

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 7 November 2013 2.00 p.m.
The Boardroom, Municipal Building

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

Item	Page No
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
3. RESOURCES PORTFOLIO	
(A) ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2012/13	3 - 17

*Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 511 8670 or
Angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 21 November 2013*

Item	Page No
4. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO	
(A) FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF SCI-TECH DARES BURY - KEY DECISION	18 - 22
5. CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO	
(A) FAIRFIELD JUNIOR AND FAIRFIELD INFANT SCHOOL - KEY DECISION	23 - 52
6. HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO	
(A) TACKLING SOCIAL ISOLATION PROJECT PILOT CONTRACT PROCUREMENT WAIVER	53 - 58
7. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO	
(A) CHANGE OF ALLOTMENT CHARGING METHOD	59 - 62

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.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	7 November 2013
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director - Policy and Resources
TITLE:	Annual Audit Letter 2012/13
PORTFOLIO:	Resources
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Annual Audit Letter 2012/13.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Annual Audit Letter 2012/13 be received.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Annual Audit Letter summarises the findings from the 2012/13 audit completed by Grant Thornton LLP, the Council's external auditors. It includes messages arising from the audit of the financial statements and the results of the work undertaken in assessing the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources.
- 3.2 A copy of the 2012/13 Annual Audit Letter is attached to the report. Mr Mike Thomas from Grant Thornton LLP will attend the Board to present the letter and take questions.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council is a publicly funded body and, as such, is required to receive and consider annual reports from externally appointed auditors. The external audit function makes an important contribution to the stewardship of resources and the corporate governance of public services.
- 4.2 The Annual Audit Letter provides an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2012/13 financial statements. It also provides an unqualified conclusion that the Council has adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

6.2 **Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The economic, efficient and effective use of the Council's resources is a major factor in delivering better and sustainable outcomes for local people and therefore contributes to all of the Council's priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Annual Audit Letter states that no significant weaknesses were identified in the Council's internal control arrangements. However, the key risks identified through the audit process are reflected in the recommendations for improvement made in the report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

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

9.1 There are none under the meaning of the Act.



DRAFT

This version of the report is a draft. Its contents and subject matter remain under review and its contents may change and be expanded as part of the finalisation of the report.

The Annual Audit Letter for Halton Borough Council

Year ended 31 March 2013

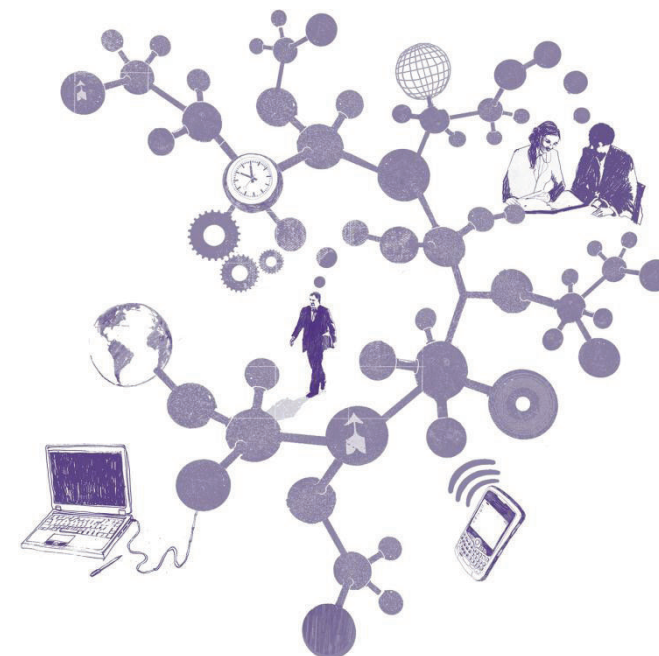
October 2013

Mike Thomas

Director

T 0161 214 6368

E mike.thomas@uk.gt.com



Contents

Section	Page
1. Executive summary	4
2. Audit of the accounts	8
3. Value for Money	10

Appendices

A Reports issued and fees

Section 1: Executive summary

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Value for Money

This Letter is intended to communicate key messages to the Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public. We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance in the Audit Findings Report on 18 September 2013

Executive summary

Purpose of this Letter

Our Annual Audit Letter ('Letter') summarises the key findings arising from the following work that we have carried out at Halton Borough Council ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2013:

- auditing the 2012/13 accounts and Whole of Government Accounts submission (Section two)
- assessing the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (Section three)

The Letter is intended to communicate key messages to the Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public. We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance in the Audit Findings Report on 18 September 2013.

Responsibilities of the external auditors and the Council

This Letter has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission (www.audit-commission.gov.uk).

The Council is responsible for preparing and publishing its accounts, accompanied by an Annual Governance Statement. It is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (Value for Money).

Our annual work programme, which includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work, has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan that we issued in April 2013 and was conducted in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

Audit conclusions

The audit conclusions which we have provided in relation to 2012/13 are as follows:

- an unqualified opinion on the accounts which give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2013 and its income and expenditure for the year
- an unqualified conclusion in respect of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources
- an unqualified opinion on the council's Whole of Government Accounts submission
- our work on the certification of claims and returns is in progress and detailed findings will be reported to those charged with governance once this is complete.

Key areas for Council attention

We summarise here the key messages arising from our audit for the Council to consider as well as highlighting key issues facing the Council in the future.

Financial statements

We provided an unqualified opinion on the financial statements on 27 September 2013. The accounts were prepared to a high standard, supported by clear and comprehensive working papers. We agreed a small number of adjustments to improve the presentation of the financial statements. Officers were available throughout our audit fieldwork to provide additional supporting information in a timely manner and to resolve our queries promptly.

The draft and audited financial statements record net expenditure of £142m. Our audit did not identify any adjustments affecting the Council's reported financial position.

Value for money conclusion

We issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 27 September 2013. Overall our work highlighted that the Council has good arrangements in place to secure financial resilience, and proper arrangements in place for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We reviewed whether the Council has prioritised its resources to take account of the tighter constraints it is required to operate within. We also completed a detailed risk assessment and carried out a high level review of your arrangements for managing the risks associated with the Mersey Gateway project.

The Council has addressed general fund budget gaps of over £26m in the past two years. Funding gaps in 11-12 and 12-13 have been successfully addressed through the delivery of significant financial savings, and despite financial pressures arising from service demand and pressures on income generation. Plans are in place to deliver further significant savings in 13-14.

The Council once again delivered a significant capital programme in 2012/13 totalling £57.817m, a large element of which relating to Mersey Gateway land acquisition and development costs. Planned capital programmes in 2013/14 and 2014/15 are £18.828m and £6.900m respectively.

The Council's MTFS covers a 3 year period, 2013/14 to 2015/16, and identifies a funding gap of £37m over the period. The MTFS is linked to the Council's five priorities and is updated annually as part of the budget setting cycle. It reflects the impact of changes to funding as a result of the Government's resource reviews such as the retention of business rates and localisation of council tax support.

Our review of your Mersey Gateway arrangements confirmed that the project continues to present a number of financial risks, challenges and opportunities. The Council recently selected a preferred bidder and anticipates the Mersey Gateway bridge being operational in 2017. Mersey Gateway is a major project for a unitary council, with significant financial risks and challenges associated with it. It therefore remains important for the Council to continue to monitor, manage and mitigate these risks throughout the lifetime of the project.

Future challenges

The financial challenge facing the Council from 2014/15 and beyond is significant, and decisions will become increasingly difficult in the context of the significant savings already delivered. The medium term financial strategy assumes further reductions in government funding of 10-15% over the next three years. The forecast budget gap over the three years from 14/15 to 16/17 is estimated at £37m. Having already delivered significant financial savings, the Council faces a significant challenge to address this budget gap and to meet its mandatory responsibilities.

Despite the financial challenges the Council continues to seek opportunities to progress and grow the local economy and continues to have some major successes. It is leading, in partnership, on a number of significant developments, most notably, the Mersey Gateway Development, the Science Park at Daresbury, 3MG Multi-Modal site and the Castlefields development. The Council is also a key player in the wider regional agenda.

Acknowledgements

This Letter has been agreed with the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources and will be presented to the Executive Board in November 2013 and the Business Efficiency Board on 20 November 2013.

We would like to record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us during our audit by the Council's staff.

Grant Thornton UK LLP
October 2013

Section 2: Audit of the accounts

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Value for Money

The accounts were prepared to a high standard, supported by clear and comprehensive working papers. We did not identify any adjustments affecting the Council's reported financial position, and issued an unqualified audit opinion on 27 September 2013

Audit of the accounts

Audit of the accounts

The key findings of our audit of the accounts are summarised below:

Preparation of the accounts

We received draft financial statements and accompanying working papers at the start of our audit, in advance of the national deadline. The accounts were prepared to a high standard, supported by clear and comprehensive working papers, and officers provided prompt and helpful responses to our requests for additional information.

Issues arising from the audit of the accounts

The draft financial statements recorded gross cost of services expenditure of £370 m, total net comprehensive expenditure of £142 m and net assets of £357m. We did not identify any adjustments affecting the Council's reported financial position. Officers made some minor adjustments to improve the presentation of the financial statements as a result of the audit.

Internal controls

Our work did not identify any control weaknesses that we needed to draw to the attention of management or those charged with governance. We made two recommendations to remedy minor IT control weaknesses.

Annual governance statement

Our review of the annual governance statement concluded that the statement is compliant with 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: a Framework' published by CIPFA/SOLACE in June 2007.

Conclusion

Prior to giving our opinion on the accounts, we are required to report significant matters arising from the audit to 'those charged with governance' (defined as the Business Efficiency Board). We presented our report to the Business Efficiency Board on 18 September 2013 and summarise only the key messages in this Letter.

We issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2012/13 accounts on 27 September 2013, meeting the deadline set by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Our opinion confirms that the accounts give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and of the income and expenditure recorded by the Council.

Section 3: Value for Money

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Value for Money

Value for Money

Scope of work

The Code describes the Council's responsibilities to put in place proper arrangements to:

- secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources
- ensure proper stewardship and governance
- review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required to give a VFM conclusion based on the following two criteria specified by the Audit Commission which support our reporting responsibilities under the Code:

- **The Council has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience.** The Council has robust systems and processes to manage effectively financial risks and opportunities, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.
- **The Council has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.** The Council is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.

Key findings

Securing financial resilience

We have undertaken a review which considered the Council's arrangements against the three expected characteristics of proper arrangements as defined by the Audit Commission:

- financial governance
- financial planning
- financial control.

Overall our work highlighted that the Council has good arrangements in place to secure financial resilience. Details are set out in the Financial Resilience Report presented to the Business Efficiency Board on 18 September 2013.

Challenging economy, efficiency and effectiveness

We have reviewed whether the Council has prioritised its resources to take account of the tighter constraints it is required to operate within and whether it has achieved cost reductions and improved productivity and efficiencies. The work included:

- Review of the 2013/14 budget setting process and updates to the MTFS
- Review of the Annual Governance Statement
- On-going review of major projects and developments in particular the Mersey Gateway development

Overall our work has confirmed that the Council has proper arrangements in place for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Overall VFM conclusion

On the basis of our work, and having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission, we are satisfied that in all significant respects the Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2013.

Appendices

Appendix A: Reports issued and fees

We confirm below the fee charged for the audit and provision of non-audit services.

Fees

	Per Audit plan £	Actual fees £
Council audit	£139,322	£139,322
Grant certification	£14,350	*£17,851
Total audit fees	£153,672	£157,173

Note:

Grant certification work is on-going and is estimated to be £17,851. This varies from our original estimate because we have audited two additional claims that were not audited in 2010/11. The final fee will be reported to the Audit Committee later in the year in our annual certification report.

Fees for other services

Service – Provided directly to Halton Borough Council	Fees
Review of Spare Parts Contract	£9, 200
Provision of VAT advice for various schemes	£33,000
	£42,200

Reports issued

Report	Date issued
Audit Plan	March 2013
Audit Findings Report	September 2013
VfM – Financial Resilience Report	September 2013
Annual Audit Letter	October 2013



© 2013 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

'Grant Thornton' means Grant Thornton UK LLP, a limited liability partnership.

Grant Thornton is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (Grant Thornton International). References to 'Grant Thornton' are to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms operate and refer to one or more member firms, as the context requires. Grant Thornton International and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered independently by member firms, which are not responsible for the services or activities of one another. Grant Thornton International does not provide services to clients.

grant-thornton.co.uk

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 7 November 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO: Leader
SUBJECT: Further Development of SciTech Daresbury
WARD(S) Daresbury

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Receive a presentation giving an update on the future development of Sci-Tech Daresbury
- provide an update on the proposed arrangements to fund the future development at Sci-Tech Daresbury
- to seek authority to enter into the proposed legal and funding agreements with the Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- 1) **the Board notes the proposals for the future development of Sci-Tech Daresbury;**
- 2) **Council (on 11th December 2013) be asked to approve inclusion of Project Tech Space in the Council's capital programme, to be funded as set out in the Threshold Report;**
- 3) **the Board gives the authority for the Council to enter into the legal and funding agreements with the JV Partners for the delivery of the projects; and**
- 4) **the Board agrees to the Council entering into the financial arrangements to deliver the projects.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 **Sci-Tech Enterprise Zone Daresbury**

Sci-Tech Daresbury is a key strategic site. It is an international hub for world class science. In August 2011, part of Sci-Tech Daresbury became an Enterprise Zone.

A Daresbury Joint Venture Partnership was set up in 2010 and is a 50:50 private:public partnership between Langtree, STFC (Science and Technology Facilities Council), and Halton Borough Council.

The aim of enterprise zones is to attract new businesses with simplified planning rules, super-fast broadband and reductions in business rates. Business rates growth within the zone is retained by Halton Borough Council for the 25 year life of the zone.

3.2 On 13th June 2013 and following the due diligence process, the Daresbury JV Partnership was informed that it had been successful in securing £7.36m of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) grant-aid.

The following 4 projects have now been agreed by the JV Board

- 1) **Project Tech Space** - the construction of high quality, flexible office space which will enable businesses to grow and expand, as well as specialised laboratory space to help businesses which rely on laboratory space to develop their respective products;
- 2) **Power (Phase1)** –Part of the RGF bid will be used to increase the power capacity needed to support future science and technology facilities planned for the campus.
- 3) **Connectivity/Environmental Improvements** this element of the grant will pay for the site clearance, and landscape improvements to bring together sites in a better managed way within a quality environment .
- 4) **Transport Improvements** - to provide better public transport provision to and from Daresbury including neighbouring residential areas, thereby improving access to job opportunities for all.

2 additional medium term priorities have also been identified by the JV Board and will now be subject to further investigation

- Improving Broadband Access to the site
- Creating a loop road within the SciTech development

3.3 The Threshold Report circulated separately to Executive Board members (under PART 2 as it contains COMMERCIALY CONFIDENTIAL information) provides the legal and financial arrangements to deliver at SciTech Daresbury :-

- The 4 Projects mentioned above
- £30million investment
- new business opportunities; and
- create 800+ new jobs

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Daresbury strategic site is included in the Council's Corporate Plan, the Halton Partnership and Halton Borough Council Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan, and supports the Council's Urban Renewal corporate priority. Grant funding is essential to facilitate the delivery of Daresbury.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Threshold Report identifies the financial implications for the JV and the Council in delivering the 4 Projects.

5.2 It is proposed that the Council will provide part of the funding for Project Tech Space, by undertaking £7.8m of prudential borrowing. In order to do this the Council will need to take ownership of the property once constructed and will then lease it back to the Joint Venture Partnership for a period of 25 years. All maintenance and associated costs will be the responsibility of the Joint Venture Partnership for the 25 year period.

5.3 Repayment of the Council's prudential borrowing will be made by the Joint Venture Partnership utilising their existing and future rental income. The repayment of such borrowing will also be underwritten by the Joint Venture Partners as outlined in paragraph 7.1 below.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

They are no implications associated with this report.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Overall the development of Sci-Tech Daresbury will assist in providing job opportunities for local people and will go some way in addressing the level of unemployment in Halton. The next phases of development are estimated to create up to 800+ new jobs.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The development at Daresbury will act as a catalyst to attract developers and new businesses to the area by creating an attractive, well-accessed and serviced area, which provides a safe and attractive environment for employees and visitors.

The Enterprise Zone aims to deliver 25% of the employment land for the borough. The programme will also provide improvements to the local area, and in particular key gateway sites alongside the A558 and A56.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Threshold Report identifies the risks to the JV and the Council in delivering the 4 Projects

It is, therefore, recommended that Halton Council enters into a clawback agreement with JV Partners to underwrite and share the risk in the event that the jobs or investments presented in this report do not materialise.

Members are advised that, on balance the benefits of the scheme, that is job creation and growing the borough's economy, outweigh the risks. The risks will be mitigated by sound project management and monitoring of expenditure. Equally, grant will only be drawn down as and when programme milestones have been met. Finally, the Council has a good track record of managing and delivering schemes of this scale and complexity.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no issues arising out of this report.

9.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 To provide the legal and financial arrangements to deliver at SciTech Daresbury :-

- The 4 Projects mentioned above
- £30million investment
- new business opportunities; and
- create 827+ new jobs

10.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 None

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

As set out in the timetable in the Threshold Report.

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

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from receiving the following document on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

- Threshold Report (Commercially Confidential)

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 7 November 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior School

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the responses received during the representation period to the statutory consultation to re-organise Fairfield Infant and Junior School.
- 1.2 The report also outlines the decision making process which needs to be followed.
- .

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Proposals having been published in pursuance of the powers set out in sections 19 (1) and 15 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and having had regard to the statutory guidance and to responses to consultation IT IS RECOMMENDED that the following related proposals be approved:-

- 1) With effect from 1st January 2014 the age of Fairfield Junior School be extended to 4 to 11 years;**
- 2) With effect from 31st December 2013 Fairfield Infant School be discontinued;**
- 3) The Published Admission number for the “All Through Primary” school will be 80 per year group; and**
- 4) All pupils in the Junior and Infant School would become part of the “All Through Primary” School on 1st January 2014.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the Executive Board meeting on 27th June 2013 it was agreed that a statutory consultation could be undertaken to change the age range of Fairfield Junior School to age 4 – 11 to become an “all through” primary school from 1st January 2014. The Published Admission Number would

remain the same at 80 per year group. Fairfield Infant School would then be discontinued from 31 December 2013. All the pupils in the Junior and Infant School would become part of the “all through” primary school.

- 3.2 The statutory proposal was published on 4th September 2013. Letters were sent to all parents, staff, governors, trade unions, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan authorities, health, schools and other local authorities. These letters contained a copy of the statutory proposals and included a feedback form and contact details for anyone to ring if they had any questions. They also provided the date, time and venue of consultation meetings.
- 3.3 In addition, a public meeting was advertised in the local press and posters were displayed at the school, Children’s Centres, Community Centres, Direct Links and the libraries. The consultation details were also included on the circular, which is distributed to all schools and Children’s Services settings. A copy of the statutory notice is attached at Appendix A for information.
- 3.4 A staff meeting was held on the consultation on 9th September 2013 and a meeting for governors was held on the same day. A public consultation meeting was held at Fairfield Junior School on 10th September 2013.
- 3.5 The statutory notice, proposal and feedback form were all placed on the website along with the minutes of the public meeting, a copy of the feedback form.
- 3.6 Those people wishing to respond to the consultation were advised to put their views in writing to Mark Reaney, Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services. They were also advised to note that the representation period was 6 weeks and the consultation would close on 16th October 2013.
- 3.7 At the close of consultation 54 responses had been received. Of this number two parents responded more than once to the application. This includes responses from both Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior School Councils. There were 5 (2 from the same parent) responses received which did not support the proposal. 49 responses were received in support of the proposal with 4 responses from the same parent. A summary of the responses received is attached at Appendix B.
- 3.8 The issues raised by those who did not support the proposal were as follows:

Governance – will there be a new governing body.

There is currently a combined governing body with representatives from both the infant and juniors governors. This group of governors is planning for the potential re-organisation. There will be a new governing body from 1st January 2014.

Leadership – Will the Headteacher post be advertised?

No. The current Headteacher will continue to undertake this role.

Staffing – Are the infant staff happy with the proposal

All staff were invited to attend the consultation meeting and were provided with a copy of the feedback form. No responses were received to the statutory consultation from staff indicating they did not support the proposal.

Closure – Why shut the infant school as the stronger of the two schools.

The staff and pupils and resources from the infant school will transfer to the proposed “all through primary”.

Resources – it was suggested that the two schools are only combining so that money, staff and resources can be reduced.

Although there are likely to be some efficiencies due to the proposed re-organisation the primary reasons for the change are as follows:-

- It will allow a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 (infants) to Key Stage 2 (Junior)
- It will provide greater opportunities for curriculum continuity and development;
- There will be greater opportunities for staff development;
- It will allow greater flexibility with a combined budget to deploy staff and the curriculum resources effectively;
- allows a whole school approach to assessment, record keeping and target setting;
- Allows a whole school approach to behaviour management;
- Provides continuity for pupils with Special Educational needs; and
- Will provide greater opportunities for staff recruitment.

Disruption - one parent thought the change may disrupt her daughters education.

There are no plans at this stage to change the current deployment of class teachers.

- 3.9 A key issue raised by a number of parents including those who supported the proposal was the concern that the **uniform** may be changed and that they would be expected to meet the costs of a new uniform for their child/children. If the proposal is agreed this is a matter that the new governing body would need to give their early consideration.
- 3.10 Children from both schools were consulted through the two School Councils. Both School Councils supported the proposal. Appendix C and D is a copy of the response received from each School Council.

4.0 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

4.1 The decision-maker (Executive Board) must decide the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period otherwise the decision must be referred to the Adjudicator for a decision. If referred to the Adjudicator the proposal and any representations must be forwarded to the school Adjudicator within one week of the end of the two month representation period along with any representations received and not withdrawn. Appendix E outlines the issues the decision maker needs to consider.

4.2 The decision-maker can decide to:

- Reject the proposals;
- Approve the proposals;
- Approve the proposals with a modification
- Approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition.

Conditional approval can only be granted in a limited number of circumstances related specifically to Academy provision or changes in admission arrangements relating to another school. A date by which the conditions should be met must be set.

4.3 The reason for the decision must be given whether it is approved or rejected should also include the factors and criteria for the decision. A copy of the decision must be sent to:

- Each objector;
- The Secretary of State;
- Local C of E Diocese
- The Bishop of the RC Diocese; and
- The Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The re-organisation of the Infant and Junior schools would result in a more efficient Primary setting.

5.2 A primary school would provide a more consistent provision and would be in line with other provision within the Borough.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The bringing together of Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior school would allow greater flexibility with a combined budget to deploy staff and curriculum resources effectively and enable more of the budget to be spend on front-line teaching and learning since overheads will only be a smaller proportion of the school budget.

6.2 School Forum approved the request that the “all through primary” school receive 85% of the lump sum for both schools. In addition, the Forum agreed a split site factor should the proposal be approved.

6.3 A Section 77 application has been submitted to the DFE if this is approved the Executive Board have agreed that part of the proceeds from this sale will be used to invest in improving the facilities on the Fairfield site.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

A primary school would provide a more consistent provision and would be in line with other provision within the Borough.

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

N/A.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

7.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

7.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

N/A

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The current Headteacher of Fairfield Junior School originally agreed to act as Executive Headteacher of the two schools until 31st August 2013. This arrangement has been extended for one term until 31st December 2013. It is therefore proposed that to ensure continuity approval the proposed new arrangements commence on 1st January 2014.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 Extending the age range of Fairfield Junior school will ensure an inclusive, coherent and consistent approach for the pupils. The needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs can be identified, tracked and supported pupils through Key Stage 1 to Year 6.

10.0 REASON FOR DECISION

10.1 The Headteacher of the Junior school has acted as Executive Headteacher of the Infants and Junior school since September 2013. During this time the

Infant school has been graded as Good by OFSTED. Combining both schools to an “all through” primary will allow a more coherent and consistent approach to provision at Fairfield Infants and Juniors and ensure that there is a smooth transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 No change to the current provision was considered. However this was rejected as it did not provide the same opportunities for curriculum continuity and development, flexibility for staffing and resources and allow seamless transition across the key stages.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 The implementation date is 1st January 2014.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Ann McIntyre Operational Director Childrens Organisation & Provision
Schedule 1 Consent Education Funding Agency (28th September 2012)	Floor 2 Rutland House Runcorn	
Executive Board Report Fairfield High Site 7th June 2012	As above	As above
Executive Board Report Fairfield Infant & Junior 27th June 2013	As above	As above

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

Extract of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):

Contact details

1. The name of the LA or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

The name of the Local Authority publishing the proposals is Halton Borough Council, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF.

The school to be discontinued is Fairfield Infant School, Peel House Lane, Widnes. WA8 6TH

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or, where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

It is planned that Fairfield Infant School will discontinue on 31st December 2013. This proposal is linked to Fairfield Junior School which will expand from its current age range of 7 to 11 to an age range of 4 through to 11 to become an 'all-through' primary school.

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

The pre-statutory consultation commenced on 17th April 2013 and was for 6 weeks until 29th May 2013.

The outcome of the consultation was considered by the Executive Board of the Council on the 27th June 2013, and permission was given to proceed to a statutory consultation.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including:

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

a) The following people were consulted:

Fairfield Infant and Junior School staff, Governors, parents and carers, pupils, Trade Unions, Neighbouring Authorities, Diocesan Authorities, the Children's Trust and the general public.

b) Minutes are available for the following meetings:

Staff meeting 17th April 2013 15.15

Junior School Governor Meeting 17th April 2013 16.30
Infant School Governor Meeting 17th April 2013 18.00
Public meeting 24th April 2013 18.00
c) Feedback forms were provided for consultee's to comment and a summary of the responses were outlined in the Executive Board paper dated 27th June 2013.

d) All consultation documents were provided either by e-mail, in paper format and also on the Halton Borough Council website. The information was also placed on public notices in key information points such as Children Centres, Direct Links, Libraries and Community Centres.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

The main objective is to amalgamate Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior School to create an 'all through' Primary School with one Headteacher and one Governing Body

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Creating a primary school by amalgamating the Infant and Junior schools will benefit children by enhancing the provision in the area. A primary school will have the following advantages:

- it will allow a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 (Infants) to Key Stage 2 (Juniors);
- it will provide greater opportunities for curriculum continuity and development;
- there will be greater opportunities for staff development;
- it will allow greater flexibility with a combined budget to deploy staff and curriculum resources effectively; and
- it will provide greater opportunities for staff recruitment.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

N/A

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

All Infant pupils will transfer across to Fairfield Junior School which will expand to become Fairfield Primary School, operating on a split site. No pupils will be displaced.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

N/A the school does not have a religious character

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

There were 234 pupils when the May 2013 School Census was conducted, of these 37 were SEN Pupils (School Action, School Action Plus or Statemented).

The school is a mixed sex school.

The age range is 4 years to 6 years.

It is not a boarding school, all pupils are day pupils

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

All Infant pupils will transfer across to Fairfield Junior School which will expand to become Fairfield Primary School, operating on a split site.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

N/A as the schools will continue on a split site.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

To minimise the impact on the pupils, staff and community both schools have agreed for a joint committee to be set up to ensure both Governing Bodies are fully involved in the amalgamation. Governors of both schools will therefore be represented on the governing body of the amalgamation if this is approved.

Split site funding will be applied for through School Forum.
There is a proposal to invest in the new school's facilities if approval is given to dispose of the Peelhouse Lane Playing Fields.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

Provision will continue to be available.

Travel

15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

N/A as infant pupils will continue to attend the same site.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

N/A as pupils will continue to attend the same site.

Related Proposals

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

This proposal forms part of a link proposal.

Part 1 addresses the change of age range for Fairfield Junior School from its current age range of 7 to 11 to an age range of 4 through to 11 to become an 'all through' Primary School.

Part 2 addresses the discontinuance of Fairfield Infant School, where all pupils attending the infant school in reception class to year 2 at the time of its closure, will transfer on to the roll of the 'all-through' Primary School.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
 - b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
 - c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase;
- and
- d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4)

N/A

--

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

N/A

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

N/A

PROPOSALS FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS OTHER THAN FOUNDATION PROPOSALS: Information to be included in a complete proposal

Extract of Part 1 of Schedule 3 and Part 1 of Schedule 5 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):

In respect of a Governing Body Proposal: School and governing body's details

1. The name, address and category of the school for which the governing body are publishing the proposals.

--

In respect of an LEA Proposal: School and local education authority details

1. The name, address and category of the school .

The Local Education Authority publishing the proposal is Halton Borough Council, Kingway, Widnes, WA8 7QF.

The category of school is a Community School.

The school is Fairfield Junior School, Peel House Lane, Widnes, WA8 6TH.

Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

2. The date on which the proposals are planned to be implemented, and if they are to be implemented in stages, a description of what is planned for each stage, and the number of stages intended and the dates of each stage.

It is proposed that from 1st January 2014 Fairfield Junior School be expanded from its current age range of 7 to 11 to an age range of 4 through to 11 to become an 'all-through' primary school.

This proposal is linked to the proposal to discontinue Fairfield Infant School on 31st December 2013. All pupils from Fairfield Infant School will transfer to Fairfield Junior School from 1st January 2014.

Objections and comments

3. A statement explaining the procedure for making representations, including —
- (a) the date prescribed in accordance with paragraph 29 of Schedule 3 (GB proposals)/Schedule 5 (LA proposals) of The School Organisation (Prescribed

- Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), by which objections or comments should be sent to the local education authority; and
- (b) the address of the authority to which objections or comments should be sent.

Part (a)

The publication date of the statutory notice is 04th September 2013. The six weeks representation period will be complete by 16th October 2013.

Part (b)

All comments must be put in writing to Mr M Reaney, Operational Director (Legal and Democratic Services), Halton Borough Council, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF.

Alteration description

4. A description of the proposed alteration and in the case of special school proposals, a description of the current special needs provision.

It is proposed to change the age range of Fairfield Junior School, from its current age range of 7 to 11 to an age range of 4 through to 11 to become an 'all-through' primary school.

School capacity

- 5.—(1) Where the alteration is an alteration falling within any of paragraphs 1 to 4, 8, 9 and 12-14 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals)/paragraphs 1-4, 7, 8, 18, 19 and 21 of Schedule 4 (LA proposals) to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), the proposals must also include —

- (a) details of the current capacity of the school and, where the proposals will alter the capacity of the school, the proposed capacity of the school after the alteration;

The current number of pupils registered at the school is 279 (May 2013 School Census). The current admission number for the school is 80 into year 3 giving an overall capacity of 320 (year 3 – year 6).

The proposed admission number will remain at 80 and the total capacity will be 560 (Reception – year 6).

All pupils on roll of the Junior School on 31st December 2013 will transfer to the roll of the new 'all-through' primary school from the 1st January 2014.

All pupils attending the infant school on 31st December 2013, will transfer on to the roll of the 'all-through' primary school from the 1st January 2014.

- (b) details of the current number of pupils admitted to the school in each relevant age group, and where this number is to change, the proposed number of pupils to be

admitted in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals will have been implemented;

Based on the May 2013 School Census, the pupil numbers at Fairfield Junior were as follows:

Year 3 72
Year 4 64
Year 5 75
Year 6 68

In January 2014, the predicted pupil numbers will be

Reception Class 69
Year 1 83
Year 2 72
Year 3 79
Year 4 72
Year 5 64
Year 6 75

- (c) where it is intended that proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in the first school year in which each stage will have been implemented;

N/A

- (d) where the number of pupils in any relevant age group is lower than the indicated admission number for that relevant age group a statement to this effect and details of the indicated admission number in question.

N/A

(2) Where the alteration is an alteration falling within any of paragraphs 1, 2, 9, 12 and 13 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals) /paragraphs 1, 2, 8, 18 and 19 of Schedule 4 (LA proposals) to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), a statement of the number of pupils at the school at the time of the publication of the proposals.

At the time of the publication of the proposal, using the May Census figures it is anticipated there would be 290 pupils at the school, as the year 6 pupils will have left and the year 2 pupils in the infants will have move to year 3 in the juniors.

Implementation

6. Where the proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary controlled school a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local education authority or by the governing body, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body.

N/A

Additional Site

7.—(1) A statement as to whether any new or additional site will be required if proposals are implemented and if so the location of the site if the school is to occupy a split site.

The infant and junior pupils will continue to be taught within their existing buildings.

(2) Where proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary school a statement as to who will provide any additional site required, together with details of the tenure (freehold or leasehold) on which the site of the school will be held, and if the site is to be held on a lease, details of the proposed lease.

N/A

Changes in boarding arrangements

8.—(1) Where the proposals are for the introduction or removal of boarding provision, or the alteration of existing boarding provision such as is mentioned in paragraph 8 or 21 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals)/7 or 14 of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) —

(a) the number of pupils for whom it is intended that boarding provision will be made if the proposals are approved;

N/A

(b) the arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children at the school;

N/A

(c) the current number of pupils for whom boarding provision can be made and a description of the boarding provision; and

N/A

- (d) except where the proposals are to introduce boarding provision, a description of the existing boarding provision.

N/A

(2) Where the proposals are for the removal of boarding provisions or an alteration to reduce boarding provision such as is mentioned in paragraph 8 or 21 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals)/7 or 14 of Schedule 4 (LA proposals) to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) —

- (a) the number of pupils for whom boarding provision will be removed if the proposals are approved; and

N/A

- (b) a statement as to the use to which the former boarding accommodation will be put if the proposals are approved.

N/A

Transfer to new site

9. Where the proposals are to transfer a school to a new site the following information—

- (a) the location of the proposed site (including details of whether the school is to occupy a single or split site), and including where appropriate the postal address;

N/A

- (b) the distance between the proposed and current site;

N/A

- (c) the reason for the choice of proposed site;

N/A

(d) the accessibility of the proposed site or sites;

N/A

(e) the proposed arrangements for transport of pupils to the school on its new site; and

N/A

(f) a statement about other sustainable transport alternatives where pupils are not using transport provided, and how car use in the school area will be discouraged.

N/A

Objectives

10. The objectives of the proposals.

The main objective is to amalgamate Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior School by extending the Junior school age range, to create an 'all through' Primary School with one Headteacher and one Governing Body

Consultation

11. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- (a) a list of persons who were consulted;
- (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- (c) the views of the persons consulted;
- (d) a statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with; and
- (e) copies of all consultation documents and a statement on how these documents were made available.

a) The following people were consulted:

Fairfield Infant and Junior School staff, Governors, parents and carers, pupils, Trade Unions, Neighbouring Authorities, Diocesan Authorities, the Children's Trust and the general public.

b) Minutes are available for the following meetings:

Staff meeting 17th April 2013 15.15

Junior School Governor Meeting 17th April 2013 16.30

Infant School Governor Meeting 17th April 2013 18.00

Public meeting 24th April 2013 18.00

c) Feedback forms were provided for consultee's to comment and a summary of the responses were outlined in the Executive Board paper dated 27th June 2013.

d) All statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals have been complied with. The pre-statutory consultation commenced on 17th April 2013 and was for 6 weeks until 29th May 2013.

e) All consultation documents were provided either by e-mail, in paper format and also on the Halton Borough Council website. The information was also placed on public notices in key information points such as Children Centres, Direct Links, Libraries and Community Centres.

Project costs

12. A statement of the estimated total capital cost of the proposals and the breakdown of the costs that are to be met by the governing body, the local education authority, and any other party.

N/A

13. A copy of confirmation from the Secretary of State, local education authority and the Learning and Skills Council for England (as the case may be) that funds will be made available (including costs to cover any necessary site purchase).

N/A

Age range

14. Where the proposals relate to a change in age range, the current age range for the school.

The current age range is 7 years old – 11 years old. The proposed age range will be 4 years old – 11 years old.

Early years provision

15. Where the proposals are to alter the lower age limit of a mainstream school so that it provides for pupils aged between 2 and 5—

- (a) details of the early years provision, including the number of full-time and part-time pupils, the number and length of sessions in each week, and the services for disabled children that will be offered;

N/A

- (b) how the school will integrate the early years provision with childcare services and how the proposals are consistent with the integration of early years provision for childcare;

N/A

- (c) evidence of parental demand for additional provision of early years provision;

N/A

- (d) assessment of capacity, quality and sustainability of provision in schools and in establishments other than schools who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within 3 miles of the school; and

N/A

- (e) reasons why such schools and establishments who have spare capacity cannot make provision for any forecast increase in the number of such provision.

N/A

Changes to sixth form provision

16. (a) Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school provides sixth form education or additional sixth form education, a statement of how the proposals will—

- (i) improve the educational or training achievements;
- (ii) increase participation in education or training; and
- (iii) expand the range of educational or training opportunities for 16-19 year olds in the area;

N/A

(b) A statement as to how the new places will fit within the 16-19 organisation in an area;

N/A

(c) Evidence —

(i) of the local collaboration in drawing up the proposals; and

(ii) that the proposals are likely to lead to higher standards and better progression at the school;

N/A

(d) The proposed number of sixth form places to be provided.

N/A

17. Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school ceases to provide sixth form education, a statement of the effect on the supply of 16-19 places in the area.

N/A

Special educational needs

18. Where the proposals are to establish or change provision for special educational needs—

(a) a description of the proposed types of learning difficulties in respect of which education will be provided and, where provision for special educational needs already exists, the current type of provision;

N/A

(b) any additional specialist features will be provided;

N/A

(c) the proposed numbers of pupils for which the provision is to be made;

N/A

(d) details of how the provision will be funded;

N/A

(e) a statement as to whether the education will be provided for children with special educational needs who are not registered pupils at the school to which the proposals relate;

N/A

(f) a statement as to whether the expenses of the provision will be met from the school's delegated budget;

N/A

(g) the location of the provision if it is not to be established on the existing site of the school;

N/A

(h) where the provision will replace existing educational provision for children with special educational needs, a statement as to how the local education authority believes that the new provision is likely to lead to improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision for such children; and

N/A

(i) the number of places reserved for children with special educational needs, and where this number is to change, the proposed number of such places.

N/A

--

19. Where the proposals are to discontinue provision for special educational needs—

(a) details of alternative provision for pupils for whom the provision is currently made;

N/A

(b) details of the number of pupils for whom provision is made that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs during each of the 4 school years preceding the current school year;

N/A

(c) details of provision made outside the area of the local education authority for pupils whose needs will not be able to be met in the area of the authority as a result of the discontinuance of the provision; and

N/A

(d) a statement as to how the proposer believes that the proposals are likely to lead to improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision for such children.

N/A

20. Where the proposals will lead to alternative provision for children with special educational needs, as a result of the establishment, alteration or discontinuance of existing provision, the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of—

- (a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment with reference to the local education authority's Accessibility Strategy;
- (b) improved access to specialist staff, both educational and other professionals, including any external support and outreach services;
- (c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
- (d) improved supply of suitable places.

N/A

Sex of pupils

21. Where the proposals are to make an alteration to provide that a school which was an establishment which admitted pupils of one sex only becomes an establishment which admits pupils of both sexes—

- (a) details of the likely effect which the alteration will have on the balance of the provision of single sex-education in the area;

N/A

- (b) evidence of local demand for single-sex education; and

N/A

- (c) details of any transitional period which the body making the proposals wishes specified in a transitional exemption order (within the meaning of section 27 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975).

N/A

22. Where the proposals are to make an alteration to a school to provide that a school which was an establishment which admitted pupils of both sexes becomes an establishment which admits pupils of one sex only—

- (a) details of the likely effect which the alteration will have on the balance of the provision of single-sex education in the area; and

N/A

- (b) evidence of local demand for single-sex education.

N/A

Extended services

23. If the proposed alterations affect the provision of the school's extended services, details of the current extended services the school is offering and details of any proposed change as a result of the alterations.

Provision will continue to be available.

--

Need or demand for additional places

24. If the proposals involve adding places—

- (a) a statement and supporting evidence of the need or demand for the particular places in the area;

N/A

- (b) where the school has a religious character, a statement and supporting evidence of the demand in the area for education in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination;

N/A

- (c) where the school adheres to a particular philosophy, evidence of the demand for education in accordance with the philosophy in question and any associated change to the admission arrangements for the school.

N/A

25. If the proposals involve removing places—

- (a) a statement and supporting evidence of the reasons for the removal, including an assessment of the impact on parental choice; and

N/A

- (b) a statement on the local capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

N/A

Expansion of successful and popular schools

25A. (1) Proposals must include a statement of whether the proposer considers that the presumption for the expansion of successful and popular schools should apply, and where the governing body consider the presumption applies, evidence to support this.

(2) Sub-paragraph (1) applies to expansion proposals in respect of primary and secondary schools, (except for grammar schools), i.e. falling within:

(a) (for proposals published by the governing body) paragraph 1 of Part 1 to Schedule 2 or paragraph 12 of Part 2 to Schedule 2;

(b) (for proposals published by the LA) paragraph 1 of Part 1 to Schedule 4 or 18 of Part 4 to Schedule 4

of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

N/A

Appendix B - Fairfield Re-Organisation statutory feedback

Respondent	School/Other	YES	NO
Staff	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infants & Fairfield Juniors	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Unknown	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Guardian/Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Carer	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Unknown	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Governor	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Governor	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Staff	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Staff	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Unknown	Unknown	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Unknown	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Governor	Fairfield Infant & Junior School	Yes	
Staff	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infants & Junior School	Yes	
Unknown	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Infant School	Yes	
Governor	Fairfield Infant & Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School	Yes	
Parent	Fairfield Junior School		No
Parent	Fairfield Junior School		No
Parent	Fairfield Infants School		No
Unknown	Fairfield Junior School		No
Employee	Halton Borough Council	Yes	



Fairfield Infant School

Working together to achieve our best

Consultation with pupils representing the School Council regarding the proposed amalgamation of Fairfield Infant and Junior Schools

The children were asked what their thoughts were about the proposed amalgamation and they thought it would be a good idea because:

- We would see our sisters and brothers more
- We would make friends with older children
- If we didn't know a spelling the Year 6 children could help us
- If one of the older children get hurt, we could help them
- The older children can help if we don't have a friend to play with
- It would be good to share with the Juniors, like when they played the trumpets for us
- The Juniors can help us with computers
- We would have boy teachers in our school
- Open Book might come to the Juniors
- Teachers could help in each others' schools
- There would be more teachers to get more work done
- Teachers could help us make things because there would be more of them.



Learning for Life

Fairfield Junior School

Aspire, Believe, Succeed

Consultation with pupils on the School Council regarding the proposed amalgamation of Fairfield Infant and Junior Schools

The children were asked what their thoughts were about the proposed amalgamation and they thought it would be a good idea because:

- If we were one school we would still be able to see old friends in Year 1 and Reception
- The change in uniform would suit everyone and it would be the same
- Those who have younger brothers and sisters would see them more often
- There would be more space if we could use both buildings
- We could share our concerns with teachers from both schools
- We could show children around if they come up to the Junior School and they would know the building
- If younger children learn about a topic then the older children could help them with their learning
- If you had a favourite book in the Infants, you could read it again in the Junior School
- We could be mentors to the younger children

The children also thought that:

- We would need to get ready for the change and be prepared
- Children would need to have separate playtimes so that there was enough space.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Appendix E

FACTORS	STATUTORY PROPOSAL TO RE-ORGANISE FAIRFIELD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL AND EXTEND THE AGE RANGE
Complies with requirements	Published statutory notice in line with the advice and support from the DFE School Organisation Unit and Halton's Legal Services
Prior Consultation	Two rounds of consultation have been held. Copies of the proposal was sent to Schools, Diocesan Authorities, Health representatives, Neighbouring Authorities, parents, staff, trade unions, governors and the Children's Trust. The statutory proposal and date of the public meeting was published in the local paper and notices were provided for schools and other public buildings.
Related to other proposals	N/A
Ensures sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils – including future demand for places	There will be no displaced pupils as a result of this proposal. The age range of the junior school will be extended so that pupils aged 4 to 11 will be part of the "all through primary". All the infant and junior pupils will then be part of the "all through primary" school. The Published Admission number for the "all through primary" will remain at 80 per year group
Consider the travel and accessibility for all	There will be no travel implications as the two schools currently share one site. Opportunities will be explored to increase accessibility to the site and to provision in any future capital development.
Diversity	The re-organisation will improve continuity for pupils with special educational needs and allow a whole school approach to assessment, record keeping target setting.

Curriculum	The “all through primary” will offer a broad and balanced curriculum. It will allow the seamless transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. It will also allow greater opportunities for curriculum continuity and development. The greater flexibility it will offer should allow curriculum resources to be used more effectively.
Capital	The school will continue to operate on two sites initially. Any future capital funding will be invested to improve the provision of the “all through school”.
Views of interested parties	Extensive consultation has been undertaken and all stakeholders have been given the opportunity to respond during the first phase and second phase of the consultation.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	7 November 2013
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Communities
PORTFOLIO:	Health and Wellbeing
SUBJECT:	Tackling Social Isolation Project Pilot Contract Procurement Waiver
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval from Executive Board to issue a pilot contract to Visbuzz in relation to the Tackling Social Isolation Project from 1st September 2013 for one year which requires a waiver to Procurement Standing Orders.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board agree to waive Procurement Standing Order 4.1 in respect of the Visbuzz pilot contract, the value of the one-year contract being £25,000 (Appendix 1).**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Older People (65+) population within Halton is projected to grow by 33% from 18,600 in 2011 to 24,700 in 2021. Many issues exist and are faced by Older People in Halton that impact on social isolation/loneliness, including:-

- Ability to maintain good health;
- Levels of deprivation;
- Access to transport; and
- Loneliness.

3.2 The Government has put loneliness high on the agenda as it affects so many areas across the country. The Ageing Well Programme and the Campaign to End Loneliness are both government initiatives to drive this forward.

3.3 Halton has established a Tackling Social Isolation Project (a joint venture between Halton Borough Council and NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG)), to develop an overarching strategy to clearly define and develop services to tackle social isolation in older people in Halton. The strategy will aim to inform future commissioning decisions and will focus on a number of areas. One

aspect of the strategy is technological options to manage loneliness. Within HBC and the NHS HCCG a range of options are being considered, one of which is a small company (Visbuzz) who have developed the use of a tablet solution designed to use digital media as a positive communication tool. Appendix 1 of the report gives some detail about Visbuzz. Any further detail can be offered as required. Regular performance and data using (SWEMWB national accredited data collection for measuring well-being) This performance measure will guide this pilot in terms of live tweaks and adaptations to ensure the service reduces loneliness.

3.4 It is proposed that we pilot this option with 100 older people to test out the solutions offered. HBC's Principal Manager for Sure Start to Later Life and the Chief Executive Officer of Wellbeing Enterprises CIC have worked together with the Community Wardens Service to identify lonely people to take part in this pilot. The pilot will inform future strategy development.

3.5 It is proposed to use Visbuzz as:

- They have a proven track record providing bespoke technological equipment;
- The Royal College of Psychology has recommended Visbuzz as a specialist organisation in this domain; and
- There is support from the NHS HCCG in relation to evidence base who have recommended this company following a demonstration of the equipment.

3.6 The planned start date of the project is September 2013 running for one year. This is a joint project being fully funded by NHS HCCG, with resource support from HBC. The pilot will involve the 100 participants in testing out the solutions including:

- Virtual community group;
- Virtual healthcare group; and
- Family members.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Locally the Older People's Commissioning Strategy and the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy identify the need to support Older People to maintain their independence and a high quality of life.

4.2 Halton is currently in the process of developing a local Social Isolation working group; this group has also recently worked on an Expression of Interest for the Big Lottery, who have as one of their key priorities Fulfilling Lives: Tackling Social Isolation.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Whilst recognising that other organisations may be able to provide similar equipment, this is a bespoke loneliness technology that will be evaluated over a 12-month period to help ascertain the future requirements of the project in the long-term.

5.2 This project is being undertaken in a safe, controlled environment for a one-year period whilst a thorough evaluation takes place.

5.3 The total cost of this one-year contract with Visbuzz is £25,000 and is being funded 100% by NHS HCCG with resource support in the form of one member of staff from HBC.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Halton's health and wellbeing priorities enable local people to maintain good health and improve poor health so they can benefit from employment, learning and skills. The delivery of this project will help people learn new skills and remain independent in their own community for as long as possible.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and the planned Loneliness Strategy will both tackle the issue of loneliness. This can be a significant contributing factor to people accessing services earlier than they would do normally. This project is designed to utilise new technology to support people's health and wellbeing and to help them maintain their own independence.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 This is only a pilot project and is supported by robust research from the Royal College of Psychology. By taking this approach it minimises the risk to both Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and Halton Borough Council. The project will also be evaluated

throughout with a final recommendations report submitted at the end of the pilot.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Any Equality and Diversity issues will be addressed in the contract and terms and conditions of the pilot.

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

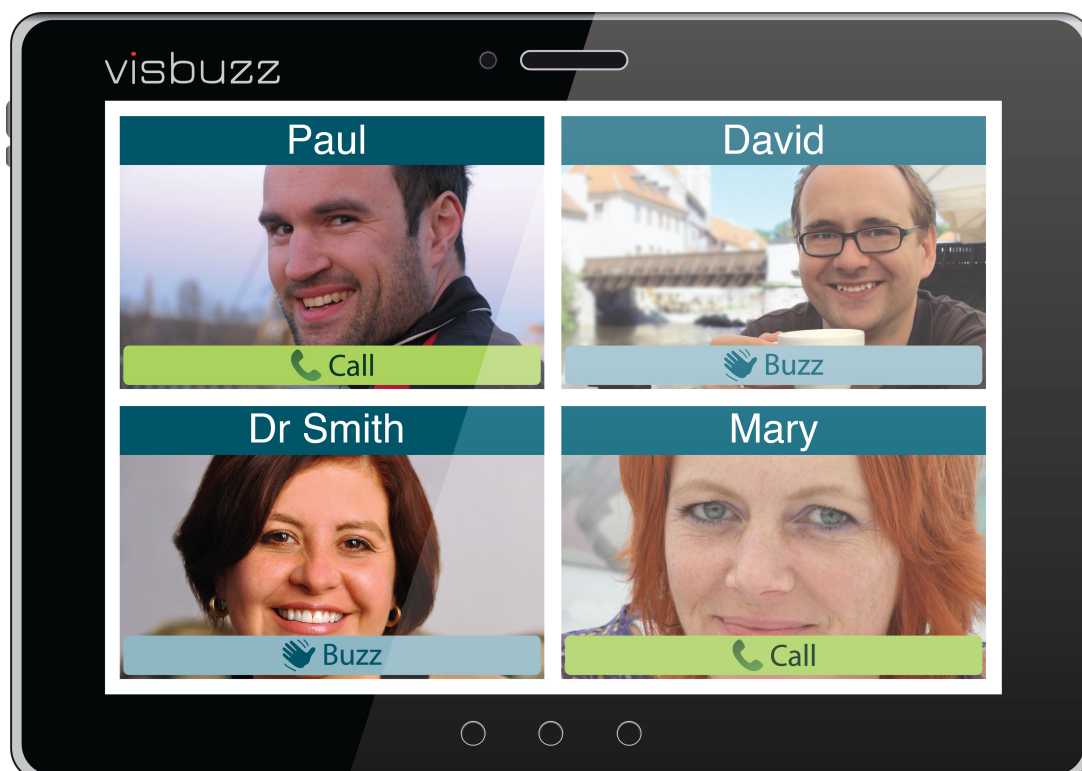
None under the meaning of the Act.

What is Visbuzz?

The Visbuzz vision is a world in which loneliness does not exist. Visbuzz are achieving this by connecting isolated people to those who matter most to them. They are starting with the elderly as Visbuzz was created by Steve McNulty, the founder, with his need to help his isolated Mum.

Visbuzz is a single-task mobile touchscreen that enables the elderly, isolated, socially and technologically unsure to be connected face-to-face to, and included in, the lives of those who matter most to them. Visbuzz have developed a modern and robust system to use the best technology so that users do not need to. It has been described as “my picture frame that talks to me”. They say it is easier than using their TV or telephone. It can be used anywhere, anytime by anyone.

The Primary User sees a screen that looks like a picture frame. To call someone she just has to touch the photo. If that person is not available the user can touch the ‘Buzz’ button. This sends an SMS to the person’s mobile phone indicating the user is trying to call them. Contact can then be established at an appropriate time.



This link leads to a 2-minute overview [video of Visbuzz](#) and this is a link to a homemade video of the creator's Mother-in-Law using Visbuzz for the first time. <http://youtu.be/mXEKyFqUXBY>

Visbuzz is delivered as software as a service served from the cloud. For our users it is a simple single screen that they can see either on our purpose built device or on one they source for themselves. They connect either via Wi-Fi or 4G mobile broadband.

There are different sizes of device dependent on whether the user is normally mobile or static.

The time and cost savings to families, communities, the NHS and social services from using Visbuzz far outweigh the moderate cost of installation.

Visbuzz is a young company run by seasoned entrepreneurs and managers with years of experience and expertise at the top levels in business. They are supported and guided by professional carers, doctors and health professionals.

Current projects underway and in operation are as follows:

- Isolated elderly inclusion project for medical practice in Devon
- Inclusion for mild dementia sufferers in London
- Sheltered housing project in Northern England
- Carer efficiency with increased patient wellbeing project for major UK healthcare staff provider.
- Remote inclusion project in the USA
- Increased communication effectiveness for remote triage service.

Plus the Visbuzz system is in use by private families in the UK.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 7 November 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities

PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Change of Allotment Charging Method

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to change the allotment pricing structure from a full plot/half plot cost to one utilising a rate/cost per square metre whilst at the same time maintaining the same level of income.
- 1.2 To gain approval to introduce an initial start-up fee to cover associated costs incurred during the start of a new allotment tenancy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board agrees

- 1) in the interest of fairness to all allotment holders, a new rate is introduced based upon a cost per square metre of 0.412p per annum so that the allotment holder pay only for the area of land they cultivate;**
- 2) that a one off `start-up' charge of £40 is applied to new tenants for administration purposes, which includes a refundable deposit of £20 for issued keys; and**
- 3) that water use conservation measures be taken at allotment sites in order to reduce costs.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The provision of allotments is a statutory function for the Council and up until the 2012 rent increase, the service was heavily subsidised.
- 3.2 Although the annual management costs fluctuate each year, the new charges introduced in 2012 reflect a reasonably balanced budget for the provision of allotments. The current charge for an allotment is £80 for a full plot and £40 for a half plot, however allotments in Halton all differ in size.

- 3.3 The National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardens recognise a full size plot to measure 250m² however, given that allotments in Halton differ in size, a half plot category was introduced based upon the current allotment legislation. The half plot measure was deemed to be 125m² or less. Any plot sized above 125m² would be classed as a full plot and charged at the higher rate.
- 3.4 Following the introduction of the new pricing structure, many allotment holders have complained about the half plot/full plot pricing structure which they consider to be unfair. The matter has been raised at the Allotment Representatives Meeting which is a local forum at which allotment holders views can be shared with officers. Officers have considered the complaints and as the mean average size of an allotment in Halton is 155m² there is some justification in the tenants' argument. Many allotment holders are paying an extra £40 for an extra 20m² of land.
- 3.5 Since January 2013 Open Space Services has issued 36 new allotment tenancies, which incur approximately 2½ hours of staff time in administration and site viewings for each tenancy.
- 3.6 The costs incurred at the start of a tenancy include; administration of the waiting list; the subsequent costs to administer allotment fees and the finance billing system; postage for sending offer letters, tenancy agreements and invoices; travel and staff costs incurred for site viewings and the supply of keys to the allotment holder (which remains the property of the Council).
- 3.7 The proposed fee will be a one off charge at the start of a new tenancy and does not affect any existing tenants.
- 3.8 The Council spends approximately £6,000.00 per year on water supplies at allotment sites and in 2014 we intend reviewing whether there are more efficient ways of providing water.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council would be moving from a half plot/full plot charging policy to a metre square charging policy for allotment plots. An initial 'start up' cost of £40.00 would also be a new charge.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Halton currently provide 306 full plots and 50 half plots and should full occupancy occur would provide an annual income of £26,480.
- 5.2 The total area of allotment land available for rent is 64,344m².
- 5.3 Under the proposed system, the Council would need to charge a

new rent of 0.412p per metre which would provide income of £26,509.73.

5.4 Based on the pence per metre rate, a standard allotment of 250m² would be charged at £103.00.

5.5 The Councils cheapest allotment would be £18.13.

5.6 The Councils most expensive allotment would be £174.69.

5.7 A total of 115 allotment tenants would be charged more than the £80 they currently pay now. 241 tenants would pay the same or less.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Allotments are a major contributor to health. The proposal will make the charges made for allotments more fair and equitable. Tenants would be paying for the actual size of allotment cultivated.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 As there are 115 tenants who would pay more under the proposal there could be complaints however the majority would not be affected and some would see a reduction in costs. The proposed system is more equitable and has been suggested by tenants through the Allotment Representatives Meeting which is attended by a council officer and which meets four times per year.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no equality or diversity issues.

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

None.