

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**PEOPLE
CABINET MEMBER**

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE BROUGHTON
INFANT SCHOOL AND BROUGHTON JUNIOR SCHOOL**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to undertake a public consultation regarding a proposal to amalgamate Broughton Infant School and Broughton Junior School.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 1 September 2012 Broughton Infant School and Broughton Junior School formed a hard federation. This means that a single leadership team (including a single governing body) was appointed to oversee the effective running of both schools.
- 2.2 The federated schools are collectively referred to as 'The Broughton Primary Schools'.
- 2.3 Although the schools are federated, legally they remain separate entities and operate independently in respect of Ofsted outcomes, funding allocations and school admissions.
- 2.4 Federated schools may become a single primary school by undertaking a statutory process to formally amalgamate the schools.
- 2.5 Currently the infant school and the junior school operate on separate sites. However, the Schools and Children's Centre Capital Programme includes a scheme to extend the junior school's buildings so all the infant school pupils can be co-located on the same site together with the junior school pupils. It

is proposed that the new-build extension will be fully completed by September 2014. Despite being co-located, the schools will continue to be classed as separate infant and junior schools, unless the council formally seeks to amalgamate the schools.

2.2 In order to amalgamate community schools, the council must follow statutory regulations. The regulations require that public consultation is undertaken. The consultation allows an opportunity to seek the views of the stakeholders regarding the creation of a primary school in Broughton. The consultation process normally involves, at minimum:

- Consideration of pupils' views
- The publication of a formal proposal incorporating a questionnaire to facilitate feedback
- An online-questionnaire for comments and feedback

2.6 Feedback from the consultation exercise will be collated and presented in a formal report. The governing body will review the feedback and provide their recommendation. Thereafter the Cabinet Member will determine whether the proposal should proceed to the next stage (i.e. publication of a public notice) or be withdrawn.

2.9 The council works closely with governors, schools' staff, parents and children to ensure they are kept informed and involved in the process wherever possible.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 There are two options for consideration

3.2 Option 1 To undertake a public consultation regarding the proposal to amalgamate Broughton Infant School and Broughton Junior School with effect from 1 September 2014.

3.3 Option 2 To maintain the current arrangements and not undertake the consultation.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Option 1

4.1.1 A public consultation is part of the statutory regulations for proposing / implementing school amalgamation.

4.1.2 From a capital perspective, both schools should be co-located by 1 September 2014. Through informal discussion with the school it is agreed that formal amalgamation is the next logical step, therefore the consultation provides the opportunity to formally capture stakeholder views.

4.1.3 As the schools are federated, they are already tightly integrated and enjoy many of the benefits of close working arrangements. However, amalgamation will enable the strengths of the schools to be maximised beyond the limits of the federation and enhance the level of integration in a number of areas, which include:

- Longer-term relationships with children and parents, as children will be part of the same school from reception to year 6.
- Enhanced continuity of education which will mean that parents do not have to re-assess their choice of school (i.e. at year 2 to year 3 transition) or get to know another school.
- All staff will be employed by one entity and therefore it may lead to additional flexibility for the governing body and create more opportunities for staff to engage in teaching other key stages. This helps with staff development and cross-phase flexible working.
- A primary school will be subject to a single Ofsted inspection, whereas the Federation will be subject to one for the junior school and one for the infant school.

4.1.4 The consultation provides an opportunity to seek stakeholders' views on the proposal. The decision to proceed with the proposal would be taken based on the consultation feedback.

4.2 Option 2

4.2.1 The amalgamation could not proceed without the consultation as it is a requirement of the school organisation regulations and the council would be unable to demonstrate the views of stakeholders regarding the proposals to create a single primary school in Broughton.

4.2.2 This option does not support the Council's ambition to create a sustainable schools estate, which favours through-primary schools opposed to separate infant and junior schools.

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

- 5.1 **Finance** - The cost of the consultation will be met from existing budgets for school organisation issues.
- 5.2 **Staffing** - Any staffing issues will be identified through the consultation process. Staff members will be formally consulted as part of the process.
- 5.3 **Property** – The site currently occupied by the infant school pupils will be vacated by 1 September 2014. However, this will happen irrespective of the amalgamation proposal.

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 processes and regulations. The procedures are established by:

This guide provides information on the procedures established by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 21 January 2008 and The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009 which came into force on 1 September 2009).

Local authorities also have a duty to have regard to statutory guidance “Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School: A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies” and “Closing a Mainstream School: A guide for Local Authorities

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The head and governors have been informed that the formal consultation is required and they have been involved in the planning of the capital project to bring the schools on to one site.
- 7.2 This paper proposes the commencement of a thorough and robust consultation process. It is proposed that the consultation be open for 6 weeks during the summer term 2013.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves option 1, to undertake public consultation regarding the proposal to amalgamate Broughton Infant School and Broughton Junior School with effect from 1 September 2014.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None