

## APPENDIX 1

### **Extract of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes Relevant to the Children and Young People's Policy and Performance Board**

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2008**

##### **EXB2 DECISION ON THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO CLOSE FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL AND EXPAND WADE DEACON HIGH SCHOOL - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People summarising the responses to the Statutory Consultation on the closure of Fairfield High School and the expansion of Wade Deacon High School, outlining the background, statutory consultation undertaken, financial implications and the decision making process.

In addition, a further report was tabled at the meeting. It was reported that this report had been considered in detail by the Cross Party Members Advisory Working Group on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The report detailed the rationale for the proposal, identified who had been consulted, the response to the consultation and the issues raised, it provided a summary of previous consultations, transitional arrangements and the reasons, factors and criteria which needed consideration prior to a decision on the proposal.

It was reported that the Cross Party Members Advisory Group had been unanimous in their support for the closure of Fairfield High School due to declining pupil numbers and the expansion of Wade Deacon, which was a successful and popular school. The Group also supported the encouragement of both schools to collaborate quickly prior to the establishment of a hard federation.

The Board received a further update in respect of the overall position covering:

- the Academy proposal and the position regarding potential sites, sponsors and the size of the post 16 provision being 200 planned pupil places;
- the Grange, where the schools were currently consulting on the proposals to establish a hard federation;
- The Bankfield;
- The Heath;
- Chestnut Lodge and Ashley Schools; and
- meeting with Partnership for Schools in respect of the Council's projected pupil numbers – it was advised that the Partnership was in agreement with the Council's pupil numbers and the methodology used.

The Statutory Consultation that had been undertaken, outlined in Appendix A to the tabled report, was described in detail to the Board. In particular, the Board noted that only thirteen of the responses received had disagreed with the proposal to close Fairfield High School.

Appendix C within this document outlined a summary of objections. Appendix D provided outlined the summary of responses to the proposal to expand Wade Deacon High School. Appendix E and F detailed all the key issues raised in writing by the respondents to the consultation. Members were provided with a summary of all the questions and detailed answers to each issue raised were considered by the Board. This information was included in the separate report Appendix B and included information on school size, pupil projections, class size, traffic and safety, use of site, extended and community use, choice, culture, shared sports, admissions, funding, governing body, improvements, site assessment and communication.

In particular, it was noted that the Department for Children, Skills and Families (DCSF) and OFSTED Inspections of schools did not support the assertion that larger schools meant lower standards of behaviour. It was reported that there were benefits to having larger schools in terms of enhanced facilities and funding and that a model of smaller units or “schools within school” so that, to pupils, the school did not look or feel large.

Members recalled that, in the second round of consultation, an alternative proposal had been submitted by Fairfield High School. The Executive Board had previously found that the alternative proposal was incomplete and flawed and lacked information crucial to its proper evaluation. The school had been advised of the information that was necessary for evaluation and discussions had been held with the school to clarify the information needed. However, no new information or other alternative options had been submitted.

It was confirmed that school travel plans would have to be developed for the new site and all efforts would be made in the interim period to minimise pupil movement. Congestion was a concern and the school and Local Authority would be encouraged to look at ways to manage this, for example by trialling different start and end times for pupils. Planning for vehicular access and quick routes in and out of school would be required in the site development under BSF.

The Board further noted that it had been suggested that the rationale to close Fairfield High School was in order that the Council could sell the land. The Board was advised that the closure was due to the declining pupil numbers. Members noted that the land would transfer to the Local Authority from September 2010 but would be managed on an interim basis by Wade Deacon. Consideration would be given to retaining some part of the land for future community use once it was no longer needed by Wade Deacon in 2013. An

undertaking had been made that if any of the land were sold, the proceeds would go to the BSF funding envelope for the good of the pupils of the Borough. In addition, through BSF, the Authority was looking to offer more extended provision and community access.

In terms of Fairfield's Performing Arts Specialism, it was advised that options were currently being discussed and explored with the SSAT part of DCSF regarding retaining this at Wade Deacon in the interim period, and the future options for an additional specialism for Wade Deacon if, after a re-inspection by Ofsted, it retained its high performance status.

In terms of disruption to pupils during future capital building work, which would need undertaking across the authority, the Council was confident that this could be kept to a minimum through robust project management and good communication as previously evidenced at St. Chad's Catholic High School. Furthermore, it was explained that, through the BSF programme, the Authority would be looking to enhance the sports facilities at Wade Deacon.

The Board then went through each of the factors/criteria for consideration in detail outlined at Appendix G, contained within Appendix A to the tabled report, outlining implications for both the closing school and the expanding school. In terms of federation, it was advised that this was for the two schools to agree. The Council had encouraged a Hard Federation but could not impose this. Additional support could be provided by the Authority for both schools if federation was supported.

Further information was also provided in terms of the Workforce Strategy, the Strategy for Change and the Gateway Review. It was advised that the Gateway Review Team had concluded that the current programme development was a healthy programme with some operational recommendations.

The Board commended the Strategic Director - Children and Young People, the Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources, and the BSF Programme Director, and all those who had been involved in this process to date.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

The reasons for the decision and the main factors/criteria considered to close Fairfield High School and expand Wade Deacon High school were:

- due to the continuing decline in pupil numbers. Insufficient pupil numbers were forecast in Widnes to ensure the continued financial and curriculum viability of Fairfield High School;
- expansion of Wade Deacon High School a successful and popular school;

and

- as further detailed in the Building Schools for the Future Report (Appendix A ) document Appendix G (15<sup>th</sup> May 2008).

#### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

In the first and second round of consultation a number of alternative options were proposed, each of these was assessed and evaluated in detail, in particular in relation to the government criteria.

#### Implementation Date

The decision to close Fairfield High school would take effect from 31st August 2010 and to expand Wade Deacon High school from 1st September 2010.

RESOLVED: That having regard to the statutory guidance and in pursuance of the powers set out in Part 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the related regulations, the following related proposals be approved:

- (1) with effect from 31st August 2010, Fairfield High School be discontinued;
- (2) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010, Wade Deacon High School be expanded by the admission number for that school being increased to 300 to give effect to the enlargement of the school;
- (3) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010, the Wade Deacon admission numbers for Years 8 to 11 be expanded to accommodate pupils transferring from Fairfield High School;
- (4) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 the Fairfield High School Site (detailed on Plan Ref. F1 attached to the report) be appropriated from the Children and Young People Directorate to Corporate to be managed as an integral part of the Council's corporate estate but that the Council permits the Fairfield School site to be managed on an interim and revocable basis as part of the Wade Deacon "campus" from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 to continue until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 or such later date as the Chief Executive may prescribe; and
- (5) the Chief Executive be authorised to take whatever actions are necessary to give effect to the above decisions.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008

### EXB10 - ADOPTION INSPECTION - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and young People on the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of Adoption Services.

In August 2006, CSCI carried out an inspection of Halton's Adoption Service. Prior to this it had been acknowledged that there were issues for the service to address and progress had already commenced on recruiting a suitable staff team, adding management capacity and developing practice.

Whilst this progress and the plans for the future were accepted as appropriate by the Inspectors, the outcome of the Inspection was that the service provided **Poor** outcomes.

As a result, the inspectors imposed 11 statutory requirements and made 31 recommendations. All statutory requirements were achieved within the timescales that were given and all the recommendations were worked on over the following months.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008, prior to the Joint Area Review, Inspectors returned to Halton for a Random Inspection of the Adoption Service. The outcome of the inspection was that the overall quality rating of the service was **Good**. The inspection report noted that the agency had made considerable efforts to address previous issues and "the work undertaken by the agency had resulted in an improved service being provided to adopters, children, their birth parents and family".

As a result of the inspection, there was 1 statutory requirement and 6 recommendations. The statutory requirement related to information held on the adoption service's personnel and this was now being addressed. It was asked that the Officers be thanked for all their hard work in this field. The recommendations would be addressed over coming months.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) the Ofsted Inspection report be endorsed.

## EXB11 PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which provided an outline of the draft Primary Strategy for Change that had been developed as part of the Primary Capital Programme.

The capital investment programme required approval by Council, however as the DCSF deadline required schools projects which would be undertaken within the first two years to be named by 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008 the Board was asked to approve the schools programme for the purposes of the DCSF submission. Full Council would then be asked to ratify the projects at their July meeting.

The aim of the Primary Capital Programme was to ensure primary schools play a lead role in the heart of their communities, through offering local services, providing a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment particularly in ICT, development of world class standards and promoting personalisation, flexibility, diversity and choice.

The Primary Strategy for Change for Halton had been developed following consultation with primary schools, Diocesan colleagues and a range of other partners. Three dedicated sessions on had been held with Primary Headteachers and an Extended Services Working Group had met to consider opportunities for local and extended services to be offered through primary schools. Chairs of Governors and Halton Association of Governors had been consulted along with colleagues from other Departments across the Council such as Environment and Health and Community.

A draft of the Primary Strategy for Change had been circulated to the headteachers of all nursery, infant, junior and primary schools including the primary special schools. It had also been sent out to all secondary headteachers and secondary special headteachers. Chairs of Primary Governors had been sent copies and the draft had also been placed on the pages of the Governors Website. Copies had also been sent to the Diocese of Shrewsbury, Diocese of Chester, Liverpool Diocese and Liverpool Archdiocese for final comments. The document had been placed on both the intranet and internet and sent to Departments across the Council for their information and comment. In addition, each member of the Alliance Board had been sent a draft copy. The draft Primary Strategy for Change had now been reviewed and revised in light of the comments received following the consultation. It had been re-issued and had the endorsement of each Diocesan Authority and the schools.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Primary Strategy for Change be approved;  
and
- (2) the building projects prioritised for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 be approved for the purpose of the submission to the DCSF and that Full Council be requested to ratify the projects at its next meeting in July 2008.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

### **EXB23 EDUCATION SKILLS BILL**

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People, which provided background information on the Education and Inspection Bill.

It was advised that the Education and Skills Bill was a landmark piece of legislation. For the first time in over thirty years, the Government was legislating to change the education leaving age and provide extended educational opportunity to all people until the age of 18. It was reported that the Bill contained measures to encourage more young people to participate in learning post-16 and to achieve higher levels of skill and qualification. The Government proposals go beyond the current aspiration so that by 2013, all 17 year olds and by 2015, all 18 year olds were participating in some form of education or training. It was advised that 16 year olds could go to work as long as education was available. It was noted this would change the environment for education in the future.

Members were advised that the Bill would legislate to raise the participation age, young people would have a duty to participate in education and training post 16 which they would be able to do in a number of ways, including:

- full-time education, for example, at school or college;
- work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship; and
- part-time education or training, if they were employed, self-employed or volunteering more than 20 hours a week.

It was reported that the Education and Skills Bill seeks to carry out the following:

- set out duties on employers to release young people for the equivalent of one day a week to undertake training elsewhere (where the employer did not provide their own training).
- introduce a duty on local authorities to ensure that young people participate and provide the support service currently known as Connexions;

- require local authorities to assess the education and training needs of young people aged 16-19 with special educational needs; and
- requires the Learning and Skills Council to secure the proper provision of courses for learners over the age of 19.

The Board discussed various issues such as how this would fit into the Building Schools for the Future, what methodology would be employed to encourage young people who refused to be educated, delivery of flexible curriculum for young people and the duty on young people and parents to assist their children to participate.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Executive is kept informed of any changes; and
- (2) a further report is submitted later in the year.

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

##### **EXB24 BSF STRATEGY FOR CHANGE (PART 1)**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing a summary of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Strategy for Change (Part 1), seeking approval for its submission to Partnership for Schools (PfS) by 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008.

It was noted that the Strategy for Change was divided into two parts with Part 1 outlining the vision for BSF in Halton. Part 2 was a more detailed document that described how the Authority, with its key stakeholders, intended to achieve its vision: Part 2 was to be completed and submitted by 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

The requirements for the Strategy for Change Part 1 document were outlined for Members' consideration and it was noted that, following work with secondary and secondary special headteachers, a draft document had been submitted to PfS prior to Wave entry on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008. This document had also been circulated to all key stakeholders as part of the consultation including Diocesan Authorities; Alliance Board Members; all schools; and the BSF Strategic Board.

As a result of the consultation, and following a further meeting with headteachers on 20<sup>th</sup> June and feedback from the PfS Adviser, the Strategy and chart had been further amended and an updated document was tabled for the



Board's consideration. It was noted that some further work on this document was needed, for example to reduce it to the required 12 pages in length. It was confirmed that the Council's partners had agreed to any minor changes required by either the Board or PfS.

The Board considered the need for the Chair of the Sports Partnership to be included in the PE, Sports and Culture Stakeholder Group. In addition, it was noted that a specialist workstream had been established to look at the ICT requirements as almost one fifth of the money received would be for technology: external consultants had been appointed to assist in this process.

Members thanked all those involved in the production of this excellent document.

**RESOLVED:** That the Strategic Director – Children and Young People be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Children and Young People, to make any necessary minor amendments following this meeting prior to the submission of the Strategy for Change Part 1.

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2008**

#### **EXB27 STATUTORY CONSULTATION - ST CHAD'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing a summary of the statutory proposal on the closure of St. Chad's Catholic High School and the establishment of a new joint faith Catholic and Church of England Voluntary Aided High School.

It was noted that during the consultation on future secondary provision in Halton, the joint proposal from the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Church of England Diocese of Chester to explore the development of a joint faith school offering both Catholic and Church of England provision at St. Chad's High was supported. Following consultation, a Joint Faith Working Party, led by the headteacher of St. Chad's Catholic High School with members from both faith communities, agreed that the current ethos of St. Chad's summed up in its Mission Statement would remain the mission and ethos as a joint faith school. The Working Party had also considered a number of other key issues including admission arrangements and funding issues.

As the joint faith school was to be a new school, an application had been made to the Secretary of State to seek permission to publish the proposal without holding a competition. On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2008, the Secretary of State exercised the powers conferred on him by Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and decided to grant consent to the publication of a proposal for a new 11-19 joint Catholic/Church of England Voluntary Aided Secondary School. Once

permission had been granted by the Secretary of State to consult, the statutory proposal was published by the Governing Body on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008.

The proposal was a joint agreement with the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Church of England Diocese of Chester to close St. Chad's High in order for a joint faith Catholic and Church of England (11-19) School to be established on the current site. St. Chad's Catholic High School would close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009 and the new joint faith school would be established on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009. All the pupils from St. Chad's would transfer to the new joint faith school from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009. The published admission number would increase to 190 from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 and, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, it would increase to 240 with 100 sixth form places.

Any representation to the published proposal had to be made in writing within six weeks of the publication and sent to Mr. M. Reaney, Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources). As the Local Authority was the Commissioner of School Places, all comments would then be submitted to the Executive Board in the form of a report, and a decision on whether to agree to the new joint faith school would be made by the Board in October prior to the deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Consultation meetings had been held with staff, parents and other stakeholders at St. Chad's Catholic High School on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and it was advised that the response had been positive. In particular, it was noted that, in light of the proposal, the number of preferences expressed for the school during the admission process commencing in Autumn 2007 for September 2008, admissions had risen, and there had been a significant number of appeals for the school. This showed the parental demand for a joint faith school. In addition, applications from St. Chad's Catholic Primary School had remained constant showing that parental demand from this area was unchanged.

**RESOLVED:** That a further report summarising the response to the consultation be submitted to the Executive Board in October 2008.

## **EXB28 SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People fulfilling the requirement of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to annually review the Council's Sustainable School Travel Policy.

It was advised that the Sustainable School Travel Policy 2008 drew together the four required elements of the Act; supported and clearly demonstrated links to the Children and Young People's Plan; and ensured that Halton fulfilled its statutory requirement. The Policy incorporated a number of transport related documents and had allowed for a review of the previous

Sustainable School Transport Policy and associated procedures. The Policy also recognised possible changes in transport demands placed upon the Local Authority and was aligned to the Council's School Admissions Policy.

In particular, it was noted that there was a requirement within the 2006 Act that children from defined low income families may be eligible for assistance with travel. This applied from September 2007 to primary aged pupils aged between 5 and 11 attending the nearest qualifying school more than two miles from their home. From September 2008, it would also apply for secondary aged pupils aged between 11 and 16 from low income families attending one of the three nearest qualifying schools which were between two and six miles from the child's home and/or to the nearest qualifying school preferred by reason of a person's religion or belief up to a maximum of 15 miles.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sustainable School Travel Policy 2008 be approved.