

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	16 July 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2670
TITLE:	Proposal to Amalgamate Southdown Infant and Junior Schools into a Primary School	
WARD:	All Bath Wards, Bathavon North, Bathavon South, Bathavon West Wards	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 Consultation Responses Report		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to publish a statutory notice proposing the amalgamation of Southdown Infant and Junior schools into a primary school.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve the publication of a statutory notice proposing the closure of Southdown Junior school and the expansion and change in upper age range of Southdown Infant school in order to create an all through 420 place primary school.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Any revenue implications relating to the amalgamation will be supported by the schools budget which is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the Department for Education (DfE). The only exception to this would be if a redundancy was to be required which is formally the responsibility of the Local Authority, in which case this would be funded through the People and Communities Department schools redundancy budget. It is anticipated that possible redundancies at either of the two existing schools would be minimal as one Headteacher is currently already supporting both schools.
- 3.2 Some additional accommodation will need to be added to enable the proposed primary school to have a Planned Admission Number (PAN) of 60 to admit more pupils. This will be funded from the Council's Basic Need capital allocation from the DfE and details will be provided as part of a further report in November when Cabinet will be asked to determine the statutory notice, should publication go ahead.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Relevant considerations: Equalities, Children. No negative or adverse equalities issues have been identified. There is expected to be a beneficial impact on any junior age pupils who may be within the socio-economically disadvantaged equalities group, due to the OFSTED rating of Outstanding at the Infant school which will be expanded to also benefit junior age pupils, leading to enhanced attainment. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the sufficiency of school places.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Bath and North East Somerset Council is proposing to amalgamate Southdown Infant and Junior schools to create a larger all through primary school. Between 12 May and 22 June the Council carried out a statutory consultation with individuals and organisations that may be affected by this proposal. The results of this consultation are contained in the 'Consultation Responses Report' at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the Junior school would close and the Infant school would increase its upper age range to age 11 and expand by taking on the junior school buildings, to provide places for junior pupils in Years 3 to 6 in addition to places for infant pupils in Reception to Year 2. The Infant school would then become an all through primary school with a single point of admission at Reception.
- 5.3 The existing Infant and Junior schools each currently have a Planned Admission Number (PAN) of 45 and offer a total of 315 places for children in Reception to Year 6. The primary school would be slightly larger with a PAN of 60 for admissions into Reception in 2015 onwards and ultimately offer a total of 420 places for children in Reception to Year 6. The primary school would also make provision for Early Years age children as at present, therefore the age range of the school would be 3 to 11.
- 5.4 The primary school would continue to operate from the existing buildings and sites currently occupied by the Infant and Junior schools. The current Infant and Junior schools are Community schools and the primary school would be a Community school. All children currently on roll at the Infant and Junior schools would become pupils on roll at the primary school.
- 5.5 The Local Authority is under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area. These places should where possible be provided in popular and successful schools serving the area of need to increase parental choice and contribute to raising standards and attainment.
- 5.6 Additional primary school places are projected to be required in this area of Bath for admissions in 2016 onwards. Southdown Community Infant school has an OFSTED rating of Outstanding and is a popular school, having 135 places and 130 pupils on roll.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The two schools were federated on 1 January 2014. Federation is a formal arrangement whereby schools share a single governing body but retain their own

legal status, character, budget, performance tables and OFSTED inspections. As a result, they are already led and managed by a single Headteacher and Governing Body, in the same way as the primary school would be. The Headteacher and Governing Body have expressed a wish for the two schools to be fully amalgamated into an all through primary school. There would be several benefits in becoming a primary school:

- It would provide children with a seamless journey through school from age 4 – 11, removing the need for Infant school children to apply for a Year 3 junior school place as now.
- It would support and enhance the delivery of the new 2014 curriculum and would enable better continuity and progression of children's learning, particularly between Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.
- It would promote high educational standards and ensure high quality, good teaching.
- It would allow consistency of approach to learning policies, behaviour management, Special Education Needs (SEN) provision and better use of educational resources including teaching and non-teaching staff.
- It would provide opportunities to increase the range of expertise and experience of teaching staff and provide opportunities for improvements in the deployment and development of teachers.

6.2 The 11 consultation responses that were received from parents, parent governors, staff, unions and other interested parties were all in support of the proposal.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 To continue to run the Infant and Junior schools as separate schools as at present. This option was rejected as this would not achieve any of the benefits as outlined in Section 6 above. Also the schools are already federated and the Governing Body and Headteacher wish to be fully amalgamated into an all through primary school.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Copies of the printed consultation document were given to the schools for distribution to every Governing Body member, the Headteacher and all staff at both schools and for all parents of all children at the schools including early years age children in the nursery.

8.2 A meeting for parents was held at the school on 17 June. A meeting for staff was held at the school on the same day and additional staff consultation has been carried out by Human Resources. The schools carried out consultation activities with pupils at the schools.

8.3 The consultation document was emailed to trade unions representing staff at the school, the local Church of England Diocese, the local Catholic Diocese, the MP for Bath, all Bath Ward Councillors and Councillors in Bathavon North, Bathavon South and Bathavon West wards, the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children

and Youth, council officers including those in School Improvement, Admissions and Transport, Human Resources, Education Finance, Schools Capital and Early Years. It was also emailed to all other primary schools in Bath, all secondary schools in Bath and to the two special schools in Bath.

8.4 The consultation document was published on the Consultation section of the Bath and North East Somerset Council website for public access and on the Junior school website.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. No significant risks have been identified.

9.2 With regard to possible redundancies at either of the two existing schools, it is anticipated that they will be minimal as the Headteacher is currently already supporting both schools.

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Background papers	<p><i>Consultation Document</i></p> <p><i>Bath and North East Somerset website, Schools Colleges and Learning, School Strategies, Policies & Planning, School Statutory Notices</i></p> <p><i>Primary and Secondary School Organisation Plan 2013 – 2017</i></p> <p><i>Bath and North East Somerset website, Schools, Colleges and Learning, School Strategies, Policies & Planning</i></p>
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