

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 28 January 2010

**PRESENTED BY:** Strategic Director – Children and Young People

**SUBJECT:** Outcome of the Consultation on the Closure of Halton High

**WARDS:** Wards in Runcorn

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report summarise the response to date (14<sup>th</sup> January 2010) to the statutory consultation to close Halton High school. The formal representation period for the consultation closes on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010. The Executive Board will receive a further updated report at the end of this representation period on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

2.1 **(a) The progress to date on the formal representation on the closure of Halton High School be noted; and**

**(b) The Executive Board receive a further updated report at the Executive Board meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010 on the outcome of the statutory consultation.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 During the consultation on future secondary provision in Halton it was agreed that Halton High be developed as an Academy. It is therefore proposed that Halton High be closed on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010, subject to the successful completion of the current feasibility project and upon the agreement of the Secretary of State to the proposed establishment of a Halton Academy on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

3.2 The Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester are the Sponsors of the proposed Academy, which would open in Halton High School's buildings. Ormiston Trust is the Lead Sponsor and the University of Chester the co-sponsor. The sponsors aim to raise standards and accelerate the rate of progress.

- 3.3 The first phase of consultation commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and closed on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The consultation proposal was widely advertised with details sent to parents of pupils at Halton High and a range of other stakeholders including trade unions, and Halton Schools. Copies of the proposal were placed in the local Children's Centres and the library and the meetings were advertised in the local press, placed on the BSF website and on the electronic children and young people's circular.
- 3.4 Consultation events were held in Halton High School on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009; for staff, governors and the public. A further consultation event was held at Castlefield's Community Centre on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009. At the consultation meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009 the authority presented the proposal and the consultation arrangements and the sponsors; Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester provided information on the Academy and their respective organisations. The notes of the meetings were placed on the website. A copy was also provided to the school and the sponsor for their information.
- 3.5 The proposal was well received at each of the consultation events and the feedback forms received from the Chair of Governor and four other respondents supported the proposal.
- 3.6 Following the agreement by the Board, the statutory consultation commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009. A copy of the published proposal is attached as Appendix A and the full copy of the proposal is available on the BSF website. Copies of the published proposal were sent to each of the Diocesan Authorities, the LSC, 14-19 Partnership, neighbouring Local Authorities, trade unions, Chair of Governors of Secondary schools, headteachers of all schools, the Principal of Riverside College, Principal of Priestley College and St John Deanes. Copies were also provided for the DSCF and sponsors Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester. Notices were also placed in the local libraries, Direct Links and Children's Centres. The notice was placed on the website and placed on the electronic circular sent to all schools and children's settings.
- 3.7 The statutory notice was published in the paper along with the dates of the public meetings. Letters were sent out to parents inviting them to participate in the consultation. On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009 there were three consultation meetings; one for staff, one for governors and the third public. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 2010 there were two further meetings held one for Governors and the second for parents.

- 3.8 At each of the meetings the authority presented an outline of the proposals, the representation process and the timescale for responses. The two sponsors Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester outlined their proposals for the new Academy and addressed any questions raised. The proposal was received well at each meeting with no objections. A number of feedback forms have been received up to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010 each of these responses is in support of the proposal. A detailed summary of the outcome of the consultation will be presented to the Board on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Once approved the Academy will benefit from up to £150,000 Environment Grant, which can be used to make improvements to the school building. In addition, funding is made available for all pupils to have a new school uniform and to fund the costs of recruiting a Principal.

The Academy funding comes direct from the DSCF instead of the Authority. The Dedicated Schools Budget is adjusted to remove the Academy funding and a proportion of the centrally managed resources.

- 4.2 The Academy is part of the BSF Programme and will benefit from both Capital funding to remodel the school buildings and IT funding.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposal to close the school is on condition that the Secretary of State approves the Academy to replace Halton High School.
- 5.2 An Academy is established by the Secretary of State entering into a contract with a charitable company referred to as the Academy Trust. It is incorporated for the sole purpose of running one or more Academies. The Funding Agreement provides the framework within which the Academy must operate and its contents include; development plans, admissions and exclusions policies, SEN and Curriculum policies, the approach to charging, staff, information to parents and provision of grant.
- 5.3 The Council will be required to transfer the site and current buildings to the Sponsors. In addition, a legal agreement will need to be signed between the local authority and the sponsors guaranteeing the schools use of the Brookvale Sports Centre during the lifetime of the Academy. The Funding Agreement will provide for a range of consequences to any termination of the funding agreement, including for the return of any assets donated by the local authority to the Academy Trust.
- 5.4 Staff will be transferred at the point of transfer in accordance with the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 to the Academy Trust.
- 5.5 The Halton Academy will provide 900 11 -16 places and 200 post-16 places. The Sponsors will also support the development of extended school provision, including working more closely with Parents and the wider community.
- 5.6 All pupils at the school at the time of the closure will transfer to the proposed Academy.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People**

The pupils at the Halton Academy will benefit from the experience and resources of Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester. In addition, the sponsors intend to focus on the specialisms of English and Applied Learning.

### **6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

Through access to an excellent Secondary School for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People. The University of Chester will seek to use its strong networks with business and industry to enhance the quality of the Academy's work based learning curriculum.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Halton High is part of the BSF Programme, in developing its Secondary Schools for the future the Authority will demonstrate how it will enable schools to meet the School Sport Public Service Agreement through its Capital Investment and achieve high nutritional standards and encourage healthy living and eating.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Schools for the future will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

### **6.5 Halton's Urban**

Through the BSF Halton schools will become a major resource for communities they serve and will be designed to offer shared community facilities, linking to other wider regeneration projects as well as being the focus for the local delivery of children's services.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The Academy is part of the diversity of provision required within Halton. Failure to close Halton High by the end of January 2010 could lead to a delay in the establishing of the Academy by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. This would be disruptive to staff, pupils and parents and impact on the standards and viability of the school.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 The proposals for the re-organisation of Halton's Secondary and Secondary Special Provision seek to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

## **9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

- 9.1 To provide more choice and diversity and retain pupils within the Borough.

## **10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 10.1 N/A

## **11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

- 11.1 The decision needs to be made on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 so that statutory consultation can commence on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

## **12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Documents

Place of Inspection

Contact

Consultation Presentation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website <a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk/bsf">www.halton.gov.uk/bsf</a>	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
Notes of Public Meetings	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
All responses to First round of consultation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
Published Statutory Notice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
Full Proposal	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
Notes of meetings	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning
Responses to consultation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Support and Commissioning