

## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 18 June 2013

**Decision No:** (CAB 13/14 10651)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SUBJECT:	PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT - DECISION ON IMPLEMENTATION
AUTHOR:	James Howells

### THE DECISION

(i) To consider the outcome of statutory consultation and approve the implementation of published proposals to:

- Discontinue Bitterne Park Infant and extend the age range of Bitterne Park Junior, to establish a primary school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.
- Discontinue Tanners Brook Junior and extend the age range of Tanners Brook Infant, to establish a primary school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.
- Discontinue Oakwood Infant and extend the age range of Oakwood Junior, to establish a primary school from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

Discontinue Heathfield Junior and extend the age range of Valentine Infant, to establish a primary school from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

(ii) To consider the outcome of statutory consultation and approve a modification to the published proposals to:

- Discontinue St Monica Junior and extend the age range of St Monica Infant, to establish a primary school from the 1 January 2014\*

The modification will have the effect of changing the implementation date from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 as originally published above to an implementation date of 1 April 2014 as requested by the Governing Body of each school.

The modified proposal is to:

Discontinue St Monica Junior and extend the age range of St Monica Infant, to establish a primary school from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014\*

(iii) Subject to complying with Financial and Contractual Procedure Rules, to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and Learning, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to do anything necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

### REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Children's Services and Learning are working with the Education Leaders in the

City to develop all through primary schools in place of infant and junior configurations. This development is not a criticism of the infant and junior model. The intention is to pursue the development of all through primary schools if/where the situation allows. For instance:

- i. When the governing bodies of linked infant and junior schools seek support to establish a primary school.
- ii. If a headship of a linked infant or junior school becomes vacant.
- iii. If a school, with a linked school, is placed in special measures through an Ofsted inspection.

2. One of the three scenarios has arisen at all of the ten pairings of schools included in this report:

- Bitterne Park Infant School – headteacher vacancy, scenario (2), hence the proposal is to discontinue the infant and extend the age range of Bitterne Park Junior, thus forming an all through primary,
- Oakwood Infant School – headteacher vacancy from July 2013, scenario (2), hence the proposal is to discontinue the infant and extend the age range of Oakwood Junior, thus forming an all through primary.
- Tanners Brook Junior School – headteacher vacancy from July 2013 scenario (2), hence the proposal is to discontinue the junior and extend the age range of Tanners Brook Infant, thus forming an all through primary.
- Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior – Heathfield Junior has been placed in special measures following Ofsted Inspection in January 2013, scenarios (1) and (3), which has encouraged the LA to pursue a primary option, hence the proposal is to extend the infant and discontinue the junior.
- St Monica Junior School – headteacher vacancy from July 2013, scenario (2), hence the proposal is to discontinue the junior and extend the age range of St Monica Infant, thus forming an all through primary.

3. Table 1 details the number of infant and junior school pairings. Five of the school pairings in the table are involved in the consultation being led by the Local Authority. One school pairing, Bitterne C of E Infant and Junior, are currently undertaking their own consultation with stakeholders about merging the two schools. A report will be submitted to cabinet to approve the outcome of that consultation in November 2013.

**Table 1:**

<b>School pairings</b>	<b>Current status</b>
Fairisle Infant and Junior	Maintained schools
Ludlow Infant and Junior	Separate Academies
Shirley Infant and Junior	Separate Academies – members of same Trust
Hollybrook Infant and Junior	Separate Academies – members of same Trust
Bitterne C of E Infant and Junior	Maintained school - undertaking separate consultation on establishing a primary

<b>Bitterne Park Infant and Junior</b>	<b>Included in this consultation</b>
<b>Tanners Brook Infant and Junior</b>	<b>Included in this consultation</b>
<b>Oakwood Infant and Junior</b>	<b>Included in this consultation</b>
Glenfield Infant and Beechwood Junior	Maintained schools
Maytree Infant and Mount Pleasant Junior	Maintained schools
Sholing Infant and Junior	Maintained schools
<b>St Monica Infant and Junior</b>	<b>Included in this consultation</b>
Townhill Infant and Junior	Maintained schools
<b>Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior</b>	<b>Included in this consultation</b>

4. The Local Authority favours the primary model, where the situation arises, for the following reasons:

**Educational outcomes – benefits, all through primary schools:**

5. Are in a stronger position to plan for continuity and progression through the key stages of learning, Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Provide longer timescale for schools to work closely with families - year R to year 6 - seven years to develop successfully children's education progress.
  - Provide opportunities for pupils to work and play together over a longer period of time and develop greater understanding of diverse strengths, skills and personalities, which help them in later life.
  - Offer consistent approaches to inclusion, absences etc.
  - Increased opportunities for social development with older pupils having some appropriate pastoral responsibilities for younger children.

**6. Professional outcomes – benefits, all through primary schools:**

- Provide staff with greater opportunities to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the learning continuum for children from 4 to 11 years.
- Build capacity in issues of staffing and can better plan for succession.

**7. Efficiency – benefits, all through primary schools:**

- A single, larger budget offers the opportunity to deliver quality more efficiently, through greater economies of scale.
- Reduced spend on leadership and governance arrangements.
- Increased spend on front line teachers, as a percentage of the whole school budget.

**8. Parental – benefits, all through primary schools:**

There is a direct benefit to parents in the admissions process. Parents have to

apply to secure a place in an infant school, at year R and a junior school, at year 3. Only one application is required for primary school – for admission to year R.

#### **9. Modification to St Monica Infant and Junior implementation date**

At the request of the governing bodies of St Monica Infant and Junior Schools, Officers would like to propose a modification to the implementation date for this merger. The original implementation date was 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014. The governing body for St Monica Junior would prefer a 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 merger and the governing body for St Monica Infant would prefer a 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 (or at the earliest April 2014) merger. Please see Appendix 3 for details of the governing bodies' view on the proposal and implementation date. Local Authority Officers have discussed this with both schools and as a compromise would like to request that the implementation date for the St Monica Schools be modified to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

#### **DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

1. Three alternative options have been considered and rejected. See paragraph's 10, 11 and 12.
2. Alternative options (1) to discontinue the school that we are proposing to extend the age range of could be put forward, but this has been discounted for the following reasons:
  - Bitterne Park Schools – the infant has an acting headteacher whilst the junior has a permanent leadership and headteacher arrangement in place.
  - Oakwood School – the infant school will have a headteacher vacancy from July 2013 whilst the junior has a permanent leadership and headteacher arrangements in place.
  - Tanners Brook Schools - the junior school will have a headteacher vacancy from July 2013 whilst the infant has a permanent headteacher arrangement in place.
  - Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior – the infant has a 'good' Ofsted rating whilst the junior has been placed in special measures by Ofsted. It is not appropriate to expand a school judged as failing by Ofsted above a school judged as 'good'.
  - St Monica Schools – the junior school will have a headteacher vacancy from July 2013 whilst the infant has a permanent headteacher arrangement in place.
3. Alternative option (2), to close both schools in each pairing and open a brand new primary school (with a new DfE number). Legislation dictates that when seeking to establish a new school the presumption is that this be an academy/free school. If there is no academy/free school proposal a statutory competition can be held, with the Secretary of State's consent. Alternatively, the consent of the Secretary of State is not required if the proposal is to create a primary school that is to replace maintained infant and junior schools (the Office of the Schools Adjudicator would make the decision on this proposal). This option has been discounted because the Governors of the ten schools do not wish to become an academy at this point and, in addition, the competitive process to establish a new primary

school is quite lengthy and would disrupt the existing leadership and governance structures that are currently in place at the schools. We would also like to keep the decision making process for these proposals at a local level.

4. Alternative option (3) is that the schools that have or are due to have, a headteacher vacancy, recruit a new headteacher and the pairings of schools remain as separate infant and juniors. This option has been discounted because the Local Authority has a preference for all through primary schools.
5. The proposal for St Monica Infant and Junior School could be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 as originally planned. However, after discussing this, both governing bodies agreed that a 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 implementation would be a better option as it would give both schools more time to prepare for the merger.

### **OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION**

Paragraph 18 of the report was amended as follows:

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued revised guidance for merging schools this month. They recognise that whilst merging schools will achieve greater efficiency savings, these will not be realised immediately. Therefore schools will now retain their individual budget shares in the year they merge, and will keep 85% of the two lump sums for the next financial year following the year in which they merge. Therefore the maximum that a school's budget should reduce by, as a result of merging, is £34,260 in the first full year, although the minimum funding guarantee may offer further protection in some cases.

The DfE has recognised that for some school mergers there may be a requirement to continue to provide tapered lump sum protection beyond the first year. Depending on when a national funding formula is introduced, they will consider whether further tapering protection should be provided for merged schools for up to two further years.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD**

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date:

Decision Maker:  
The Cabinet

<p style="text-align: right;">Proper Officer: Judy Cordell</p>
<p><b>SCRUTINY</b>  Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.</p>
<p>Call-In Period expires on 26 Jun 2013</p>
<p>Date of Call-in <i>(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)</i></p>
<p>Call-in Procedure completed <i>(if applicable)</i></p>
<p>Call-in heard by <i>(if applicable)</i></p>
<p>Results of Call-in <i>(if applicable)</i></p>