

10 June 2013**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****ANNIE HOLGATE COMMUNITY INFANT & NURSERY AND ANNIE HOLGATE
COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOLS, HUCKNALL - POSSIBLE
AMALGAMATION****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 publish a statutory notice as required under the provisions of Sections 11 and 15 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006.

Information and Advice

2. It is current 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.
3. There is currently a statutory requirement that any proposed new school should be established as an independent academy. However, on 1 February 2012, an amendment to the EIA 2006 regulations for establishing new schools came into force and enables any proposed new school emanating from an infant and junior school amalgamation to be exempt from this requirement.
4. Annie Holgate Infant and Junior Schools are located on adjoining but separate single sites with vehicular and pedestrian access equally accessible and convenient for parents. Whilst both schools are currently operating with permanent headteachers in post, during the recent consultation, the infant school headteacher tendered his resignation to take up an alternative headteacher post from September 2013.
5. A successful bid for funding has been made to the DfE via the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme to replace the existing premises with a new through-primary school building and the original proposed implementation date for the amalgamation of September 2015 was linked to anticipated timelines for the new build.
6. However the opportunity to consider bringing forward the proposed implementation date for the amalgamation of the two schools from September 2015 to September 2014 has since arisen as a result of the headteacher vacancy at Annie Holgate Infant and Nursery

School. The Department for Education has advised that this proposed change of date for amalgamation can be considered under the existing consultation.

7. The proposed amalgamation is not a reflection on the quality of education currently provided by either Annie Holgate Infant School or Annie Holgate Junior School.
8. The current predicted combined pupil roll for 2013/14 is 357 with a combined net capacity of 420. By the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years, the combined pupil roll is forecast to rise to 359 and 366 respectively.

Consultation

9. Prior to initiating a formal statutory process, informal discussions were held between representatives of Annie Holgate Infant, Annie Holgate 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.
10. The consultation meetings were held on 18 April 2013 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.
11. Approximately 800 consultation documents were distributed to:-
 - all the staff, governors and parents/carers of pupils at the Annie Holgate schools
 - the wider community including residents adjoining the Annie Holgate schools' sites where appropriate
 - other schools in the locality
 - the Member of Parliament
 - appropriate County Councillors
 - Diocesan Authorities
 - the local district council
 - other interested parties.
12. 30 responses were returned during the consultation period that expired on 10 May 2013. Of these responses:
 - 23 agreed with the proposal to amalgamate
 - 1 disagreed and
 - 6 consultees 'Didn't Know'
13. The headteachers of Annie Holgate Infant and Junior schools, governors of both schools and the schools' respective pupil councils support the proposal and feel it would be a positive step forward. The headteachers and governors of the two schools also support the proposed new primary school being established in the existing infant and junior buildings pending confirmation of government's proposals to provide new premises on one of the existing school sites.

14. All written responses received either by the reply form provided, via the County Council's website or by electronic mail, are available as a background paper to this report. A summary of the comments made is included in the attached **Appendix**.

Statutory Notice

15. If amalgamation was 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 the publication of a statutory notice under the provisions of Sections 11 and 15 of the EIA 2006. This notice will stand for six weeks and the decision on the outcome of its publication will be determined by an independent Schools Adjudicator.

Other Options Considered

16. One other possible option for the future of these two schools was considered:
- both schools remain as separate infant and junior schools
17. The particular benefits of amalgamation include:
- making more efficient use of available on-site accommodation to benefit not only the two schools, but also the local community as a whole;
 - a larger, single primary school will benefit from a combined budget and be a more viable provision of educational places for the community it will serve.

Reasons for Recommendation

18. There is support from staff, governors and parents/carers of both educational establishments for an amalgamation to proceed. The proposed implementation date consulted on was from September 2015 at the earliest. However, in the light of the headteacher vacancy referred to in paragraph 4 of this report, it would seem prudent to bring the proposed implementation forward to September 2014 in order that potential interim headteacher arrangements are less protracted.
19. A new single primary school for 420 pupils and 39 full-time equivalent early years places, is perceived as being in the best interests of both schools and the community. 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
 - more 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

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service

and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

21. If approval is subsequently given for the proposal to be implemented, pupils on roll at Annie Holgate Infant and Junior schools at the time of closure will automatically transfer to the new school as appropriate.

Financial Implications

22. As a result of the changes all local authorities have been required to make to school funding from April 2013, upon amalgamation, the new school will receive a single budget allocation based on the agreed local funding formula for schools of a similar size.

Equalities Implications

23. Due regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.
24. Equal opportunities issues for staff will be addressed within an agreed enabling document which will follow an agreed standard format.
25. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is available as a background paper. Decision makers must give due regard to the implications for people with protected characteristics when considering this report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

26. Appropriate consideration has been given to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is the view of the County Council that this proposed amalgamation does not pose a significant risk to increasing criminal activity within the locality of the two schools.

Human Rights Implications

27. Parental preference will continue to be facilitated.

Safeguarding of Children Implications

28. Any new build scheme will take account of safeguarding needs and requirements.

Human Resources Implications

29. 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.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

30. Any new build project will require planning approval and will meet Building Regulations which reflect sustainability and environmental targets.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:-

- 1) Committee notes and considers the outcome of formal consultation with staff, governors, pupils, parents/carers, local community and other interested parties about the proposals referred to in paragraph 1 of this report.
- 2) Committee agrees to the publication of a statutory notice, under the provisions of Sections 11 and 15 of the EIA 2006, for the proposal to amalgamate Annie Holgate Infant and Nursery School and Annie Holgate Junior School to form a single 3-11 years community primary school with early years provision, in existing accommodation, from September 2014 at the earliest.
- 3) a further report be submitted to the Committee on the outcome of the School Adjudicator's decision on whether or not the proposed amalgamation can be implemented.

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Constitutional Comments (NAB 15/05/13)

31. Children and Young People's Committee has authority to approve the recommendation set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (KLA 14/05/13)

32. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraph 22.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- 1) The document for parents/carers, staff, governors and other interested parties explaining the possibility of amalgamating the two schools (circulated 25 March 2013)
- 2) Notes of questions and views expressed and discussed at the consultation meetings held on 18 April 2013 with parents/carers, staff, governors and local community
- 3) Written responses received during the formal consultation period that expired on 10 May 2013
- 4) Equality Impact Assessment

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.

Electoral Division and Members Affected

Hucknall: Councillors Alice Grice, John Wilkinson and John Wilmott

C0224

APPENDIX

Possible Amalgamation of Annie Holgate Infant & Junior Schools, Hucknall

Consultation Responses Analysis:

Number of consultation documents distributed approximately 800

	No. of responses received Agreed	No. of responses received Disagreed	No. of responses received Didn't Know
Parent/Carer	11	1	3
Governor	2	0	0
Staff	6	0	1
Pupil Councils of Annie Holgate Schools	2	0	0
Other	2	0	2
TOTALS	23	1	6
Where reply forms indicated more than one type of respondent, only one has been included in the table above using a priority order of 'parent/carers', 'governor', 'staff' and then 'pupil/other'.			

**Comments/Issues/Points raised at consultation meetings and within
Written/Electronic/On-line responses:**

The decision making process

- Individual parental full support expressed for the amalgamation, citing that any improvements can only be a good thing
- Parental comments made of recognising the benefits of an amalgamation for both current pupils, and those who may attend in the future
- Opinion expressed that 'primary phase' education seems to work for other local schools so why not develop the two Annie Holgate schools in the same way
- Comments made there was insufficient information about the potential impact the proposal would have on residential properties neighbouring the Annie Holgate schools' sites
- Although support expressed for a proposed amalgamation, concern raised about the statutory process and that County Council officers attending the joint staff consultation meeting were not able to confirm exactly when a formal decision would be made about the proposal
- Concern raised that opinions expressed about the proposed amalgamation would be taken seriously by the County Council and that all interested parties directly affected will be kept informed, asked for their professional opinions and kept up to date
- Clarification sought and concern raised about where any new build would be located on one of the Annie Holgate schools' sites
- Clarification sought and concern raised about what will happen to the existing school sites
- Feeling expressed that the consultation process appeared to be merely a paper exercise and that decisions had already been made about the proposal
- Comment made that if no decisions have yet been made, how could the County Council provide specific dates during the process
- Clarification sought on whether new houses are proposed for either of the Annie Holgate schools' sites not needed for the proposed new primary school
- Opinion expressed there was information to suggest that a residential dwelling in the locality of the Annie Holgate schools was to be demolished to provide access to the schools' site
- Clarification sought on whether there was a proposal to increase the capacity of the proposed new primary school
- Clarification sought on why propose an amalgamation at this time
- Residential concerns raised about where any potential new build would be located
- Clarification sought on what were the benefits of amalgamation if the new primary school is located in two buildings
- Clarification sought on what the schools' governors would need to do depending if they supported the proposal, or wished the formal amalgamation process to be halted
- Clarification sought on the implementation date of the proposed new primary school
- Clarification sought that if the proposed amalgamation is approved, could it then be delayed until the new building is available

- Clarification sought on whether the amalgamation process could be 'put on ice' pending a new school building being completed. Opinion then expressed that governors needed to know if this was feasible, and what were their options
- If the proposed amalgamation goes ahead but funding for a new building is not available, clarification sought if the new school would become a split-site primary
- Clarification sought on whether a decision on available funding for a new school building would be made before a final decision on the amalgamation proposal is determined
- In expressing an opinion that a temporary governing body has lots of difficult decisions to make, clarification sought on whether its members will be sufficiently qualified to make such decisions
- Clarification sought that academy status was not being considered for the proposed new primary school
- Clarification sought on how a temporary governing body is set up
- Clarification sought on how much input the current headteachers would have with the temporary governing body (TGB)
- In referring to the TGB, clarification sought on what senior level experience the members would have
- Clarification sought on what would be the timeline for the TGB in the appointment of the headteacher and implementing the new staffing structure.

Staffing matters

- Opinions expressed that the proposal would be a good opportunity for staff to develop their own careers by broadening their experiences and knowledge, and provide an insight into each others roles
- In supporting the proposed amalgamation, opinions expressed that staff would have the most disturbance and it was hoped the County Council would offer as much support as they could
- Opinion expressed that if the proposal goes ahead, it would need to be carefully managed to ensure staff from both schools are thoroughly informed and given the same information and opportunities to voice their opinions
- In disagreeing with the proposal, opinion expressed that it meant a lot of uncertainty for several people involved in the process and needed serious consideration
- Opinion expressed that having one headteacher for the whole school will be beneficial for everyone concerned as they will have the same guidance
- Clarification sought on whether the existing Annie Holgate Infant School headteacher would be able to apply for the headteacher's post in the new school
- Clarification sought on whether existing Annie Holgate schools' staff would be guaranteed a job in the new primary school
- Referring to the impending departure of the existing Annie Holgate Infant School headteacher to a new post, clarification sought on what would happen to this vacant post
- Clarification sought on if there was no new school building provided, would the infant school headteacher vacancy still have to be advertised
- Clarification sought and concern raised that if the amalgamated school is located across the existing school sites, how can the teachers mix and work together

- Clarification sought about the 'visibility' of and access to the new school's headteacher if located across two school sites
- In referring to a potential new staffing structure in the proposed primary school based in two buildings, clarification sought on whether this would be an interim measure pending a final structure being in place when staff were located in one building
- Concern raised that governors were helping to make decisions about the future of teachers
- Clarification sought about whether staff will have to apply for their own jobs if the proposal proceeds; could they be downgraded and are those on permanent contracts guaranteed a job in the new school
- Clarification sought on when the new staffing structure would take effect
- Concern raised and opinion expressed there will be some duplication of jobs and clarification sought about what is the position for staff in this situation
- Clarification sought on staffing contracts and who would be their employer in the new school
- Clarification sought on whether staff might be asked to work in either school building in the event of a split-site school situation
- Clarification sought on whether job evaluation levels would transfer with staff to the new school, and if current pay protection would end
- Clarification sought about the implications of an amalgamation on those staff on temporary contracts, and those staff employed by the DSO.

Building and site related issues

- Opinions expressed that the existing schools are far too small and old/out of date and that they could do with modernising
- Feeling expressed that children would benefit from being under 'one new roof', and that it would be a safer environment than the existing situation
- Concern expressed that there should be separate playgrounds for infant and junior aged pupils in any new premises provided
- In supporting the proposal, comment made of hoping that facilities in the new school will be adequate enough for the benefit of the children
- In supporting the proposal, clarification sought about what impact any proposed new build might have on the existing Annie Holgate Infant School on-site management residential accommodation. Opinion also expressed that having this facility on-site was a contributing factor in deterring potential criminal activities on school premises, and to providing a safe and secure environment for school and surrounding area. For these concerns raised, a request was made for this facility to be retained.
- Opinion expressed that any new built school should be designed to benefit children with special needs requirements
- Clarification sought on what will happen to the children during the building of a new school
- Clarification sought on whether the County Council will be proactive in requesting the provision of a new school building
- Clarification sought on whether parents/carers would have the opportunity to comment on the design of any new build and when would they be told about it

- Clarification sought on whether a change of government would have an impact on design plans
- Clarification sought on when would a decision be made on the siting of any possible new build
- Clarification sought about the field adjacent to Annie Holgate Infant School and whether it belonged to the infant school
- Referring to an alleged existing on-street vehicle parking problem for parents/carers around the Annie Holgate schools' locality, clarification sought on whether this situation would be improved if the amalgamation goes ahead, as it was alleged there is already very serious congestion at the beginning and end of the school day
- Clarification sought about whether any new build could take several years to be completed
- Clarification sought on who owns the land on which the Annie Holgate schools were currently located
- Clarification sought on whether the County Council would listen to local residents as to how and where the new school is to built
- Clarification sought on whether an amalgamated school could be initially located in just one of the exiting Annie Holgate schools' premises.

Financial Issues

- If the proposal proceeds, concern raised that as funding for a new school building is not guaranteed, this could result in having a combined school over two sites which was felt would be a massive step backwards
- In referring to the funding of a new school building, clarification sought on whether the amalgamated school would still get all the benefits if it remained in two separate buildings
- Clarification sought on whether it would be more expensive if the new school is located in two buildings
- Clarification sought by governors about what will happen if funding does not become available for a new school building
- Clarification sought on the availability of any funding being available from the County Council for possible changes of school uniform if the proposal proceeds
- Clarification sought on whether the budgets of the Annie Holgate schools would be combined if amalgamation was implemented.

Pupil, Curriculum and Community related issues

- Individual parental concern raised about the age difference from 3-11 years in the new school and the possibility that this could lead to bullying of the younger pupils by the older ones
- Support expressed for an amalgamation, citing that it will be good for the infant children to mix with older pupils who can help teach them how to behave, respect and learn
- Opinion expressed that the proposal would make the transition from Year 2 to Year 3 smoother for children

- Opinions expressed that combining the two schools will hopefully help in the way the schools are allegedly currently run differently, and help to improve communication that is allegedly sometimes lacking as separate schools
- Opinion expressed that, should the proposal be implemented, it will mean there would be consistent policies and practices for all of the children, which was felt had to be beneficial to their learning
- As a neighbouring resident to the Annie Holgate school campus, concern raised about the potential impact the proposal would have on privacy and property values
- Concern expressed there would be increased traffic to the new school
- Comment made that having one school will make it easier for parents/carers when dropping off/picking up their children
- Support expressed for the proposal, citing that children will get to know all the staff thereby making the transition between Key Stages easier for them
- Opinion expressed that the proposal would help improve school events between Key Stages 1 and 2
- Comment made that improved facilities will mean a better learning environment for the children
- Concern raised about the impact and disruption on children's education during the proposed amalgamation transition period and any potential on-site building works, particularly when Year 6 pupils are taking their SATs, citing that arrangements do not appear to have been put in place to manage this
- Clarification sought on whether children in the existing Annie Holgate schools would be guaranteed a place in the proposed new primary school
- Clarification sought on whether the existing early years provision would be retained
- Clarification sought about new housing developments proposed in other parts of Hucknall and where would any potential additional children from these houses go to school
- Clarification sought on what evidence is there that children progress better in a primary setting, and is there evidence to suggest that children benefit more when transferring from a primary school to secondary education, rather than from a junior school
- Clarification sought on whether parents/carers were aware of a potential split-site primary school situation.