

REPORT: Executive Board
DATE: 1 November 2007
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young People
SUBJECT: Secondary School Re-organisation
WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to provide a summary of the detailed consultation process undertaken on the initial proposals for the re-organisation of secondary and secondary special provision. It provides a summary of the outcome of the first phase of consultation, identifies the key issues raised and how the local authority, through the next phase of school organisation proposals, is addressing these.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Executive Board

- (1) Approves the revised set of school organisation proposals contained at paragraph 3 as the basis for the next stage of consultation on secondary and special school reorganisation;**
- (2) Approves a further stage of pre-statutory consultation on the revised school organisation proposals; and**
- (3) Requests the outcome of the second phase of the consultation process be reported to the Executive Board for consideration; and after due consideration put recommendations for approval before Council on the 12th December 2007**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In June and July 2007 Halton Borough Council along with the Diocesan Authorities, carried out a detailed consultation exercise on proposals for the re-organisation of secondary and secondary special provision within the borough. (See Appendix A - for details of the initial proposals the Council consulted on)
- 3.2 The consultation included: Elected Members, School Staff, Governors, parents of senior and primary aged pupils, some young people through the Youth Forum, Trade Unions, Alliance Board, neighbouring authorities, Riverside College, NHS representatives, the Learning and Skills Council, MPs and Council staff.

- 3.3 As part of the consultation process 52 separate meetings were held. These meetings shared the Council vision for Building Schools for the Future (BSF); outlined the objectives of the proposals; the Government's requirements; and provided the opportunity for questions and concerns to be raised. Notes from each meeting were published on the Halton Borough Council website in the BSF area.
- 3.4 In total 18,881 consultation fact sheets were distributed which outlined the proposals. 37,762 letters were sent to parents of pupils at secondary, special and primary schools. Letters were also sent to each school inviting all staff to attend the consultation meetings along with school governors.
- 3.5 Press briefings on the proposals were held. A dedicated area on the Halton Borough Council website and telephone line was established. Feedback forms on the proposals were provided at each meeting, and an online version provided on the website.
- 3.6 The response to the consultation is summarised below:
- 1618 people attended the consultation meetings;
 - 187 feedback forms were completed
 - 17 objecting to the proposals
 - 37 supporting the proposals
 - 133 asking questions or making comments;
 - 28 letters of objection were received and 7 letters of support;
 - 483 objections were completed on a pre-printed pro-forma and 192 letters of support were received on a pre-printed pro-forma;
 - 2 petitions objecting to the proposals were received and 1 petition supporting the proposals;
 - 163 e-mails were received; and
- 3.7 Seven alternative proposals were received. (Please see Appendix B for further details). The main themes emerging from the consultation were:
- Transport;
 - Admission arrangements and zoning;
 - Pupil numbers;
 - Federation arrangements;
 - Transitional arrangements;
 - Workforce issues;
 - School size;
 - Co-located schools;
 - Private Finance Initiative (PFI);
 - Academy Provision;

- Trust arrangements; and
- Closure of Fairfield High and The Grange Comprehensive.

3.8 A Cross Party Members Advisory Working Group was established and

a) considered the key themes that emerged from the consultation and how these could be addressed; and

b) evaluated the initial proposals and the alternative proposals

3.9 In determining their recommendations for the next stage of the consultation process the Group was informed by:

- The Government requirements;
- Secondary Headteacher and Secondary Special Headteachers' views;
- The views of the Department of Children School and Families;
- The views of the Office of the School Commissioner; and
- A range of factual information, for example demographic change
- Information gathered from respondents to the consultation process

3.10 The Cross Party Member Advisory Working Group has recommended:-

- **revised proposals be considered; and**
- **a further pre-statutory stage of consultation be undertaken.**

This will commence on the 2 November and run to the 7 December 2007.

The full list of consultation events can be seen at Appendix C.

3.11 The recommendations of the Cross Party Members Advisory Working Group held on the 9 October 2007 can be summarised below. All proposals are for 11 – 16 provision:-

- **Increase the size of The Bankfield School to 1050 pupils.**
- **Co-locate and rebuild Chesnut Lodge on The Bankfield site.**
- **Re-model and expand Wade Deacon to 1500 pupils**
- **Relocate Ashley School to Wade Deacon site.**
- **Cease provision at Fairfield High School and close at a time to be determined**
- **Move to a zonal approach for admissions for Widnes community schools. (see Appendix D)**
- **As a transitional arrangement, encourage Wade Deacon and Fairfield High school to enter into a hard federation (for further details on a hard federation please see appendix E)**

- **Develop Halton High as new specialist Academy for 900 pupils (size to be confirmed by sponsor).**
- **Rebuild/remodel and expand The Heath A Specialist Technology College to 1200 pupils.**
- **Establish G4 – The Grange Comprehensive, Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools – as an all-through school 0 to 16, provide 750 secondary places. G4 to seek Trust status, remain within the G4 site, providing extended services, a link to City Learning Centre and to be aligned with the Primary Capital strategy.**
- **Maintaining Cavendish School with its current designation.**

(Please note that the size of Secondary voluntary aided schools are determined by the relevant Diocese Authorities).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The re-organisation of secondary provision requires a comprehensive review of the transport and access across the borough to ensure there is safe, accessible and sustainable provision to all schools.
- 5.2 Building School for the Future will provide in the region of £100 million of capital investment in Halton Schools. Funding for the programme will be delivered as conventional capital grant and/or private finance initiative (PFI) credits. There will be revenue costs for establishing a team and ongoing revenue consequences of PFI. Exact costs cannot be identified at this stage, however, there is provision within the programme to produce a detailed business case which demonstrates affordability.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

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

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

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

6.3 A Healthy Halton

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

6.4 A Safer Halton

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

6.5 Halton's Urban

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

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

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

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposals for the re-organisation of Halton's secondary and secondary special provision seek to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

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

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The next phase of consultation will commence on 2nd November 2007 and end on 7th December 2007.

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

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact
<u>Consultation Summary – Halton Building Schools for the Future – Inspiring Children</u>	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Consultation Meeting dates (Phase 1)	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Consultation Presentations	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Pupil Numbers	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Notes of Public Meetings	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Alternative Proposals	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board minutes of 17 th July 2007	Committee Services, Municipal Building, Widnes and website www.halton.gov.uk	L. Derbyshire, Committee Services