

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 26 JULY 2012**

**PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES:  
HOLLINSWOOD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND  
SKILLS**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER CLLR PAUL WATLING**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

Following the formal consultation process which was completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012, to seek a Cabinet decision upon whether to publish Public Notices in respect of the possible school merger to establish a primary school formed from the amalgamation of Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools from January 2013.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Cabinet, having taken into consideration responses to the formal consultation process completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012, publish Public Notices in respect of the merger of Hollinswood Infant and Junior schools.**

**SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>Children &amp; Young People – to consult and involve all stakeholders with a vested interest in children’s education and safety</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	<i>Children and Families living within the Wards served by the schools</i>
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	<i>To make a decision on whether to publish Public Notices to merge the schools to take effect from January 2013.</i>	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<i>With a proposed merger date of January 2013, the proposed change would take place shortly before new school funding arrangements take effect from April 2013. The Department for Education is currently still consulting on some aspects of these proposals, but the new funding formula for</i>

		<p><i>schools will be required to have fewer factors than at present. The only one of these factors that would be affected by a merger would be the lump sum. The maximum allowable lump sum will be between £100,000 and £150,000.</i></p> <p><i>The impact of a merger on Telford &amp; Wrekin's Schools Budget would be positive, as we would receive the same funding (which is based on the number of pupils in the area) but would only fund one lump sum rather than two. The impact of the merger on the new school's budget would depend upon the precise details of the new school's staffing structure. However, in general terms, the savings generated by having only one Headteacher, a likely lesser requirement for office staff and some savings on bought in services (as support for only one school rather than two would be required) would be likely to reach £100,000, possibly more. Thus the new school should be broadly in a similar budget position to its two predecessor schools.</i></p>
<p><b>LEGAL ISSUES</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><i>Changes to school organisation are governed by the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Guidance from DfE. The Local Authority is required to follow a statutory consultation process to merge schools or to change the school status. The consultation period should be for a minimum of six weeks during term time. The Local Authority is required to publish formal proposals. There is a four week representation period for objections or comments to be sent to the Local Authority. The Local Authority is required to consider the representations and decide whether to merge schools or change school status within six months of publishing the proposals. Relevant Bodies can refer the proposals to the school's Adjudicator if they have concerns that the Local Authority has failed to consult adequately or has not taken account of the consultation, or that the merger of schools and/or change of school status will have a negative impact on standards at the school.</i></p>

		<p><i>If a referral is made, the Schools Adjudicator will decide the proposals in place of the Local Authority.</i></p> <p><i>If the decision is to proceed with the merger of schools and change of school status the Governing Body will be reconstituted.</i></p> <p><i>A wide range of legal implications arise upon merger of schools and change of school status. These include negotiating the transfer of land; Assets Transfer; Joint Use Agreements; TUPE of Staff and Service Level Agreements for Support Services. In this instance there is no intention to change the status of any merged school and so the majority of these provisions would not apply.</i></p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>		
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	<p><i>The merger would impact on the individual ward within which schools are located. However there is potentially Borough wide impact due to parental preference in choosing which schools children attend.</i></p>

**PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Council’s policy on infant and junior school provision is that reviews take place, where appropriate, whenever particular circumstances emerge such as a pending head teacher retirement or resignation, or significant building issues including excessive numbers of surplus places.

In the case of Hollinswood Infant and Junior schools, the Headteacher of the infant school has submitted her resignation with effect from the end of the summer term 2012, in order to take up another Headship . It is intended therefore to apply the policy in respect of these schools to consider the options available following consultation with all stakeholders.

A decision to merge the two schools would be in line with the national trend to reduce the number of single phase schools. The benefits of aligning policies and curriculum planning which an all- through primary school would offer are more likely to lead to improved attainment for all children. A merged school would also afford opportunities for staff to enhance their skills by gaining experience across more than one key stage.

As both current schools are located on the same site this would be relatively easy to achieve. In the short term we are unlikely to join the two buildings physically but there would be opportunities to improve the access and circulation between the existing teaching blocks.

In the past 7 years records show that only 4 pupils have transferred from the infant school to a school other than the linked junior school at the end of key stage one. This indicates considerable parental satisfaction with progression to the current junior school.

A 6 week formal consultation process on the proposed merger has just closed and officers have been involved in several meetings with parents, pupils, staff and governors to seek and collate the views of all stakeholders. Letters have also been sent to the Parish Council, local MP and other relevant bodies such as neighbouring local authorities where appropriate, in order to alert them to the consultation process and to give them the opportunity to register their views on the proposals. Responses have been received via meetings and also through the School Organisation email inbox.

The outcome of the consultations is included at Annexe A. Any consultation responses received between 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July will be made available to Cabinet members before the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July

### **3. INFORMATION**

Following the Cabinet decision on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012 to engage in formal consultation on the merger of the two schools, further discussions have been held with headteachers and governors to explain the timetable and process necessary for consultation to take place in time for any possible changes to take place by January 2013.

### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If following consultation a decision is made to merge schools, to avoid lengthy competition rules regarding the opening of new primary schools and changes to school category, the recommendation will be to close the infant school and extend the age range of the junior school to accommodate infant aged pupils. . This would enable final decisions to be made by the Local Authority, subject to any objections being received and considered.

### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Decision **CB-5** – Cabinet meeting 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012.

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet Paper 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012 - Planning of School Places: Hollinswood Infant and Junior

**Report prepared by Kathy Swallow, Service Delivery Manager – Integrated Planning, Placements & Commissioning : Telephone: 01952 380905**