

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Outcome of the Consultation on extending the age range of Fairfield Junior School and closure of Fairfield Infant School.

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the outcome of the first phase of consultation on the re-organisation of Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior School. It identifies the key issues raised and seeks approval to commence statutory consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Executive Board:

- 1) **considers the response to the first phase of consultation; and**
- 2) **gives approval to proceed to statutory consultation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Following approval from Executive Board on 28th March 2013 consultation commenced on 17th April on the proposal to expand Fairfield Junior school from 1st January 2014 to include Fairfield Infant School, with staff and pupils becoming part of the expanded school. The Infant school would close as a separate school on 31st December 2013 with all Fairfield Infant school children becoming part of the roll of the amalgamated primary school.

3.2 Creating a primary school by amalgamating the Infant and Junior schools 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 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.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The first phase of the consultation included: School Staff, Governors, schools, parents and carers, pupils, trade unions, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan authorities and the Children's Trust.

4.2 Consultation meetings were held with staff and governors from both schools. The views of both School Councils were sought and are attached as Appendix A and B. A public meeting was held at the school on 24th April 2013. Details of the consultation proposal along with the feedback form were also placed on the website.

4.3 The first phase of the consultation closed on 29th May 2013. . Both governing bodies supported the proposal. However, to ensure the involvement of both governing bodies in the key decisions related to the amalgamation a further governing body of each school was held and a joint committee has been set up.

4.4 74 responses were received. 52 of the responses were in favour of the proposal. 2 respondents provided comments but did not indicate their position. Two anonymous responses were received. The remaining 18 respondents did not support the proposal. A summary of the responses received is attached in Appendix C.

4.5 Appendix D details the main issues raised in the consultation a summary of the key issues is included:

- Transition between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
- Concern about infant children mixing with older junior children;
- Different sets of procedures in place at both schools and opportunities for training;
- Concern about split site;
- Accessibility of the Headteacher;
- Size of the school;
- Staffing; and

- Finance

4.6 The timetable for consultation on the proposal is summarised below:

17th April 2013	29th May 2013	27th June 2012
Phase 1 of the informal consultation commenced for a 6 week period	Consultation closed	Executive Board Meeting
4th September 2013	16th October 2013	7th November 2013
Phase 2 – statutory consultation commences for a 6 week period	Consultation Closes	Executive Board Meeting

5.0 STATUTORY PROPOSAL

5.1 Executive Board is asked to consider the responses received to the consultation and give approval to the commencement of statutory consultation on 4th September 2013.

5.2 The statutory proposal will seek views on the following:

- 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 from 1st January 2014;
- The Published admission number remains at 80 per year group;
- Fairfield Infant School is discontinued from 31st December 2013; and
- All the pupils in the Junior and Infant school become part of the “all through” primary school.

5.3 A full copy of the statutory notice is attached in Appendix E.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A new budget will need to be calculated for the new “all through” primary school. Currently both schools receive a lump sum of £125,570. This would be reduced to one lump sum from January 2014. In addition, both schools receive minimum funding guarantee to cushion changes from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014. However, as the school will be a developing school as a result of an authority re-organisation, a case can be submitted to School Forum for contingency support to meet any additional costs. In addition, as the school

will be operating on two sites an additional lump sum can be paid to the school provided the School Forum agree to the definition and the funds requested.

7.0 Implications for the Council's Priorities

7.1 Children and young people

Combining the two schools will allow for a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

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 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

8.1 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.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 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.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 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.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The next phase of the consultation is scheduled to commence on 4th September 2013 for 6 weeks.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Executive Board report on Fairfield Infant and Juniors – 28th March 2013	Halton Borough Council Website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Rutland House, Runcorn
Phase 1 Consultation documents	HBC website	As above