had to choose an alternative school. The advice given was that the possibility of visits would be raised with the other School Head Teachers.

(This issue was raised at the meeting held with neighbouring school Head Teachers, they all confirmed that visits would be a good idea and they all agreed to arrange dates with Mrs Bartholomew (Associate Head Teacher – St Mary's) for pupils and parents to visit.)

- 7) Concern was expressed that give the availability of spaces in some year groups at neighbouring schools that families may be split up and that friendship groups would be split. The advice given was that the LA would follow the guidance given in the 'New Admissions Code of Practice' whereby parents would be able to make up to three preferences for alternative schools and that the LA would ensure that siblings are kept together. Preference forms would be sent out to all parents early in the process to ensure that preferences would be known in advance and arrangements made.
- 8) Staff were concerned about their future and they were advised that everything would be done to find them similar alternative employment, that their views were important and would be considered. It would not be a case of just slotting them into any available post that came up. Suitable alternative employment would be offered and redundancy was a final resort.
- 9) Parents were concerned that they may have to buy new uniforms and that where more than one child was involved there could be a substantial expense. (Following the meeting Mrs Bartholomew took a request to the St Mary's Governing Body who advised that the school would assist with the purchase of school uniforms).
- 10) Concern was expressed by parents that they would lose the opportunity to attend at the excellent 'Breakfast Club' run at St Mary's and asked what provision was available at the alternative schools. (This matter was raised at the meeting with the neighbouring Head Teachers some of which had similar clubs running, each school would be able to advise of their arrangements at the forthcoming visits to the school).
- 11) Some parents were concerned that the alternative schools may not want their children at their school because they could be viewed as being disruptive. The advice given was that (apart from Rawmarsh St Joseph's) the LA was the admissions authority for the schools and that individual schools were not in a position where they could object to the placement of a pupil in their school by the Authority. All parents would be able to express a preference for their child which the Authority would do its best to comply with.
- 12) Parents wished for information on how an objection could be made to the proposals. They were advised of the procedure to follow for objections to be made. All objections would be presented to the Council for consideration.
- 13) Questions were asked about the future of the school buildings and the land. The advice given was that the buildings and the land they were built on belonged to the Diocese whilst the playing field land belonged to the LA. No decision on the future of the land had been made and any rumours that were circulating were false.

- 14) The neighbouring Head Teachers were concerned about having to take a number of pupils and the effect it would have on their budget particularly if additional staff had to be appointed. They were advised that the Authority would look to support schools that were taking a number of pupils.

The above covers most of the major concerns raised at the meetings. Other concerns were raised about the closure and the minutes of the meetings give further information on the response of the Authority/Diocese.

8. Finance:

Funding currently allocated to the school would remain within the Authority's total Schools budget. No revenue savings would accrue to the Authority or the Diocese and the funding would be redistributed to all schools through the formula for the delegation of funding to schools.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

There are sufficient places available locally, in neighbouring primary schools, in order to provide for all those currently in attendance at St Mary's School. The main risk/uncertainty is, therefore, seen as maintaining the status quo with the school remaining open, but being unable to provide and sustain an appropriate quality of education that its pupils deserve.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

The proposed closure seeks to maintain the offer a sustained quality of education to all those resident in Rawmarsh and, indeed, throughout Rotherham. It accords with the core vision of 'creating a service that ensures fair access and best possible outcomes for all children, young people and families'.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

The attached document was used in order to facilitate discussions as part of the consultation process on this proposal. The viability of schools is outlined in the Authority's School Organisation Plan 2003/04 – 2007/8. The time table for the closure is:

Publication of Proposal	16th March, 2007
Representation Period (6 weeks)	ending during April, 2007
Decision	May/June, 2007.
School Closure	wef 31 st August, 2007

Contact Name : David Hill, Manager, School Organisation, Planning and Development, ext 2536 e-mail: david-education.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RAWMARSH ST. MARY'S CE (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following recent discussions between the Local Authority and the Diocese of Sheffield it has been decided that a consultation exercise should take place with all local stakeholders on a proposal to close the school. If the proposed closure was to go ahead the draft timetable would be as follows:

Consultation Period	January/February, 2007.
Publication of Proposal	March, 2007
Representation Period (6 weeks)	ending during May, 2007
Decision	May/June, 2007.
School Closure	wef 31 st August, 2007.

During the consultation period there will be a series of meetings arranged with the school's governing body, all staff, parents and also representatives of the other Rawmarsh Primary schools so that everyone has an opportunity to comment on the proposal.

If it is agreed that the notice of closure should be published, a final decision on the matter would normally be made by the Local Authority (if no representations are made), the local School Organisation Committee or, if there was no unanimity within the SOC, the Schools Adjudicator. It should be noted, however, that changes emanating from the Education and Inspections Act 2006 are likely to result in the abolition of School Organisation Committees from around May, 2007 and decisions made after that time are likely to be made by the Local Authority with, in some cases, the power of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Rotherham's current School Organisation Plan suggests that no **viable** school should close, but that '**viability** should be seen in the context of the size of the school, the community which it serves, and its education standards'. Furthermore, a viable 5-11 years school should be seen in the context of at least one new class (i.e. around 25 to 30 pupils) coming into the school each year. It is recognised that some schools, particularly those seen as operating as a village school, may have smaller numbers, but, in general, small schools should look towards supporting 4 classes of children (i.e. 2 in Key Stage 1 and 2 in Key Stage 2).

PUPIL NUMBERS

Up until recently, St. Mary's had an admission number of 30 which would suggest a total capacity of 210 places for seven year groups. The assessed capacity of the school based on current usage is 131 places and in 2006/07 there are just 102 pupils on roll. The number in each year group is as follows:

	REC	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	TOTAL
St. Mary's	12	13	16	10	15	18	18	102

The first closing date for applications into Reception for September, 2007 has just passed. There is just one first preference for the school, together with 2 others which make the school their 2nd preference. Further applications may be forthcoming, but at this point it looks most unlikely that the intake will reach the 2006 number of 12.

Even if 12 pupils were to enter, there would be just 37 children throughout Key Stage 1 with just 96 pupils in total. If this pattern was to continue in September 2008, then there would be only 90 pupils and the likelihood is that there could be significantly less.

This means the school will have in excess of 25% surplus capacity from next September, rising to over 30% in the following year. When a school reaches this level of surplus, the Authority must justify to the DfES why it wishes to retain the school. Given the particular circumstances described in the section below, both the Authority and the Diocese cannot make this justification and instead wish to consult on a proposal for closure.

Educational Standards

In 1998 Rawmarsh St Mary's Cof E (A) Primary School was inspected and judged to have serious weaknesses, with low levels of attainment, frequent bad behaviour and poor attendance identified. This situation reflected the ineffective leadership and lack of curriculum planning the school had suffered over the years prior to the inspection. At the time of this inspection an Associate Headteacher was in post and while rapid improvements had been made, it was still judged to need further significant improvements. Following this inspection a substantive Headteacher was appointed, who addressed the identified weaknesses successfully and led the school through its next inspection in December 2000, when the Ofsted designation of serious weakness was removed. However in 2001 the school once again experienced significant difficulties following the absence of the substantive Headteacher, which resulted in her resignation at the beginning of 2002. The weaknesses identified in 1998 were once again key features and required very high levels of support and intervention from the LA and the Diocese to stabilise the deteriorating situation within the school. Between October 2001 and September 2002 prior to the new substantive Headteacher joining the school, four Associate Headteachers had been linked to the school as well as intensive levels of support from the School Improvement Service (SIS) consultancy workforce, Behaviour Support Service, Educational Psychological Service and the LEA Primary Learning Mentor. This level of support was unprecedented.

Since 2002 standards in the school have been variable. Standards in key stage 1 remained very low between 2002 and 2005, most particularly at L2B+ with a small minority of pupils reaching the national expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. Key stage 2 standards at Level 4+ had risen over this period in reading and writing, while standards in mathematics were more variable, reporting particularly low outcomes in 2002 and 2003. Throughout this period the school's results remained below DfES floor targets in English, reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science did report a more positive profile. However the school was unable to establish a secure trend of improvement, reflecting significant variance from year to year.

The substantive Headteacher left the school in February 2006 and was replaced by a highly effective Associate Headteacher. Under his leadership the school demonstrated its highest standards at the end of 2006 at L2+ and L2B+ in key stage 1 and at L4+ in English, reading, writing, mathematics and science in key stage 2. These strong standards are not predicted to be maintained in 2007 and sharp declines are anticipated once again. The school continues to reflect its inability to sustain and build upon any improvements it has made. Simply, it does not have the sustained capacity to establish an appropriate quality of education for the pupils in its care.

Other local Primary school provision.

There are 8 other Primary Schools in Rawmarsh, all of which are within 1 mile of St. Mary's. The nearest Church of England school is St. Thomas' in Kilnhurst. This is less than 2 miles away.

The following table shows the numbers on roll at all of the primary schools in Rawmarsh and also the current position at St. Thomas'. Figures in brackets show the number of spare places available in each year group at each school.

	REC	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	TOTAL
Ashwood	32 (-2)	29 (1)	25 (5)	26 (4)	28 (2)	24 (6)	27 (3)	191 (19)
Monkwood I	39 (21)	44 (16)	51 (9)					134 (46)
Monkwood J				54 (6)	52 (8)	47 (13)	59 (1)	212 (28)
Ryecroft I	60 (0)	34 (26)	52 (8)					146 (34)
Rosehill J				48 (12)	48 (12)	55 (5)	56 (4)	207 (33)
Sandhill	30 (0)	19 (11)	25 (5)	24 (6)	29 (1)	27 (3)	26 (4)	180 (30)
Thorogate	30 (0)	30 (0)	27 (3)	27 (3)	27 (3)	31 (-1)	31 (-1)	203 (7)
St. Joseph's	18 (12)	27 (3)	27 (3)	28 (2)	26 (4)	30 (0)	30 (0)	186 (24)
TOTALS	209 (31)	183 (57)	207 (33)	207 (33)	210 (30)	214 (26)	229 (11)	1459 (221)

	REC	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	TOTAL
St. Thomas	18 (12)	13 (17)	13 (17)	12 (18)	23 (7)	18 (12)	20 (10)	117 (93)

The above figures show that although there are sufficient places overall within Rawmarsh to accommodate all the children currently in attendance at St. Mary's, no single school has sufficient spare capacity to accommodate them all.

Inevitably, there will be a number of questions which will arise concerning the practicalities of any proposed closure. Chief among them will be the arrangements for existing and potential pupils and, of course, the existing staff at the school.

Current Pupils

All current pupils in Reception through to Y5 would have to be allocated a place elsewhere. This should be done by offering parents the chance to express up to 3 preferences and the preferences would be processed in the same way as any normal admissions transfer i.e. places would be allocated in accordance with the published admissions criteria for each school.

Preferences for Reception entry in 2007

As stated previously, there have only been a small number of preferences for the school in that year. Parents who have made a preference will be contacted and offered the opportunity to make an alternative preference.

School staff

Staff will need to be consulted on this issue at the earliest opportunity and there needs to be relevant Trade Union involvement.

The onus will be on securing suitable redeployment opportunities for staff and the Authority's Human Resources Manager will take a lead in ensuring that the redeployment process is fully utilised.

Finance

It should be noted that the funding used to operate the school will remain within the Authority's total Schools Budget. No savings will accrue to the Authority or the Diocese. Instead, it will be distributed to all schools through the formula for the delegation of funding to schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Authority and the Diocese wish to consult on a proposal to close Rawmarsh St Mary's C of E (A) Primary School. It is becoming unviable because of falling pupil numbers and its inability to sustain an appropriate quality of education for its pupils. In order to support the school thus far, it has meant an unprecedented amount of support from the Authority and the School Improvement Service in particular.

The Authority and the Diocese are committed to working with all parties, especially the parents in ensuring their children will enjoy the best possible education in the future.

Special Meeting of the Governing Body of Rawmarsh St Mary's CE VA School held on the 17th January 2007

Present: Don Matthews, John Burbeck, Amanda Bartholomew, Carol Sellars, Ellen Crookes, Pauline Johnson, Millie Charlsworth, Mark Langton, Elaine Parker, David Hill, Graham Sinclair, Chris Jennings, Helen Rogers, Paul Fitzpatrick, Mick Gillam and Sue Warner

Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair of Governing Body. Officers introduced themselves to the Governing Body.

Mrs Carol Sellars thanked Amanda Bartholomew for the work undertaken by her in supporting the school in the absence of a Permanent Head Teacher.

Helen Rogers advised the Governing Body of the support given over a number of years to support the school. Concerns have revolved around: Attainment, Behaviour and attendance.

The LEA has supported recently with two Head Teachers. One of the main concerns is that the school is only sustainable with the support of excellent Head Teachers from the Authority. Progress from 1998 (serious weakness) to now has been minimal.

Graham Sinclair circulated the paper on a proposal to close the school and then highlighted the issues as follows:

The draft timetable for the proposal is:

Consultation Period	January/February 2007
Publication of Proposal	March 2007
Representation Period (6 weeks)	end May 2007
Decisions	May/June 2007
School Closure	wef 31 st August 2007

A further series of meetings is to be held with staff, Governors, Parents and neighbouring schools. The final decision would be made by the SOC (if still in existence) or by the Local Authority.

Background

The Local Authority policy is that no viable school should be closed and this relates to size of the school, the community; and education standards with at least one new class coming in each year. Small schools in general should have at least four significant classes.

Numbers on roll

The numbers entering the school are low and at the time the report was written only one first preference for admission in September 2007 had been received. The numbers in the whole of the Infant phase is low with only around 37 pupils on roll. The LEA has to justify keeping a school open with in excess of 25% surplus places.

Educational Standards

The Governors were asked to read through the section in the report on the Educational Standards in the School.

Mick Gillam (Governor) advised that given, the low numbers predicted on roll more than two key stages would have to operate in one class.

Other Local Primary School Provisions

Pupils attending a Church School for a faith reason would be offered a place at an alternative CE controlled school. (Kilnhurst St Thomas). Faith schools would be considered for those pupils who would want it.

The nearest Local Authority maintained schools are Ryecroft Infant and Rosehill Junior, with surplus places in various year groups across the age range. Total number of spare places in the Rawmarsh area equate to 221 pupils. This is sufficient for the 81 pupils left in the school (after Y6 had left).

Current pupils would be allocated a place by being offered up to three choices on the Parental Preference form. Reception pupils would be offered the opportunity to change their preference.

Staff

Staff would be consulted at the earliest opportunity with re-deployment offered to all existing staff.

Finance

All funding is retained within the total school budget. It does not accrue to the Authority.

Summary

The Local Authority and the Diocese wish to consult on a proposal to close the school.

Question 1 *How are educational standards changed as the pupils numbers go up and down?*

Answer GS - less funding due to falling numbers on roll will impact on the schools ability to retain quality staff.

Answer AB - If the school were inspected tomorrow it is likely to be put into special measures.

Question 2 *What has gone wrong?*

Answer AB - It is mainly due to the leadership. The Head Teacher is key to maintaining the standards.

Question 3 *Are we not just moving the problem to other schools?*

Answer CS - On visiting the school, behaviour appears low when visiting. On previous visits to other schools it appears when pupils move that standards raise, behaviour improves. Leadership team will not continue when AB leaves.

Question 4 *When Head Teachers have left why have they been allowed to continue in the profession?*

Answer Not an issue for this meeting.

Question 5 *Why hasn't something been done in the past?*

Answer GS - Whilst the LA has supported, standards have been maintained – the LA is no able to continue to provide this level of support.

HR - More funding has been put into this schools to support, than any other in the authority. 100 hours consultancy support given but standards have slipped when it has been withdrawn. The capacity to provide a quality education does not exist.

Question 6 *My child would not have a place in the school that I would want?*

Answer GS - Will depend on where parents apply for places. May have to increase places at for example at Ryecroft Infant School.

HR LA (and Diocese) would not move quickly to close a school without first providing support. LA has exhausted all options to support the school.

Governor *LA should have supported the school with funding to provide a quality Head Teacher.*

Governor *The school has never provided the quality of education required.*

Governor *The school has provided a quality of education over a number of years (5) for my children.*

Question 7 *A number of disruptive pupils exist within a number of classes, the problem does not always transfer to another school.*

CS - *Housing stock and background does impact upon the school.*

AB – *Culture of poor behaviour is growing and festering within the school, cannot get a supply teacher to support in staff absence.*

Question 8 *Concern that the Governors have failed the children. MG Mixture of circumstances which has not helped continued support to the schools.*

Answer CS – *Inevitable in some circumstances – spiralling down of the numbers.*

Question 9 (Teacher Governor) *Instability of staff is a key factor in the future of the school. Puts me out of a job but I believe it is in the best interest of the school.*

Question 10 *CS – concerns regarding spaces at other schools, which schools will the pupils go to?*

Question 11 *What will happen next term where there is no Head Teacher?*

Answer HR – we will secure a Head Teacher for the last term.

Question 12 *Staff re-deployment – what will happen?*

Answer PF – LA will do everything to re-employ all staff from the school. Very confident that we will sort out all the staff.

Question 13 *Is there now a vote?*

Answer GS – when a church school closes a proposal could be from the Governing Body on the LA. GB will need to decide. This proposal will go to Cabinet Member next week. The report will be this paper and covering report.

GS – number of things to discuss. Pre-statutory consultation with Governors/Parents/Staff. Then publication of Statutory Notice in the press opportunity to object – April/May.

Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning will determine then to go ahead on not the statutory publication.

Question 14 *What is the Church's view to this?*

Answer Rev JB – concerns regarding leadership of school – Not able to get a Head Teacher. Spiralling down this last term the bottom line is that the school is not sustainable. (The Church itself is too weak but will improve but too late for the school).

The meeting closed and the Governors were thanked for their attendance.

RAWMARSH ST MARY'S CE (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED CLOSURE

Meeting with Staff of Rawmarsh St Mary's CE Primary School on Thursday 1st February 2007 at 3.30pm

Present: Graham Sinclair, David Hill, Paul Fitzpatrick, Chris Jennings, Helen Rogers, Janice Harrop, Ann Hercock (LA). Carol Sellars, (Diocese of Sheffield), Amanda Bartholomew (Acting Head), Members of Staff and Union Representatives.

Graham Sinclair opened the meeting and introduced Carol Sellars, the Acting Director of Education from the Sheffield Diocese. Carol explained that Malcolm Robertson, the former Director had taken early retirement due to illness and that now she was representing the Diocese.

She was here to answer any questions and said she would particularly like to thank all the associate Head Teachers for their efforts in supporting the school.

Graham Sinclair explained the background to the proposal. A summary of the information had been distributed prior to the meeting, which also included a timetable for the consultation process.

He then invited David Hill to explain what would happen with preferences for entry to Reception in September 2007. There were two considerations:-

- 1) There are currently 7 first preferences for Reception places for September 2007. A letter was going to be sent to the parents of these children inviting them to change their preferences. These preferences would be treated as new applications and not treated as arriving late and the applications would not be at a disadvantage.
- 2) When the current Y6 pupils leave in the summer, there will be 84 pupils left attending the school. Preference forms are to be sent to parents of these pupils inviting them to make up to 3 preferences for alternative schools. When the preference forms are returned to the Local Authority, available places will be considered and If necessary, admission limits could be exceeded and extra teaching spaces created. This is in line with the new 'Admissions Code of Practice'.

A meeting with other local Head Teachers was scheduled for next week.

Paul Fitzpatrick spoke next about the staffing implications that would occur if the proposal went ahead. He explained that, whilst not intending to say the school would definitely close, for the purposes of the exercise it would have to be treated as so.

He stressed that every effort would be made to find suitable employment for all staff. Janice Harrop will be a specific point of contact and will be going out to the school to speak to staff on an individual basis.

In the meantime, staff need to consider their personal preferences in terms of their future employment. All staff teaching and non teaching will receive full support.

In the event of a job not being found an absolutely last resort would be redundancy with payment based on age and experience. For staff over 50 in this situation, pension entitlement would be available.

Questions and comments were then invited which were as follows:-

Why has so much money been spent on the school – notably the £28,000 spent on the kitchen? Could not some of the ‘cosmetic’ expense have been better spent? It is obvious there has been something wrong for years. The staff are devastated. The children are not concerned about the ‘cosmetic’ element.

The work to the kitchen had to be done to comply with health and safety legislation. Some other areas were changed to improve the environment. The Funding for building work at an Aided School comes directly from the DfES.

It is the academic side that is causing the concern. A vast amount of resources have been put into the school. Head Teachers have received all possible support. It has reached a point where this cannot be sustained. We all aspire to the best quality of education. The quality of staff is acknowledged and is not an issue. The level of support given has been unprecedented. For the children who have been in the school this has been worthwhile.

The children have also benefited from the physical changes to the school.

Numbers on roll a few years ago were 81-83. Why wasn't the school closed then?

It was not proposed then because a rise in numbers was predicted and it was hoped that standards would rise.

Why are children who live close to the school not forced to attend this school?

That cannot legally be done. Parents can make a preference for the school of their choice. Only 7 first preferences have been made so far for a reception place in September.

There is a fast turn-over of staff now

Heads of the highest calibre have been brought in to try to stabilise the situation but it simply cannot be sustained. Some of the support has had to go elsewhere.

We cannot help but feel that all the hard work has been for nothing

This is not so. Your hard work has made it better for the children.

If the children have to move to other schools there is a feeling that they will not receive the care that they have here

All Rotherham schools care for their pupils.

What happens when we lose the current acting head? Where do staff go from here?

We are looking to replace the current head with the highest quality Head Teacher so this would be minimised. The current head has agreed to stay until April instead of the end of January.

When was the last Head Teacher post advertised?

It was January 2006. No one met the criteria. It was at that point where the Associate Head Teachers were brought in.

How does the Diocese feel about the proposed closure?

The Diocese does not like the idea of closure but it has become necessary to consider.

There has been no permanent Head for 12 months. More effort could have been made to secure a quality Head Teacher.

The best place for the children is here. Does each child have to be a high achiever? Many will go on to do better things in the future. Children are being cared for here

In the end the school is just not viable.

Is it about making the children happy or just about finance?

Why is the church not fighting for the school?

Rev Burbeck is very concerned about the situation. However, any school will be considered for closure if not in a viable position. Anyone is free to put an objection in to the proposed closure.

Who owns the school building and the land?

The building is owned by the Diocese and the land is owned by the Local Authority.

There are rumours that the land has already been sold and that permission has been given for houses to be built

This is not true. The closure proposal was confidential in order to adhere to the legal processes.

The Local Authority and Diocese could dispose of the land but it would have to be redesignated as a change of use and this is much longer process than simply selling.

There will be a number of people who oppose the proposal. What will be taken into account?

All objections will be presented to the Council. If identical letters objecting to the proposal were duplicated and then simply signed by a number of individuals, only one letter would be taken to Committee.

It would be more helpful to give specific reasons for objecting.

If the school does close, what would happen to the caretaker's house?

Jane Muffett, the Caretaker Manager would deal with this. If the caretaker did not secure another similar post with housing provided, provision would be made for local authority housing.

Our aim would be to find a similar post. If not possible as much support as possible would be provided.

I have a permanent contract renewed year after year. Would that arrangement go with me elsewhere?

Offering a temporary contract would not be considered as appropriate and would only be offered as a short term solution. The aim would be to find permanent posts. Continuous service would be maintained.

I am concerned about possibly having to work in a secondary school environment.

This would only be explored if it was an alternative to redundancy.

Could redundancy be requested?

If alternative employment was unsuitable or unreasonable in terms of travel or personal preference, yes. However, steps would be taken to avoid redundancy. This is about saving jobs.

Standards were high at the end of 2006. Why is this happening?

It is about consistency of these standards and about the intensity of support. There were additional consultants in addition to teaching staff. It cannot be sustained.

What sort of reputation does this give staff who teach here now and may wish to work at other schools?

Other schools recognise the continuing challenge here.

Someone has failed staff

The process has failed them.

Some children do not want to learn.

Most would say that staff deserve a medal to what they have done.

What if I wanted to move to another authority?

If there was no break in service and you got another post before September it would not be a problem for you. We are concerned about keeping staff in Rotherham schools and preserving employment.

If someone left before the school closed, what would happen?

The aim would be to enable staff to start another post in September. The ideal would be to stay here until then. We would try to work with both schools if necessary.

How much notice would we have to give?

This would be as flexible as possible and would be a school decision rather than the LA.

I understand the budget would be distributed to other schools. Could it be used to fund more staff?

Funding follows pupil numbers. Each school would receive a little more.

The staff were thanked for their questions and comments and the meeting was closed.

RAWMARSH ST MARY'S CE (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED CLOSURE

Meeting with Parents/Carers of children attending Rawmarsh St Mary's CE Primary School on Thursday 1st February 2007 at 5.00pm

Present: Graham Sinclair, David Hill, Paul Fitzpatrick, Chris Jennings, Helen Rogers and Ann Hercock (LEA). Carol Sellars, (Diocese of Sheffield), and approximately 80 parents.

Graham Sinclair opened the meeting and introduced Carol Sellars, the Acting Director of Education from the Sheffield Diocese. Carol explained that Malcolm Robertson, the former Director had taken early retirement due to illness and that now she was representing the Diocese.

She was here to answer any questions and said she would particularly like to thank all the associate Head Teachers for their efforts in supporting the school.

Graham Sinclair explained the background to the proposal. A summary of the information had been distributed prior to the meeting, which also included a timetable for the consultation process.

He then invited David Hill to explain the process for dealing with preferences for entry to Reception in September 2007.

Parents/Carers then asked questions/made comments as follow:-

Why have other schools in the area already been checked out for places?

The Government has published a new Schools Admissions Code which states that other schools need to be consulted for places. As a Local Authority we are required to do this. There is a meeting with local head teachers during the week beginning 5th February 2007.

All parents will receive a preference form which will then all be processed at the same time. If necessary admission limits could be exceeded.

What if another school in the area is closed?

There are no proposals for any other schools to close.

If I had known this was going to happen I would not have sent my children here

No other school will want to admit disruptive children

The Local Authority is the admissions authority. All preferences will be considered.

My children have only been in this school for three weeks – we moved from Sheffield. Will they have to go back to Sheffield?

No, places will be made available at other local schools.

This will create problems for many parents. Some do not have their own transport. Other schools in the area do not have Breakfast Clubs or After-School Clubs, making it difficult for working parents. Some people do not know where the other schools are. It is not fair

Why has it got to this stage from an educational point of views?

It got to this position because the school was failing its pupils despite a large amount of resources being put into the school.

The school has had good results – why not appoint a Head Teacher with a good business head?

A considerable amount of effort has been put into attracting the best candidate.

I am concerned about children from the same family being sent to different schools

Children from the same family will be kept together as much as possible.

The children who attend this school have bonded with each other. They are familiar with being in a through-primary school. Some of the other local schools have separate infant and junior departments. Can the children be mixed now?

Every effort will be made to provide opportunities for children to meet each other and to become familiar with their new schools.

What can we do to object?

A Public Notice will be published in the Advertiser. It will also be put on view in the Central and Local Libraries and at the entrance to the school. You then have six weeks to send in your objections and/or comments. You will need to state why you object (for example, distance to other schools, no Breakfast Club etc).

Why cannot some other children come here?

It depends on parental preferences.

I thought the Government was trying to reduce class sizes. Putting Rawmarsh St Mary's children into other schools in the area will make their class sizes bigger

Is it all down to money?

There is a financial element, yes. The amount of support given to the school cannot continue indefinitely.

Would there be any funding for children with special needs in the other schools?

Funding would be made available for children with special needs.

Disruptive children will be excluded – they only attend this school because it is convenient

Each school deals with difficult children. There are good partnerships between all local schools and at the comprehensive school where the majority of local children continue their education at Y7.

Was this proposal decided on before Christmas?

Yes, it would have been at that time.

Why has money been spent on the extension only to propose that the school closes down?

Funding for buildings is separate and the Governing Body has to apply to the DfES for that.

It has been said that this school does not have higher levels of disadvantage but families ARE in circumstances of disadvantage. The efforts of the staff should be acknowledged. The school should receive more resources. Standards are not the only thing that should be considered. There are problems here – transport is difficult – most walk to school. The school cannot be treated the same. Some parents want their children to go to a church school. Children love it here. We do not want to lose this school.

There was applause at this point.

St Thomas' (Kilnhurst) CE has similar numbers to this school, Why hasn't there been a proposal to close that school?

The population in the area is growing due to new housing.

Rawmarsh St Joseph's has refused parents places in the past

The school is its own admissions authority but places will still be considered at the school.

We do not feel we are going to get what we want

What if there were 10 children in the same year group all wanting the same school?

Children from the same family would be placed in the same school. More spaces would be provided to accommodate children if necessary. Class sizes must be kept to less than 30 for Key Stage 1.

Are you going to guarantee a place for a disabled child?

Yes.

When will you send preferences forms out?

This would probably be at the end of February/beginning of March.

Can we visit alternative schools?

We will speak to the other Head Teachers about this.

Rawmarsh Ryecroft is very built up. How would another class be fitted in?

There are rooms within the school that can be adapted for classroom use.

Is there nothing else that could be done?

No, there is likely to be a proposal to close.

If a parent does object can it help to prevent closure? Is it a possibility?

Yes, if reasons for the objection are made.

Could the other schools have a Breakfast Club?

We will speak to the other Head Teachers.

Would transport be provided for the children?

Yes, if the distance between home and school was more than 2 miles.

When can we make objections?

Objections can be made after the public notice is published (which will be in March). They will need to be sent them to David Hill and the address will be set out on the Public Notice.

A pupil asked – What if we don't want to go?

Applause gain.

Bullying will become a problem if the children have to attend another school. They are going to feel alienated

Staff at their new school will be very experienced at helping children settle in. They will try very hard and will have ways of dealing with any evidence of bullying.

When will we find out which school our children will be going to?

We will write to you as soon as possible after the decision is made.

Who will provide new uniforms?

If this is an issue the Governing Body can opt to spend some money on uniforms.

Will childcare be provided for? Some parents will need a childminder

This would not be possible.

When do we have to put our preferences in?

It will be the end of May/beginning of June.

You say this school is performing badly but the SATS results were very good last year

That was a result of a lot of help being provided. It cannot be sustained over a long period of time.

Who is responsible for employing a Head Teacher?

The Governing Body is responsible for appointments.

Every effort should be made to keep this school open

Will children be able to visit their new schools before starting there in September?

There will be arrangements put in place to introduce children to other schools probably during June and July.

Parents were thanked for their questions and comments and the meeting was closed.

Meeting with Rawmarsh Primary Head Teachers about the proposal to close Rawmarsh St Mary's CoE J&I School

Present:	David Hill	Local Authority
	Ann Hercock	Local Authority
	Martin Wagstaff	Rawmarsh Rosehill Junior
	Elizabeth Gee	Rawmarsh Monkwood Junior
	Liz Ruston	Rawmarsh Ashwood J&I
	Chris Cohen	Rawmarsh Monkwood Infant
	Carmel Battersby	Rawmarsh St Joseph's C Primary
	Sue Darby	Rawmarsh Thorogate J&I
	Amanda Bartholomew	Rawmarsh St Mary's CE J&I
	Judith Shelley	Rawmarsh Children's Centre
	Linda Etchell	Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant

Apologies: Graham Sinclair and Helen Rogers

A consultation paper on the proposal was circulated. It had previously been sent to the Governing Body of Rawmarsh St Mary's, staff and parents. David Hill briefly talked through the main points.

Questions and comments were then invited which were as follows:-

Would we be under pressure to take staff from Rawmarsh St Mary's?

Paul Fitzpatrick has confirmed that vacancies across the whole of the authority would be looked at. Appointments are made by schools not the Local Authority and would not be imposed.

David asked that if anyone was aware of vacancies would they please let Paul Fitzpatrick know.

There could be problems for support staff – some of them live locally and travel could be difficult

How would admissions into Reception in September impact on Rawmarsh schools?

Applications already received for Rawmarsh St Mary's are being dealt with by sending a preference form to parents inviting further preferences. These would not be treated as being received late; they would be treated as any other preference. Currently, there are only 7 applications for Reception places.

There may be implications for those with older siblings. Places may be available for a Reception pupil but not for an older sibling. The Authority would try to keep siblings together.

The DfES has published a new Schools Admissions Code of Practice which states that Local Authorities must work with other local schools in order to secure places for children from a closing school.

The new code gives two examples of good practice which have been successfully adopted.

This Authority will follow option (b) which is where a Local Authority carries out a preference exercise and, where it is necessary, negotiates with a school to provide additional places.

Would first preferences be refused if KS1 numbers looked like being higher than 30 or would another class be put in?

It could be both. If the school closes the budget transfers back to the Local Authority and could be shared out amongst receiving schools from September.

What is the closing date for preferences to be returned?

Parents will probably be given three weeks to return their preference forms.

Some parents have indicated that they will put down Rawmarsh St Mary's for all three preferences. How will these be dealt with?

After the closing date, preferences will be considered. If possible, siblings will be placed in the same school. Those with social/medical reasons will also be placed in the school of their choice if possible and there could be problems with admission limits in some year groups.

Parents making preferences for Rawmarsh St Mary's only will be allocated places where available.

Looking beyond September, what support would there be if two teachers had to be employed for FS2 children?

The Authority would have to look at the implications of longer term support but additional pupils would be on the PLASC return and funding allocated in the usual way.

What about Y1? It would only need one child to go above the 30 limit

At worst, 12 children (current Reception) would have to be accommodated in Y1. (This relates to typically to around £20,000 age weighted funding).

Numbers might have to go beyond 30 because of the sibling issue. (However, if a child was admitted into Reception with a Statement of Special Needs they would be regarded as an 'excepted' pupil.)

We thought the majority of parents would make a preference for either Rawmarsh Ryecroft/Rosehill or Rawmarsh Monkwood

The feeling from parents is that they wish their children to attend a school within walking distance of their homes. The two nearest are Rawmarsh Ryecroft and Rawmarsh St Joseph's Catholic Primary.

In effect, there are two admissions authorities; the Local Authority and Rawmarsh St Joseph's. It is not within the Local Authority's discretion to admit children into Rawmarsh St Joseph's but the Authority would liaise with the school. The school does have spaces at the lower end of the school but not in Y5 and Y6.

Parents have expressed a wish to visit other schools

Visits will be arranged outside this meeting.

Some parents have asked if there are breakfast clubs in any of the other schools in Rawmarsh

The breakfast club at St Mary's is not funded by the school; it is run by a charitable organisation and is free to children. Other schools may have them but there is usually a charge.

Parents have already contacted schools about a transfer

David Hill advised Heads to continue to refer parents to the Local Authority.

The Head of Rawmarsh Ryecroft felt that accommodating more pupils would be difficult and was very concerned

David said he would visit the school to have a look.

If the school was to close, what would happen to the building and land and also the furniture and equipment in the building?

The furniture and equipment will probably belong to the Diocese. Originally they would have been purchased using government funding. However, as yet the legal position is unclear as to what would happen should the school close..

At the parents' meeting one parent asked if school uniform would be paid for if their child transferred to another school

The governing body of Rawmarsh St Mary's have offered funding to purchase sweatshirts from new schools.

There were concerns that the children would not be known by name by members of staff at their new schools as they are at St Mary's

That would not be a problem as the other Rawmarsh schools know all of their pupils.

One Head commented that it was difficult having to accept building alternations to accommodate extra pupils when there were places available at other schools

It is too early to know how many extra places would be needed. Even if parents are refused there is still the appeals process so it is beyond the control of the Local Authority.

How would SEN funding be distributed? There could be implications for support staff

It is not known yet – not until places have been allocated.

As a cluster we thought that children would go to schools with places. We did not realise we would have to go above admission limits and have additional classrooms

We are working with a tight-knit community. The visits to other schools could be helpful. We will not know until preferences are returned. St Joseph's will be a popular choice.

Will negotiations take place with schools to admit pupils?

Discussion will take place but parental preferences will be a determining factor.

Are any transfers from Rawmarsh St Mary's being agreed?

No transfers are being dealt with before preference forms go out.

If any were agreed, and the proposal did not go forward, it could be interpreted as trying to force the issue.

The only exception, for example, would be if a family were moving house some distance away (eg near to Rawmarsh Monkwood).

Budgets are being planned now. It is difficult to plan if future numbers are not known. There are implications for support staff

This is why preference forms will be sent out to parents as soon as proposals are published. Many preferences will have been returned before the next meeting so a clearer picture should begin to emerge.

Next Steps

- 1 David Hill will visit Rawmarsh Ryecroft to look at accommodation. **(DH)**
- 2 Head of Rawmarsh St Mary's to send letters to parents to arrange visits with other schools. **(Amanda Bartholomew)**
- 3 Arrange a further meeting to take place when preferences are returned. (Provisionally booked for 30th March at 2.00pm) **(AH)**
- 4 Enquire about furniture and equipment in Rawmarsh St Mary's. **(GS/HR)**
- 5 Publish public notice on or around 16th March and send out preference forms. **(AH)**

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted