

Stamford Park Infant and Junior Schools

Informal Consultation Information

1. Summary of this proposal

The proposal is to amalgamate Stamford Park Infant and Junior Schools. It is proposed this will be achieved by closing Stamford Park Infant School and simultaneously extending the age range at Stamford Park Junior School from the current 7 to 11 years, to 3 to 11 years.

The reason this method of amalgamation is being proposed is because from January 2021 there is a vacancy in the headship of Stamford Park Infant School. When a Headteacher position at either an infant or junior school becomes vacant, we consider if the site can be effectively managed as one school and if the buildings can be adapted to meet the needs of an amalgamated school at an acceptable cost, should this be required. If this is the case then we commence a period of informal consultation on a proposal to amalgamate.

This proposal does not include an expansion project or new school building.

2. Background

As there have been previous proposals linked to the amalgamation of these two schools, it is important to understand how we arrived at where we are today.

a) Original proposal – amalgamation and expansion

Back in September 2019, we carried out informal consultation on a different proposal which was to amalgamate the two schools and also expand them through building a new school. In our original vision, we proposed to discontinue both schools, which each provide 70 places in each year group, and to replace them with a new primary school providing 90 places in each year group.

There were a number of reasons we made this proposal at that time. Crucial was the Department for Education (DfE) consideration that additional school places were required in the Altrincham area, resulting in an allocation of basic need capital funding to create the additional places. This gave us a unique opportunity to simultaneously address the suitability and ongoing maintenance issues of the existing school buildings which have been a long standing concern.

b) Initial design phase – new build school

The building element of the original proposal was to create a new primary school building which would improve the teaching and learning environment for staff and pupils. In conjunction with the informal consultation, a design and build contractor was procured and design works started with the schools. The brief was to provide a new three-form entry primary school built on the current playing field, with the playing field being re-provided on the current buildings site. The new build design progressed to the point of initial discussions with the Planning Department and Sport England, a statutory consultee.

During this initial design phase an application to list the current school buildings was submitted to Historic England by an interested party. Historic England undertook an assessment in November 2019 and we were notified in February 2020 that Grade II listed building status had been awarded to the schools and outbuildings.

The proposed new build scheme was paused as a key part of the original proposal relied on being able to demolish the existing school buildings and re-provide the school playing field on the current buildings site.

c) Subsequent design phase - refurbishment and expansion options

The design team, which included representatives from both schools, then commenced a feasibility study to assess the refurbishment and expansion options in light of the listed building status. An initial options appraisal generated two potential preferred options which were explored in further detail. Both these options came in significantly over the project budget.

d) Ongoing options appraisal

There is now ongoing work to carry out a wider options appraisal which considers more than just the refurbishment and expansion options. This involves a range of partners including education, place development, planning, heritage and strategic parks. This group are developing an options paper which will be presented to Trafford Council Executive late 2020/early 2021. Executive will make a decision about which option to take forward. This could potentially be the option of doing nothing and not proceeding with the school expansion. If an expansion proposal is progressed, it will be subject to the relevant statutory processes for town and country planning and school organisation. These processes would be separate to the current amalgamation proposal.

3. The advantages of amalgamation

We have a long standing strategic aim to amalgamate separate infant and junior schools where this is possible.

The amalgamation of the two phases, infant and junior, will mean the school can develop a clear vision which is shared and understood by all. It will provide opportunities for the development of the curriculum and improve the way it is delivered. While both schools are already committed to working together and making transitional links, the amalgamation will provide a seamless curriculum which is broad, balanced and demonstrates clear continuity and progression in learning. It will increase opportunities for further curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

The amalgamation will enable the better use of educational resources including teaching and non-teaching staff. In terms of management and administration, it will avoid duplicating work.

Having one governing body to drive the school's strategic planning and monitor whole school development will ensure robust accountability.

The amalgamation will provide a single school at the heart of the local community, offering a consistent vision and ethos, bringing about benefits for children, staff, parents and carers.

a) Educational benefits for children

Amalgamation will improve continuity and progression for children's learning along with an increased ability to track long term attainment and progress. It will provide a consistent approach to their learning which will follow them all through their time at the school and help them to understand their place within the school family.

Within a single primary school, all children – younger and older – will have the opportunity to share the outcomes of their learning. The primary school will provide a nurturing environment where children can work and play together over a longer period of time developing a greater understanding and appreciation of one another's diverse strengths, skills and personalities. This experience has been shown to have a positive impact on social skills, problem solving and relationship development.

The transition from Year 2 to 3, from infants to juniors, will be smoother for pupils and their families. This will promote an increase in feelings of stability, security and confidence because the children are all in the same school.

The amalgamated school will provide greater continuity for the most vulnerable children such as those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and also gifted and talented pupils. The introduction of consistent behaviour management strategies across all ages would result in clear expectations and a shared ethos which is understood by children, parents and carers throughout the primary and early years stages.

b) Benefits for parents and carers

An amalgamated school will simplify communication between school and parents, especially for parents with children in both schools. It will remove duplication and ensure a joined up approach for events, training and timetabling.

There will be no need for parents to have to become familiar with different systems and procedures as children move into Year 3. Parents will only need to familiarise themselves with one set of policies.

The amalgamation will lead to the establishment of more consistent engagement with parents and carers as it gives the ability to foster longer-term family relationships within one school, thereby helping to better understand the needs of each child. A close working partnership between school and home has been shown to have a strong, positive impact on children's learning.

The amalgamated school will enable even stronger partnerships between school and parents with a shared understanding of aspirations and expectations for teaching and learning.

c) Benefits for staff

A single primary school will offer increased opportunities for existing staff to develop their professional interests and skills. It will also assist in the recruitment and retention of staff by providing greater professional opportunities. The

amalgamation will provide opportunities to increase the range of expertise and experience of teaching staff.

4. Human resources

The proposal is to discontinue Stamford Park Infant School and to expand the age range of Stamford Park Junior School to enable it to accommodate the displaced pupils and become Stamford Park Primary School. The Junior School would retain its original school number as it is not a new school, even if its name has changed. Therefore the Headteacher of Stamford Park Junior School will become the Headteacher of the Primary School.

Both schools are community schools, which means that Trafford Council are the employer of all staff. There are no proposed changes to this; Trafford Council will remain the employer of all staff, and there are therefore no TUPE implications. Staff terms and conditions will remain the same. In addition, other than the removal of one Headteacher position, there are no proposed changes to the staffing structure.

Support is available to staff throughout this process from their Line Manager and also the Trade Unions. Counselling support is available through the school's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). There are also some frequently asked questions which have circulated to staff. These will be added to as we receive any comments or queries from staff.

5. Financial implications

a) Revenue

The proposed amalgamation will reduce the overall cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant which will result in an adjustment through the funding formula meaning there is no impact to Council's revenue budgets.

Each school currently receives a lump sum allocation as part of the delegated Schools' budget.

Where schools amalgamate during the financial year 2020 to 2021, or on 1 April 2021, the amalgamated school will retain the equivalent of 85% of the predecessor schools' lump sums for the financial year 2021 to 2022.

2021/22 lump sum = £118,442

The additional payment would be £82,909 $((118,442 \times 2) \times 85\% - 118,442)$

Where schools amalgamate after 1 April 2021, the amalgamated school will receive funding equivalent to the formula funding of the two schools prior to amalgamation added together for the appropriate proportion of the year. This means that they receive the combined lump sum for the remainder of the year and 85% in the following year, as outlined above.

The local authority can also apply to provide a second year of protection. The most recent application to ESFA recommended by the Schools Funding Forum on 16 October 2018 sought 60% lump sum protection in the second year. The ESFA consider applications on a case-by-case basis.

b) Capital

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocation

DFC is allocated to schools annually by the DfE using a formula. Each school is allocated a lump sum of £4,000 and an amount per pupil based on the phase of education.

As a result of this proposal, Stamford Park Primary School would be allocated one £4,000 lump sum and a per pupil allocation based on the number on roll. This represents an overall reduction of £4,000 as previously both the Infant and Junior Schools received a lump sum amount.

Schools Condition Allocation (SCA)

SCA is allocated to the local authority annually by the DfE. Our School Asset Management Plan information combined with Area Surveyor knowledge is used to prioritise and allocate this funding on an annual basis. The funding process for allocating SCA for condition improvements for school buildings will remain unchanged as a result of this proposal. There is no SCA funding linked with this proposal.

Basic Need Funding

Basic Need funding is calculated and allocated to the local authority annually by the DfE. This funding is for the creation of additional of school places. This amalgamation proposal does not include an expansion of pupil number and therefore is not eligible for basic need funding.

6. The consultation process

The first stage in the process is consultation with interested parties. These are:

- the governing bodies of both schools;
- families of pupils at both schools;
- teachers and other staff at both schools;
- any other LA likely to be affected by the proposals, in particular neighbouring authorities where there may be significant cross-border movement of pupils;
- the governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected;
- families of any pupils at any other school who may be affected by the proposals;
- any trade unions who represent staff at the school; and representatives of any trade union of any other staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals;
- MPs whose constituencies include the schools that are the subject of the proposals or whose constituents are likely to be affected by the proposals;
- any other interested organisation or person that the proposer think are appropriate.

We want the consultation period to provide enough time for everyone to express their views and for these views to be properly considered.

The period of consultation is for 6 weeks in term time from Monday 9 November 2020 until Sunday 20 December 2020. We will consider and respond to all comments and questions and post those comments and responses on our website.

At the end of the period of consultation, all the feedback will be included in a report to the Executive Member for consideration. If they take the decision to proceed to the next stage, we will publish a statutory notice of our intention to discontinue Stamford Park Infant School and simultaneously extend the age range at Stamford Park Junior School.

The publication of the notice would mark the start of a four-week representation period. Within one week of the publication of the statutory notice there is a requirement for us to publish a full proposal and provide a copy upon request to any interested party.

A copy of the full proposal will also be sent to the Department for Education (DfE) and to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). This representation stage allows people to make comments.

At the end of the representation period, all the feedback will be included in a report to Trafford Council Executive for a final decision.

This is the proposed timetable highlighting the key stages in the process:

Stage	Action	Date
1	Informal consultation begins including publication of the proposal.	Consultation begins 9 November 2020 and runs until 20 December 2020 (6 weeks)
Decision by Executive Member to proceed or not to proceed to Stage 2.		w/c 4 January 2021
2	Publication of statutory notices and the final full proposal commences the statutory 4 week representation period (formal consultation).	15 January 2021 until 12 February 2021
3	Final Decision by Trafford Council Executive (must be made within 2 months of end of representation period which is 12 April)	22 March 2021
4	Implementation	April 2021

7. Have your say

You can ask any questions and help shape the proposal by giving your ideas and comments in one of the following ways:

Consultation hub: <https://trafford.citizenspace.com/>

Email: stamfordparkproposal@trafford.gov.uk

Write to: School Admissions Team, Trafford Council, Waterside, Sale, M33 7ZF