

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

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

**CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
ORGANISATION: STRATEGY AND POLICIES**

1 OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to consult on the draft Review of Primary School Organisation: Strategy and Policies.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the council is required to undertake a strategic role in commissioning and reviewing the schools estate to ensure high quality school places.
- 1.3 The draft Review of School Organisation Strategic Overview outlines three key policy documents which will be used to facilitate changes to the organisation of North Lincolnshire Schools:
 - School Amalgamation
 - Small Schools Policy
 - School Federation Policy

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The local authority is responsible for the strategic commissioning of a diverse supply of strong schools and has a key role in ensuring that children, young people and families benefit from high educational standards locally.
- 2.2 In order to achieve this, the local authority must strategically review, where appropriate, the organisation and provision of its schools and consider alternative structural and operational solutions.
- 2.3 Through its statutory powers the local authority must promote educational excellence for all children and young people and be ambitious in tackling underperformance.
- 2.4 Historically, there have been changes in the school organization of North Lincolnshire. The most recent include:
 - Amalgamation of Riddings Infant and Junior

- Opening of 'Convertor' Academies – FtC and The Vale
- Federation of West Butterwick and St Martin's primary schools
- Federation of Hibaldstow and Scawby primary schools
- Amalgamation of South Leys and Thomas Sumpter
- Closure of High Ridge Comprehensive and opening of St Lawrence Academy
- Amalgamation of Rochdale Road Junior and Sunway Infant Schools.

2.5 With the exception of the amalgamation of South Leys and Thomas Sumpter which was part of the Strategic planning in the Building Schools for the Future Programme, the changes in school organisation above have been a result of individual decisions been made either at a Local Authority level or a school level.

2.6 This paper makes proposals to publish a Review of Primary School Organisation: Strategy and associated policies which outline how changes may take place.

2.7 The draft document is attached in Appendix 1.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 **Option 1:** To seek the views from heads and governors on the Review of Primary School Organisation: Strategy and Policies.

3.2 **Option 2:** Do not proceed with the proposals and policies for School Organisation review.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 **Option 1:**

4.1.1 By publishing a strategic overview and policies for Primary School Organisation Review will enable improved transparency.

4.1.2 Consultation with key stakeholders will ensure that the policies are clear and understandable and provide the direction to support schools and governance with their individual plans regarding structural solutions.

4.1.3 The policies outline the detailed process of formal consultation that would be undertaken for each individual review.

4.1.4 The strategic review document outlines the criteria on which the local authority would seek to review the schools.

4.2 **Option 2:**

4.2.1 The local authority could choose not to publish a school organization strategic overview and policies and continue approaching structural changes on a case by case basis.

4.2.2 This would not enable strategic planning in a transparent way.

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

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 There are no financial implications associated with the consultation of these policies.

5.1.2 Any savings resulting from any subsequent reorganisation proposal or rationalisation of places will be re-distributed to all schools in accordance with Schools Forum's recommendations.

5.2 **Staffing**

5.2.1 There are no staffing implications associated with the consultation of these policies.

5.2.2 Individual reviews of school organisation may have staffing implications. These will be managed in accordance with HR policies and following full consultation processes.

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

6.1 **Environmental**

None

6.2 **Statutory**

All changes in school organisation would be done in conjunction with the relevant legislation, primarily the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

6.3 **Value for Money**

The local authority must secure high quality educational provision whilst maximising public expenditure. Any reorganisation of school provision would ensure best value in achieving its vision for children young people and families in North Lincolnshire.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The paper seeks approval to consult with key stakeholders.
- 7.2 Initial discussions have taken place with some schools which may be affected. Heads, governors and unions would have preferred the consultation on the policies prior to these conversations.
- 7.3 The key stakeholders want to ensure full, transparent and proper consultation processes are undertaken with any changes.
- 7.4 The key stakeholders would like to ensure that the strategic review policies provide clarity on the decision making process for any of the structural solution options.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To approve that the Review of Primary School Organisation: Strategy and Policies are sent to Heads and Chairs of Governors for consultation.
- 8.2 That feedback from the consultation and any revision of the policies and plans be presented to Cabinet Member at a later date for approval.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None

Achieving Excellence

**Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation:
Strategy and Policies**

DRAFT

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Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation: Strategy and Policies

1.0 Prologue

The aim of this document is to share with school leaders the Local Authority's (LA) intention to undertake a strategic review of the primary schools' estate. There are two separate parts to this document, which are described below:

1.1.1 **Part 1: The Primary Schools' Organisation ¹Strategy:** The first part of the document confirms the LA's intention to undertake a programme of organisational reviews at school-level. This ensures that all key stakeholders have common understanding of the LA's strategy and are able to determine (a) whether their school will be reviewed and, if applicable, (b) its relative priority for review.

1.1.2 **Part 2: School Organisation Policies:** The second part of the document identifies three policy documents, which the LA intends to use/promote in order to effect school-level reorganisation. These are:

- a) Small Schools Policy
- b) School Amalgamation Policy
- c) Schools Federation Policy

Collectively these policies are referred to as 'structural solutions'

1.2 Scope of the Primary School Organisation Review

1.2.1 The principal purpose of this document is to undertake a review of primary provision with particular reference to:

- a) Small Schools
- b) Infant and junior schools

¹Strategy is the **direction** and **scope** of an organisation over the **long-term**: which achieves **advantage** for providers through its configuration of **resources** within a challenging **environment**, to meet the needs of **children and young people** and to fulfill **stakeholder** expectations. (adapted from Johnson and Scholes (2006))

However, this document may be applicable to other school settings to support the raising of attainment and standards. For example any school which is underperforming may benefit from structural solutions. Therefore this policy equally applies to other schools which do not fall into category (a) or (b) above, where structural solutions are deemed appropriate.

1.3 Clarifying Terminology

In order to assure consistency and clarity in terminology, the following key phrases have been defined:

- 1.3.1 The phrase '**School Organisation**' refers to the current configuration of the maintained schools' estate.
- 1.3.2 The word '**review**' is used to indicate that schools will be assessed against published criteria. A review will conclude a number of options.
- 1.3.3 The phrase '**structural solutions**' refers to options such as federation, merger or closure.
- 1.3.4 The word '**Reorganisation**' refers to the implementation of a structural solution

Part 1

The Primary School Organisation Strategy

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Primary School Organisation Strategy describes how the LA intends to undertake a review of primary school organisation within North Lincolnshire.

2.2 This document explains the reasons why it is necessary to review primary school provision and describes the methodology and criteria which will be used when selecting and prioritising schools for review.

3.0 Background – Schools’ Estate and Standards

3.1 **Schools’ Estate²:** There are currently 80 schools in North Lincolnshire: 13 secondary schools (3 which are academies), 48 primary schools, 9 infant schools, 8 junior schools, 2 special schools. There is a diverse range of voluntary control and aided schools and also 2 federated governing bodies (4 schools). In September 2012 a new Church of England Foundation Trust primary school will open to meet the needs of a new housing development in Scunthorpe. The council continues to support schools that convert to academy status and strives to work in partnership with all of its schools.

3.2 Historically, there have been changes in the school organisation of North Lincolnshire. The most recent include:

- Amalgamation of Riddings Infant and Junior School
- Amalgamation of Rochdale Road Junior and Sunway Infant Schools.
- Amalgamation of South Leys and Thomas Sumpter Comprehensive Schools
- Closure of High Ridge Comprehensive and opening of St Lawrence Academy
- Federation of West Butterwick and St Martin’s Primary Schools
- Federation of Hibaldstow and Scawby Primary Schools
- Opening of ‘Converter’ Academies – FtC and The Vale

² Information as at November 2011

- 3.3 With the exception of the amalgamation of South Leys and Thomas Sumpter which was part of the strategic planning in the Building Schools for the Future Programme, the changes in school organisation above have been a result of individual decisions made either at a Local Authority level or a school level.
- 3.4 **Standards:** The proportion of North Lincolnshire primary schools judged good or better in August 2010 was 73%. The position in August 2011 was 68% which represents 4 schools moving from good to satisfactory. The proportion of North Lincolnshire secondary schools (including Academies) judged good or better in August 2010 was 33%. The position in August 2011 was 54% which represents 2 schools moving to good.
- 3.5 The overall position for attainment at KS2 for North Lincolnshire is 69% and although this represents a small increase from 2010 it is below the national average. There are a number of schools below the floor standards at KS2 (60% of pupils achieving a L4 in English and Maths). The attainment at KS4 for 5 A*- C GCSE is above the national average at 86%, however the measure including English and Maths is 52% and although an increase of 7% from 2009, it is below the national average.
- 3.6 The 2011 Children's Services Assessment letter highlights the following for development:

"..... while none are inadequate, almost a third of primary schools are only satisfactory. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 remains below similar areas and the national average, as does the rate of progression between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for both English and mathematics.

Outcomes for 11-year-olds were disappointing in 2010 but provisional data for 2011 indicate a small rise in standards".

4.0 LA Statutory Duties

4.1 The LA has a number of duties which are relevant to school organisation. These duties are briefly described and listed below as:

- The duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education (Education Act 1996)
- The duty for ensuring sufficient school places (Education Act 1996)
- The duty to promote high standards and, the fulfillment of every child's educational potential. (Education Inspection Act 2006)
- The duty to provide best value and make arrangements to secure continuous improvement, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. (Local Government Act 1999)
- Under the Children Act (2004), the DCS is required to use powers to address underperformance quickly, including warning notices, structural improvement models, the creation of Interim Executive Boards and other alternative governance arrangements, and, where necessary, school closures (Statutory Guidance DCS & LMCS roles and responsibilities 2008)

4.2 This document provides the necessary strategic framework which supports the LA to discharge its relevant statutory duties using a fair, consistent and transparent approach to determine whether structural solutions can improve standards, efficiency, resources, attainment and underperformance.

4.3 The strategy will also be used to inform strategic decision-making in respect of capital investment in schools.

5.0 Supporting 'The Schools Excellence Strategy'

5.1 The excellence Strategy was developed in partnership with head teachers and various consultative bodies. It provides a strategic framework in which to implement schools standards, performance and effectiveness duties

5.2 In line with national policy drivers and the council's ambitions, as described in Excellence Strategy for Schools 2011/12, the LA wants to promote and support the expansion of good and outstanding schools,

collaborative working and school to school support. This is with the principal aim of improving attainment.

5.3 North Lincolnshire's Excellence Strategy for Schools 2011/12 is particularly relevant to the Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation as it confirms the LA's commitment to raising attainment and, if necessary, the need to implement structural solution to help tackle underperformance. These key features from the Excellence Strategy are summarised below:

5.3.1 **Raising Attainment & Key Targets:** The Excellence Strategy confirms the LA's ambition to ensure all children and young people have access to first class education, all schools will aspire to be rated good or better.

5.3.2 **Promoting Structural Solutions:** The excellence strategy identifies that structural solutions should be considered. The strategy states that in extreme circumstances, where necessary, LA statutory powers are used to seek structural solutions.

5.4 All school-level organisation reviews will need to be considered in line with the principles and ambitions outlined in the Schools Excellence Strategy.

5.5 In determining the pattern of school provision across all educational sectors the LA will have as their overriding aim the improvement of the quality of education and the raising of standards for North Lincolnshire pupils, especially those living in the most disadvantaged communities.

6.0 Structural Solutions

6.1 The commitment to undertake a Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation will identify whether school reorganisation options should be considered. The principal method of implementing reorganisation is through structural solutions, which are briefly described below:

6.1.1 **School Amalgamation:** The position outlined in this policy is that, at a minimum, consideration should be given to the amalgamation of all infant and junior schools to create through primary schools.

6.1.2 **Federation:** A federation is a group of schools – often two, but it can be more – whose governing bodies decide to agree a formal partnership. This often involves an executive head teacher who also takes responsibility for running two or more schools.

6.1.3 **Small Schools:** The policy defines a small school as a mainstream primary school with circa 120 pupils on roll. The purpose of the review is to consider the role of the small school within the context of the whole schools' estate.

6.1.4 The above policies are included in the appendices 1 to 3.

1. Amalgamation Policy (Appendix 1)
2. Small Schools Policy (Appendix 2)
3. Federations Policy (Appendix 3)

6.2 **Academy Conversion.** As academy conversions do not fall within the remit of the LA, they are not a central feature of this strategy. However, academies are an additional structural solution which governing bodies and schools may wish to consider. The LA will support schools wishing to convert to academy status. It should be noted that the above policies can be also be used in conjunction with a school strategic plan for academy conversion in order to promote sustainability of strong schools into the future.

7.0 School-Level Organisation Review: Implementation

7.1 Each school-level organisation review will be undertaken as sensitively as possible in recognition of the uncertainty that the review process can create.

7.2.1 All reviews will commence, in the first instance, with a personal conversation and discussion with the head teacher and chair of governors. This will be an opportunity to explore the options in more detail and consider any issues which the head teacher and chair of governors would like the LA to take into account. A summary of the discussions will be confirmed in writing to the chair of governors and head teacher for their comment. This will then form part of the report to Children's Services Cabinet Member on proposed options for reorganisation. The types of issues discussed could include:

- Can a new school organisation structure improve the learning opportunities available to the children and young people of North Lincolnshire?
- How can we promote and build the sustainability of strong schools into the future.
- How can we foster a culture that develops innovation and creativity?
- How can we minimise the number of transition points within a child's educational journey?
- How can we ensure wide access to the curriculum opportunities in a school for all pupils?

7.3 The LA will continue to work with the diocesan and voluntary bodies ensuring the best outcomes for children and young people.

7.4 The LA will consider the views and feedback from key stakeholders

7.5 **Use of Data:** Where appropriate the LA will provide background information to identify key facts. The types of data sets will differ depending upon the nature of the review (e.g. small school review or infant and junior school review), but are likely to incorporate some of the following:

- Pupil numbers, past and future
- Published admission numbers, capacity and surplus places (may also include data for neighboring schools)

- Catchment areas
 - Analysis of out of catchment pupils
 - Condition and suitability survey of the school
 - Previous and planned capital projects
 - Denominational provision
 - Site ownership
 - Financial plans
 - Learning and improvement data. Feedback from 'annual conversation'. Monitoring reports and evaluations.
 - Extended school services; pre school provision
 - Community Use
 - Staffing/staffing ratio/capacity
 - Class organisation
 - SEN
 - Admission arrangements
 - Accessibility, access and transport infrastructure
 - Indices of deprivation.
- 7.6 Priority criteria have been established to determine the order in which schools will be considered (see section 8.0).
- 7.7 **Small Schools Review:** With regard to schools classified as 'small schools', the LA will review these on a rolling programme over a three year period. The LA will write to each school during the Spring Term 2012 confirming the indicative time period when the review meeting is likely to take place.
- 7.8 **Infant and Junior School Review:** With regard to Infant and Junior Schools, all schools will be reviewed, but the priority order will be based on the criteria (see section 8.0). Any one school within the 'paired' arrangement meeting the criteria will result in both 'paired' schools being reviewed.
- 7.9 **Consultation:** Where a review prompts the need for further dialogue and discussion, with the possibility of implementing a structural solution, the LA will ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted at the appropriate time. Any options for major change will be subject to formal consultation prior to any decision being made.

Formal proposals for reorganisation will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on a case by case basis.

8.0 Review Prioritisation Criteria

- 8.1 An organisation review needs to take place in the interests of raising standards for pupils and will follow robust, objective criteria for prioritising schools.
- 8.2 Publishing prioritisation criteria ensures a fair, consistent and transparent approach is used to determine the order in which schools will be considered for review.
- 8.3 The following categories of schools will be reviewed as a priority using the criteria specified in the policies,
- All mainstream primary schools with numbers on roll below circa 120
 - All infant schools and junior Schools

However, any school may be subject to a review where the LA deems this is appropriate (see 1.2.1 – Scope of Review)

- 8.4 **Criteria for prioritising school-level review:** The following identifies the criteria which will be used for prioritising small school and infant and junior schools for review:

Category	Criteria
(Block A) School performance	a) Ofsted Category b) School category as per protocol identified in the Schools' "Excellence Strategy" this includes: (i) school of concern (LA category 1) (ii) vulnerable below floor standards (LA category 2) (iii) Good but vulnerable (LA category 3)
(Block B) Viability/ Resources	c) Number of pupils on roll/viability d) Declining pupil roll e) Surplus places f) Condition of building g) The school is in financial difficulty and has to set a deficit budget with little prospect of recovery.
(Block C) Leadership	h) Head teacher resigns/vacant i) Leadership and / or governance issues
(Block D) Other	j) Any other factor which is deemed reasonable and may impact on standards

The impact of the criteria will form the basis of discussion with schools. However, performance in block A will normally have the highest weighting on the overall assessment.

9.0 Support During School Level Reorganisation

- 9.1 Where reorganisation proposals are implemented, staff who are affected will be supported by the LA and their Professional Association or Trade Unions. Professional Associations and Trade Unions will be involved throughout the process and will be invited to attend any meetings with staff.
- 9.2 The Council's HR policies, where relevant will be adopted and followed.
- 9.3 Schools undergoing changes will be supported by the local authority. Funding arrangements will be kept under review subject to the relevant approvals. In addition, considerable officer support (e.g. School Effectiveness Service, Inclusion, Governor Support, Finance Services and Human Resources Services) will be available.

10.0 Review of this document

This strategy and policies will be reviewed every year unless the statutory roles and responsibilities of a local authority change within this timescale.

Part 2

School Organisation Policies

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Appendix 1 School Amalgamation Policy

Appendix 2 Small School Policy

Appendix 3 Federation Policy

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APPENDIX 1

North Lincolnshire Council Children and Young People's Service

School Amalgamation Policy Supporting Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document supports the Local Authority's Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation and outlines the policy for implementing school amalgamation.
- 1.2 Although the scope of this policy is primarily aimed at existing infant and junior schools, the policy could equally apply to primary schools, secondary schools or special schools. Therefore, this policy acknowledges that changes in demographics and or parental preference may create an environment where consideration is given to other types of amalgamations.
- 1.3 The position outlined in this document is that, at a minimum, consideration should be given to the amalgamation of all infant and junior schools to create through primary schools.

2.0 The Educational Case for creating 'all-through primary' schools.

- 2.1 The strengths of individual infant and junior schools can be enhanced within a primary school setting. The most significant advantage of amalgamation is the removal of the transition from infant to junior school which helps foster improved opportunities to build longer term relationships with parents as pupils progress through seven years of schooling. The following summarises other potential benefits:

2.1.1 For the Children

Integration and continuity of education in one school from 4+ to 11 years may help improve standards and attainment by:

- Developing the infrastructure to provide smooth, seamless progression through education/phases. This will reduce the disruption as children transfer from one school to another at the end of Year 2, reducing the likelihood of academic regression;

- Providing greater opportunities for the academic, social and moral development of older pupils allowing them to develop a sense of responsibility, citizenship and peer and sibling support using cross school projects, for example, working with and for younger children and buddy systems;
- Offering pupils a wider range of opportunities, for example, by holding joint activities or sharing facilities or teachers that might be difficult to sustain individually.

2.1.2 For Teaching and Learning benefits

- Greater capacity for developing excellence.
- Making it easier to plan across the whole age range with additional benefits, for example, of greater continuity of curriculum methodology and policies.
- Allows staff to get to know the children for a longer period of time, which would support more informed assessment, target setting and pupil tracking, leading to improved outcomes and educational opportunities.
- Provides greater flexibility for lesson timetabling which will allow creative and innovative ideas to develop.
- Provides greater increased flexibility to explore specialist provision (eg gifted and talented)
- Allows information and pupils records to be standardised using common forms and, where relevant, data sharing protocols.

2.1.3 For Leadership and Staff Benefits

A larger “pool” of diverse staff would mean:

- Individual teachers have greater opportunity to develop areas of responsibility – linked to raising attainment and closing gaps in performance between different groups of pupils;
- Professional interaction, discussions and decisions are informed by a wider group of staff;
- Enhanced career opportunities for staff are developed, i.e. a chance to work across the key stages of the curriculum;

- Standards can be raised through shared learning and the development of an integrated curriculum and pastoral policies;
- More opportunity for continuing professional development, developing e-learning, Initial Teacher Training and Cross Schools Review;
- It is easier to plan across the whole age range with additional benefits, for example, of greater continuity of curriculum methodology and policies;
- Improved leadership and management structure can be developed.

2.1.4 For the Whole School Community

A larger school/infrastructure means:

- Parents do not have to re-assess their choice of school, which means they will have a longer relationship with the school and staff and will be able to contribute more fully in the education partnership with the school;
- Other support such as extended services and facilities could be arranged more effectively to meet the needs of the community; develop a range of extended services and activities for pupils and the wider community;
- Maximised sharing of resources, sharing specialist facilities, taking advantage of economies of scale. Sharing premises and/or equipment;
- Creating a strong sense of school family and togetherness throughout the school community;

3.0 Criteria for prioritising school-level review:

- 3.1 The review of infant and junior schools will be undertaken on a priority basis. Initial conversations will be held with all infant and junior school head teachers and chairs of governors to determine their priority.

- 3.2 Associated infant and junior schools are considered collectively within the prioritisation process. This means that if either school within a 'paired arrangement' meets a priority criteria both schools are prioritised.
- 3.3 The following identifies the criteria which will be used for prioritising small school and infant and junior schools for review:

Category	Criterion (not necessarily weighted/priority order)
(A) School performance	a) Ofsted Category b) School category as per protocol identified in the School's "Excellence Strategy" this includes: (i) school of concern (LA category 1) (ii) vulnerable below floor standards (LA category 2) (iii) Good but vulnerable (LA category 3)
(B) Viability/ Resources	c) Number of pupils on roll/viability d) Declining pupil roll e) Surplus places f) Condition of building g) The school is in financial difficulty and has to set a deficit budget with little prospect of recovery.
(C) Leadership	h) Head teacher resigns/vacant i) Leadership issues/concerns (including governance)
(D) Other	j) Any other factor which is deemed reasonable and may impact on standards

The prioritisation will take into account the mix and balance of the different criteria listed above. However, performance in block A will normally have the highest weighting on the overall assessment.

- 3.4 There may be other one-off scenarios when the council may consider amalgamation as a recommended solution for structural change.

4.0 Guidance and process for amalgamation

- 4.1 **Legislative Framework.** Proposals for school amalgamations can be made by the local authority or the governing body (for foundation and

voluntary schools) in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

4.2 Amalgamation involves making changes to the organisation of schools. This is governed by statutory processes that are detailed in the document “Establishing A New Maintained Mainstream School - A Guide For Local Authorities”³. In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 there are three routes for the local authority to achieve a combined school:

- To extend the age range and expand the capacity of one school and discontinue the other school.
- To discontinue both schools and open a new school through competition processes
- To discontinue both schools and open a new school without a competition by securing the consent of the Secretary of State.

4.3 The routes for amalgamation will be considered as part of the review process. Therefore, part of the initial consultation/feasibility discussion with the relevant head teachers and governing bodies, would explore this in more detail. The extension of the age range of one school and discontinuation of the other is the speediest method of amalgamation.

4.4 **Amalgamation Process:** The process to implement amalgamation is approached in four stages. The local authority will work closely with governing bodies throughout each stage.

- Stage One Preparation
- Stage Two Planning and Consultation
- Stage Three Decision Making
- Stage Four Implementation

4.5 Amalgamation process flow chart is shown in annex A.

5.0 Staffing

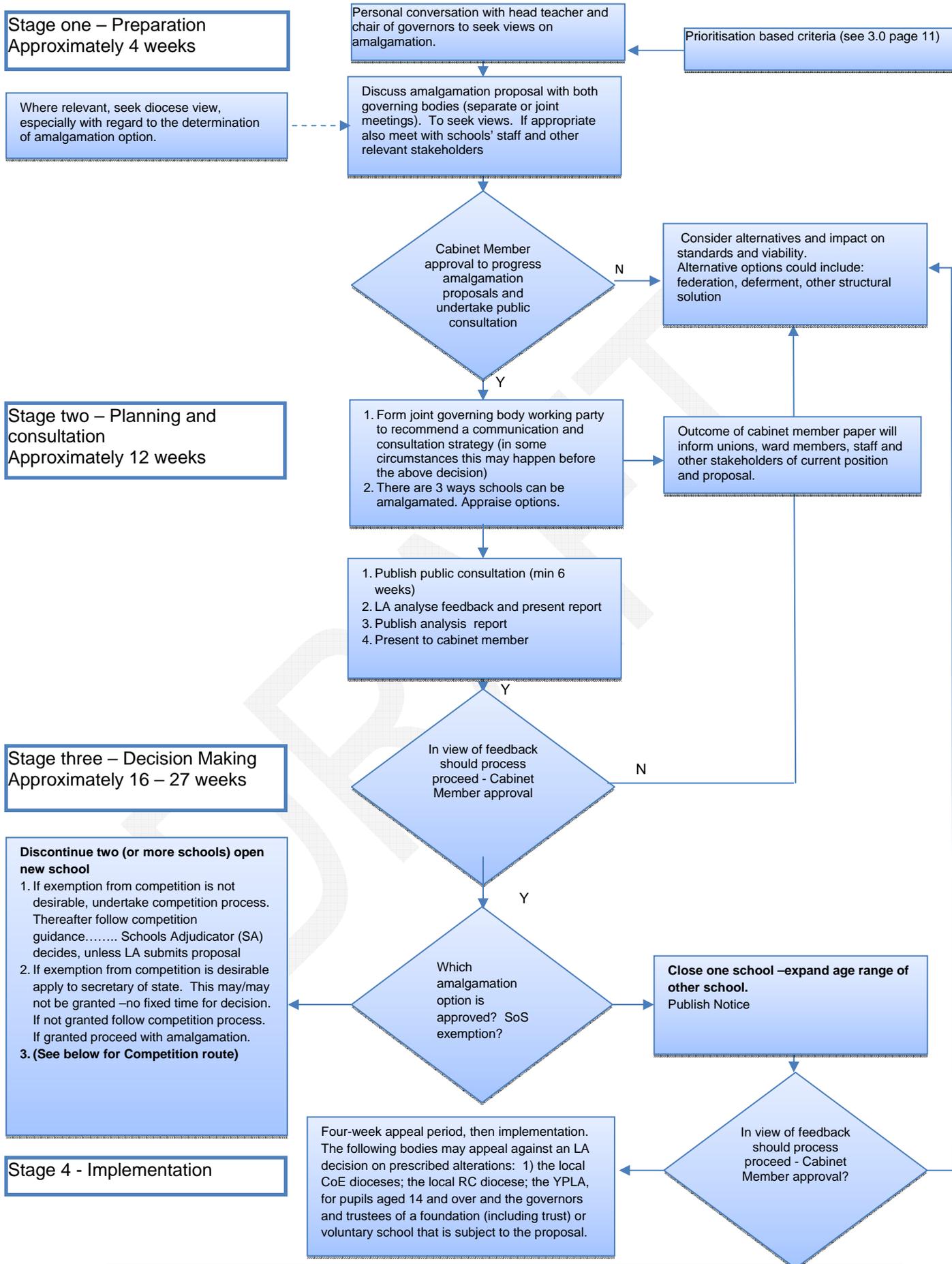
³ Guidance is subject to revision in accordance with Education Act 2011 amendments.

- 5.1 The process to confirm the appointment of a headteacher is the responsibility of the governing body, and it is for the governing body to determine the appropriate process for their school context.
- 5.2 The staffing implications for individual amalgamation proposals would be determined in consultation with the relevant trade unions and in line with HR policies and relevant statutory guidance.

6.0 Finance

- 6.1 A new funding formula will be applied which relates to the new school which will be calculated on a pro-rata basis if the new school opens mid financial year.
- 6.2 There will be transition funding available for a minimum of one year. Any costs associated with staffing changes as a direct result of the reorganisation will be met from central education budgets.
- 6.3 Where a merged school is operating say operating across a split sites there will be a split site allowance. The value of this will be determined by Schools Forum.
- 6.4 Any capital investment required to support amalgamation will be considered as part of the Strategic Capital Budget planning processes within the council. The current capital funding for school investment has been prioritised on condition and basic need factors.

School Amalgamation: Indicative Processes/Key Stages/Timeline
 (This is for illustrative purposes. All reviews will have individual project plans based on the most suitable approach)



APPENDIX 2

North Lincolnshire Council Children and Young People's Service

Small School Policy Supporting Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document supports the Local Authority's Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation and outlines the policy for implementing school amalgamation.
- 1.2 The scope of this policy has the potential to cover all mainstream primary, infant and junior and secondary schools, but not pupil referral units or special schools.
- 1.3 Small schools and rural schools have a good track record of achievement within North Lincolnshire and are an essential part of the local education provision particularly in the more rural areas of North Lincolnshire. Although many small schools are highly effective and serve their communities well, their size means they can easily be at risk in terms of viability and performance.
- 1.4 The Local Authority has an overall responsibility to ensure the efficient and effective supply and demand of school places. As communities and demographics change over time the demand for school places is affected. This policy outlines North Lincolnshire Council's commitment to review the provision of small schools and, where appropriate, look at ways in which the long term viability can be sustained whilst at the same time, standards improved.
- 1.5 The key purpose of this document is to explore a range of outcomes which may result from a review.

2.0 What is a small school?

- 2.1 There are numerous definitions of 'small schools', all of which can be debated based on perspective and context. However, looking at the guidance as used by the DfE, small can be categorised as those mainstream primary schools with about with 120 pupils or fewer. In North Lincolnshire there are currently 19 primary schools in this category and 22 schools with fewer than 150 pupils on roll. For mainstream secondary schools this is commonly defined as under 600 pupils on roll.

- 2.2 Whilst this policy focuses on small schools this also provides a natural link to rural schools, which are also often, by nature, 'small schools'. Rural school classifications are defined by the Secretary of State.
- 2.3 Although the debate about small schools tends to centre on the primary sector, it should also be acknowledged that issues identified below (key challenges of small schools) can equally apply to secondary schools. The developments in school organisational and leadership models has seen a number of innovative schools and authorities develop federation clusters which not only adopt the vertical integration model (foundation to post 16), but also adopt the horizontal integration model encompassing a number of secondary or primary schools. Hence within the context of this policy consideration should also be given to the effectiveness of secondary schools in relation to their size.

3.0 Key Challenges of Small Schools

The challenges and problems which schools face are numerous. However, there are particular issues which are more acute in small school settings. This section looks at some of those issues.

- 3.1 **Appointment of Head teacher:** Evidence suggests that it is more difficult to appoint suitable head teachers to small schools. The work that head teachers are required to undertake within a small school is not necessarily proportionally less than their counterparts in larger schools. The multiple roles undertaken by small school head teachers can include teaching commitments in addition to leadership commitments and the implementation of new initiatives. This is compounded by the limited opportunities to delegate work to other staff; furthermore this reduces the scope for the continuing professional development of aspiring leaders.
- 3.2 **Effects of Appointment:** The time period to re-advertise and work through the recruitment and selection process can put unnecessary pressure on other staff and may affect the quality of teaching and learning. The traditional model of one head teacher, one school and one governing body needs to be challenged – is this the best organisational model to serve the interests of the children and young people?
- 3.3 **Teaching and Learning:** The need to teach a broad and balanced curriculum can be problematic in a small school setting. High quality teaching is required to cover the mix of age ranges, mixed key stages as well as reaching the full curriculum. Small schools can be more vulnerable if the quality of teaching is not sustained.
- 3.4 **Limited administrative support:** The economies of scale in small schools limit the provision of administrative support. In many circumstances, in areas such as finance, peripatetic support is required to supplement the levels of expertise available.

- 3.5 **Quality and appropriateness of small school buildings:** Although some small schools have been modernised and altered, there are still a number of small schools with issues of suitability. For example some schools do not have halls and teaching area is restricted. The ability to deliver 21st Century teaching and learning is compromised.
- 3.6 **Fluctuation in pupil numbers.** Small schools are particularly susceptible to fluctuations in the demand for school places. The effect of just 5 pupils leaving a school with 50 on roll equals 10% of the total cohort. Furthermore this effect can be more significant if the pupils are from a particular key stage or year group. Whilst pupil numbers are affected by many factors (housing development, birth rates, popularity, access etc), it is always a concern that small schools are more sensitive to falling rolls.
- 3.7 **Financial:** The current funding formula for North Lincolnshire schools includes a small school subsidy. For many small schools it is very challenging to operate the school on the budget allocation. The lack of economies of scale provides little scope for flexibility within the budget.

4.0 Criteria for prioritising school-level review:

- 4.1 The Local Authority needs to carefully balance the benefits of small schools against their relevant disadvantages. Whilst the majority of small schools performance is good, this does not preclude the aspiration to make them excellent. In other circumstances, it may be necessary to carefully consider the viability of small schools, when set against the backdrop of the need to improve operating efficiencies.
- 4.2 The following identifies the criteria which will be used for prioritising small school:

Category	Criterion (not necessarily weighted/priority order)
(A) School performance	a) Ofsted Category b) School category as per protocol identified in the School's "Excellence Strategy" this includes: (i) school of concern (LA category 1) (ii) vulnerable below floor standards (LA category 2) (iii) Good but vulnerable (LA category 3)
(B) Viability/ Resources	c) Number of pupils on roll/viability d) Declining pupil roll e) Surplus places f) Condition of building g) The school is in financial difficulty and has to set a deficit budget with little prospect of recovery.
(C) Leadership	h) Head teacher resigns/vacant i) Leadership and / or governance issues
(D) Other	j) Any other factor which is deemed reasonable and may impact on standards

The prioritisation will take into account the mix and balance of the different criteria listed above. However, performance in block A will normally have the highest weighting on the overall assessment.

- 4.3 Although the policy defines a small school as a primary with circa 120 pupils on roll and a secondary with up to 600 pupils on roll, this policy may be applied to schools with slightly more pupils where one of the above criteria is present.

5.0 Guidance and Process for Small Schools

- 5.1 There are four options which the LA will consider in relation to small schools. These are:

- **Option 1: Status Quo:** In some circumstances, the most appropriate strategy is to maintain the status quo.
- **Option 2: School Federation/partnership working:** The development of federations which encompass small schools will help address some of the challenges outlined in section 4 (see separate policy on school federations).
- **Option 3: School Amalgamation:** Although the amalgamation is predominantly used for bringing key stages phase together into one school, it is also possible to amalgamate two or more schools which are the same phase. (See separate policy on school amalgamation).
- **Option 4: School closure⁴:** There may be circumstances where local initiatives (federations) fail to develop or have the desired outcome, when the local authority may need to take forward and consult on other options, including proposals to cease to maintain a school (i.e. closure).

- 5.2 The Review of Small Schools will be carried out in conjunction with the head and governing body. A flow chart is shown in annexe B.

- 5.3 Governors may wish to consider federation options and the local authority would facilitate and support the school in identifying suitable partners. The conclusion of each review will be reported to Cabinet Member.

- 5.4 The final option may require consideration. The process for closure of a school is contained within the "Closing a Maintained Mainstream School: A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies (1 February 2010)". This describes in detail the keys stages which must be followed which are in summary:

⁴ Statutory guidance to schools adjudicators includes a presumption against the closure of rural primary schools. But it does not rule out school closures where there is a strong case.

- a. Consultation
- b. Publication
- c. Representation
- d. Decision
- e. Implementation

6.0 Staffing

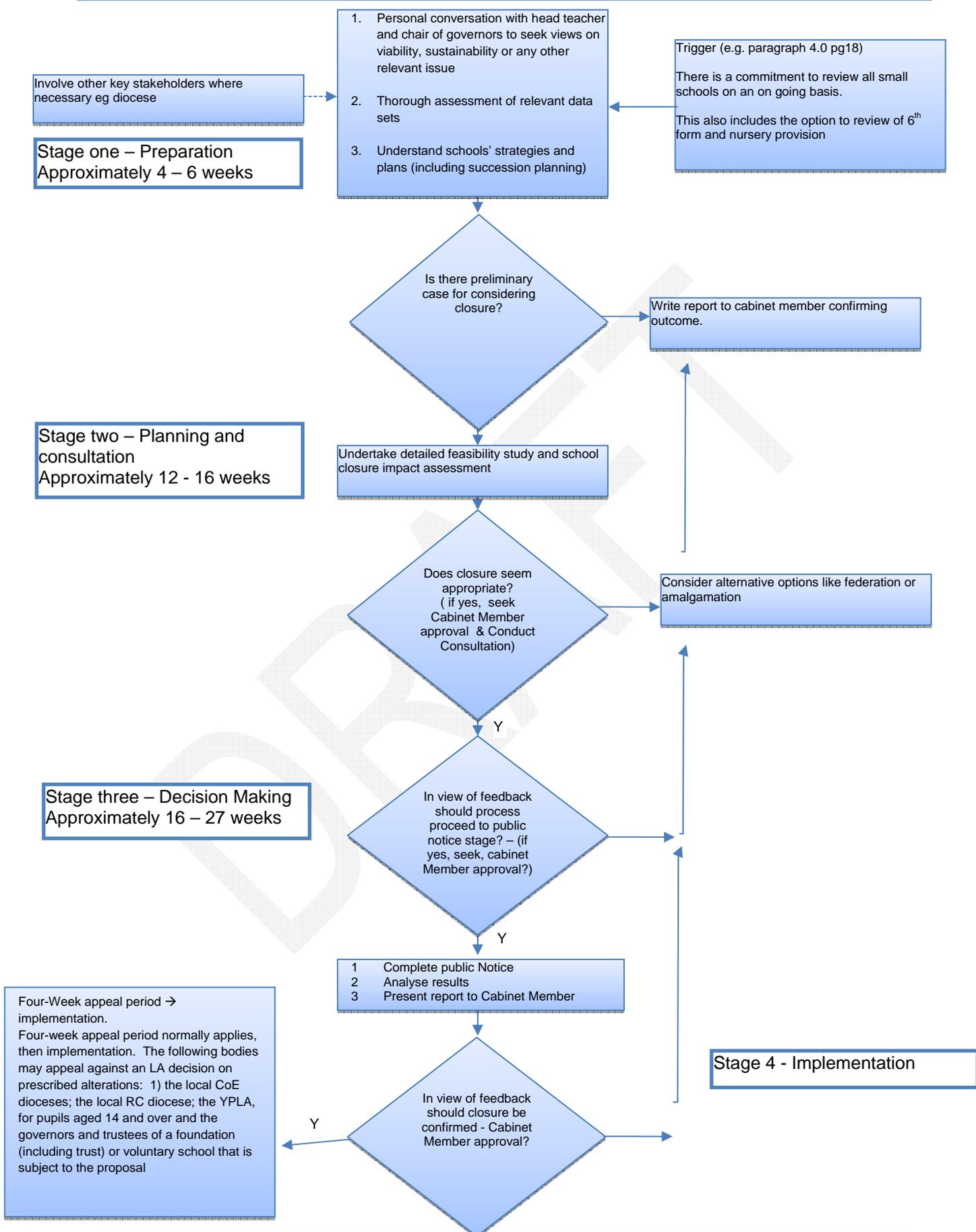
- 6.1 The staffing implications for individual small school reorganisation proposals would be determined by the governing body in consultation with the relevant trade unions and in line with HR policies and relevant statutory guidance.

7.0 Finance

- 7.1 There is an additional block sum as part of the funding formula to support small schools. This will be subject to review by the Schools Forum.
- 7.2 Where schools are discontinued any associated costs would be met from the residual school budget and offset against central education budgets.

DRAFT

Small School Review: Indicative Processes/Key Stages/Timeline
 (This is for illustrative purposes. All reviews will have individual project plans based on the most suitable approach)



APPENDIX 3

North Lincolnshire Council Children and Young People's Service

School Federation Policy Supporting Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document supports the Local Authority's Strategic Review of Primary School Organisation and outlines the policy for implementing school federation options.
- 1.2 This policy endorses North Lincolnshire Council's commitment to promote federation and collaboration to support school improvement.

2.0 What is a Federation?

- 2.1 The Education Act 2002 introduced several new powers, which allowed governing bodies to operate in a number of flexible ways, enabling them to respond more appropriately to their own local situations. One of these options was to create a federation of two (or more) governing bodies as permitted by Section 24 of the Education Act 2002, and the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007 No 960) ("the Federation Regulations").
- 2.2 A statutory federation is a group of schools – often two, but it can be more – whose governing bodies decide to agree a formal partnership. Each school retains its own character, budget and performance tables and will have separate Ofsted inspections (but may have an overarching school development plan). Schools in federations continue to be individual schools, and admission to each school continues to be determined by the appropriate admission authority.
- 2.3 One of the interesting features of federation is the scope to develop and implement creative partnerships/cluster arrangements. Whilst, the simplest model of federation is the partnering of two schools (say two small primary schools), creative solutions could be implemented encompassing faith school, multiple key stages, special schools etc.

2.4 Working together through formal shared governance structures, can enable schools to raise standards and enhance provision by sharing resources, staff, expertise and facilities. The variety of models offered by federation make it adaptable to suit individual contexts, and local needs and objectives. In general, there are two models of federation which are:

2.4.1 **Hard Federation (Statutory):** Federation is a shared governance structure, which provides a basis for extensive school-to-school partnership. Hard federation involves two or more maintained schools coming together with a single governing body (and normally an executive head teacher). Federated schools remain separate schools, maintaining their own individual budget allocations and reporting results separately.

2.4.2 **Soft Federation (Statutory):** A soft federation (statutory) is a formal arrangement under which two or more governing bodies share elements of governance or establish a joint strategic committee with delegated powers. Under these arrangements each school retains its individual governing body. It is based on the principle of allowing governing bodies and joint committees the freedom to determine their own arrangements within an agreed framework. It can cover a range of operational models from an over-arching committee delegated to take strategic decisions on behalf of two or more governing bodies, to setting up single-issue committees such as premises or curriculum committee. Under soft federation there is potential for common management positions and appointments, but there would need to be protocols/contracts in place to underpin commitment to shared posts.

2.4.3 **Executive headship arrangements:** One of the key features of federation is the ability to have an overarching leadership team and governance structure across the federated schools.

2.4.4 The principal difference between the statutory *hard* and statutory *soft* federation is that the hard federation has one overarching governing body; whereas the statutory soft federation maintains two or more governing bodies.

2.4.5 **Typologies of federation:** Recent studies have identified types of federation which describe certain characteristics of the partnership. In summary these are:

- **Cross-phase federation** (permutations of KS1, KS2, K3 and KS4)
- **Performance federation** (involving school(s) of low performance and school(s) of high performance)
- **Size federation** (involving two or more smaller schools or a smaller and larger school(s))
- **Mainstream federations** (mixture of special and mainstream schools)
- **Faith federations** (consisting of two or more schools of the same denomination, which may overlap with the above categories)
- **Academy federations** (two or more academies run by the same sponsor)

2.5 **Informal collaboration/partnership working (non-statutory):** Whilst the focus of this policy is based on statutory federation arrangements, it is acknowledged that informal collaboration and partnership working currently exists and works well. In some instances informal arrangements may be a precursor to federation; in other circumstance informal arrangements may simply be the most appropriate way of partnering. Either way, the LA recognises the importance of informal arrangements and will continue to support and encourage the development of these arrangements.

2.6 For clarity it should be noted that 'amalgamation', is where two schools become a single school. This is undertaken through a different process and is not within the scope of the policy. However, where amalgamation is being considered as a long term goal, federation may complement this as an interim arrangement.

3.0 Why Federate?

3.1 The strengths of individual infant and junior schools can be enhanced within a federated school setting. The following identify a number of possible reasons why federation may be desirable. In many instances the advantages will depend on a number of factors and variable affecting schools.

3.1.1 Benefits for the Children

- Cross-phase federation can help develop the infrastructure to provide better integration through education/phases.
- Provides greater opportunities for children to support pupils in other phases of education, e.g. citizenship support using cross school projects, for example, older children working with younger children and buddy systems;
- Offering pupils a wider range of opportunities, for example, by holding joint activities or sharing facilities or teachers that might be difficult to sustain individually.

3.1.2 Teaching and Learning benefits

- Greater capacity for developing excellence.
- Making it easier and more effective to plan across multiple schools, e.g. two federated primary schools could share co-ordinator roles.
- With cross phase federation, it allows the senior leadership to know the children for a longer period of time, which would support more informed assessment, target setting and pupil tracking, leading to improved outcomes and educational opportunities.
- Provides greater flexibility for lesson timetabling which will allow creative and innovated ideas to develop.
- Provides greater flexibility to explore specialist provision (eg gifted and talented).
- Allows information and pupils records to be standardised using common forms and, where relevant, data sharing protocols.

3.1.3 Leadership and Staff Benefits

A larger “pool” of diverse staff would mean that:

- Individual teachers have greater opportunity to develop areas of responsibility – linked to raising attainment and closing gaps in performance between different groups of pupils;
- Professional interaction, discussions and decisions are informed by a wider group of staff;

- Enhanced career opportunities for staff are developed, i.e. a chance to work across the key stages of the curriculum;
- Standards can be raised through shared learning and the development of an integrated curriculum and pastoral policies;
- More opportunity for continuing professional development, developing e-learning, Initial Teacher Training and Cross Schools Review;
- It easier to plan across the whole age range with additional benefits, for example, of greater continuity of curriculum methodology and policies;
- Improve leadership and management structure can be developed.

3.1.4 Benefits for the whole school community

A larger school/infrastructure means that:

- Other support such as extended services and facilities could be arranged more effectively to meet the needs of the community; Develop a range of extended services and activities for pupils and the wider community;
- Maximise the sharing of resources sharing specialist facilities, taking advantage of economies of scale. Sharing premises and/or equipment;
- Creating a strong sense of school family and togetherness throughout the school community.

3.1.5 Other Issues

- A proportionate reduction in committee and governors meetings – fewer meetings, creating more time and allowing greater focus.
- Budgets would be retained.

3.2.1 Evidence: A recent study commissioned by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services has concluded that federations of two or more schools can have a positive impact on student outcomes. The research involved more than 500 schools found evidence that links collaboration through federation to school improvement. The impact was found to be the strongest where the aim

of the federation was to raise educational standards by federating higher and lower attaining schools – so called “Performance Federations”.

3.2.2 DfE (2009) research into formal collaborations between small rural primary schools made a number of key findings:

- a) “That existing informal collaborations provided strong foundations for structural, more lasting models. Emerging evidence suggests that the adoption of any of these was likely to improve the schools’ long-term viability and effectiveness. In particular, models which involved sharing a headteacher (executive headship) had the potential both to alleviate difficulties of recruitment and to improve substantially the quality of leadership in schools”
- b) “A key driver of formal collaborations was the difficulty in recruiting headteachers for small rural schools. Executive headship was seen first and foremost as improving the likelihood of appointing a headteacher of the right caliber”
- c) Emerging evidence suggests that formal collaborations can create a climate of innovation which improves schools’ capacity for seeking new solutions to established problems.

4.0 Children and Young People’s Service Commitment to Federation and Collaboration

4.1 The Children and Young People’s Service is fully committed to collaboration between schools as a mechanism to raise aspirations, standards and attainment. In some instances, unplanned opportunities will arise which provides the opportunities for exploring federation, in other instances it may be possible to strategically plan for federation and collaboration. Either way the service will proactively promote the federation of schools, or collaboration. This will be undertaken in conjunction with school parents, school leaders, employees, governing bodies and the community.

4.2 This policy is likely to be used in conjunction with the small schools policy; however federations provide a viable solution for all sizes/phases of school to bring about sustained improvement.

- 4.3 The following criteria will be used by the LA as the trigger-point(s) to commence discussions regarding the feasibility and potential benefits of any school federation:

Category	Criterion (not necessarily weighted/priority order)
(A) School performance	a) Ofsted Category b) School category as per protocol identified in the School's "Excellence Strategy" this includes: (i) school of concern (LA category 1) (ii) vulnerable below floor standards (LA category 2) (iii) Good but vulnerable (LA category 3)
(B) Viability/ Resources	c) Number of pupils on roll/viability d) Declining pupil roll e) Surplus places f) Condition of building g) The school is in financial difficulty and has to set a deficit budget with little prospect of recovery.
(C) Leadership	h) Head teacher resigns/vacant i) Leadership and / or governance issues)
(D) Other	j) Any other factor which is deemed reasonable and may impact on standards

The prioritisation will take into account the mix and balance of the different criteria listed above. However, performance in block A will normally have the highest weighting on the overall assessment.

5.0 Implementation Process and Support

- 5.1 The process of agreeing a federation is a careful 'matching process'. Although a school governing body may wish to progress with a federation, the success of this depends upon finding a suitable partner. This feasibility stage can involve a number of stakeholders and careful consideration needs to be given about the sequence and timing of communications, prior to the statutory consultation.
- 5.2 Where a governing body has expressed a desire to federate, the nominated LA officer will advise on possible options. In conjunction with the chair of governor or governing body, the senior advisor will normally tentatively explore federation options with the identified head teacher(s) and chair of governor(s). If they are interested in exploring federation a subsequent meeting will normally be arranged.

5.3 The Local Authority is able to support schools through the federation process. The general type of support which will be offered (subject to SLA buy-in):

- Advice from a senior adviser – school leadership, structure, governance and how to maximise opportunities to improve outcomes.
- Federation advice – Advice on the process and procedure, including statutory requirements and consultation.
- Clerking relevant meeting and offering advice on federated governance arrangements, dissolving governing bodies and creating a single governing body.
- Finance advice on flexible arrangements, which may be realised through federation.
- HR advice on flexible arrangements that may be realised through federation.

6.0 Staffing Issues

6.1 Staffing may be affected by new federation structures. The new governing body will create a new staffing structure for the federation. Usually this is under a single Executive Leadership team. Any changes in structure will be determined in accordance with HR policies and in consultation with staff and trade unions.

6.2 Where a hard federation occupies multiple sites, it is likely that the LA will advise consideration of the appointment of a named leader for each site. The Executive Headteacher would retain overall responsibility of all schools.

6.3 Whatever staffing structure is used, it is essential to utilise staff flexibility wherever relevant/possible. Hence, school leaders may capitalise on this flexibility by using staff with specialist skills (eg languages, music or technology) to be used in numerous schools (and not just the staff members 'original' school)

6.4 It is possible to revisit contracts to allow flexibility of staff (teaching, non-teaching and administrative staff) to work across site (ie across the federation). HR advice should be sought regarding this process.

7.0 Finance Issues

- 7.1 There will be a one off payment of £5,000 per school to support with any transition costs associated with becoming a hard federation. In addition subject to SLAs, the LA will support schools in terms of advice and, where requested, undertake the role of managing the project to ensure the process is undertaken in accordance with the legislation. Experience shows that support provided by the LA to assist with the federation process can be significant which could include finance, HR, school effectiveness and governance support.
- 7.2 With hard federation, a single governing body allows for prompt budgetary decisions on behalf of the group of schools. The budget allocations are not affected by federation and individual school's funding is calculated separately. This allows the governing body scope for flexibility between and across the school budgets.
- 7.3 With a soft federation, there are no requirements. However, the governing bodies may set up a strategic committee and delegate it budgetary powers, so they can make prompt budgetary decisions for the group of schools. The budget allocations are not affected by federation.

School Federation: Indicative Processes/Key Stages
(This is for illustrative purposes. All reviews will have individual project plans based on the most suitable approach)

