

TRAFFORD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: Monday 22 March 2021
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Children's Services and Director of Children's Services

Report Title

Amalgamation of Stamford Park Infant and Junior Schools (through the proposal to close Stamford Park Infant School and simultaneously expand the age range of Stamford Park Junior School)

Summary

Following consultation with governing bodies, staff, parents and other stakeholders, the Executive Member for Children's Services decided that a statutory notice should be published regarding the proposal to amalgamate Stamford Park Infant and Junior Schools (through the proposal to close Stamford Park Infant School and simultaneously expand the age range of Stamford Park Junior School). 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.

The statutory notice was published on 28 January 2021. This report provides analysis of the responses received during the representation stage.

Recommendation(s)

That the Executive:

- notes the representations and responses
- approves the proposal with a change to the implementation date to 1 September 2021

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Karen Samples, Director of Education
Sarah Butters, Head of Early Years, School Places and Access

Extension: 3233

Background Papers:

None

Implications:

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	Ensuring a fair start for all children and young people
Financial	The proposed amalgamation will reduce the overall cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant, resulting in an adjustment through the funding formula meaning there is no impact on the Council's revenue budgets.
Legal Implications:	A school closure is determined by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and Opening and Closing Maintained schools statutory guidance. Expanding the age range of a school is determined by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2013 and Making Significant Changes to Maintained Schools statutory guidance.
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	No direct implications
Carbon Reduction	No direct implications
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	There are no ICT 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	No direct implications
Health and Safety Implications	Schools are subject to current Health and Safety Legislation but there are no direct implications from this proposal

1.0 Background

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 There are two methods by which two schools can be amalgamated. The first method is to close both schools and open a new community primary school. The second, the method proposed here, is to close one school and enlarge the other school by extending the age range.
- 1.3 This method of amalgamation is being proposed in line with the Trafford Presumption to Amalgamate Policy as there has been a vacancy in the headship of Stamford Park Infant School from January 2021.
- 1.4 The process of closing a school is determined by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013. Expanding

the age range of a school is determined by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2013.

- 1.5 For these proposals, the Local Authority is the proposer and the decision maker. The Local Authority must have regard for the statutory processes and consider all the views and comments submitted during the consultation and representation period.
- 1.6 The proposals, and the reasons for them, were fully set out in the Report to the Executive Member on 15 January 2021 and in the full proposal published on 28 January 2021. The statutory process required for these proposals has been carried out.

2.0 Representation

2.1 On 28 January 2021, the Council published statutory notices of its intention to discontinue (close) Stamford Park Infant School and to extend the age range of Stamford Park Junior School to offer provision for pupils aged 3 years to 11 years. The Council announced a four-week statutory representation period that lasted until 25 February.

2.2 The Council received 18 responses to its consultation:

12 consultees stated their support for the amalgamation of the 2 schools, although 4 of these raised concerns about the proposed implementation date;

The remaining 6 did not state their specific support of, or objection to, the amalgamation but did restate concerns, expressed in early stages of the consultation process, about the governance arrangements, the state of the buildings and disappointment that the provision of a new school was not included in the proposal.

The comments received and the responses provided are detailed in Annex 1.

3.0 Financial Implications

3.1 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 on the Council's revenue budgets.

4.0 Accommodation

4.1 This current proposal does not include any expansion project, refurbishment or new school building.

4.2 There is ongoing work to consider site options involving a range of partners including education, place development, planning, heritage and strategic parks.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 To proceed with the proposal to amalgamate, with a revised implementation date of 1 September 2021.

6.0 Other options

6.1 A decision not to proceed with the amalgamation, the schools would remain as separate entities.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendation

7.1 The local authority has a long standing strategic aim to amalgamate separate infant and junior schools where there are no contradictory reasons, as laid out in the Presumption to Amalgamate policy.

7.2 There is a vacancy in the headship of Stamford Park Infant School.

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

7.4 Amalgamation would allow development of a single vision for the future with a shared ethos. It will provide continuity of leadership and consolidate more effectively the high quality education that exists, delivering advantages to staff, children and families.

7.5 The amalgamation would enable better continuity and progression of children's learning, particularly between key stage 1 and key stage 2. It would remove the requirement for children to transfer between schools at the end of Year 2, creating opportunity for improved educational standards and achievement

7.6 After careful consideration of the ever changing Covid-19 situation it is proposed that the implementation date for amalgamation be delayed until 1 September 2021. This will allow schools to concentrate their energies on meeting the needs of their pupils as they re-open to all children on 8 March 2021 following a period of restricted attendance during national lockdown.

Key Decision Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance AN

Legal Officer Clearance PD

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



Jill McGregor, Director of Children's Services

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.