

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Wednesday, 12 December 2007 9.00 a.m.
Bridge Suite, Halton Stadium

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', is written over a faint rectangular stamp.

Chief Executive

ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

PART 1

Item	Page No
(A) SECONDARY SCHOOL RE-ORGANISATION - KEY DECISION	1 - 17

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

*Please contact Lynn Cairns on 0151 471 7529 or e-mail lynn.cairns@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 13 December 2007*

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 12th December 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director
Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Building Schools for the
Future - Statutory Notices

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the outcome of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Members Advisory Working Group of the 10th December 2007 and its recommendations to the Executive Board on the next stage of the BSF consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (i) The Building Schools for the Future proposals be agreed as set out below; as the basis for statutory consultation**
- (ii) Council be invited to support the Building Schools for the Future proposals as set out in the said report; and**
- (iii) Executive Board receive a report at its next meeting on any views expressed by Council in respect of the Building Schools for the Future proposals.**

Recommendation from Cross Party Members Advisory Group

Runcorn

1. The Grange Comprehensive

Recommendation for:-

A Change of the Lower Age Range Limit for Grange Comprehensive.

This would require a Statutory Notice issued in June 2008.

The four schools (The Grange Comprehensive; The Grange Junior; The Grange Infant; and The Grange Nursery) have proposed a new type of school known as an **all-through school**. The proposal is that an **all-through school** be established offering places for pupils aged 0-16 years old and seek trust status for the school. Further consultation with the four schools will take place in spring term 2008.

2. The Heath – A Specialist Technology College

Recommendation for:-

The Heath – A Specialist Technology College to expand to 1200 pupils using capital investment from BSF funding.

A Statutory Notice would not be required.

3. Halton High

Recommendation for:-

The closure of Halton High and develop a new Specialist Academy with provision for 11-19 year olds.

Further work to be carried out on securing a sponsor

Exploration of 3 site options for location.

To provide up to 1050 places for pupils age 11 – 16 plus 100 places for Post-16s.

A Statutory Notice would be required and issued in 2008 at a date to be agreed once a sponsor has been secured.

4. Cavendish Special School

No change to the designation of Cavendish agreed by the School Organisation Committee in April 2006.

5. St Chad's Catholic College

No recommendation

This is a proposal by the Diocese of Shrewsbury (Catholic) and Diocese of Chester (Church of England).

It is for information only.

The Diocesan authorities would be required to issue a Statutory Notice to close St Chad's Catholic College and establish a new shared faith school. The school would provide 1200 11-16 places plus sixth form provision. It would be located on the current site of St Chad's Catholic College.

A statutory notice will be required.

Widnes

6. The Bankfield and Chesnut Lodge

Recommendation for:-

The Bankfield to expand to 1050.

The rebuilding and co-location of Chesnut Lodge onto the Bankfield site through capital investment from BSF.

A Statutory Notice would not be required

7. Fairfield High

Recommendation to:-

Close Fairfield High. This would require a Statutory Notice.

The notice will be issued in January 2008 proposing the closure of Fairfield High School and listing Federation as a transitional safeguarding arrangement.

A hard federation will be encouraged and facilitated by the Local Authority with a view to it commencing as soon as is practicable.

A hard federation would need to be agreed by the two schools. It would have one governing body, a strong leadership team with an Executive Headteacher and associate Headteacher, a common set of goals and could continue to operate across split sites. Both schools would retain their separate identity, receive individual school budgets and Ofsted inspections and report separately on performance.

If a federation cannot be agreed alternative transitional safeguarding arrangement will need to be implemented.

The Statutory Notice will include information detailing that the last proposed admission to Fairfield will be September 2009. The school will close at the end of term in the Summer of 2010. All pupils in Fairfield High at the time of the closure will be transferred to an expanded Wade Deacon.

8. Wade Deacon

Recommendation for:-

The expansion of Wade Deacon High from 1125 to 1500 places for 11 -16 year olds funded through BSF capital investment.

A Statutory Notice would be required and this will be issued in February 2008.

The Notice will propose a planned admission number of 300 from September 2010.

From this date Wade Deacon will operate across two sites; the current site and Fairfield site until the building work on Wade Deacon is complete.

All Fairfield pupils at the time of the closure will become pupils attending at Wade Deacon.

9. Ashley School

Recommendation for:-

The co-location and rebuilding of Ashley School onto the Wade Deacon site.

A Statutory Notice would not be required.

Relocate and rebuild Ashley – 120 places for pupils with cognition and learning combined with emotional and social difficulties – aged 11 –16

10. Introducing Zoning Admission

Recommendation for-

The introduction of Zoning Admission Criteria in Widnes.

Consultation on the admission criteria will be undertaken as part of the annual consultation on Admission Arrangements.

Zoning is a widely recognised admission arrangement. A catchment zone serves a designated area in Widnes based upon historical and projected pupil data (allows variance) Ensures equal access for all children in Widnes and removing the need for pupils travelling East to West and vice versa to access secondary provision

11. Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College

No recommendation

It is for information only

This is a diocesan proposal, for information only, to reduce St Peter and Paul to 1350 places for 11-16 year olds in addition to its sixth form provision.

A Statutory Notice would not be required

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The revised proposal submitted by Fairfield High School received on 7th December does not appear to meet the current Government criteria. It lacks the following information which is considered critical to the proper evaluation of the proposal. The working Group identified the following information necessary for the evaluation:-

- Accurate pupil information
- Where pupils will come from
- Inter-relationship of 11 – 16 school and 16 – 19 Studio School
- Details of new governance model
- If other schools support the proposal
- Programme affordability – pressure on funding allocation if the model is to achieve transformational change and financial viability
- How this will help reduce surplus places
- No details of workforce remodelling

3.2 The proposal as submitted is incomplete and flawed.

3.3 A summary of the proposal has been shared with the Department for the Children, Schools and Families (Office of Commissioner) and in its current form they could not approve this as part of the 'Halton Strategy for Change.

3.4 This does not preclude Fairfield from making a further representation during the next Statutory consultation period.

3.5 The Building Schools for the Future Members Advisory Working Group meeting of the 10th December 2007 minutes are attached as the appendix to this report .

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The re-organisation of secondary provision will change the balance of the numbers, knowledge, skills and experience of the staff required in Halton Schools. A Workforce Strategy is therefore being developed in collaboration with the Trade Unions.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The re-organisation of secondary provision requires a comprehensive review of the transport and access across the borough to ensure there is safe, accessible and sustainable provision to all schools.

5.2 Building School for the Future will provide in the region of £100 million of capital investment in Halton Schools. Funding for the programme will be delivered as conventional capital grant and/or private finance initiative

(PFI) credits. There will be revenue costs for establishing a team and ongoing revenue consequences of PFI. Exact costs cannot be identified at this stage, however, there is provision within the programme to produce a detailed business case which demonstrates affordability.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

By undertaking a secondary school re-organisation and entering into the BSF Programme the authority aim to transform secondary provision for all children and young people and improve the facilities for the secondary workforce.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

Through access to an excellent secondary school for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In developing its secondary schools for the future the authority will demonstrate how it will enable schools to meet the school sport Public Service Agreement through its capital investment and achieve high nutritional standards and encourage healthy eating.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Schools for the future will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

6.5 Halton's Urban

Through the BSF Halton schools will become a major resource for communities they serve and will be designed to offer shared community facilities, linking to other wider regeneration projects as well as being the focus for the local delivery of children's services.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Secondary school re-organisation must be completed in order that the authority can enter Building Schools for the Future Programme. A full risk register is available for the BSF Programme.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposals for the re-organisation of Halton's secondary and

secondary special provision seek to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 Secondary provision must be re-organised prior to entry in to the BSF programme.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 The initial options along with the alternative options were all assessed and considered against the Government criteria.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The next phase of consultation will commence in January 2008

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
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Please refer to list in main BSF Executive Board report dated 12th December 2007

Name of Board:

Date of Meeting:

Report Title:

Author:

STANDARD SECTIONS – CHECKLIST		
All reports must be submitted together with the following checklist fully completed		
	Yes	No
<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>The financial, manpower and land (buying or selling) considerations should be clearly detailed including any corporate implications of following the recommended course of action.</p> <p>Social Inclusion Implications</p> <p>Any implications relating to social inclusion/anti poverty should be highlighted</p> <p>Sustainability Checklist</p> <p>Any implications that affect the sustainability themes of economy society and the community and the environment should be included,</p> <p>Best Value</p> <p>Any Best Value implications should be included.</p> <p>Legal Implications</p> <p>Any Legal implications should be included.</p> <p>Crime and Disorder Issues</p> <p>Any crime and disorder implications should be included.</p>		
<p><i>Please review these potential effects, within the context set out overleaf, to compose your summary assessment</i></p>		
<p>Summary assessment of Implications: <i>This wording will appear in the Board report.</i></p>		

**BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE
MEMBERS ADVISORY WORKING GROUP
10th December 2007**

Present: Cllr Tony McDermott
Cllr John Swain
Cllr Tom McInerney
Cllr Tim Sly
Cllr Linda Redhead for Cllr Chris Rowe
Cllr Eddie Jones
Cllr Rob Polhill
Cllr Mike Wharton
Cllr Margaret Radcliffe

Officers

Present: David Parr
Gerald Meehan
Dick Tregea
Daniel Hennessy
Ann McIntyre

Unable to attend: Cllr David Findon
Cllr Phil Drakeley

Item	Discussion	Action
1.0	Apologies for absence – there were no apologies	
2.0	Minutes of the last meeting – 9 th October 2007	
2.1	It was noted that John Swain had been present at the last meeting.	
2.2	It was noted that the PFI explanatory document was to follow via e-mail but it is to be presented at this meeting.	
2.3	The minutes were agreed.	
3.0	Consultation Summary	
3.1	The Consultation Summary was presented to the Group. The second phase of the pre-statutory consultation commenced on 2 nd November 2007 and closed on 7 th December 2007. The following main themes raised were highlighted:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closure of Fairfield • Location of Halton High (new Academy) • School size • Pupil Numbers • Funding • Workforce 	
3.2	Gerald Meehan shared some of the responses to BSF from pupils. It was agreed that it was exceedingly important to consider the views of young people and a request was made to share the pupil responses from the consultation.	
4.0	School Size	
4.0.1	Discussed school size in relation to performance of schools. It was agreed that it was the management/leadership of the school that had the greatest impact on the performance of the school and that this was not necessarily related to school size. There is no definitive position on school size and overall school effectiveness.	
4.1	Pupil numbers	
4.1.1	The data used to calculate the pupil numbers was presented. It was noted that the National Statistics data 2001 census and updated midyear estimate was the Governments starting point. The data shows 7,400 children in Halton at the midyear estimate, however, this figure is not broken down into Widnes and Runcorn. The data presented by Daniel Hennessy was discussed,	

	<p>including the live births data obtained from the PCT that has been used to calculate the projected pupil numbers for the future. An updated version of the National Statistics and projected surplus places for the next 10 years was circulated to the Group.</p>	
4.2	<u>Zoning</u>	
4.2.1	<p>It was noted that the Zoning line would be dealt with as a separate issue outside the BSF process in the annual Admissions process. This is agreed every year by the Executive Board. The process was outlined to the group and it was noted that a consultation process would take place with the schools and community before the positioning of the line was agreed.</p>	
4.2.2	<p>It was highlighted that a Trust school or Academy can make their own admission arrangements but they must also consult all bodies that this process would affect. The Local Authority could object to a process proposed by a Trust School or Academy that was not deemed as meeting the Admissions Code of Practice.</p>	
5.0	<u>Closure</u>	
5.1	<p>Ann McIntyre presented the information regarding the Fairfield school closure proposal. The group discussed the National census data and the school pupil figures for Fairfield. The figures show a decline in numbers over the last few years since 1999. Information on first preferences was discussed and compared with figures for Wade Deacon, Bankfield and Sts Peter and Paul.</p>	
5.2	<p>The financial viability of Fairfield was discussed. Fairfield has had financial difficulties over recent years due to declining pupil numbers. The LA has had to support the school and there has also had to be a reduction in staff.</p>	
5.3	<p>Based on the October 2007 data, if pupil numbers continue to fall as expected the school funding could reduce by £350,000 for 2008/2009. This figure could potentially increase year on year.</p>	
5.4	<p>Ann McIntyre explained the Dedicated School Grant and how this reduction in funding for Fairfield would effectively be shared by the other schools. It was noted that financial viability of schools is a key consideration by Government as part of its consideration of BSF.</p>	
5.5	<p>David Parr noted that it could be possible for the Council to fund this deficit, but a figure of £350,000 could require an</p>	

<p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p>	<p>extra 1% on the Council Tax.</p> <p>Concern was raised for the pupils remaining at Fairfield with the falling numbers and reducing budget. It was considered that, if agreed, the Hard Federation with Wade Deacon should start as early as possible to safeguard the educational provision for the remaining children.</p> <p>The Hard Federation was discussed and it was noted that the proposal would be to use both sites with the staff of both school working flexibly.</p>	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p><u>Workforce</u></p> <p>It was noted that 3 meetings of the BSF Joint Working Group had taken place to date with all Union representatives. The meetings had been very well attended. The Workforce Strategy process has been signed up to and a Communication Strategy developed.</p> <p>A notice board poster with all names of the members of the Workforce Group with contact details had been developed. Statements from each meeting of the Joint Working Group had been added to the poster and distributed to schools so that all staff are aware of the outcomes of the meetings and progress made.</p> <p>Personnel had offered one to one meetings with all affected staff. With regard to policy development, the policies for prioritisation had been agreed as Handling At Risk/Redeployment/Redundancy; and Recruitment/Vacancy process for New, Expanding, Federated or Amalgamated Schools.</p>	
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p><u>Alternative Proposals</u></p> <p>Gerald Meehan introduced the alternative proposal from Fairfield High School. The Fairfield High proposal is the only alternative proposal received. The Government BSF requirements were outlined. It was noted that the proposal had been submitted two days prior to the end of the second pre-statutory consultation process.</p> <p>It was proposed that the proposal for a 'small school by design' including aspects of a 'studio school' at Fairfield High be rejected as it stands and that the school be asked to reconsider all BSF and local requirements and, should Fairfield consider it appropriate, a revised version of the proposal to be presented during the statutory (3rd) stage of consultation.</p>	
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Daniel Hennessy outlined the statutory process.</p>	

<p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p>	<p>The Council has now completed the second round of pre-statutory consultation to get views of the community on the Council's proposal. The next stage would be a statutory notice stating the Council's intentions. There is either a 6 weeks or 4 weeks period (depending on the nature of the notice e.g. closure or expansion) allowing the community to respond formally to the statutory notice. The Council then has 8 weeks/2 months to make the decision based on the information received from that Consultation.</p> <p>It was noted that only one school organisation proposal can be put forward per school for consultation.</p> <p>It was agreed that the proposal for a Studio School within a small school by design at Fairfield High was incomplete and appeared flawed and, therefore, the Members Advisory Working Group had no option but to reject the proposal.</p> <p>The Leader rounded up the process and it was agreed that the group would make a recommendation to Executive Board that will also go to Full Council to submit a statutory notice to close Fairfield High School.</p> <p>It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Fairfield High proposers to communicate the decision that the proposal had been rejected in its present format and with a suggestion that they resubmit in the statutory 3rd stage of the consultation.</p>	<p>AMc</p>
<p>9.0</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p>	<p><u>Halton Academy</u></p> <p>There are 3 possible sites for the Academy; the current site, Halton Sports site and Wharford Farm</p> <p>It was noted that the site of the Academy does not need to be agreed at this time. Additionally a sponsor is still to be found who will need to be consulted upon this. Discussed possible arrangements with a Social Enterprise such as a University.</p> <p>Cllr John Swain reported that the Governors and staff at Halton High had chosen Wharford Farm as the preferred site for the Academy. Parents had been invited to a meeting regarding the proposals and although the turn out had not been as good as expected, those that did vote, voted in favour of Wharford Farm.</p> <p>The main issues being raised by parents, other than the site move were those of transport and the impact on the</p>	

	Leisure Centre if the school moves site. It was noted that there would be transport arrangements for pupils if the school moves site in the form of a clear transport strategy. The long term viability of the Leisure Centre was not considered an issue.	
9.5	The Group considered the map which showed the location and proximity of the 3 proposed sites.	
9.6	All children from Halton High and local area would be eligible to attend the Academy. The Council would have to agree the admission policy and would wish to ensure fair access to the re-located school (if this is agreed) for all current and future children from the current Halton High catchment area.	AMc
9.7	It was agreed that a Seminar would be arranged for all Members where the 3 sites could be considered and their pros and con discussed prior to the next meeting of this Working Group.	DT
9.8	Dick Tregaea to meet with colleagues from Daresbury Park in the near future and will convey the comments regarding the Wharford Farm site to the Group.	
10.0	<u>Members questions</u>	
10.1	A Digest of questions and answers arising from the recent communications on BSF was circulated with the papers and discussed. It was agreed that this would be circulated to all Members of the Council for background information.	AMc
11.0	<u>PFI Information</u>	
11.1	Background information on PFI was provided to the meeting.	
11.2	Discussed PFI and Prudential Borrowing. These funding scenario options were outlined by Ann McIntyre. Borrowing amounts were compared and the possible repayable costs by Halton Council.	
11.3	One of the benefits of PFI is that the financial risk in relation to the building is transferred to the provider. PFI requires a detailed funding agreement for the facilities costs. PFI requires the provider to return the building to the Council in the same state of repair following completion of the tender period.	
11.4	PFI Costs were discussed but it is considered too early to say what the financial commitment for the Council will be. The schools involved and the designs need to be agreed	

	<p>first. It was noted that, if necessary, the specification would be reduced to meet any funding gap, however, schools would still be built to the same high standard identified within the relevant Building Bulletin.</p>	
11.5	<p>It was noted that the financial risk would be transferred to the builder, however, the delivery risk of the service or school would remain with the Council.</p>	
11.6	<p>It was noted that a robust contract would be drawn up including collective targets and outputs that would be delivered.</p>	
11.7	<p>It was noted that most Authorities have a mixture of PFI and design and build with prudential borrowing.</p>	
11.8	<p>It was noted that approximately 66% of costs is covered by PFI credits.</p>	
11.9	<p>It was noted that the correct pupil number data is imperative at this stage. Incorrect figures could result in the Council having surplus places in the future in the new buildings.</p>	
12.0	<p><u>Draft Statutory Notices</u></p>	
12.1	<p>An illustrative example of a draft notice for closure and draft for expansion was included in the papers.</p>	
12.2	<p>It was agreed that the recommendation put forward to Executive Board would be that a Statutory Notice will be issued for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the closure of Fairfield High School; (ii) the expansion of Wade Deacon; (iii) to extend the age range at The Grange 	
12.3	<p>It was noted that a recommendation would also be included for the Executive Board to agree in principle to the arrangements for The Heath, The Bankfield, Ashley and Chesnut Lodge, although a Statutory Notice is not required for these schools.</p>	
12.4	<p>A further recommendation supporting the closure of Halton High and its replacement with an Academy School was also agreed.</p>	
12.5	<p>The proposals in respect of Sts Peter and Paul, St Chad's Catholic College and Cavendish were noted.</p>	

13.0	<u>Next Steps</u>	
13.1	There will be a meeting in January or February 2008 with the DCSF, Office of the Schools Commissioner, 4P's and the Council the entry requirements for BSF Wave 6. This will initiate the next detailed stage of the BSF process.	
13.2	The 'Strategy for Change Part One' will then be drafted providing the vision for transforming secondary provision in Halton. In April or May 2008 there will be a formal introduction into BSF Wave 6. The Strategy for Change will be expected in draft with the vision having been consulted upon. Over the next 5 – 6 months the Strategy for Change Part two will be developed showing how the Council and along with the Governors, staff and pupils will deliver the its vision through the BSF Programme. The Halton BSF Project Board will be set up in January 2008.	
13.3	It was agreed that the next meeting of this Group will take place in February 2008 and then again at the end of consultation in March 2008. It was agreed that the meetings would be held at 3.00 pm.	