

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services
2.	Date:	5th March, 2014
3.	Title:	Proposal to amalgamate Brampton the Ellis Junior and Infant Schools by the discontinuance of the Junior School and the change of age-range of the Infant School – Statutory Consultation
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval from the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services to commence Statutory Consultation on the amalgamation proposals.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that Statutory Consultation should commence on proposals to amalgamate Brampton the Ellis (CE Aided) Infant and Junior Schools and that a further report be brought to Members in due course.

7. Proposals and Details

This proposal is also linked to the proposals to expand Cortonwood Infant School from a published Admission Number (PAN) of 40 to 50 with effect from 1st September 2017 and expand Brampton the Ellis Junior School from a Published Admission Number of 70 to 80 by 1st September 2014 to accommodate rising feeder school numbers and to 90 in due course (2020/21 academic year) to accommodate rising pupil number cohorts following the expansion of Cortonwood Infant School.

The proposed 'through' School would have 120 infant places (40 X 3 = 120 FS2/Reception to Y2) and 280 Junior places (70 X 4 = 280 presently, rising to 80 X 4 = 320 WEF 1st September 2014 and eventually 90 x 4 = 360 WEF 1st September 2020). The school would have a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 40 for the Infant School and 80 (rising to 90 for the Junior School).

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.

8. Finance

The proposed amalgamation will allow the Headteacher and Governing Body to structure financial resources to best support a through-school ethos across the Infant and Junior sites.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on estimations. Over provision at one school could influence pupil numbers at other schools. Local Authorities are obliged, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental preference. (CYD0015/018 - Corporate risk register).

If the Local Authority progresses to the statutory consultation phase, then formal objections may be lodged during the representation period following the publication of the statutory notice. A final decision should be determined by the decision maker within 2 months from the end of the representation period. If this fails to be done, then the matter is referred to the Schools Adjudicator for decision.

The principal ADVANTAGES of amalgamation 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 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 principal DISADVANTAGES of amalgamation are:

- 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'.

Rotherham School Improvement Mission:

- ~ All children will make at least good progress
- ~ There will be no underperforming cohorts
- ~ All teachers will deliver at least good learning
- ~ All schools will move to the next level of successful performance

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013

School Organisation (Maintained Schools) guidance for proposers and decision makers (January 2014)

Proposed consultation timeline

Cabinet Member to agree to consultation	15 th January 2014
Pre statutory consultation period Commences including meetings with governors, Staff and parents etc.	
Report to the Cabinet Member seeking approval to commence Statutory Consultation	5 th March 2014
Publication of statutory notices	14 th March 2014
4 week period for representations and objections closes	11 th April 2014
Report to Cabinet Member and final Determination of proposals and notification to Secretary of State for Education	21 st May 2014
Implementation	2 nd June 2014

Consultation meetings have been undertaken with the Governing Bodies of both Schools, Staff and Trade Unions, Parents (families) of pupils at the schools, local Councillors, the local Parish Council and the local MP.

Additionally consultation has also been undertaken with the Governing bodies of any other school that may be affected plus the Diocese and Trust Board of any school likely to be affected.

These proposals are linked to the proposals to expand Cortonwood Infant School from a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 40 to 50 from 1st September 2017.

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