

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> March 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 The report summarises the current governance arrangements of Fairfield Infant and Junior Schools and seeks permission to start a consultation process to amalgamate the schools into a Primary.
- 1.2 This report outlines the timeline and actions required for such an amalgamation.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) **the commencement of consultations to amalgamate Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools be approved; and**
- 2) **the timescales and key dates for the consultation process be noted.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Reasons for the Amalgamation of the schools**

- 3.1.1 The Fairfield Infant School head teacher left the schools at the end of the 2012 school year. Since that point the Fairfield Junior School head teacher has performed an Executive Head role over the two schools. This is therefore an ideal time to consider changing the organisation of both schools.
- 3.1.2 Fairfield Infant and Junior Schools provide a good quality education. However, a primary school has the following advantages:
  - a single governing body and Headteacher would offer better continuity;
  - a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 (Infants) to Key Stage 2 (Juniors);
  - single policies for teaching and learning, behaviour and monitoring pupil progress which would enhance pupils' learning and development;

- builds upon best practice within both the Infant and Junior School, as part of a fresh start, and to continue improving standards of pupil achievement and attainment;
- allows parents to only apply once for the school (before Reception) without having to reapply at the end of Key Stage 1;
- the relationship between parents and the school can build over a longer period of time;
- staff will know children for a longer period of time thus allowing the school to better understand the needs of each pupil;
- greater opportunities for curriculum development, and staff recruitment and development;
- greater flexibility with a combined budget to deploy staff and curriculum resources effectively; and
- enables more of the budget to be spent upon front-line teaching and learning since overheads are a smaller proportion of the school budget.

### **3.2 Amalgamation Process**

3.2.1 It is proposed that the board consider whether Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior School should formally amalgamate to form a split site Fairfield Primary School.

3.2.2 The process would be:

- The Fairfield Junior School would expand on 1 January 2014 to include the Fairfield Infant, with all staff and pupils becoming part of the expanded school
- The Fairfield Infant School would close as a separate school on 31 December 2013 and become part of the amalgamated primary school
- All Fairfield Infant and Junior School pupils will then be on roll at the amalgamated primary school

### **3.3 Consultation Timeline**

3.3.1 If approved an indicative timeline for such a consultation is presented below.

28 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	Executive Board give approval to consult
17 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	6 week informal consultation commences. The consultation will include staff, governing body, parents, unions and other interested parties.
29 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	Consultation ends and a report will be prepared to summarise the comments

	received and this will be issued to the Executive Board for consideration.
27 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	Executive Board considers consultation response and determines whether statutory consultation can be undertaken
3rd July 2013	Statutory consultation commences. The consultation will again include staff, governing body, parents, unions and other interested parties.
14 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	Statutory consultation ends and a report will be prepared to summarise the comments received and this will be issued to the Executive Board for consideration.
5 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	Executive Board considers the response to the consultation and determines whether to support the proposal for amalgamation.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The amalgamation of the Infant and Junior schools would result in a more efficient Primary setting.
- 4.2 A primary school would provide a more consistent provision and would be in line with other provision within the borough.

#### **5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 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 enables more of the budget to be spent upon front-line teaching and learning since overheads are a smaller proportion of the school budget.
- 5.2 Funding requirements for potential works to bring together the two facilities will be considered at a future date.

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

##### **6.1 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.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

N/A.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

N/A

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

N/A

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no risks associated with the recommendations put forward by this paper. A risk analysis would be undertaken as part of the feasibility works.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects. The capacity of schools to meet the needs of children with more complex needs and disabilities will be developed further through building works at schools.

## **9.0 REASON FOR DECISION**

9.1 To allow the consultation process to commence to allow the schools to be amalgamated from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

## **10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 10.1 When two schools amalgamate there are 3 possible routes:
- close both schools and establish a new primary school
  - close Fairfield Infant School and expand Fairfield Junior School
  - close Fairfield Junior School and expand Fairfield Infant School
- 10.2 Option one was rejected as it would be too disruptive to the staff at both schools. Option 3 was rejected as there is currently a vacancy for the Headteacher position at the school.
- 10.3 The preferred option would be to close Fairfield Infant School and expanded Fairfield Junior School. The Headteacher of the Fairfield Junior School would then take the position of Headteacher of the Fairfield Primary school.

## **11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 The consultation would commence at the start of the summer term on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Ann McIntyre Operational Director Childrens Organisation &amp; Provision</b>
<b>Schedule 1 Consent Education Funding Agency (28<sup>th</sup> September 2012)</b>	<b>Floor 2 Rutland House Runcorn</b>	
	<b>As above</b>	<b>As above</b>
<b>Executive Board Report Fairfield High Site 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012</b>		