

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES
13 JULY 2015**

**REPORT ON THE PROPOSED REVOCATION OF APPROVAL TO
ALTER THE AGE RANGE AT ICKNIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
WATLINGTON**

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. This report seeks to revoke the approval to extend the age range of Icknield Community College in order to establish a Sixth Form. The original approval of this extension was made by the Member for Children, Education & Families on 3 November 2014.
2. A Revocation Notice was published on 21 May 2015 in the Oxford Mail, as required under the Guidance (School Organisation – Maintained Schools: Guidance for proposers and decision-makers – January 2014). This Notice is attached at Annex 1 and was circulated to the College, County Council teams, District, Council and Parish councillors and other groups and organisations. It was also available on the County Council website and displayed at the College site entrance. Comments were invited from any interested parties for a period of 4 weeks.
3. The decision-making power in terms of determining the notice lies with the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families. In meeting as 'decision-maker' Cabinet Member must have regard to government guidance and statutory timescales otherwise a decision can be referred to the independent Schools' Adjudicator for reconsideration. The decision must be made within 2 months of the close of the notice period; as a consequence, it is necessary for the Chairman of the Council to determine that the decision cannot be subject to 'call-in' as this would, in most cases, prevent a decision being finalised within the required timescale and mean that the Cabinet's role would be negated by referral to the Schools' Adjudicator.

The Proposal

4. The governors wish to withdraw their proposal to establish a Sixth Form at Icknield Community College from September 2015. This is for the reasons set out in their statement below:

"Following consultation with stakeholders, and a full discussion of the evidence, the Governors of Icknield Community College have decided to apply to revoke the decision to change the school's upper age range to 18 years old.

When applications were submitted in February 2015 for students to join in September 2015 the College had sufficient student numbers to be able to fund the costs of establishing and running a Sixth Form. However, this was coupled with lots of student voice work and, unfortunately, it was clear that the vast majority of students had sensibly applied for multiple establishments, but that many of these were still very hesitant about studying at Icknield.

Our costings required a very specific minimum number of students to attend, and our intelligence suggested there was significant risk that we may not achieve that number. We were very concerned about running a venture of this scale at a loss, and did not want to irresponsibly subsidise our Sixth Formers with funding allocated to younger students.

Furthermore, the economic situation has changed quite significantly since the initial proposal to open a Sixth Form was approved. The College is now responsible for increased National Insurance and pension contributions which mean that we would require a larger number of students to fund the Sixth Form. The funding problem is enhanced by a strong likelihood that central government will further reduce funding to post-16 students in the coming years.

There was a discussion that we could increase our prospective student numbers by offering a wider range of qualifications in our Sixth Form, but this too is constrained by the limitations in the capacity of our buildings. It was concluded that unless we were able to build another building, this would not be a viable option.

For the reasons above, our Governing Body has decided that, in the current climate, we should not now go forward with establishing a Sixth Form.”

Representations

5. The Revocation Notice generated no responses.

Legal background

6. The revocation of a decision to approve a proposal is subject to statutory procedures, as set out in “School Organisation: Maintained Schools. Guidance for proposers and decision-makers” (The Guidance) published January 2014. When reaching a decision, Cabinet Member must have regard to The Guidance, in particular paragraphs 29 – 32.
7. In terms of reaching a decision the Decision Maker must be satisfied that the consultation meets statutory requirements. If the requirements have not been met, the Decision Maker may judge the proposals to be invalid and should consider whether they can make a decision on the proposals.

Financial and Staff Implications

8. There will be no cost implication for revoking the approval; in fact the financial situation of the College would be adversely affected if the approval were not revoked, as set out in its statement above.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

9. There would be no change to the current situation.

Decision

10. In considering the revocation of an approval, the Decision Maker can decide to:
 - revoke the approval to the original proposal;
 - reject the proposal to revoke the approval, and let it stand.

RECOMMENDATION

11. **The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families is RECOMMENDED to revoke the decision to approve the extension of the age range at Icknield Community College to establish a Sixth Form.**

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children's Services

Annexes: Annex 1: Revocation Notice

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