

West Sussex County Council

Urgent Action

The following decision has been taken under the urgent action procedure by the Director of Law and Assurance, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and with the agreement of the relevant Select Committee Chairman.

Regulation 11: Members are asked to note this decision is a key decision and as such should have been included in the Forward Plan for the required 28 days. It was, however, not possible to do so and agreement to the decision has been obtained from the relevant Select Committee Chairman and notice has been given to the public.

Decision Title & Ref No:	Change of status for The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrews CE High School for Boys, Worthing to co-educational schools - Determination of Statutory Notices Reg11 - ES08 (20/21)
Cabinet Member Responsible for Decision	Director of Law and Assurance
Electoral Divisions	Broadwater; Horsham East
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose	<p>Demand for places at single-sex boys schools in West Sussex has been declining in recent years and this is evidenced by a reduction in the overall number of families applying for boys schools as first preferences. Reduced pupil numbers impacts upon the finances available to schools and thereby on how the school can deliver the opportunities required to both staff and pupils.</p> <p>To address these issues the governing bodies of The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing feel that conversion to become co-educational schools will not only enable increased pupil numbers but also increase opportunities for girls and provide a wider range of curriculum benefits for boys through co-educational subjects.</p> <p>The Director of Education & Skills agreed to consult on the proposed significant change of character to alter The Forest School, Horsham from a single sex boys' school to a co-educational school from September 2021 entry. At the same time, the Governing Body of St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing consulted on changing from a single sex boys' school to a co-educational school from September 2021 entry. As St Andrew's CE High School for Boys is a voluntary aided Church school, different regulations regarding who initiates the consultation apply.</p> <p>The proposed changes would mean the schools will no longer admit only boys as Year 7 pupils from September 2021 and each year of entry thereafter would be co-educational. There are no changes proposed to have co-</p>

	<p>educational provision for any of the existing year groups on roll at both schools. There are also no proposals to alter the single sex girls' provision at either Millais School, Horsham or Davison CE High School for Girls, Worthing.</p> <p>The initial consultations took place during June 2020 and following a review of the comments received the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills took a decision to agree the publication of statutory notices to implement both changes with effect from September 2021 (Decision reference ES05(20/21)).</p> <p>Statutory Notices were issued on the 6 August 2020. Members of the public and interested parties had the opportunity to make further representations regarding the proposed changes during a four week period that closed on the 3 September 2020. During this time one email was received in relation to the proposals for The Forest School, Horsham but this was not substantial or significant in content to amend, alter or delay the Cabinet Decision ES05 20/21. There were no representations received for St Andrews CE High School for Boys.</p> <p>Notice of the intention to take the decision to determine the Statutory Notices was published in the Forward Plan on 8 July 2020. It was removed from the Forward Plan on 10 September 2020 as it was determined that a further decision would not be necessary. Recent communication from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator indicates a further decision is required to enable action by that office. Due to the need for this matter to be determined by 3 November 2020 the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills has authorised that this urgent decision can be taken by the Director for Law and Assurance. The Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny committee has also agreed the taking of the decision is urgent and cannot be reasonably deferred.</p>
Decision	<p>The Director of Law and Assurance, with the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee, has used his delegated powers under Standing Order 5.23 to agree:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The conversion of The Forest School, Horsham to become a co-educational school with effect from September 2021 (2) The conversion of St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to become a co-educational school with effect from September 2021.
Interest and nature of interest declared	None
Reason for urgency	The decision is urgent due to recent communication from

	the Office of the Schools Adjudicator indicating a further decision to that already taken in July 2020 in relation to these proposals (Decision reference ES05(20/21)) is required to enable action by that office.
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Background Papers	See report for details