

## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 29 January 2013

Decision No: (CAB 12/13 9646)

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

### THE DECISION

#### Modified Decision

- (i) To approve the commencement of four separate, six weeks, pre-statutory consultations. The four separate, but similar, proposals for consultation are:
  - Discontinuance of Bitterne Park Infant and expansion of Bitterne Park Junior to accommodate 4-11 year olds.
  - Discontinuance of Oakwood Infant and expansion of Oakwood Junior to accommodate 4-11 year olds.
  - Discontinuance of Tanners Brook Junior and expansion of Tanners Brook Infant to accommodate 4-11 year olds.
  - Discontinuance of Heathfield Junior and expansion of Valentine Infant to accommodate 4-11 year olds.
- (ii) To approve the establishment of four steering groups for each pairing of co-located schools to oversee the consultation on the possibility of a transitioning to a primary.
- (iii) To delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and Learning, following consultation with the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services, to determine the final format and content of consultation in accordance with statutory and other legal requirements.
- (iv) 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

Amended.

The Chair of Governors of the federated governing body (one governing body operates across both schools) of two schools, Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior, asked the Local Authority if cabinet would consider their request to include the proposal, in the Primary School Development project, to discontinue Heathfield Junior and expand the age range of Valentine Infant, to create an all through primary. The Chair of Governors was unaware of the lengthy timescales required for consultation and decision making on such a proposal, and as such, did not approach the Local Authority sooner. Given that the Local Authority are shortly due to commence consultation on proposals to create three primary schools from existing pairings of infant and juniors, it would timely and beneficial for all parties if the proposal to discontinue Heathfield Junior and expand Valentine Infant was consulted on at the same time as the proposals for the Bitterne Park, Oakwood and Tanners Brook school pairings.”

1. Children’s Services and Learning are committed to pursuing the development of all through primary schools where the situation allows. For instance:

- Where infant and junior schools are co-located and governing bodies seek support to establish a primary school.
- If a headship of a co located infant/junior school becomes vacant.

Currently in Southampton the education estate has:

- 18 infant schools - 3 of which are Academies
- 14 junior schools - 2 of which are Academies
- 28 primary schools - 3 of which are Academies

2. There are 14 pairings of Infant and Junior Schools, see table 1. These pairings often liaise and share resources but operate as separate, individual schools.

<b>Table 1: 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	Infant Academy, Junior transitioning later
Bitterne C of E Infant and Junior	Maintained school
<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	Maintained schools

Beechwood Junior	
Maytree Infant and Mount Pleasant Junior	Maintained schools
Sholing Infant and Junior	Maintained schools
St Monica Infant and Junior	Maintained schools
Townhill Infant and Junior	Maintained schools
Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior	Maintained schools – recently federated their Governing Bodies

3. There are three infant schools across the City that are separate with no co-located school. These are: Weston Shore Infant; Woolston Infant; and Wordsworth Infant. The latter is due to become a primary from September 2013.
4. Over the last year the Local Authority has been progressing the development of primary schools. The schools involved are: Weston Park Infant and Junior (will be an all through primary from January 2013), Banister Infant and Wordsworth Infant – the later two taking the first cohort of year 3 (age 7-8 year olds) from September 2013.

#### **Current proposal**

5. By the end of the academic year 2012/13, July 2013, three headships of six co-located schools will be vacant: Bitterne Park Infant, Oakwood Infant and Tanners Brook Junior. The Chair of Governors of Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior schools have approached the Local Authority to seek support for the establishment of an all through primary school. Consequent consultation on school reorganisation is being pursued. The reorganisation, if successful, will allow for the creation of four all through primary schools. The four primary schools would be developed through expanding the age range of one of the two co-located schools: Bitterne Park Junior, Oakwood Junior, Tanners Brook Infant and Valentine Infant. The basic performance data of the eight schools included in the proposal is shown in Appendix 1.
6. Each new primary school will accommodate the full primary age range; 4 – 11 years of age. The schools will be renamed to recognise their primary status. For example: Bitterne Park Primary School, Oakwood Primary School and Tanners Brook Primary School and Valentine/Heathfield Primary School.
7. If the proposals are implemented the governing body from the expanding school would be the governing body for the new primary school. The governing body of the discontinuing school would be disbanded. However, the Local Authority would encourage the remaining governing body to reconstitute and incorporate members of the governing body that is disbanding. It is hoped that this would make for a harmonious fusion between the two schools and would be for the benefit of the new primary school and its key stakeholders. In the case of Valentine and Heathfield, these two schools have recently federated and have one governing body across both schools. In this case the existing governing body would be the governing body for the proposed primary school.

8. The Local Authority has discussed the proposal on becoming all through primary schools with the seven governing bodies. **All seven governing bodies have confirmed that they do not have an objection to the development of all through primary education**, on the site of the co-located schools. The individual governing bodies are concerned about school specific points. These are recorded in Appendix 2. The proposals have been shared with staff, parents and pupils at the Bitterne Park, Tanners Brook and Oakwood Schools, via a letter distributed from the Local Authority in December, see Appendix 3. Due to time limitations, the proposal to create a primary from Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior have not yet been shared with staff, parents and pupils.
9. To support the consultation, it is proposed to establish four steering groups for each pair of co-located schools. The steering groups' purpose would be to draw together the governing bodies and school leadership teams to collectively address issues to aid the consultation. Membership of the steering groups would comprise, but not exclusively, of two headteachers, two business managers, representatives from the governing body and a Local Authority Officer. In addition, a professional advisory group will be established, facilitated by the Local Authority Primary Inspector, comprising initially the four head teachers who will head up the new Primary schools.
10. If the recommendations in this report are approved, the first of two, six week periods of consultation would take place. This is known as pre-statutory consultation and will involve the production of information documentation and questionnaires, as well as consultation drop-in meetings. Any queries or issues raised during the consultation, about the implementation of an all through primary school, will be picked up by the proposed steering groups referenced in recommendation (ii). If there are no significant objections to pre-statutory consultation, and subject to Cabinet approval, a second six week consultation period would take place, known as statutory consultation. Statutory notices would be published at all schools included in the proposals, published in the local newspaper and sent to the DfE's School Organisation department. After this, a final report would be taken to Cabinet requesting permission to implement the proposals.

### **Primary Education**

11. Primary education can be delivered through: an infant and junior structure, a, primary structure or all-through primary and secondary structure. Each model has pros and cons. This paper does not address the pro and cons of the different types of education structures, especially the current status quo – infant and junior configuration. Instead it focuses on outlining some of the benefits of primary education, specifically focussing on educational outcomes, professional outcomes and efficiencies of a combined structure.
12. **Educational outcomes – benefits, all through primary schools:**
  - 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 progress 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.
13. **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.
14. **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.
  - Increases spend on front line teacher, as a percentage of the whole school budget.
15. **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.

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

1. Two alternative proposals could be put forward, including the closure of the opposite school or the closure of both co-located schools and the establishment of a brand new primary school. These are addressed in points 17 and 18 and are not recommended.
- Closure of the opposite school:
- To discontinue Bitterne Park Junior and expand Bitterne Park Infant. This option has not been proposed because the infant school will not have a permanent headteacher from January 2013. It is more logical for the school to be expanded to become a primary to be the one that has a headteacher.
  - To discontinue Oakwood Junior and expand Oakwood Infant. The headteacher of the infant has offered her resignation based on retirement from July 2013. The junior school has a permanent headteacher. Both schools have a 'Good' Ofsted rating.
  - To discontinue Tanners Brook Infant and expand Tanners Brook Junior. The headteacher of the junior school is due to retire; the infant school has a permanent headteacher. The junior school has recently been inspected, by Ofsted, and graded as 'requiring improvement'. In addition the junior schools KS2 results are below the city average. The infant school has a 'Good' Ofsted rating.
  - To discontinue Valentine Infant and expand Heathfield Junior. The junior school has been graded as satisfactory, inadequate and satisfactory for its last three Ofsted inspections, whilst the infant has been graded as good, outstanding and successful/good. It is logical for the better performing school to be the one that expands

2. Discontinuance of each pair of co-located schools, infant and junior, and open a brand new primary school. The development of any new school, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, requires that an open competition takes place to secure an academy provider. To open a maintained primary school without a competition would require authorisation by the Secretary of State or regulations.

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

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services (following consultation with Local Authority Officers) made amendments to the report and appendices, attached.

#### **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:  
29<sup>th</sup> January 2013

Decision Maker:  
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:  
Ed Grimshaw

#### **SCRUTINY**

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.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*