

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER**

**BERKELEY INFANT SCHOOL AND BERKELEY JUNIOR SCHOOL
AMALGAMATION**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet Member on feedback from the public consultation regarding the proposal to merge Berkeley Infant School and Berkeley Junior School.
- 1.2 To seek the Cabinet Member's approval to publish a statutory notice. The statutory notice confirms the council's formal intention to amalgamate the schools.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 1 October 2015 approval was granted for a public consultation to be undertaken to consider the council's proposal to merge Berkeley Infant School and Berkeley Junior School to create a through primary school.
- 2.2 The proposal recommended that the amalgamation should be implemented by closing the infant school and expanding the age range of the junior school to include pupils aged 4 to 11. The amalgamated school would become operational on 1 September 2016.
- 2.3 A comprehensive consultation was undertaken with stakeholders from 12 October 2015 to 22 November 2015 using a variety of consultation methods.
- 2.4 Feedback from the consultation has now been analysed and can be used to help determine the most appropriate option regarding the next stage of the amalgamation process.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 There are two options for consideration:
 - 3.1.1 **Option 1** To proceed to the next stage of the amalgamation process and publish a public notice which outlines the plans to merge Berkeley Infant and Berkeley Junior schools.
 - 3.1.2 **Option 2** Not to proceed with the publication of a statutory proposal and to withdraw the proposal to amalgamate Berkeley Infant School and Berkeley Junior School.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Option 1: To publish a Statutory Proposal

- 4.1.1 This option allows the amalgamation to proceed to the next stage as determined by the statutory guidance. The public notice describes the technical arrangements of the amalgamation and allows stakeholders a final opportunity to pass comment.
- 4.1.2 The vast majority of stakeholders would like to see Berkeley Infant School and Berkeley Junior School become amalgamated. Therefore, this option supports their vision and aspiration for the individual schools to become a through primary school.
- 4.1.3 The governing body has formally resolved their support to proceed to the next stage of the amalgamation process.
- 4.1.4 The public notice outlines the intention that Berkeley Infant and Berkeley Junior Schools would become a through-primary school with effect from 1st September 2016. Following the publication of the public notice there is a four week statutory representation period which provides a final opportunity for anyone to submit feedback on the proposal.
- 4.1.5 Following the public notice period a final decision will be sought from the Cabinet Member on whether to ratify the amalgamation or otherwise.

4.2 Option 2: Not to support the publication of statutory proposal

- 4.2.1 By not proceeding to the next stage would not reflect the feedback from the consultation which indicates support for the proposals
- 4.2.2 The amalgamation would not progress without the publication of a public notice.

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

- 5.1 **Finance** - The cost of publishing the statutory notice would be met from existing budgets.
- 5.2 **Property** - Both schools would continue to utilise their existing buildings and land.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The process for undertaking school mergers is governed by statutory processes and regulations. The procedures are established by a Statutory Instrument "The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013)", which came into force on 28 January 2014. It provides information on the processes involved in making significant changes to maintained schools.
- 6.2 An integrated impact assessment is not necessary at this stage. An integrated impact assessment will be undertaken following the publication of the statutory notice in order to consider all feedback.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 The LA has worked in close partnership with the federated governing body throughout the amalgamation proposal process. The governing body have been instrumental in devising the consultation documents and have attended all staff and parents' consultation sessions.

7.2 A summary of the key findings, based on responses received, is as follows:

- 149 questionnaires were received.
- 95% of respondents confirmed that they liked the proposal.

7.2 The federated governing body met on 25 November 2015 to review the consultation feedback and voted unanimously to recommend that the process proceeds to the next stage and that the schools should become amalgamated.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves option 1 and that a public notice is published outlining the proposal to amalgamate Berkeley Infant School and Berkeley Junior School with effect from 1 September 2016.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- 1) DfE: School Organisation Maintained Schools – Guidance for Decision-Makers. (January 2014)
- 2) DfE: School Organisation Maintained Schools – Annex A: Further Information for Proposers. (January 2014)
- 3) DfE: School Organisation Maintained Schools: Annex B: Guidance for Decision-Makers. (January 2014)
- 5) Statutory Instrument "The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations (2013).
- 6) School Merger Consultation Document: Berkeley Infant School and Berkeley Junior School. Available at the time of publication at <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/consultations-and-petitions/current-consultations>