

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Monday, 12 March 2012

Decision No: (CAB 11/12 7843)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN SERVICES AND LEARNING
SUBJECT:	SAINT GEORGE CATHOLIC VA COLLEGE SOUTHAMPTON PROPOSALS TO CHANGE STATUS TO A MIXED-SEX SCHOOL
AUTHOR:	Karl Limbert

THE DECISION

- (i) To consider and take into account the outcome of stakeholder consultation, as set out in Appendices 2 and 6.
- (ii) Having had regard to the statutory decision makers guidance and the legal implications under the Equality Act 2010 set out in Confidential Appendix 7, to approve the prescribed alteration to Saint George Catholic VA College by changing the character of the school from a single sex boys school to a mixed school by admitting both boys and girls to year 7 from 1st September 2013.
- (iii) To grant a Transitional Exemption Order in relation to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (the 'SDA') for a period of four years from the date of implementation of the proposals to allow for the change from single sex to co-educational to be phased, as set out in the published proposals.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The school have put forward the following reasons in support of their proposal:

1. A large number of people within the Catholic community have expressed a strong preference for there to be a non-fee paying Catholic secondary school within Southampton that both boys and girls can attend together, something that does not currently exist as an option for those parents. St George opened as a mixed-sex school in 1958 and many parents wish to see a return to that status.
2. As a consequence of this view, the school carried out an extensive period of consultation; 2,820 response forms were distributed and 322 responses were submitted. The majority (231 out of 322) of the adults who responded to the consultation wanted Saint George Catholic VA College to change to become co-educational and no longer remain single sex. 89 respondents opposed the

proposal and 2 abstained. As a Catholic school, it is also important to note that of the 204 Catholics who responded, 165 preferred Saint George to become a mixed-sex school. Indeed, when Southampton City Council carried out its Learning Futures consultation in 2006, there was no overwhelming evidence supporting single sex education within the city and therefore all single sex schools other than Saint George and St Anne's have already been either closed or merged into co-educational schools.

3. Nor does there appear to be any demand for single sex education at Key Stage 2, since all primary schools in Southampton are mixed-sex. Every child that has attended a Catholic primary school has, up until the age of 11 years, been in a co-educational setting. Catholic children do not currently have the option to access Catholic secondary education in the city with friends and family of both sexes.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As statutory decision maker the Council has the following options:

- Reject the proposals
- Approve the proposals as published
- Approve the proposals subject to minor modifications (e.g. to implementation date), or
- Approve the proposals subject to limited statutory conditions (e.g. subject to planning permission).

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 12th March 2012

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*