

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member and Advisors for Lifelong Learning and Culture
2.	Date:	24th April 2012
3.	Title:	Proposal to commence Statutory consultation on the ‘amalgamation’ of Maltby Hall Infant and Maltby Lilly Hall Junior Schools by the closure of Maltby Hall Infant School and the expansion and a change of age range at Maltby Lilly Hall Junior School.
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. Summary

It is proposed to commence Statutory consultation on the ‘amalgamation’ of Maltby Hall Infant and Maltby Lilly Hall Junior Schools. This will be by the closure of the Infant school and the expansion and change of age range of the Junior school. Members have previously agreed to consult as appropriate where two schools are considered for amalgamation.

Following the previous Cabinet Member report on the 13th March 2012, pre statutory consultation meetings have taken place with the Governing Bodies of both Schools, Staff and Union representation and parents of pupils at both schools. Communication has also taken place with all neighbouring schools and opportunity given for comment.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that statutory consultation should commence on the proposal to amalgamate Maltby Hall Infant and Maltby Lilly Hall Junior Schools as described above by the posting of a statutory notice for a 6 week period with details of how to object or make representation to the proposal outlined in the notice. A further report will be brought to Members with details of the outcome of the consultation in due course.

7. Proposals and Details

The proposal to be consulted on is:-

It is proposed to amalgamate Maltby Hall Infant and Maltby Lilly Hall Junior Schools from September 2013. To do this, the Infant school will be closed and the Junior school will be expanded and will have its age range changed from 7-11 years to 3-11 years therefore, becoming a 'through' primary school. It will accommodate the same number of pupils as are currently accommodated within the two schools, with no anticipated impact on the numbers of pupils in neighbouring schools.

The new School would have 420 places (R(F2) -Y6) with a Nursery (F1) unit of up to 52 places (26 FTE). (This is the combined numbers of the current two schools). The school would have a published admission number (PAN) of 60.

The principal objectives of amalgamation are:

- 1) to provide a continuous primary entitlement across the key stages; and
- 2) to provide a unified management structure with a single school ethos which will be more efficient and make more effective use of resources.

There will be a recruitment and selection process for the position of Head Teacher at the new Primary School. This will ensure an open and transparent recruitment and selection process bringing the Authority in line with practice in other Local Authorities.

8. Finance

Financial savings which arise are savings on staffing, mainly from the reduction of a Head Teacher's post from the school's combined budget.

planning permission has been granted to expand the existing building at the Junior School and funding has been allocated via the Capital Programme.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The risks and uncertainties associated with an amalgamation are detailed below:

The principal ADVANTAGES of amalgamation arise from the continuous primary education entitlement:

- removal of the school transfer at the end of key stage 1;
- provision of a whole school curriculum across the primary age range;
- a unified management structure with a single school ethos;
- the potential to organise and arrange the staffing structure and to safeguard the staffing establishment when pupil numbers change across the key stages;
- a whole school approach to staff development across the primary phase;

- more efficient and effective use of resources, especially accommodation, when numbers fluctuate across the infant and junior phases.
- The Infant School has a number of condition priorities which would need addressing in the coming years. The longer term financially viable option is to expand the Junior school site and vacate the current infant school site.

The principal DISADVANTAGES of amalgamation are:

- the reduction to only one head teacher post which could impact upon accessibility to staff, parents and pupils (this may have particular relevance where schools serve areas of social and economic disadvantage);
- potential difficulties in bringing together two different sets of working practice;
- possible fear of and resistance to change amongst staff, governors and parents;
- in some (but by no means all) cases, a lack of staff expertise in teaching and management across the two key stages.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the proposal is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. The principle advantages of amalgamation arise from the continuous primary education entitlements which are:-

- Removal of the school transfer at the end of key stage 1;
- Provision of a whole school curriculum across the primary age range;
- A unified management structure with a single school ethos;
- The potential to organise / arrange the staffing structure and to safeguard the staffing establishment when pupil numbers change across the key stages;
- A whole school approach to staff development across the primary phase; more efficient and effective use of resources, especially accommodation, when numbers fluctuate across the infant and junior phases.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

DfE Expanding a maintained mainstream school by enlargement or adding a sixth form guide, DfE Closing a Maintained Mainstream School guide and the 'School Standards and Framework Act 1998'

Minutes of meetings with Governing Bodies, Staff and parents at the Infant and Junior Schools and correspondence with Neighbouring School Governing Bodies.

Contact Name:

Helen Barre – Service Lead School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment Service

Tel: 01709 822656

Email: Helen.barre@rotherham.gov.uk