

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 |