

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 3 December 2009

PRESENTED BY: Strategic Director – Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Consultation on the Closure of Halton High

WARDS: Wards in Runcorn

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the Local Authority proposal to close Halton High. This will allow an Academy to be opened on the same site.
- 1.2 A further report summarising the outcome of the Consultation will be tabled for consideration by Executive Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 **(a) Executive Board approves the commencement of the Statutory Consultation to close Halton High school on 31st August 2010 to allow the development of an Academy subject to consideration of any further representations received prior to the end of the consultation period; and**
(b) That it be approved that this decision be excluded from call in as immediate action is required so that the Statutory Consultation can commence on 10th December 2009.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During the consultation on future secondary provision in Halton it was agreed that Halton High be developed as an Academy. In order to open the Academy it is a requirement that Halton High school is discontinued. To ensure that the Academy can be established by 1st September 2010 the school organisation process needs to be complete so that the Funding Agreement can be signed in February 2010.
- 3.2 The proposal is that Halton High be closed on 31st August 2010 and that an Academy be opened on 1st September 2010. The Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester are the Sponsors of the proposed Academy which would open in Halton High School's buildings.
- 3.3 The Ormiston Trust is the Lead Sponsor. It has worked to support children and young people for the last 40 years and established its first Academy in 2006. Since 2006, the Trust has opened a number of Academies and by 2010 will have nine with many more in development. The proposed Halton Academy would therefore have the best opportunity to work with other Academies in the Ormiston network and share best practice.

- 3.4 The co-sponsor, the University of Chester is currently involved in three Academy projects including the recently opened University Church of England Academy in Ellesmere Port. The University has specialist expertise in areas such as school leadership and teacher training including secondary and post-16. It has the potential through its expertise in Continuing Professional Development and Research in Education to provide the Academy with current knowledge on school improvement and thereby enhance the opportunities for Academy staff to be engaged in innovative developments in learning. The University has its strong networks with business and industry which will enhance the quality of the Academy's work based learning curriculum.
- 3.5 Consultation on the closure of Halton High is the responsibility of the Local Authority, however, as it is linked to the development of the new Academy all consultation has been undertaken in conjunction with representatives from the Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester. The DCSF make the decision on the establishment of the Academy.
- 3.6 The first phase of the Consultation on the closure of Halton High commenced on 5th November 2009 and finished on 30th November 2009. Consultation meetings were held with Staff, Governors, Parents and other stakeholders on 12th November 2009. A second stakeholders consultation was then held on 24th November 2009. The notes of each of the meetings have been placed on the BSF website and passed to the school. Details of the proposal were also circulated to the local press, all schools, Trade Unions, Children's Centre and the Local Library.
- 3.7 As the Consultation does not close until 30th November 2009 a summary of the outcome of the Consultation will be presented to Executive Board meeting.
- 3.8 For the Academy to be opened by 1st September 2010 it is necessary for the School Organisation process to be completed by the end of January 2010. To meet this timescale if the outcome of the first phase of consultation supports the proposal to close Halton High, the Statutory Consultation will need to commence on 10th December 2009. The decision to commence Statutory Consultation will therefore need to be excluded from call in to allow for the six weeks representation period and the decision by Executive Board by the end of January 2010.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Once approved the Academy will benefit from up to £150,000 Environment Grant which can be used to make improvements to the school building. In addition, funding is made available for all pupils to have a new school uniform. The Academy funded comes direct from the DSCF instead of the Authority. The Dedicated Schools Budget is adjusted to remove the Academy funding and a proportion of the centrally managed resources.

4.4 The Academy is part of the BSF Programme and will benefit from both Capital funding to remodel the school buildings and IT funding.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Halton Academy will provide 900 11 -16 places and 200 post-16 places. The Sponsors will also support the development of extended school provision, including working more closely with Parents and the wider community.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

The pupils at the Halton Academy will benefit from the experience and resources of Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester. In addition, the sponsors intend to focus on the specialisms of English and Applied Learning.

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. The University of Chester will seek to use its strong networks with business and industry to enhance the quality of the Academy's work based learning curriculum.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Halton High is part of the BSF Programme, 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 living and 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

The Academy is part of the diversity of provision required within Halton. Failure to close Halton High by the end of January 2010 could lead to a delay in the establishing of the Academy by 1st September 2010. This would be disruptive to staff, pupils and parents and impact on the standards and viability of the school.

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

9.1 To provide more choice and diversity and retain pupils within the Borough.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 N/A

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The decision needs to be made on 3rd December 2009 so that statutory consultation can commence on 10th December 2009.

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

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact
Consultation Presentation	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
Notes of Public Meetings	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning

All responses to First round of
consultation

3rd Floor Chester
Building – Grosvenor
House, Runcorn and
website

Ann McIntyre –
Operational Director
– Business Support
and Commissioning