

## TRAFFORD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Date:** Monday 24 April 2017  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Corporate Director Children, Families and Wellbeing

### Report Title

**APPROVAL TO PUBLISH A STATUTORY NOTICE IN RELATION TO THE AMALGAMATION OF FLIXTON INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS (THROUGH THE PROPOSAL TO CEASE TO MAINTAIN FLIXTON INFANT SCHOOL AND TO ENLARGE FLIXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL BY EXTENDING THE AGE RANGE)**

### Summary

Consultation on the processes and linked proposals, relating to the amalgamation of Flixton Infant School with Flixton Junior School, began on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and closed on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017. This report provides analysis of the responses received during the consultation period and proposes that the LA progress to the Representation stage of the statutory process through the publication of a Statutory Notice.

### Recommendation(s)

That the Executive Member approves the publication of a Statutory Notice on the linked proposals to "amalgamate" Flixton Infant School with Flixton Junior School to create Flixton Primary School.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Marilyn Golding  
Extension: 1853

Background Papers:

None

### Implications:

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	Achieving Educational Excellence
Financial	The proposed amalgamation will reduce the overall cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant.
Legal Implications:	A prescribed alteration is determined by The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) 2013. A School closure is determined by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013
Equality/Diversity Implications	Schools are required to meet current appropriate Equality and Diversity Legislation however there are no direct implications from this proposal.
Sustainability Implications	There are no sustainability implications from this proposal.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	There are no e government or asset management implications from this proposal. The staffing structure for the proposed school is a matter for the Governing Body of the school.
Risk Management Implications	There are no specific strategic or operational risks to this proposal.
Health and Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	Schools are Subject to current Health and Safety Legislation but there are no direct impacts from this proposal

### Background

1. The Local Authority's long standing strategic aim is to amalgamate separate infant and junior schools where there are no contrary indicators e.g. size, respective locations.
2. The post of Headteacher of the Infant School is vacant and the Junior School Headteacher is currently managing both schools. The schools share an adjoining site. These contextual factors provide the opportunity to consider amalgamation of the two schools into a single primary school with a single leadership team. The Governing Bodies at both schools are in favour of the proposal to amalgamate. The proposal will not impact on any other school.
3. There are two methods by which two schools can be amalgamated. The first method is to close both schools and open a primary school. The second, the method proposed here, is to close the Infant school and enlarge the Junior school and extend the age range it caters for from 7 - 11 to 3 - 11.
4. The proposed method, preferred by the LA and the governing bodies of both schools, allows the closure of one school and the alteration of the second and provides the most straightforward and expedient option to achieve the amalgamation within the required timescales. The alteration to the Junior School is a prescribed alteration and is determined by Statutory Instrument 2013 No.

3310 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. A School Closure is determined by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013.

**5. Consultation**

Following approval from the Executive Member for Children’s Services, the consultation period began on 9<sup>th</sup> January. Information was published on Trafford’s website and comments invited. Information was sent to all parents inviting feedback and drop in sessions for parents and staff, were held at the Infant School on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and at the Junior School on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017. A meeting for staff and union representatives was held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Minutes of the meeting are attached (Appendix 1).

The Public Consultation Document and analysis of the consultation comments received is also attached (Appendix 2).

**6. Financial Implications**

This proposed change will reduce the overall cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant.

**7. Accommodation**

The accommodation on the combined sites would continue unchanged.

**8. Reasons for Proposal**

The proposal to close Flixton Infant School and to enlarge Flixton Junior School will provide continuity of leadership of the Headteacher and remove the need to appoint another Head teacher and consolidate more effectively the high quality education that exists.

**9. Other Options**

A decision not to proceed with the amalgamation.

**10. Reasons for Recommendation**

The publication of the Statutory Notice (Appendix 3) which is accompanied by the publication of the full detail of the proposal (Appendix 4), will begin the 4 week representation stage of the statutory process. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the LA to be taken into account by the decision-maker.

**Finance Officer Clearance...GB...**

**Legal Officer Clearance...PD**

**Corporate Director.....**  .....

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Informal Consultation Meeting held at Flixton Infant School**

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017**

Present: Jason Redmond Head at Flixton Junior School and interim Head of Flixton Infant School; Emma Newton Primary Advisor Trafford Council; Mark Creighton HR Trafford Council, representatives from relevant Unions; NASUWT – Ania Alchimowcz, UNISON – Scott Caplan, ATL – Marie Holden and staff from Flixton Infant and Flixton Junior School

Introduction – Jason Redmond welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mark Creighton, Trafford's HR representative.

Mark Creighton explained to interested parties that this was an informal consultation meeting as part of the statutory process and that responses could be made to the informal consultation up February 17<sup>th</sup> 2017. He introduced the Trade Union representatives and explained that following the meeting Trade Union representatives would be available to speak to Union members confidentially. Mark Creighton explained that all relevant Trade Unions had been invited and noted that although the NUT representative was not present she could be contacted via her email; details were provided. The UNISON representative offered to speak to any non-union members and GMB members. This was followed by an offer for the ATL representative to speak to any NUT members in the absence of their representative.

Mark Creighton outlined the amalgamation process and referred the attendees to the consultation forms, which had been made available to all staff. Trade Union representatives asked for a copy of consultation documents. Mark Creighton agreed to circulate the documents to the relevant Trade Unions.

Mark Creighton then provided clarification to reassure attendees re job security, job descriptions and working hours; recognising that the process of amalgamation can cause worry. He explained to attendees that nothing would change in respect of conditions, contracts should the two schools amalgamate in September 2017. Staff would continue with existing terms and conditions. It was explained by Mark that it was intended that from September 2017 there would be no change to roles and that the proposed school budget did not indicate the need to restructure. However Mark Creighton explained that, in the future, there may be the need to look at efficiencies and this would be the responsibility of the Headteacher, Jason Redmond, and the governing body. He reiterated that should there be a need in the future to restructure a further consultation would happen over 30 days which would allow affected parties to make comments and respond to the proposals. Mark Creighton reiterated that, initially in the first year, there would be no change to the structure, job security or job descriptions.

Mark Creighton acknowledged to attendees that processes, such as amalgamation, that bring about change also bring uncertainty and invited questions from the floor.

#### **Questions and Answers**

No questions were raised.

No responses given.

Mark Creighton thanked everyone for their attendance and listening and explained that Trade Union representatives would be available in 3 separate rooms for further discussions if attendees wished to speak to them in a confidential environment.

The meeting closed.

**Public Consultation Document**  
**Flixton Infant School and Flixton Junior School –**  
**Proposed Amalgamation**



**Trafford County Council would like to your views on the proposal to amalgamate Flixton Infant School and Flixton Junior School in order to become an all-through Primary School.**

**Details of drop-in sessions**

**Tuesday 24 January 2017 @ 2:30pm - Flixton Infant School**

**Tuesday 24 January 2017 @ 6pm - Flixton Infant School**

**Wednesday 25 January 2017 @ 2:30pm - Flixton Junior School**

**Wednesday 25 January 2017 @6pm - Flixton Junior School**

**INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE  
FLIXTON INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS  
TO FORM A SINGLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **BACKGROUND**

The proposal is intended to create a Nursery to Year 6 primary school through the amalgamation of Flixton Infant and Junior Schools. Amalgamation would enable the strengths present in the existing separate schools to be combined to deliver high quality provision in one school. This would allow a shared vision and leadership fully embedding a consistent ethos and coherent curriculum across the full primary phase.

Trafford Borough Council will oversee a consultation on the proposal to amalgamate the two schools to form a single primary school within the existing school buildings from September 2017.

## **WHAT IS AMALGAMATION**

Amalgamation is the joining of two schools into one, with a single governing body and one Headteacher.

In this case this would be achieved through the 'closure' of Flixton Infant School and the simultaneous extension of the age range of Flixton Junior School to form a single Nursery to Year 6 primary school with 428 places encompassing all Junior School children and staff. (This figure does not include the number of children in the nursery.) Based on the current intake, it is proposed that the school will offer 60 places each year.

The choice of which school to close and which school to expand is no more than a technical choice and carries no implication that one school is in any way better placed for expansion than the other. Usually, as in this case, it is the school with the head teacher vacancy which is the one proposed for closure. If the two schools do amalgamate they will continue to operate within their existing buildings. The newly amalgamated school is likely to be known as Flixton Primary School.

All children currently attending the Infant and Junior schools, plus all the children joining and being offered places at these schools between now and the end of the Summer Term 2017, would be guaranteed places in the new primary school.

In terms of future admissions, the current catchment area for the schools would remain the same, in order to support the school population at 428 places (plus 52 part-time nursery places).

Admission criteria would remain the same and all future admissions would continue to be made to, and processed by, Trafford LA.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AMALGAMATION**

It is generally accepted that all-through primary schools offer certain advantages to pupils when compared with separate infant and junior schools. These include greater financial stability and staffing flexibility.

There are a number of advantages of amalgamation that would be seen by the children, staff, families and all those involved with the school. An amalgamated school would provide the best opportunity for continuity and coherence in children's educational experience. A single school at the heart of the local

community would offer a consistent vision and ethos to the benefit of children, staff, parents and carers.

### **BENEFITS FOR THE CHILDRENS EDUCATION**

- The changes should not have any negative effect on the children at any stage of their education at the school. At this early point in the children's education, they would be provided with 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.
- It would aid the creation of a continuous and progressive approach to the curriculum, especially regarding the key skills of literacy and numeracy and in behaviour management strategies.
- There would be improved continuity and consistency of teaching and learning together with an increased ability to track long term attainment and progress.
- A single primary school would make the transition of the pupils between Years 2 and 3, from Infants to Juniors, smoother and better for pupils and their families with less chance of 'lost learning' at the beginning of Year 3.
- There is likely to be an increase in feelings of stability, security and confidence as the children are all in the same school.
- A primary school would provide greater continuity for the most vulnerable children and those with special educational needs (including 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.
- The provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and /or a disability (SEND) would continue to be identified at an early age as it currently is. The proposal would support a coordinated approach to planning for the needs of vulnerable pupils across the Early years foundation stage (EYFS – Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (KS1 – Year 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (KS2 – Years 3 to 6).
- Amalgamation would open opportunities for richer social development and interaction with a wider range of age groups for children, including older pupils having some appropriate pastoral care for younger children.

### **BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL FAMILIES**

- An amalgamated school would simplify communication between school and parents, especially for parents with children in both schools.
- It removes duplication and ensures a joined up approach for events, training, timetabling etc.
- There is no need to transfer or gather information or to become familiar with different systems and procedures as children move into Year 3. Parents would only need to familiarise themselves with one set of policies and one set of communications.
- Amalgamation would 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 helping us to better understand the needs of each child.

## **BENEFITS FOR STAFF**

- Working within a primary school offers more development opportunities for staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages, EYFS, KS1 and KS2.
- Primary schools offer greater recruitment and retention prospects for staff.
- It is possible to utilise staff knowledge, skills and specific expertise more fully across the amalgamated school.
- An amalgamated school would support continuous assessment, tracking and target setting procedures for the entire primary phase of education.

## **BENEFITS FOR LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE**

- Amalgamation would provide greater continuity and progression of learning between ages 3 and 11 via a single leadership and vision
- It would help ensure continuity and consistency of policy and planning across key stages.
- Recruitment and retention of a strong governing body would be more easily achieved. This would apply particularly to governors who are parents as there would be a greater number of parents eligible to be nominated.
- There would be enhanced consistency of approaches to inclusion and well-being.
- The streamlining of management and administrative functions, as well as the ability to arrange joint contracts and service level agreements for building and other support services would result in available funding being utilised more effectively to benefit teaching and learning.
- One governing body would promote a whole school culture and ethos across the amalgamated primary school.

## **BENEFITS FOR THE USE OF RESOURCES**

- Amalgamation gives scope for greater flexibility in use of money and the advantages of economies of scale — a larger school would provide more options in premises, finances and staffing which would help the school maintain greater flexibility to ensure the best provision possible for all the children.
- School budgets are based largely on the number of children on the school roll. If these go up and down year to year, it can cause instability and can lead to diminished funding, job losses etc. This is often more acute for smaller schools. Bigger schools are often better able to cope with these fluctuations.
- The streamlining of management and administrative functions, as well as the ability to arrange joint contracts and service level agreements for building and other support services would result in available funding being utilised more effectively to benefit teaching and learning.

## **POSSIBLE CHALLENGES**

We acknowledge that there may be some challenges during and following amalgamation, that would have to be managed by the school:

- Some aspects of staff and resource management may be disrupted during the restructuring process. However, by using support from the Local Authority and from other local schools,

which have prior experience of the amalgamation process we will together ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum and that children's education is not affected.

- The reduction to one Headteacher could impact upon accessibility to the leadership for staff, parents and pupils. There would, however, be a strong senior leadership team in the school to ensure all leadership functions will be managed well.
- Bringing together two different sets of policies and working practices could present some issues that both sets of staff would benefit from working through together.
- There may be some challenges in operating across separate buildings, however their very close proximity would make these relatively easy to manage.

The Headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body of the amalgamated school, with support from the Local Authority, would manage any challenges that arise. Both schools have effective and flexible working practices and there is already a strong working partnership across both schools.

The Headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body would adopt a transparent and equitable change management process to ensure that all who work, teach and are taught in both schools have minimum disruption through the process of amalgamation.

### **PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER**

The Published admission number for Flixton Infant School is 60. This is based on the capacity of the School and because the School need to comply with Infant Class Regulations. These Regulations limit the size of an infant class; Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, to 30 pupils per qualified school teacher.

The published admission number (PAN) for Flixton Junior School is 62. This is allowed because the Infant Class Size Regulations don't apply to junior classes; Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Admission arrangements, including published admission numbers, are determined (agreed) more than 18 months before they come into force. This means that the admission numbers for Flixton Infant and Junior Schools for 2017 have already been determined and that consultation for 2018 is already underway. In this proposal Flixton Infant School will close and the age range of Flixton Junior School will be extended from 7 to 11 to 3 – 11. However, the agreed published admission number would still apply. If the admission number is kept at 62 for 2017 and 2018, the School will have one class of 30 and one class of 32 in each of those year groups and the School will have to provide one extra teacher in each class of 32. This situation would have a significant impact on the finances of the School and would make the proposal to amalgamate the School unaffordable.

Once the full statutory process has been concluded, Trafford Council will consider whether or not to approve the proposal. If the proposal to amalgamate the two schools is approved, the Council will apply to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to request a reduction to the published admission number for 2017 and 2018 to 60. This is called an In Year Variation. However, admission numbers only apply at the relevant year of entry. This means that the School can continue to admit 62 children into Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 so no child will be disadvantaged by the process since the current position, 60 children into the Infant Classes and 62 children into the junior classes, will be unchanged.

Implementation of the proposal will be subject to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator agreeing to the reduction in the admission number in accordance with Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools Regulations, Schedule 3, Paragraph 8(f).

## **Frequently asked questions**

### ***Why would an all-through primary school be the best structure for the future?***

All pupils entering reception would receive their education from reception to year 6 without the need to transfer between two schools. A single primary school enables a consistent ethos and approach and has a single governing body and Headteacher accountable for pupil progress. The LA believes that the proposal is in the best long term interest of the children and their families

### ***What will the proposal mean for children currently attending Flixton Infant and Junior schools? Will my child be offered a place at the amalgamated school?***

All children attending Flixton Infant and Junior Schools at the time of the amalgamation will be guaranteed a place at the amalgamated school. All families who wish to apply for a place in the reception classes or for in-year admission after amalgamation would follow the normal procedures.

### ***How would amalgamation affect parents?***

From September 2017, once a child is enrolled within the primary school, there would be no need to transfer to a new school at the end of Year 2. A single primary school would provide continuity of education between key stage 1 and key stage 2 and would operate under a single set of policies and procedures. In practical terms, a single primary school would ensure that Parents would only need to familiarise themselves with one set of policies and one set of communications.

### ***How would amalgamation affect the staff of the current schools?***

It is anticipated that the existing staff of both schools would be incorporated into the newly amalgamated primary school. However, a senior leadership team will be developed to support the Headteacher and the staffing structure across the whole school will be organised accordingly to ensure the most effective delivery of the best education possible for all the children who attend the single school..

### ***Who will be the head teacher of the amalgamated primary school?***

Mr Jason Redmond will assume the role of Interim Headteacher for Flixton Infant School. Mr Redmond is already the substantive serving Headteacher of Flixton Junior School and will extend his remit to cover the extended age range of the new school, strongly supported by a strong senior leadership teams from both schools.

### ***Who will be the governors of the amalgamated primary school?***

The existing governing body of Flixton Junior School would formally continue to be the governing body of the amalgamated school. The governing body will reconstitute and extend its membership to include members from the governing body of the Infant School. The current governing body of Flixton Infant School will formally disband when the infant school closes.

### ***What are the financial implications of amalgamation?***

The Governors decision to pursue amalgamation was made for educational not financial reasons. It is anticipated that there will be financial efficiencies over time. The education budget that the LA receives from government is 'ring-fenced' and can only be spent on education – so there is no saving to the Council through amalgamation. The budget for each individual school is determined by a formula that includes some amounts for every school but is mainly determined by the number of

pupils. There are primary schools in the borough of the same size or bigger than the proposed amalgamated school, and they are able to provide very good education within their budgets.

***Will there be any changes to the buildings?***

It is not envisaged that any immediate changes to the school buildings would be necessary. The new amalgamated school would provide opportunities to share resources between buildings.

***Will there be any changes to the catchment area?***

Flixton Infant and Junior schools currently have the same catchment areas. There will be no change to the catchment area because of the proposed amalgamation.

***Will the amalgamation of Flixton Infant and Junior schools mean that the Primary School will have a new name?***

The proposal in this document is to extend the age range of Flixton Junior School. It will then be appropriate for the primary school to have a new name, which may be Flixton Primary School.

***Will the policies of the school change to reflect the new age range of the children and their needs?***

This will be a decision of the governing body and the Headteacher of the school. The school will review its policies to ensure that all children in the school are covered by all key policies including the school's governance and safeguarding policies.

***Will the children be required to wear a different uniform to school?***

This will be a decision that is made by the Headteacher and the governing body of the school. There will inevitably be some changes when the school's name changes. Any change will be phased to minimise any expense caused to families when buying new uniform.

***Will the amalgamated school be too big?***

The amalgamated school will of course be bigger as it is two schools joined into one but that will not mean that classes will be any bigger. The total combined capacity will remain the same. Staffing ratios will not be affected, children will still be cared for by their class teacher, just as they are now.

***Who decides if the proposal goes ahead?***

After the full consultation process the final decision is with the Executive Member for Education at the Local Authority. If approved the new Primary School would open in September 2017.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed:

Stage:	Process
1: Consultation	The issue of this document marks the beginning of a period of consultation during which the views of any interested parties are sought. These views will be considered before any move to the next stage of the process happens.
2: Publication	Dependent upon the outcome of this consultation, a decision on whether to publish a statutory notice must be made by the Governing Body of the schools and the Local Authority (Trafford Council).
3: Representation	Following publication of statutory notices 'representations' can be made on the proposals – this is the main opportunity for anyone with an interest to submit their views before a final decision is made. The representation period would last for four weeks.
4: Decision	Within two months after the representation period ends, the Local Authority (Trafford Council) must make a final decision on the proposal.
5: Implementation	If the proposal is approved the Flixton Primary School would open on 1 September 2017.

This document is the start of an informal **consultation** period on the proposal to amalgamate. The consultation will last for a period of 6 weeks from 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017. All written comments will be forwarded to the LA be considered by the Executive Member for Education when the consultation ends. No responses will be issued during the informal consultation process.

After this the Executive Member will decide whether to progress to the next stage of the process. If so, this begins with the **publication** of statutory notices on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017. This will start the period of formal consultation; 'The **Representation Period**', which will last for 4 weeks. Any member of the public can make representation to the Council ending on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Every representation (comment or question) will be responded to and published by the LA. A final **decision** will then be made by the Executive Member on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017 as to whether to amalgamate the two schools.

### How can you give your views and ask questions

It is very important that we hear your view and opinion on this proposal and we would ask that you complete Appendix A to put those forward and raise any issues and concerns you might have. In addition the schools have arranged a couple of drop in sessions to enable parents and staff to raise any issues or concerns they have about the proposal (Dates on front sheet).

## Proposed Amalgamation of Flixton Infant and Junior Schools – Consultation Comments

Consultee Type	Comment Details	Comment Subject	Response
Parent Infant and Junior School	<p>Think the joining together of the two schools is a positive thing. Sure the uniform will have to change due to name and colour. Please keep the 'tie' for the juniors and the 'polo shirt' for the infants. Very minor recommendations.</p> <p>Good luck.</p>	Positive idea	Uniform will be reviewed, but age appropriateness will be a prerequisite of any recommended changes.
Parent Junior School	<p>I agree that there should be numerous benefits, including financial efficiencies, to the amalgamation. I would hope that the transition from Infants to Juniors would be smoother and that policies, discipline methods etc. are merged to help both parents and children in this respect.</p> <p>It would also make better sense educationally. E.g. We were told in infants that “we teach joined up writing this way but it’s slightly different at juniors”. Shared teaching philosophies and shared outcome goals (rather than each school individually focussing on how to pass their Ofsted or Government targets) can only be a good thing for our children, taking the best of each school, hopefully!</p> <p>Only plea is to ensure sufficient senior management support to the Head; and to ensure sufficient back-fill to allow those area leads to fulfil those roles properly – As well as teach – and to ensure that protected time is properly timetabled so the cover teachers consistently teach the same part of the curriculum for continuity/progress assessment/ clarity for children</p>	Should benefit the children as long as there is sufficient senior management support.	<p>As part of the amalgamation process, the schools will undertake a full staffing structure review, considering roles and responsibilities and how to ensure as much continuity in staffing as possible.</p> <p>There will be, within such a review, consideration given to provide time for staff to effectively fulfil their roles.</p>

	and parents! With clear communication about any such arrangements to allay any concerns, if existing teachers will have increased responsibilities outside the classroom.		
Parent of Junior School	<p>I do think amalgamating the schools would be a positive move as there is quite a change to adjust to when moving from Infants to Juniors and I think it is positive for the older pupils to have interaction with the younger pupils and vice versa.</p> <p>My area of concern is any possible disruption this may cause to the pupils while everyone 'finds their feet' and it settles down. My daughter is currently in year 4, year 5 is a critical year for her leading up to the grammar school entrance exam and I would want complete reassurance that there wouldn't be any disruption to her learning or the positive environment she is currently in and that the school will focus on preparing her and her peers for the exam and supporting them through the process, which can be a stressful experience in itself.</p>	Positive move as long as there is little disruption to the pupils.	There will be no discernible disruption to children's learning as a result of amalgamation. Teachers will be totally focussed on providing the best possible learning experiences for their classes, as they are now.
Parent of Junior School	<p>After reading this consultation it is clear the practical solution is to run one school. However I have concerns regarding how the school if split over two sites will be effectively managed.</p> <p>A single vision, shared resources and communication makes perfect sense with a single governing body but I am extremely concerned about the head teacher being split across 2 sites, senior leadership not being visible in each building for 50% of the week if split across the sites equally and the impact of this on leading the teachers, children and parents.</p> <p>Already with the juniors since the shared site in</p>	Practical solution but concerns over splitting the head teacher's time over two buildings	Obviously there is an impact in having a split site, but part of a staffing structure review would involve ensuring the school community has access to senior staff across the school as a key priority.

	<p>September '16 the head teacher is much less visible after school and hardly ever available before school. Deputy head teachers are in classrooms full-time and I worry about decision-making, serious incidents and behaviour management if these teachers are unavailable for large parts of the school day.</p> <p>As a parent neither school is large enough to accommodate school assemblies, sport activities, celebrations so parents with children at both sites will not feel any benefit, as they will still have 2 drop off /pickups and calendars to juggle.</p> <p>Although streaming finances makes sense it should not be done at the expense of leadership. Therefore this proposal in our opinion is only viable with an assistant lead on each site not teaching but addressing studies, (?) behaviour and guidance for junior team members and a head teacher ultimately leading the school.</p>		
Parent of Junior School and Member of Staff	<p>I feel this is the best course of action for the schools. I look forward to the proposed amalgamation as a parent and member of staff. This will be very beneficial to the progress of the children's learning and success.</p>	Amalgamation would benefit the children.	
Parent of Junior School	<p>Considering all of the options, it sounds like a sensible and well considered proposal. The advantages offered in terms of continuity of education, management, leadership and shared resources make sense.</p> <p>The opportunities afforded to staff to improve their knowledge base around teaching different key stage children will need to be managed to ensure the quality of teaching is maintained.</p>	In favour, but need to ensure quality of teaching is maintained throughout all the key stages.	Teaching and learning of consistent high quality would be a core focus of the school and, whilst professional development across Key Stages would be offered, it would not be at the cost of high quality provision.

Parent of Junior School	I believe the amalgamation would be a great thing for the school. Shared values, beliefs and working towards the same goals can only benefit the children. It would also streamline the process of moving up through the years without a disruption between years 2 and 3 that can impact on a child's learning.	Amalgamation would benefit the children.	
Prospective Admission, parent of Infant and Junior School Member of staff Other	Would be good to join the infants and juniors together, but keep Mr Redmond as Head-Master of both, and all the teaching is very good as it is now. We are pleased with the school and anything which would improve the school.	In favour	
Parent of Infant and Junior School	To be honest as long as the children remain the priority and they do not feel any massive changes that may disturb them, I am fine with the amalgamation of the 2 schools.	In favour as long as there is no disruption to the children.	There will be no discernible disruption to children's learning as a result of amalgamation.



### **Appendix 3**

#### **AMALGAMATION OF FLIXTON INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS (THROUGH THE PROPOSAL TO CEASE TO MAINTAIN FLIXTON INFANT SCHOOL AND TO ENLARGE FLIXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL)**

Notice is given, in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road Stretford, M32 0TH, intends to discontinue Flixton Infant School, a community school, Mardale Avenue, Flixton, M41 5SA on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

Notice is also given, in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Trafford intends to make a prescribed alteration to Flixton Junior School, a community school, Delamere Road, Flixton, M41 5QL from 02 September 2017.

Trafford Borough Council is consulting on a proposal to amalgamate Flixton Infant and Junior Schools to form a single primary school within the existing school buildings from September 2017. Amalgamation is the joining of two schools into one, with a single governing body and head teacher. This would be achieved through the “closure” of the Infant School and the simultaneous expansion of the age range of the Junior School to form a single 3 to 11 primary school with 428 places (this figure does not include the number of children in the nursery). Based on the current intake, it is proposed that the school will offer 60 places in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 increasing to 62 places in Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.

The current capacity of Flixton Junior School is 240 and the proposed capacity will be 428. The current admission number for the school is 62 and the proposed admission number will be 60.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Marilyn Golding School Admissions, Waterside House Waterside Sale M33 7ZF Telephone 0161 912 5007 or email [marilyn.golding@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:marilyn.golding@trafford.gov.uk)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Marilyn Golding, School Admissions, Waterside House, Waterside, Sale M33 7ZF or email [marilyn.golding@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:marilyn.golding@trafford.gov.uk).

Signed:

Publication Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

**PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE FLIXTON INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS  
(THROUGH THE PROPOSAL TO CEASE TO MAINTAIN FLIXTON INFANT  
SCHOOL AND TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF FLIXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL)**

The proposal is made to amalgamate:

Flixton Infant School (a community school)  
Mardale Avenue,  
Flixton,  
M41 5SA

And

Flixton Junior School (a community school)  
Delamere Road,  
Flixton,  
M41 5QL

The Proposal is made by:

Trafford Council  
Trafford Town Hall  
Talbot Road  
Stretford  
M32 0TH

The LA (Trafford Council) proposes to cease to maintain Flixton Infant School on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and to extend the age range of Flixton Junior School from 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to be renamed Flixton Primary School.

**Objections and comments**

The publication of the Statutory Notice on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 begins a representation period which lasts for 4 weeks from 3<sup>rd</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017.

Objections or comments should be sent to:

Marilyn Golding  
School Admissions  
Waterside House  
Waterside  
Sale  
M33 7ZF

Or emailed to: [marilyn.golding@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:marilyn.golding@trafford.gov.uk)

By the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017

## **PART 1 – PROPOSAL TO CEASE TO MAINTAIN FLIXTON INFANT SCHOOL**

The published admission number (PAN) for the Infant School is 60 covering the age range 3 to 7. The maximum number of children on roll at the School is 180 (not including the nursery children). The net capacity of the School is 168. At the time of the publication of the proposal the number of children on roll is 180 (not including the nursery children).

The proposal to cease to maintain Flixton Infant School is linked to the proposal to extend the age range of Flixton Junior School. The combined effect of these linked proposals is, in effect, the “amalgamation” of the two schools to form, on current adjacent sites, a 428 place community primary school (plus 52 nursery places) for pupils aged 3 – 11.

Both schools are fully subscribed, and are a popular choice for parents in the area.

It is proposed that all children on roll at Flixton Infant School will be automatically admitted to the extended Flixton Junior School (Flixton Primary School). The need, therefore, for special transitional and transport arrangements are unnecessary. Other pupils wishing to gain admission to the proposed new primary school will be subject to the Local Authority’s usual Admission and Home to School Transport policies.

Early Years provision and extended services offered at the Infant school will continue, unchanged, at the amalgamated school.

The LA does not consider that there will be any adverse impact on the community.

## **PART 2 – FLIXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL**

### **School capacity**

The published admission number (PAN) for the School is 62 covering the age range 7 to 11. The maximum number of children on roll at the School is 248. The net capacity of the school is 224. At the time of the publication of the proposal the number of children on roll is 243.

It is proposed that the age range will be altered to 3 to 11. However it is proposed that the published admission number is reduced to 60. This is based on the capacity of the proposed primary school and on the requirement to comply with Infant Class Size Regulations.

These Regulations limit the size of an infant class; Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, to 30 pupils per qualified school teacher. The published admission number (PAN) for Flixton Junior School is 62. This is allowed because the Infant Class Size Regulations do not apply to junior classes; Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The School Admissions Code requires that admission arrangements, including published admission numbers, are determined (agreed) more than 18 months before they come into force. This means that the admission numbers for Flixton Infant and Junior Schools for 2017 and 2018 have already been determined. In this proposal Flixton Infant School will close and the age range of Flixton Junior School will be extended from 7 to 11 to 3 – 11. However, the agreed published admission number for Flixton Junior School would still apply to the Flixton Primary School. If the admission number is kept at 62 for 2017 and 2018, the School would be required to

administer one class of 30 and one class of 32 in each of those year groups with one extra teacher in each class of 32. This situation would have a significant impact on the finances of the School and would make the proposal to amalgamate the two schools unaffordable.

Therefore, the proposal is made subject to an application to the Office of the School's Adjudicator requesting a variation to the determined admission arrangements. The LA would request a reduction to the published admission number for 2017 and 2018 to 60. This is called an In Year Variation. However, since admission numbers only apply at the relevant year of entry, it is the LA's intention to continue to admit 62 children into Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 so that no child will be disadvantaged by the process. The current position, 60 children into the infant classes and 62 children into the junior classes, will be unchanged.

Implementation of the proposal will be subject to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator agreeing to the reduction in the admission number in accordance with Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools Regulations, Schedule 3, Paragraph 8(f).

The maximum number of children on roll at the primary school will therefore be 428. The Net Capacity of the amalgamated schools will be 420. There are no proposed physical alterations.

This proposal is linked to the proposal to cease to maintain Flixton Infant School. The combined effect of these linked proposals is in effect the "amalgamation" of the two schools to form, on the same shared site, a 420 place community primary school for pupils aged 3 – 11.

### **Additional Site**

The proposal is to accommodate all children on the current site. No new or additional site will be required.

### **Objectives**

The proposal to cease to maintain Flixton Infant School and to extend Flixton Junior School will enable better continuity and progression of children's work, particularly between Key Stage 1 (5-7) and Key Stage 2 (7-11,) and so create additional opportunities for improved educational standards and achievement. Pupils will not be required to transfer between the schools at Year 2, supporting curriculum continuity and in turn creating the opportunity for improved educational achievement.

As the school will provide education at Foundation, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, it will be able to offer expertise to cover the whole curriculum.

The amalgamation will 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. It will offer increased opportunities for staff to develop their professional interests and skills. This will assist in the recruitment and retention of staff by providing greater professional opportunities and financial incentives.

It will enable the schools to develop a single vision for the future. The amalgamation will provide opportunities for development of the curriculum and in particular enhance the delivery. The two schools provide a good education for their pupils at present and are well supported by parents and governors.

The amalgamation will reduce management and running costs due to economies of scale. The amalgamation will provide opportunity for better use of educational resources including teaching and nonteaching staff

### **Consultation**

The details of the consultation, including a list of persons and/or persons consulted was included in the report to the Executive (attached as Annex A) and was supported by accompanying documents.

All applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with.

### **Project Costs**

Sufficient accommodation is available and no capital costs are anticipated.



**TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**DELEGATED EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REPORT**

**Report to:** Executive Member for Education  
**Date:** 28 November 2016  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing

**Report Title**

**APPROVAL TO CONSULT ON A PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE FLIXTON INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS (THROUGH THE PROPOSAL TO CEASE TO MAINTAIN FLIXTON INFANT SCHOOL AND TO ENLARGE FLIXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL)**

**Summary**

This report proposes that the LA initiate consultation on the proposal to amalgamate the two schools into a single primary school with a single leadership team. This would be achieved by the closure of the Infant School and enlargement of the Junior School by extending the age range. The LA will also consult on a reduction to the published admission number of Flixton Junior School from 62 to 60 through the application to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

The schools share adjoining sites and the Governing Bodies at both schools are in favour of such an amalgamation.

**Recommendation(s)**

The Executive Member is asked to agree to consult on the proposal to cease to maintain Flixton Infant School and to enlarge Flixton Junior School to become a Primary School for children aged 3 – 11.

**Contact person for access to background papers and further information:**

**Name:** Marilyn Golding  
**Extension:** 1853

Background Papers: None

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	Achieving Educational Excellence
Financial	The proposed amalgamation will reduce the overall cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant. Although the savings would not be significant in the first two financial years, this would increase to £150k in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and subsequent years.
Legal Implications:	A prescribed alteration is determined by The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) 2013. A School closure is determined by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013
Equality/Diversity Implications	Schools are required to meet current appropriate Equality and Diversity Legislation however there are no direct implications from this proposal.
Sustainability Implications	There are no sustainability implications from this proposal.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	There are no e government or asset management implications from this proposal. The staffing structure for the proposed school is a matter for the Governing Body of the school.
Risk Management Implications	There are no specific strategic or operational risks to this proposal.
Health and Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	Schools are Subject to current Health and Safety Legislation but there are no direct impacts from this proposal

## 1. Background

The Local Authority has a long standing aim to amalgamate separate infant and junior schools where there are no contrary indicators e.g. size, respective locations. The schools share adjoining sites and the Governing Bodies at both schools are in favour of such an amalgamation.

Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education in April 2016 provides the process for the amalgamation of two (or more) schools.

There are two options available to achieve the amalgamation of two schools:

- i. is to close both schools and open a new school; and
- ii. is to close one school, the Infant School in this case, and to change the age range of the remaining school, the Junior school from 7-11 to 3-11.

Option one requires the closure of both schools and the establishment of a new school.

Option two requires the closure of one school and the alteration of the second. This is, for the second school a, prescribed alteration. A prescribed alteration is determined by the Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 3310 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. A School Closure is determined by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013.

The preferred option of both the LA and the Governing Bodies is option 2. This option provides the most straightforward and expedient option to achieve the amalgamation within the required timescales.

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

- the governing bodies of both schools;
- families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the school;
- 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 party; and
- such other persons as appear to the proposers to be appropriate.

Since the admission number at Flixton Junior School is currently 62, consultation will include a reduction to the published admission number to 60. This will allow Flixton Primary School to comply with Infant Class Size Regulations without prejudicing the provision of an efficient education for the children already attending the school. However, the School will continue to admit 62 children into Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.

Consultation can begin six working days after the decision to approve has been published, to allow an opportunity for the decision to be 'called-in' by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The period of consultation needs to allow adequate time for parties to express their views and to allow that these views can be properly considered. Although not prescribed, good practice would allow at least six weeks from the date of the publication.

At the end of the consultation the Executive Member considers the feedback and decides whether or not to proceed with the issuing of statutory notices, which provides all interested parties a period of four weeks to submit representation to the proposal. At the end of this stage the Executive will then determine the outcome.

If a decision is taken to proceed with consultation the following notional timetable sets out the key stages in the process:

<i>Action</i>	<i>Date</i>
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<i>Action</i>	<i>Date</i>
Executive Member's decision to consult	28 November 2016
<p><b>Stage 1</b></p> <p>Informal Consultation: (minimum 6 weeks)</p> <p>Letters to parent, staff and governors informing them of the Governing Bodies decision to seek approval to consult on the proposal and forward notice of consultation meetings. Announcement of informal consultation to relevant parties and publication on school and Trafford websites.</p> <p>Meetings with Staff, Parents and Governors</p> <p>Consultation ends</p>	<p>Consultation begins 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017</p> <p>(Until 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017)</p>
Decision by Executive Member to proceed or not to proceed to Stage 2.	April 2017
<p><b>Stage 2</b></p> <p>If decision to proceed:</p> <p>Publication of statutory notices</p> <p>4 weeks for representations to be made to the Local Authority ends</p>	<p>19 April 2017</p> <p>(until 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017)</p>
<p><b>Stage 3</b></p> <p>Determination by the Executive</p> <p>Application to the OSA for variation to the 2017 and 2018 published admission number from 62 to 60.</p>	<p>5<sup>th</sup> June 2017</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> June 2017</p>
<p><b>Stage 4</b></p> <p>Implementation subject to agreement from OSA to vary PAN</p>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2017

## 2. Financial Implications

This proposed change will reduce the overall cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant of £150,000 in a full year.

## 3. Accommodation

The accommodation on the combined sites would continue unchanged.

## Other Options

That the two schools remain as separate entities.

### **Consultation**

Once approval to consult is granted the statutory procedure for consultation (detailed above) and representation will be employed. A copy of the informal consultation document is attached for information.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The merger of infant and junior schools, where there are no contradictory reasons to so do, is a strategic objective of the Local Authority. It would meet the objectives of the LA in reducing the number of points of transfer between schools.

The schools share adjoining sites.

The amalgamation would enable better continuity and progression of children's work, particularly between Key Stage 1 (5-7) and Key Stage 2 (7-11,) and so creating opportunity for improved educational standards and achievement. Pupils would not be required to transfer between the schools at Year 2, supporting curriculum continuity and in turn creating the opportunity for improved educational achievement.

As the School would provide education at Foundation, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, it would be able to offer expertise to cover the whole curriculum.

The amalgamation 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. It would offer increased opportunities for staff to develop their professional interests and skills. This will assist in the recruitment and retention of staff by providing greater professional opportunities and financial incentives.

It will enable the schools to develop a single vision for the future. The amalgamation would provide opportunities for development of the curriculum and in particular enhance the delivery

The two schools provide a good education for their pupils at present and are well supported by parents and governors

The amalgamation will reduce management and running costs due to economies of scale. The amalgamation will provide opportunity for better use of educational resources including teaching and nonteaching staff.

The Governing Bodies of both schools are in favour of the amalgamation

**Finance Officer Clearance**...(GB).....

**Legal Officer Clearance** ...(MJ).....

**[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** ...JC.....

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Corporate Director has cleared the report prior to issuing to the Executive Member for decision.