

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER**

RIDDINGS INFANTS AND RIDDINGS JUNIORS AMALGAMATION

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The local authority published a public notice on 5 August 2011 confirming its intention to merge Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School to create a single primary school.
- 1.2 The object of this report is to seek the Cabinet Member's approval to implement the amalgamation proposal.
- 1.3 The decision is to be taken as an urgent decision in order to meet the timescales set out in the Statutory Notice.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 24 February 2011 approval was granted for a public consultation to be undertaken regarding the Local Authority's (LA's) proposal to merge Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School to create a through-primary school. The consultation ran from 20 May 2011 to 1 July 2011 and the feedback identified significant support for the creation of a single primary school.
- 2.2 Following the consultation, a Public Notice was issued which formally confirmed the Council's intention to create a through-primary school. The Public Notice was published on 5 August 2011, with a deadline for any feedback by 15 September 2011. This was the final opportunity for any stakeholder to express objections or concerns.
- 2.3 As the Public Notice period has now expired, the LA is required to decide whether the proposal should be implemented or refused

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 **Option 1:** To confirm the proposal to amalgamate Riddings Infant School and Ridding Junior school.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** To refuse the proposal to amalgamate Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The benefits and concerns relating to the amalgamation proposal have been thoroughly discussed, debated and documented throughout the process.

4.2 Option 1: Amalgamate both schools

4.2.1 As the schools are federated, they already enjoy many of the benefits of close working arrangements. An amalgamation would enable the schools' strengths to be maximised beyond the limits of the federation and become totally integrated.

4.2.2 The LA considers that this level of integration is absolutely necessary in order to provide the correct infrastructure to improve standards and attainment. Furthermore it is envisaged that the new primary school status will act as a catalyst to accelerate positive change and provide the foundations for the school to achieve excellence.

4.3 Option 2: Not to amalgamate schools

4.3.1 Keeping the schools as separate infant and junior schools is likely to reduce the potential rate of school improvement progress throughout both key stages. Maintaining the status quo will not provide the impetus or infrastructure necessary to achieve excellence.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 **Staffing:** The contracts of all paid staff will transfer to the Primary school.

5.2 **Finance:** There will be small revenue costs associated with the merger (eg change of signage and stationery etc to reflect the school's new status). This will be covered by a transitional revenue budget.

5.3 **Property:** Complementary plans are being concurrently progressed to co-locate both schools onto a single site. This is approved within the council's capital programme.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 **Statutory:** The process for undertaking school mergers is governed by statutory procedures and regulations. All procedures have been followed.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 The initial public consultation demonstrated positive support for the amalgamation.

- 7.2 Most recently, the LA published a Public Notice formally confirming its intention to merger Riddings Infant School and Ridding Junior School. The Public Notice was published on 5 August 2011, with a deadline for any feedback by 15 September 2011.

The LA received no objections or representations to the proposal.

All paid staff at Riddings Infant and Ridings Junior School were consulted separately on the merger proposal in relation to school organisation issues, staffing arrangements and school improvement. Feedback showed 43 (97%) members of staff wanted the amalgamation to be concluded at the earliest opportunity.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the proposals outlined in the Public Notice which brings together Riddings Infants and Junior schools and establishes a single primary school.
- 8.2 That the schools become a primary school on 23 September 2011, subject to confirmation that no appeals will be lodged.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Notice of proposal to close Riddings Junior School
- Notice of proposal to close Riddings Infant School
- Proposal to amalgamate Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School to create a through-primary school
- Consultation feedback analysis
- Notes of the public meeting held at Riddings Junior School on Monday

(the above are accessible from: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Education/RiddingsConsultation.htm>)

Previous Cabinet Member papers

- Amalgamation of Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School (25 February 2011)
- Amalgamation of Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School (29 July 2011)