

REPORT: Executive Board
DATE: 9 April 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young People
SUBJECT: BSF Secondary Re-organisation
WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the response to the statutory consultation undertaken on secondary special unit provision in Halton. An outline of the decision making process is also included. A further update on the outcome of the statutory consultation will be circulated following the end of the representation period on 2nd April 2009.
- 1.2 The report also summarises the school organisation proposals required in Runcorn for The Heath Specialist Technology College, The Grange Comprehensive, The Grange Junior, The Grange Infant, The Grange Nursery and Halton High School.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the

- (1) A further update on the outcome of the statutory consultation be provided to the Board at end of the representation period on 2nd April 2009.**
- (2) Approval be given to commence the consultation process to expand The Heath Specialist Technology College to 1350 11-16 places;**
- (3) Approval be given to commence the statutory consultation to alter the age range of The Grange Comprehensive to 0 – 16 years with 60 full time equivalent nursery places, 420 primary places and 900 secondary places and to discontinue (close) the Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior School; and**
- (4) Approval be given to commence the informal consultation process to discontinue (close) Halton High school followed by the formal consultation to close Halton High School by the authority and consultation to establish the Academy by the Sponsors.**

3.0 SPECIAL UNIT PROVISION

3.1 Approval was given by Executive Board on 6th November 2008 to commence consultation on the provision of SEN units within mainstream secondary schools. This review of SEN units resulted in a set of proposals designed to provide flexible provision within mainstream schools that allow pupils to spend as much time as possible learning alongside their peers, depending on their individual needs. In this round of consultation (Part A) the consultation was on the type of provision. The consultation took place in November and December 2008 and the following was proposed:

- Resource provision to accommodate 12 pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, with an additional 10 places for outreach support;
- Resource provision to accommodate 20 pupils with Speech and Language and Communication Difficulties; and
- Resource provision for 6 pupils with hearing impairment and specific learning difficulties.

3.2 The majority of those who responded to the first stage of consultation supported the proposed change in provision. It was, however, suggested during the consultation that the distribution of unit provision across the borough needed further consideration. It was therefore proposed that the numbers of pupil places remain the same, but that the unit provision for pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and Speech and Language and Communication difficulties be offered in both Widnes and Runcorn.

The consultation on the location of unit provision (Part B) commenced in January 2009 and finished on 2nd February 2009 and the following was proposed:

- The Grange Comprehensive School – resource provision to accommodate 6 pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder with 5 additional outreach places for pupils in other high schools;
- St Peter and Paul Catholic College – as above
- The Grange Comprehensive School – resource provision to accommodate 10 pupils with Speech and Language and Communication difficulties;
- The Bankfield School – as above; and
- Wade Deacon High – resource provision for pupils with hearing impairment and specific learning difficulties

3.3 The following people were consulted as part of the SEN consultation:

- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of all secondary schools;
- Headteachers and Chair of Governors of all special schools;
- Secondary SENCOs;
- Staff and pupils;
- Parent/carers of pupils currently attending SEN unit provision;
- Trade Unions;
- Diocesan Authorities;
- Neighbouring Local Authorities;
- Voluntary Agencies;
- Parent Partnership Service;
- Halton and St Helen's Primary Care Trust; and
- All schools nursery, infant, junior, primary and special schools.

3.4 Public consultation meetings took place on:

25th November 2008 there were 8 attendees;
9th December 2008 there were 4 attendees;
10th December 2008 there were no attendees;
14th January 2009 there were 6 attendees; and
15th January 2009 there were 3 attendees.

In addition, to the feedback received at the consultation meetings thirteen responses were received to Part A of the consultation on the type of provision required within Halton:

12 responses were in favour of the proposals; and
1 response was in support but with reservations.

5 responses were received to Part B of the consultation on the location of the provision all the responses were in support of proposals.

3.5 On 12th February 2009 Executive Board approval was given to undertaken statutory consultation on the SEN Unit proposals. A copy of the statutory notice and proposal is attached at Appendix A and Appendix B. The statutory consultation commenced on the 19th February 2009 and the representation period ends on 2nd April 2009. Up to 23rd March 2009 no objections have been received to the proposal.

3.6 The Decision maker (Executive Board) must decide the proposals within two months of the end of the representation period otherwise the decision must be referred to the Adjudicator for a decision. Appendix C details the issues the Decision maker needs to consider.

The Decision maker can decide to:

Reject the proposals;
Approve the proposals;
Approve the proposals with a modification;
Approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition.

Conditional approval can only be granted in a limited number of circumstances related specifically to Academy provision or changes in admission arrangements relating to another school. A date by which the conditions should be met must be set.

The reason for the decision must be given whether it is approved or rejected it should also include the factors and criteria for the decision. A copy of the decision must be sent to:

- Each objector;
- The Secretary of State;
- LSC;
- Local C of E Diocese
- The Bishop of the RC Diocese; and
- The Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

4.0 RUNCORN SECONDARY RE-ORGANISATION PROPOSALS

- 4.1 To ensure there are sufficient places and choice in Runcorn it is proposed that consultation is undertaken to increase The Heath Specialist Technology College following the completion of the BSF Programme to 1350 11-16 places. The funding formula has now been increased to reflect the additional 150 places. Consultation will commence in the Summer Term 2009.
- 4.2 It is proposed that statutory consultation commences in Summer 2009 on the proposal to establish an All Through School with provision for pupils aged between 0 and 16 years. The statutory consultation will seek to establish The Grange All Through School initially in the existing school buildings. However, as part of the BSF Programme, it is proposed that a new purpose built school is constructed on the site of The Grange Comprehensive School. It is proposed that The Grange Nursery School, The Grange Infant School and The Grange Junior School will all discontinue with effect from 31st March 2010 and that all the pupils from these schools and the children who access the Neighbourhood Nursery will transfer to the All Through School from 1st April 2010 but remain in their existing buildings until the new facilities have been completed. It is also proposed that the age range of the The Grange Comprehensive is altered to 0-16 years and that its new name is The Grange School.
- 4.3 It is proposed that from April 2010 the All Through school will offer 900 secondary places, two forms of entry primary provision (420 places) 60 full

- time equivalent nursery places and continue with the 22 full time equivalent Neighbourhood Nursery places.
- 4.4 Consultation was undertaken as part of the BSF School Organisation consultation in June and July 2007 and November and December 2007. In addition, the four schools undertook at statutory consultation between April and June 2008 to establish a Federation with a view to forming an All Through Trust School.
- 4.5 Consultation will be undertaken by the schools to become a Trust School with; the Authority, a University, a Primary Care Trust, and Ethical Plc as Trust Partners.
- 4.6 It has not been possible to secure additional funding to meet the costs of developing the proposed Academy on the Wharford Farm site, the Academy will therefore be developed on the existing Halton High School site. It is therefore proposed that the authority commence consultation on the proposal to close Halton High in Summer 2009 so that a new Academy can be developed. Once the Feasibility stage of the Academy development is complete and there is a Funding Agreement in Place between the Local Authority and the Academy sponsors statutory consultation will be undertaken by the Authority to close Halton High school and by the Sponsors to establish an Academy. It is proposed that the Academy would offer 900 places for pupils aged 11-16 years and 200 post 16 places.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's "Strategy for Inclusion of Pupils with SEN" provides the policy content and framework by which Halton intends to meet the Special Educational Needs of young people in the Borough.
- 4.2 The next stage in the development of the Academy is the Feasibility Stage at the end of which a formal Funding Agreement needs to be signed between to Authority and the Sponsors. The Funding Agreement should be in place prior to any statutory school organisation consultation.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The revenue funding for the Resource Units will be through the Dedicated Schools Grant and it has been agreed that the school formula budget be revised to reflect the changed provision. Each school's delegated budget will then provide them with the resources to support the provision. Any additional capital costs required for remodelling in advance of BSF will be met from the appropriate capital budgets.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A comprehensive review of the transport and access across the borough is currently being undertaken to ensure there is safe, accessible and sustainable provision to all schools following the re-organisation of secondary provision.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People

By undertaking a secondary school re-organisation and entering into the BSF Programme the authority aim to transform secondary provision for all children and young people and improve the facilities for the secondary workforce.

7.2 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.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

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 eating.

7.4 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.

7.5 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.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1 The SEN unit proposals must be agreed prior to the submission of the Outline Business Case. Approval is also required to commence the consultation on the re-organisation of Runcorn prior to the submission of Outline Business Case. If approval is not given this will result in Programme delay.
- 8.2 A full risk register is available for the BSF Programme.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 9.1 The proposals for SEN unit provision aim to enable pupils to have the opportunity to the most appropriate provision to match their needs.
- 9.2 The proposals for the re-organisation of Halton's secondary and secondary special provision seek to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

The proposals for Secondary and secondary special provision must be agreed prior to the submission of Outline Business Case.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Alternative options have been considered and assessed during the consultation process.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The proposals for SEN unit provision must be agreed by 9th April 2009 and will be implemented by September 2011.

The proposal to commence the consultation on Runcorn secondary provision must be agreed by 9th April 2008, however, the increase in numbers at The Heath Specialist Technology College are not scheduled to be implemented until the school has been rebuilt as part of the BSF Programme (2012/2013). The proposals for the re-organisation of The Grange Comprehensive, Junior, Infant and Nursery are scheduled to be implemented in April 2010. The date for the establishment of the Academy to replace Halton High is September 2010.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact
<u>OFSTED Inspection of LEA – January 2004</u>	Grosvenor House	Judith Kirk – Operational Director –Universal Services
Strategy for Inclusion of Pupils with SEN – 2006/2007	Grosvenor House	As above
SEN Consultation letters, minutes and feedback forms	Grosvenor House	As above
BSF Secondary Consultation	Grosvenor House	Daniel Hennessy – BSF Programme Director
Consultation on Federation for The Grange	The Grange Comprehensive School	David Stanley – Executive Headteacher
Expression of Interest	Grosvenor House	Daniel Hennessy – BSF Programme Director