

17<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Agenda Item: 5

## **REPORT OF THE ACTING SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS**

### **PUBLICATION OF A STATUTORY NOTICE CONCERNING THE CLOSURE OF MEADOW LANE INFANT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE OPENING OF A NEW SCHOOL TO BE CALLED THE LANES PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2017**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides Committee with the outcome of the publication of a Statutory Notice concerning the closure of Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School, and the opening of a new school to be called The Lanes Primary School from 1 September 2017.
2. This report also informs Committee of a subsequent application to the Schools Adjudicator for approval to close Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School, and the opening of a new school to be called The Lanes Primary School from 1 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. Where these consultations result in County Council approval, the statutory process is then invoked to progress such proposals to formal amalgamation.
4. Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary 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 Meadow Lane Infant School's existing permanent headteacher as the executive headteacher of both schools from September 2015.
6. In September 2016, College House became a primary school as the first intake of one class of Reception Year pupils was admitted, following the Council's Basic Need expansion of this school to create 210 additional primary school places in Chilwell by September 2022. Thus, the amalgamation under consideration will involve the current Meadow Lane Infant School and an expanded College House Primary School.

7. The opportunity to consider a possible amalgamation of the two schools from September 2017 arose as a result of formal decisions by the governing bodies of the then College House Junior School on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and of Meadow Lane Infant School on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 that the County Council consult on a proposal to establish a new community primary school, which will replace these two schools.
8. The proposed amalgamation is not a reflection on the quality of education currently provided by either Meadow Lane Infant School or College House Primary 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 five to eleven, wider opportunities for professional development for staff and governors and the efficient use of resources across a split site serving a wider community of parents.
9. The combined pupil roll for 2016/17 is 538, 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.
10. 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. The formal consultation process took place between 18<sup>th</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Consultation meetings were held with the schools' staff, parents/carers and governors on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016. These 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. Consultation documents were widely distributed in the local community and responses received by the Council demonstrated that 65% agreed with the proposal to amalgamate. This level of support for the proposed amalgamation led the governors of both schools to request that the process should progress to County Council approval.
12. On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016 the County Council's Children and Young People's Committee agreed 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.
13. Approval by the Secretary of State was obtained on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 to publish proposals to establish a new 5–11 community school, to replace Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School.
14. A Temporary Governing Body was set up on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to oversee the transition to a new amalgamated school. This Temporary Governing Body appointed the existing executive headteacher as headteacher of the to-be amalgamated school from 1 September 2017, as well as a deputy headteacher so that work on establishing the staffing structure of the new school could begin.

#### **Publication of a Statutory Notice**

15. The publication of a Statutory Notice under the provisions of Sections 10 and 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 took place on 8 May 2017 and closed on 4 June 2017. This Notice was in place for four weeks. The decision on the outcome of its publication would be determined by the Schools Adjudicator, as prescribed by the Department of Education's Statutory Guidance on Opening and Closing Maintained Schools.
16. The Notice referred interested parties to the complete Proposals for Opening and Closing Maintained Schools, which gave full details of the Council's proposed closure of Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary Schools and proposed opening of The Lanes Primary School in September 2017. Interested parties were invited to submit comments on or in support of, or objections to, the proposal to the Corporate Director of Children, Families and Cultural Services at County Hall, West Bridgford.
17. There were no responses received by the Corporate Director during the period of Notice.

### **Decision by the Schools Adjudicator**

18. The Schools Adjudicator decides local authorities' proposals for new schools. On 7 June a request was sent by the Council to the Schools Adjudicator seeking a decision on the proposal to close Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary Schools and open The Lanes Primary School in September 2017. It is not anticipated that there will be any difficulties with this decision being positive or it delaying the opening of The Lanes Primary School on 1 September 2017

### **Other Options Considered**

19. One other possible option considered for the future of these two schools was for both schools to remain as separate infant and primary schools.

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

20. Support from staff, governors and parents/carers of both schools for amalgamation in September 2017, producing a new primary school for 630 pupils.
21. On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016 the Council's Children and Young People's Committee approved a request to the Secretary of State to amalgamate Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School and form a new 5-11 years community primary school, in existing accommodation, from 1 September 2017.
22. Approval by the Secretary of State on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 to publish Statutory Proposals to establish a new 5–11 community school replacing Meadow Lane infant School and College House Primary School.
23. Publication of a Statutory Notice between 8 May and 4 June 2017 resulted in no responses received by the Council.
24. On 7 June 2017 a request was sent by the Council to the Schools Adjudicator seeking a decision on the proposal to close Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary

Schools and open The Lanes Primary School on 1 September 2017. It is not anticipated that there will be any difficulties with this decision being positive or it delaying the opening of The Lanes Primary School on 1 September 2017.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

25. 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**

26. If Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary Schools were amalgamated their current year budgets would be combined and any projected underspend transferred to the new school.
27. In the second year the budget for the new school would be calculated on the same basis as any other primary school i.e. October 2017 pupil numbers, with the exception of the lump sum. The lump sum would be 85% of a combined allocation of £100,000 for each school. In the third year after amalgamation, the lump sum will revert to the standard allocation of £100,000. This gradual reduction will provide the new school with resources that will help to enable a smooth transition to a single primary school.
28. It is the intention that the new primary school 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.

## **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.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

30. 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**

31. Existing policies that currently apply to Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary schools will apply to the new amalgamated school.

## **Implications for Service Users**

32. 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**

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

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That Committee:

- 1) notes the outcome of the publication of a Statutory Notice concerning the closure of Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School, and the opening of a new school to be called The Lanes Primary School from 1 September 2017.
- 2) notes the subsequent application to the Schools Adjudicator for approval to close Meadow Lane Infant School and College House Primary School, and the opening of a new school to be called The Lanes Primary School from 1 September 2017.

**Marion Clay**

**Acting Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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

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## **Constitutional Comments**

34. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 21/06/17)**

35. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 26 and 27 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 possible amalgamation of Meadow Lane Community Infant and College House Community Primary Schools – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 18 July 2016

Statutory Notice publicising proposed closure of Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary Schools and opening of The Lanes Primary School from September 2017

Complete statutory proposals for a school closure and establishing a new school: Meadow Lane Infant / College House Junior Schools, and The Lanes Primary School

**Electoral Divisions and Member) Affected**

Beeston Central and Rylands

Councillor Kate Foale

Toton, Chilwell and Attenborough

Councillors Eric Kerry and Richard Jackson

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