



**Service Director – Legal, Governance and  
Commissioning**

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## **Decision Summary**

**Committee:**

**Date:**

**Committee Clerk:**

**TEL:**

**CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL**

**WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST 2019**

**Penny Bunker**

**01484 221000**

### **Chair**

Councillor Andrew Marchington

### **Councillors Attended**

Councillor Aafaq Butt

Councillor Paul Davies

Councillor Amanda Pinnock

Councillor Paul White

### **Co-optees**

Linda Summers

### **Attendees**

Councillor Paola Antonia Davies

Councillor Viv Kendrick

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Bernard McGuin

Councillor Carole Pattison

John Chapman

Mel Meggs

Jo-Anne Sanders

Martin Wilby

### **Apologies**

Councillor Richard Smith, Toni Bromley (Co-Optee) and Dale O'Neill (Co-Optee)

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## **1 Membership of the Committee**

This is where Councillors who are attending as substitutes will say for whom they are attending.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Richard Smith, Dale O'Neill (Co-optee), Toni Bromley (Co-optee)

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## 2 Interests

The Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have disclosable pecuniary interests, which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items, or any other interests.

No interests were declared.

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## 3 Admission of the Public

Most debates take place in public. This only changes when there is a need to consider certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual. You will be told at this point whether there are any items on the Agenda which are to be discussed in private.

All items were considered in public session.

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## 4 Call-in of Cabinet Decision in relation to Almondbury Community School

The Panel will consider issues arising from a Call-in request in relation to the decision taken by Cabinet on the 16th July 2019, on the Almondbury Community School.

- (1) That the decision be freed for implementation, but that Cabinet must consider the following learning points:-

### **Capacity**

The Panel is satisfied that all relevant factors were taken into account including the Local Plan, however, this was not explained as clearly as it could have been in the Cabinet reports or the Consultation documentation.

Whilst the Panel is reassured that there is sufficient capacity in the system, they acknowledge that if Almondbury Community School closes there will be limited choice at local schools from September 2020. It is not clear about where pupils will be allocated places in September 2020.

### **Openness**

It appears that all relevant financial information has been taken into account, but the Panel felt that this could have been more clearly stated in the Cabinet report.

It appears that an assumption was made at the outset that the school was not viable and would fail a due diligence test for academisation. Whilst that might be right, the rationale for making that assumption was not fully explained in the Cabinet reports, for example, the fact of the school operating a £500k deficit budget only became apparent at the July Cabinet meeting. In future the Panel would like Cabinet to ensure that there is better explanation within reports.

**Lawfulness**

The Panel can understand why signatories to the call-in raised issues given the complex nature of the decision making process. The Panel accepts that the statutory notice was correctly published and acknowledges the legal advice given.

- (2) That regular updates on Almondbury Community School be considered by the Children's Scrutiny Panel.
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