

**18 July 2016****Agenda Item: 07****REPORT OF THE ACTING SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS  
AND INCLUSION****CONSULTATION ON A POSSIBLE AMALGAMATION OF MEADOW LANE  
COMMUNITY INFANT AND COLLEGE HOUSE COMMUNITY PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides Committee with the outcome of formal consultation about possible amalgamation of the above named schools, and seeks approval to forward a request for approval to the Secretary of State, prior to then publishing a statutory notice as required under the provisions of Sections 10 and 15 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006.
2. This proposal is a consequence of a formal request by the governing bodies of Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Junior School that the County Council establish a new community primary school, which will replace these schools from September 2017.

**Information and Advice**

3. It is current County Council policy that consultations take place to actively consider the advantages of amalgamating schools to form new primary schools and that reports be brought to Members on the outcome of the consultations with recommendations for action.
4. Meadow Lane Infant and College House Junior Schools are located on separate school sites and are approximately 200 metres apart by the nearest available walking route.
5. Following the departure of the College House Junior school headteacher in August 2015, a temporary collaboration agreement between the two schools appointed the infant school's existing permanent headteacher as the executive headteacher of both schools from September 2015.
6. In September 2016, College House will become a primary school as the first intake of one class of Reception Year pupils will be admitted, following the Council's Basic Need expansion of this school to create 210 additional primary school places in Chilwell by September 2022.
7. Thus, the amalgamation under consideration will involve the current Meadow Lane Infant School and what will become College House Primary School from 1 September 2016.

8. The opportunity to consider a possible amalgamation of the two schools from September 2017 at the earliest, arose as a result of formal decisions by the governing bodies of Meadow Lane Infant School on 6 January 2016 and of College House Junior School on 30 November 2015 that the County Council consult on a proposal to establish a new community primary school, which will replace these two schools.
9. The proposed amalgamation is not a reflection on the quality of education currently provided by either Meadow Lane Infant School or College House Junior School. The main purposes for proposing the amalgamation are in respect of improved teaching and learning, greater opportunities for social interaction across the primary age range, improved transition from age three to eleven, wider opportunities for professional development for staff and governors and the efficient use of resources at a split site serving a wider community of parents.
10. The predicted combined pupil roll for 2016/17 is 516, with a combined net capacity of 560. By academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19, the combined pupil roll is forecast to rise to 546 and 576 respectively. If amalgamated, the new school will have a capacity capable of accommodating 630 pupils.

## **Consultation**

11. Prior to initiating a formal statutory process, informal discussions were held between representatives of Meadow Lane Infant, College House Junior and the County Council about the possibility of amalgamating the schools. Joint formal consultation meetings were then held with the schools' staff, parents/carers and governors. A consultation document was circulated prior to the meetings.
12. The consultation meetings were held on 19 April 2016 and provided parents/carers, staff, governors and the wider public the opportunity to discuss with County Council officers the implications of amalgamating the two schools.
13. Consultation documents were distributed via schools' and NCC websites and by hand to:-
  - all the staff, governors and parents/carers of pupils at the infant and junior schools
  - the wider community including residents adjoining the two schools' sites where appropriate
  - other schools in the locality
  - Early Years providers
  - the Member of Parliament
  - local County Councillors
  - local district councillors
  - other interested parties.
14. 40 responses were returned during the consultation period that expired on 12 June 2016. Of these responses:
  - 26 (65%) agreed with the proposal to amalgamate
  - 9 (23%) disagreed and
  - 5 (12%) consultees 'Didn't Know'.

15. The level of support for the proposed amalgamation has led the governors of both schools to request that the process should progress to County Council approval.
16. A summary of written responses received either by the reply form provided, via the County Council's website, or by electronic mail is included in the attached **Appendix 1**.

### **Statutory Notice**

17. If amalgamation were to be approved, the proposal requires that both schools shall formally close and that a new community primary school should be established. This will involve an application for approval to the Secretary of State, and if approved, the publication of a statutory notice under the provisions of Sections 10 and 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This notice would stand for four weeks and the decision on the outcome of its publication would be determined by the Secretary of State.

### **Other Options Considered**

18. One other possible option for the future of these two schools was considered which is for both schools to remain as separate infant and junior schools.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

19. There is support from staff, governors and parents/carers of both educational establishments for an amalgamation to be implemented in September 2017 at the earliest. A new single primary school for 630 pupils is perceived as being in the best interests of both schools and the community.
20. It is also felt there are sound educational advantages for the proposal to proceed which include:
  - greater opportunities for staff to develop and share their professional knowledge and skills
  - greater flexibility in the way management responsibilities can be shared, particularly in coordinating the curriculum and addressing the needs of all children
  - resources can be effectively focused on priorities and economies of scale and would mean that financial savings can be targeted appropriately.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, and the environment where such implications are material, they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

22. If Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary schools were amalgamated, the budget for the new school would be calculated based on the combined pupil numbers of the two schools. This means that if amalgamation were approved the budget would remain the same in the year of conversion. In the second year the lump sum element of the budget would be reduced to 85% of the combined budget (£170,000). In the following year after amalgamation, the lump sum for the new school would reduce to £100,000. This gradual reduction will assist the new school with the transition to a single primary school.
23. It is the intention that the new primary will operate from the existing buildings. In advance of this, the Local Authority would wish to work with the new school's governing body, headteacher and staff to determine, in the best interests of the children, the most appropriate way of utilising the existing accommodation. The operation of the new primary from two buildings would also qualify it for additional funding as a split site.

## **Human Resources Implications**

24. The governors of the new school will be supported by County Council officers to ensure that decisions about staffing in the school are made in accordance with employment law and the Local Authority's previously determined policies.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

25. Equality issues for staff will be addressed within an agreed enabling document which will follow an agreed standard format.

## **Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications**

26. Existing policies that currently apply to Meadow Lane Infant and College House Junior Schools will apply to the new amalgamated school.

## **Implications for Service Users**

27. When the proposal is implemented, pupils on roll at Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary, the schools at the time of closure, will automatically transfer to the new school as appropriate.

## **Implications for Sustainability and the Environment**

28. Any planning and sustainability implications were addressed in the relevant planning applications.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That Committee agrees to forward a request for approval to the Secretary of State, prior to then publishing a statutory notice as required under the provisions of Sections 10 and 15 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006, for the proposal to amalgamate Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School to form a single 5-11 years

community primary school, in existing accommodation, from September 2017 at the earliest.

**Marion Clay**  
**Acting Service Director, Education Standards and Inclusion**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Mike Sharpe  
Team Manager, Place Planning and Admissions  
T: 0115 9772803  
E: [mike.sharpe@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:mike.sharpe@nottscc.gov.uk)

**Constitutional Comments (LM 20/06/16)**

29. The recommendations in the report fall within the Terms of Reference of the Children and Young People's Committee.

**Financial Comments (SS 27/06/16)**

30. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraph 22 and 23 above.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

'Consultation on a Possible Amalgamation of Meadow Lane Community Infant and College House Community Primary Schools', March 2016

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

Beeston South and Attenborough      Councillor Kate Foale

Chilwell and Toton      Councillors John Doddy and Richard Jackson

C0851