

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	11 December 2014
Subject:	Publication of Statutory Proposals to Amalgamate and Expand Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and Welldon Park Junior School
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer, Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Roxeth
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Comments from consultation responses Appendix 2 – Formal statement by the Governing Body of Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and the Governing Body of Welldon Park Junior School

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides details of the outcomes of the consultation on the proposals to combine and expand Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and Welldon Park Junior School.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Note the outcomes of the consultation.
2. Agree to the publication of statutory notices to combine Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and Welldon Park Junior School by closing the Junior School and extending the age range of the Infant School.
3. Agree to the publication of statutory notices to expand permanently Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and Welldon Park Junior School or the combined school.
4. Agree to continue to work with the governors to address their concerns of amalgamation over a split site.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To implement the Council's Amalgamation Policy and to enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. Harrow Council has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for its area. The Council has an Amalgamation Policy that is triggered when a headteacher vacancy arises in an infant or junior school. This has resulted in the amalgamation of 24 separate infant and junior schools into primary schools since 2006.
2. Like many boroughs, Harrow is experiencing significant growth in the pupil population and the Council has been creating additional school places to meet the increased demand since September 2009.
3. The latest school roll projections predict that the increased demand for Reception places will continue at a high level until at least 2020/21. In July 2014, Cabinet agreed to the publication of statutory proposals to expand permanently a third phase of primary schools.
4. The decision sought will help the Council meet its corporate priorities to make a difference for families, communities and the vulnerable by ensuring sufficient school places in its area.

Options Considered

5. The Amalgamation Policy was agreed initially in February 2005. The policy subsequently has been revised and up-dated and was confirmed by Cabinet in July 2013.

6. The Policy requires schools to amalgamate unless there are compelling and overriding reasons not to combine.
7. The resignation of the Junior School headteacher triggered the Amalgamation Policy. This report presents the outcomes of the consultation and the recommendations from the governing bodies.
8. Cabinet agreed its School Place Planning Strategy in February 2010 to meet the increasing demand for school places that is primarily birth rate driven. In July 2011, Cabinet agreed on a Primary School Expansion Programme as part of the School Place Planning Strategy. The strategy aims to secure sufficient primary school places through the creation of additional permanent places, supplemented by temporary 'bulge' classes opened if required.
9. Phase 1 of the primary school expansion programme was implemented in September 2013 with 8 schools in the borough permanently increasing their Reception intakes. Phase 2 will deliver a further 15 additional Reception intakes by September 2015.
10. The combined increase of permanent Reception classes across Phase 1 and Phase 2 is 23 additional Reception forms of entry in primary schools from the 2008 baseline.
11. In July 2014, Cabinet agreed to delegate to the Corporate Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People, the decision about: the final list of schools that should be moved to the statutory process for permanent expansion.
12. Whilst the Corporate Director of Children and Families has delegated authority to publish statutory proposals on the expansion, it is preferable for the proposal on expansion and amalgamation to be considered at the same time. In accordance with the Council's constitution, officers should only exercise delegated powers when a matter is covered by an approved policy, there are no unusual features and there are no political or other significant issues, otherwise the matter should be referred to Member to determine. The Council's Amalgamation Policy states it will normally be appropriate for the portfolio holder to make a decision to publish statutory notices, however in cases where there is strong opposition to the proposal or it is considered controversial, the portfolio holder may consider referring the matter for Cabinet decision. Whilst the two governing bodies for the Welldon Park schools have supported expansion proposals, they do not support amalgamation. For this reason, the two recommendations have been put to Cabinet for a decision.
13. It is proposed that to effect the amalgamation, the junior school is closed and the age range of the infant school is extended. This is in accordance with the Amalgamation Policy because the resignation of the headteacher occurred in the Junior School.

Consultation

14. The consultation on the two proposals to expand and amalgamate was held from Monday 29 September for six weeks closing on Friday 14 November 2014. The consultation was wide ranging and conducted in accordance with the Department for Education school organisation guidance for proposers and decision-makers. Consultation papers were sent to all parents, members of staff and governors of Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and Welldon Park Junior School and information was delivered to residents living close to the schools. Separate open consultation meetings for parents and for residents were held in October 2014 to present information and enable discussion of the proposals. Harrow Council sent the consultation paper to interested parties including schools, neighbouring local authorities, diocesan authorities, local MPs and elected members, trade unions, voluntary and community organisations, and Harrow Youth Parliament.

Outcomes of the statutory consultation

15. 109 responses were received to the consultation. Separate consultation questions were given to the school communities from those given to local residents because the amalgamation proposal was not relevant to the local residents without children attending the schools.
- 94 responses were received to the consultation questions for the school communities.
 - 15 responses were received to the consultation questions for residents
16. A number of comments were included with the responses given and these are attached as Appendix 1. The formal statement by the Governing Body of Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and the Governing Body of Welldon Park Junior School to the statutory consultation is attached as Appendix 2.

Responses from the school communities to the consultation questions about amalgamation and expansion

17. Questions were asked in the consultation about the two proposals. They were:
- “Proposal 1: that Welldon Park Infant School and Welldon Park Junior School should join together to form one combined school on 1st September 2015.”
 - “Proposal 2: that the combined school or the two schools (depending on the outcome of Proposal 1) should expand to three forms of entry (90 places per year) from 1st September 2015.”

Both questions offered the option to respond ‘Yes’, ‘No’, or ‘Not Sure’ to each question. Opportunity was given for comments to be added after the questions if the respondent wished to do so.

The following tables provide overall responses to the consultation questions.

Proposal One: Welldon Park Infant and Welldon Park Junior School are joined together to form one combined school on 1 Sept. 2015.

Please tick the relevant box to give your view

	Junior	Infant	Total (94)
I support combining the two schools	16	18	34 (36%)
I want the schools to stay separate	21	33	54 (57%)
I am not sure	5	1	6 (7%)

Proposal Two: To expand the school(s) to three forms of entry (90 places) with effect from 1 September 2015.

Please tick the relevant box to give your view

	Junior	Infant	Total (91)
I support expansion to three forms of entry as either combined or separate schools	25	28	53 (58%)
I do not support expansion to three forms of entry as either combined or separate schools	10	14	24 (26%)
I am not sure	6	8	14 (15%)

*It will assist if you could indicate your interest by ticking **all** applicable boxes*

	Junior	Infant	Total
Infant School parent	6	34	40 (34%)
Junior School parent	20	2	22 (18%)
Parent in both schools	13	13	26 (22%)
Member of staff in Infant School	3	6	9 (8%)
Member of staff in Junior School	13	4	17 (14%)
Other interested stakeholder	3	2	5 (4%)
	58	61	119

36% of responses supported the amalgamation proposal; 57% opposed it and 7% were unsure.

58% supported expansion to 3FE; 26% opposed it and 15% were unsure.

Responses submitted online to the consultation questions about expansion

18. Two questions were asked in the online consultation. They were:

- “Do you agree with the approach to creating additional school places in Harrow?”
- “Do you agree with the proposal to permanently expand the Welldon Park Schools?”

Both questions offered the option to respond ‘Yes’, ‘No’, or ‘Not Sure’ to each question. Opportunity was given for comments to be added after each question if the respondent wished to do so.

The following tables provide overall responses to the consultation questions. Percentages are included but these should be considered in the context of the number of actual responses.

19. The overall responses to Question 1 were:

Question 1: “Do you agree with the approach to creating additional school places in Harrow?”

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	8	53.33%
No	6	40.00%
Not Sure	1	6.67%
Total	15	100%

20. The overall responses to Question 2 were:

Question 2: “Do you agree with the proposal to permanently expand the Welldon Park Schools?”

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	23.67%
No	10	66.67%
Not Sure	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

21. The response to the statutory consultation questions by respondent type is as follows.

Numbers Overall	
Harrow Resident	10
Parent/Carer	3
Pupil	0
School Staff	2
School Governor	0
Other	0
Blank	0
Total	15

22. The responses by respondent type for the first consultation question were as follows:

Do you agree with the approach to creating additional school places in Harrow?	Harrow Resident	Parent / carer	School Staff	Total
Yes	5	2	1	8
No	5	0	1	6
Not Sure	0	1	0	1
Totals	10	3	2	15

23. The responses by respondent type for the second consultation question were as follows:

Do you agree with the approach to permanently expand Welldon Park Infant and	Harrow Resident	Parent / carer	School Staff	Total

Junior Schools?				
Yes	3	1	0	4
No	6	2	2	10
Not Sure	1	0	0	1
Totals	10	3	2	15

Monitoring information

24. When completing their responses to the consultation, respondents were invited to provide information about how they perceive their social identity to assist with monitoring the effectiveness of the consultation outreach. Anonymous information was requested under the following categories: disability; ethnic group; and religion. The following tables show the responses received under these categories.

Respondents by Disability

	Number	Percentage
Not Disabled	15	100%
Disabled	0	0%
Not Stated	0	0%

Respondents by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number	% of total response
Asian Or Asian British	5	33.33%
Black or Black British	1	6.67%
Other Ethnic Group	0	0%
Mixed ethnic background	1	6.67%
White	8	53.33%
Did Not Specify	0	0%

Respondents by Religion

	Number	Percentage
Buddhism	0	0%
Christianity	6	40.00%
Hinduism	1	6.67%
Islam	1	6.67%
Jainism	0	0%
Judaism	0	0%
Sikh	0	0%
Zoroastrian	0	0%
Other	1	6.66%
No Religion	3	20.00%
Not Stated	3	20.00%

25. Just over half the responses made to the first consultation question indicate agreement with the Council's approach to creating additional school places in Harrow.
26. Two thirds of the respondents to the second consultation question disagree with the Council's proposal to expand the Welldon Park schools, and just over a quarter agree with the proposal.
27. The response level of 15 needs to be viewed in the context of 500 consultation papers distributed to local residents. Also the publicising of the online consultation response portal on the Harrow Council website.

Other responses to the consultation

Governing Body

28. The formal statement by the Governing Body of Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and the Governing Body of Welldon Park Junior School to the statutory consultation is attached as Appendix 2. The Governing Bodies recommend that the schools should not be combined and recommend that in principle the schools should be expanded.

Other responses

29. A letter was received from the staff of Welldon Park Infant & Nursery School stating disagreement with the proposal for amalgamation as a split site primary school and disagreeing that consultation should be taking place regarding expansion at the same time. The staff strongly believes alternative school models should be considered. Their preferred model for the infant school is an all through primary school with specialist provision for SEN on the present school site. The justification for their views is set out in the letter.
30. A junior school parent emailed some queries about the process and response mechanism of the consultation. Officer reply was given to the queries. The queries and reply are included in the compilation of consultation responses.

Officer response to the consultation comments

31. The five main themes in consultation comments and responses relate to:
 - Lack of information about buildings and implications for residents;
 - Other alternatives should be considered;
 - The schools do well as they are - preference that they remain separate schools;
 - The schools are already full to capacity;
 - Traffic and congestion issues;
 - Concerns about split site.

Lack of information about buildings and implications for residents

32. Information about the proposed expansion of the Welldon Park schools was sent to 500 residents in properties adjoining the school sites and along approach streets and included invitation to attend the

consultation meeting for residents on 23 October 2014. This action was taken deliberately to give early information to residents about the proposal and so residents' perspectives can be taken into account from the outset. Inevitably, detailed information could not be given about the building arrangements if expansion is approved because site scoping work needs to be undertaken. However, the comments and issues stated by residents have been noted for consideration by Cabinet and these would inform the building design proposals should the expansion be approved.

33. The initial site scoping will be completed by the end of term, undertaken by the Council with the schools. Options will be developed to address the additional requirements. This process will be undertaken in partnership with the school.

Other alternatives should be considered

34. Comments were made that it has been confusing to have consultation about the amalgamation and expansion proposals at the same time. Also, that there are alternative proposals that could be considered.
35. It is important to have clear proposals so that the consultation is not confusing. Harrow Council has an Amalgamation Policy and the consultation proposal is to amalgamate the two schools in accordance with the policy. The Council believes this is the best model for a primary school. The Steering Group included additional information about other models of school organisation for example, federation, and academy status.
36. Harrow Council also has a School Expansion Programme. Harrow Cabinet has approved that Phase 3 school expansion proposals be brought forward to meet the increased demand for places in 2015 and 2016. It is expedient to consult about both proposals at the same time rather than in close proximity to each other. Consultation at the same time on amalgamation and expansion proposals has occurred also at the Weald schools.
37. Some preference has been expressed for two separate primary schools to be created at the Welldon Park school sites to meet the increasing demand for school places. Although two additional forms of entry are projected to be needed in the South West Primary Planning Area within which the Welldon Park schools are located, there is not the demand for these additional forms of entry to be provided at the one location. Additional places are opened as local to the demand as possible to minimise any need for parents to use cars to take their children to and from school, and expansion by a form of entry at a different school location will be sought. Additional considerations are: two community primary schools beside each other would have the potential to introduce unhelpful competition; concerns have been raised in consultation responses about the congestion on the road infrastructure for the proposed expansion of one form of entry, which can be expected to be heightened if a doubling of pupils was proposed; the capital costs of creating two primary schools are likely to be comparatively high.

38. The proposal that one of the schools could be a one form entry is not considered to be the most efficient form of school organisation. Although small schools do perform well, they are very susceptible to changes to funding and have little capacity to develop economies of scale as single entities.
39. For transparency, other school organisation options were outlined in the consultation document distributed to parents and staff that the working group had investigated. Also, at the parent consultation meetings, addresses giving alternative perspectives were made by the Headteacher of Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and by the Chair of Governors of Welldon Park Junior School. During the consultation it was pointed out that comments on other models could be made and responses in other formats e.g. email or letters would also be accepted. This has occurred, and all consultation responses will be made available to Cabinet in the decision making process.

The schools do well as they are - preference that they remain separate schools

40. Amalgamation is about combining two schools organisationally while preserving and building on what works well at each school. Achieving high educational standards and preserving ethos that is in the children's interests will be key focus of the governing body and leadership team of a combined school. A combined school enables the curriculum for the whole primary phase to be planned and delivered under one leadership. This provides continuity for the pupils throughout their primary education. It is of note that the governing bodies of the two schools have put forward options around extending the age range of each school to provide a primary school, therefore the concern does not appear to be about primary provision under one head teacher and governing body, but more about the individual schools amalgamating.

The schools are already full to capacity

41. Site scoping work has started and architects are undertaking an assessment of the current buildings and comparing them to the government's area guidance for a three form entry school and for the proposed amalgamation. This work would ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate space for additional children on the school sites. The two schools sites are very different in their current buildings and accommodation and therefore the solutions will be site specific.
42. Points were made at the infant school parent consultation meeting that only two additional classrooms would be needed at the infant school site. Architects could perhaps look into the possibility of a second storey. The school were able to work around the hall space when there were 60 more children at the school before the changes in the age of transfer in September 2010 that led to the move from first and middle schools in Harrow.
43. The architects will be giving further feed back to the schools about site scoping options before the end of term.

Traffic and congestion issues

44. The concerns expressed about traffic congestion, parking and road safety in the area are fully recognised and are the consistent major theme arising from the expansion consultations. To minimise the impact of the additional pupils attending the schools proposed for expansion, a cross-council approach is being implemented. This approach brings officers together from Children and Families, Enterprise and Environment and Communications to co-ordinate work.
45. Additional resource has been committed to ensure an appropriate profile to all the school expansion projects in particular.
- Transport Assessments are being undertaken at each of the schools proposed for expansion. The assessments provide an independent view of the proposals by reviewing baseline information about current traffic volumes and current issues and make recommendations about any impact as well as setting out any actions required. The assessments take account of the consultation responses already received.
 - A Transport and Travel Planner Officer for the expansion projects has been working with schools to develop and implement effective travel strategies in conjunction with the schools. This is a key role in influencing and engaging with all stakeholders to change attitudes to travel through the review and the development of School Travel Plans in order to minimise the use of private car travel to the school, particularly by parents. This role also liaises with the Highways, Traffic Management and Enforcement teams to ensure that any necessary engineering work and enforcement action, including Safer Neighbourhood Teams, is provided in line with the travel plans developed. This officer is also involved in the pre-planning engagement activities and input into the planning applications.
 - The Transport Assessment and School Travel Plans are submitted as part of the planning applications.
 - There is a communication strategy for the expansion projects which includes raising the profile of school travel planning. An additional Communications Officer has been appointed to give communication and engagement work a high profile.
 - Parking enforcement officers visit the areas of all schools in Harrow and issue tickets when applicable. Two automatic number plate recognition CCTV cars have been introduced to reinforce enforcement work. They are dedicated to schools exclusively.
46. This proposal would require a building programme, for which planning permission would be needed. If an application is submitted, a decision on this will be a matter for the Planning Committee. This committee will consider highways and traffic concerns and the impact of the development on the local area. Residents and parents who believe they are impacted by this decision are entitled to make representations to the planning committee during the statutory planning consent timescales.

Concerns about split site

47. The governing bodies raised a concern about an amalgamated school on split sites and in particular the funding for this. Whilst it is true that all other amalgamations of primary schools in Harrow have been on one site, there is evidence of one head teacher and one governing body leading schools on different sites. Specifically, the hard federation of Heathland and Whitefriars worked successfully prior to conversion of the schools to academy status. Other schools in London and other areas have amalgamated on separate sites.
48. A combined school would receive a budget calculated in accordance with Harrow's funding formula, which is primarily based on an amount per pupil. In accordance with the Schools Funding Formula, as a combined school, there would be the loss of one 'lump sum' which currently totals £154,230 annually.
49. This would put the combined school in the same position as existing all-through primary schools over time. If the schools were to combine, in the first year, the two separate school budgets would be brought together.
50. In the year following the proposed amalgamation (2016/17) the combined school would receive the equivalent of 85% of two lump sums. This would allow time for the Governing Body to plan for this change which represents a comparatively small amount of the combined school budget (about 5%). Funding efficiencies arising from combining the schools can be used to offset this reduction. The Governing Body and leadership team of a combined school should be able to plan strategically in a cost effective manner in the best interests of the children in order to achieve positive outcomes for the children in the long term.
51. It should also be noted that there is currently no provision in the School Funding Formula for split site schools as this is not relevant to Harrow. However, the Schools Forum will consider this funding element from April 2017 when it would be required after the lump sum reduction has been implemented.
52. Over time, other amalgamated schools have found that there have been efficiencies generated as a combined school including one Headteacher salary and shared back office functions. In general larger schools have greater economies of scale and capacity to deal with financial pressures and to be more flexible and creative with their funding although some of these savings will be more difficult to achieve on a split site.

Recommendation

53. Having considered the points made by the Governing Bodies and comments in the consultation in the relevant Policy contexts, the view is that:

- The recommendation in principle that the schools should be expanded is welcomed and endorsed.
- The reasons stated for the recommendation that the schools should not be combined do not constitute compelling and over-riding reasons not to amalgamate the schools.

54. Therefore, the Corporate Director of Children & Families recommends to Cabinet the publication of statutory notices to combine and to expand permanently Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School and Welldon Park Junior School. The rationale for these recommendations are as follows:

Expansion

55. The projections indicate that two forms of entry will be required in the South West Planning Area. The expansion by one form of entry at Welldon Park Schools either as separate schools or a combined school would provide one of these forms of entry.
56. The additional forms are required across the South West Planning Area and it is not proposed that two forms of entry should be provided at the Welldon Park Schools. The schools are located to the east of the planning area and it is considered that a concentration of places in this part of the planning area would not sufficiently contribute to the demand in other parts of the planning area.
57. The proposal from the Infant School Governing Body to create two primary schools is not supported. In addition to the point about concentration of places made above, a one form entry primary school is likely to be vulnerable to budget changes and therefore unsustainable in future.
58. A long term aspiration for the Council would be to consolidate the schools on to one site, if funding were available. At this time, capital funding is not available for this type of project and the proposed expansion of the schools by one form of entry will require investment in both sites. The potential to increase and extend the current SEN provision at the Infant School would need to be considered as part of the SEND strategy that is being developed.

Amalgamation

59. The Governing Body recommends that the schools should not be combined at this time but do not rule it out in the long term. The Governors recognise the merits of working much more closely. They identify advantages of: looking to have one headteacher across the two schools; having one governing body; and to pool budgets and propose a federation.
60. Harrow Council's Amalgamation Policy is based on an educational argument and refers to an expectation that separate infant and junior schools will combine when a headteacher vacancy arises unless there are compelling and over-riding reasons not to. On reviewing the joint Governing Body response, it is considered that whilst the Governors raise a number of points, including the split site nature of the combined

school, with appropriate support and planning they will be addressed and the educational benefits of a combined school operating over two sites will be achieved.

61. The education benefits that would be secured in accordance with the Policy are as follows:

School Organisation and Teaching and Learning

- Organisational structure that fully supports the curriculum opportunities and progression in learning within the National Curriculum Key Stages. Planning across Foundation, Key Stages 1 and 2 as a coherent whole for the primary phase provides greater flexibility across and between the Key Stages. In addition, there will be consistent policies through the school for example, assessment and teaching.
- Reducing the number of changes for children in a through school system strengthens continuity and progression for children and families in the primary phase, both in terms of the curriculum and pastoral experience. Research shows that the fewer moves children have during their school career the better they perform. However, currently some children could change schools at the end of Year 2 in the Infant School, at the end of Year 6 in the Junior School and at the end of Year 11 in the High School. There can be further changes during pre-school provision where a child might attend a number of settings before starting in reception class. If there is a system with combined primary schools the number of imposed changes will be reduced to a minimum. In general, children and their families will have just one major school change. This reduction in the number of school moves is important. It is of particular benefit for children with special educational needs.
- More opportunities are created for older children to take on additional responsibility. For younger children the presence of older children provides aspirational role models and also mentoring support.
- Teachers and classroom staff have access to the whole primary curriculum. This supports and informs whole school planning, assessment, pastoral systems, etc, and provides opportunities for wider staff development and experience across the full primary phase. The opportunity for work across the entire primary phase is attractive in the recruitment market.
- Growing national evidence shows that all-through primary schools create more consistency between year groups and key stages in learning, planning and assessment. There is improved use of teachers' skills, specialist teaching and improved pastoral arrangements, as well as benefits for management, leadership and financial management.

“Where primary education is provided in separate key stages, there is generally very little effective curriculum continuity and progression. In such situations the scope for discontinuity of learning is increased, together with the attendant, wasteful, repetitive teaching of subject content and learning experiences in the receiving key stage.” Educational Management Information Exchange

- The impact on school improvement for those schools in Harrow that have amalgamated substantiates the evidence about combined schools. Of the 10 combined community schools established through the amalgamation policy, 6 have been judged by Ofsted as outstanding following the amalgamation.

Governance and Leadership

- The single governing body provides strategic governance and vision, accountability for the all the primary key stages and outcomes, and acts as a critical friend to the headteacher across the school phases.
- The headteacher of a combined primary school provides overarching leadership of the school and enables the establishment of coordinated senior leadership arrangements across the school.
- The combined primary school aids recruitment and retention of the headteacher, which has been an issue with separate infant and junior schools. The market for primary headteacher recruitment is very challenging at this time.
- The staffing structure of the combined school may offer better career development opportunities for staff.

Resources and school site

- Combined schools are able to maximise the efficiency of their resources. This is of particular relevance in the current economic climate and Government policy moving towards a schools national funding formula.
- As a combined school there will be loss of one ‘lump sum’ which each school receives annually as part of its budget. This reduction is implemented overtime. The local authority will consider the introduction of a split site factor as part of the Schools Funding Formula from April 2017.
- A combined school staffing structure removes duplication and support functions can be consolidated across the single school. This has a positive impact on the revenue budget. If the school site and its accommodation are managed as a single entity there is greater flexibility and there can be a strategic approach to capital investment.

- Across the two sites there will need to be a review of the accommodation to ensure that there are appropriate facilities across the sites and that these are supported by appropriate management and staffing structures. For example, there will need to be some facilities on both sites e.g. staffroom, reception/administration. This work is underway.
 - With a split site, there will be the potential to retain the Key Stage specific environment of the infants and junior school. And also an opportunity to consider different curriculum opportunities to the benefit of children.
62. It is important to secure the long-term school organisation arrangements for these schools as soon as possible to ensure continuity of governance and leadership, and to enhance education standards for the children. From January 2015, neither school will have a substantive headteacher. Therefore it is essential that the leadership arrangements are established for the new academic year in September 2015 with certainty and that the appointment process for a headteacher commences.
63. With appropriate arrangements, it is expected that initial planning for the combined school will begin in January and continue during the summer term with input from the appointee. Combining the schools will require leadership and sensitivity in bringing together the two workforces but this will be planned and developed over time.
64. Harrow has considerable experience of supporting schools to amalgamate. In addition there are schools in other areas that have amalgamated on split sites and as a result of visits the Steering Group were able to gain an insight into some of the activities undertaken to address the split site issues.
65. Whilst a hard federation does have potential to secure some of the benefits of an amalgamated school, the details of their federation is not set out by the governors; a federation does not have the same legal status as a combined school and does not guarantee the full educational benefits that are secured in a single primary school.
66. A federation requires investigation, further consultation, planning and a period of uncertainty. It is considered that this focus should be invested in planning for amalgamation which is regarded as a long term aspiration by the Governing Bodies and is the Council's Policy.
67. Processes are in place to progress building adjustments and split site budgetary issues:
- Site scoping work is being taken forward in parallel with these amalgamation and expansion processes. The schools will continue to be closely involved throughout the process and the schools' views will inform the development of design options;
 - The Schools Forum will consider the split site provision issue when the evidence to make a decision is available.

68. Therefore, it is recommended that the amalgamation should be progressed and statutory notices published. If the recommendations are agreed, officers would continue to support the schools through the transition phases and work with both schools' governors to progress implementation work. This would include opportunities for the staff to begin working together.

Legal Implications

69. The Council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure the provision of sufficient schools for the provision of primary and secondary education in its area.
70. New school organisation regulations and associated guidance came into force on 28 January 2014 and the process has been amended to streamline the process. If a decision is made to publish statutory proposals, there would be a representation period in which interested parties can make representations. A report would be brought back to Cabinet in February 2015 for a decision on whether the proposals should be implemented. Whilst the proposals for expansion and amalgamation have been consulted on together, a decision can be made to progress with one proposal and not progress with the other.
71. When making public law decisions, the Council must consider all relevant information, including financial implications, equality implications and consultation responses. The Council has carried out consultation and the results must be considered by Cabinet, however this does not mean that the Council has to make a decision based on the majority of respondents' views. It must take account of the views of those responding to the consultation, together with other relevant information, to reach an appropriate decision.

Financial Implications

Revenue

72. Any school expansion programme will inevitably have significant financial implications. All schools proposed for expansion have raised concerns about available funding and clarity about funding is essential to maintain their commitment to the School Expansion Programme. School revenue budgets are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As the Department for Education (DfE) allocates DSG based on pupil numbers, any increase in pupil numbers results in additional revenue funding for the expanding school. The revenue funding is allocated to schools based on the Harrow Schools' Funding Formula. School budgets are based on pupil numbers in the October prior to the start of the financial year, so there is always a funding lag when schools increase their pupil numbers. To ensure that schools who agree to an additional class are not financially penalised, the Harrow School Funding Formula provides 'Additional Class Funding' for the period from September to the end of March, following which the mainstream funding formula will take effect. This ensures that schools have adequate funding for at least the average costs of a teacher and some set up costs.

73. As a combined school there will be loss of one 'lump sum' which each school receives annually as part of its budget. This reduction is implemented over time. The local authority will consider the introduction of a split site factor as part of the Schools Funding Formula from April 2017.

Capital

74. The budget for the school expansion programme, including primary school expansions in Phase 1 and Phase 2 and three expansions at Phase 3, secondary school expansions and provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is £89.534m. Also included in this programme are budget allocations for capital works associated with amalgamations and bulge classes.
75. At its meeting on 16 October 2014, Cabinet delegated authority to use suitable national or local public sector Framework(s) to:
- a) undertake feasibility studies, surveys and provide professional costs and technical services, and;
 - b) design and build / refurbish school facilities.
- Feasibility study will be undertaken to develop design proposals and develop costings if it is decided to publish statutory proposals. This work will need to progress before a final decision whether or not to expand the Welldon Park schools is made by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 February 2015. This is to ensure that the necessary building work could be completed by September 2016 and any necessary interim accommodation requirements could be made for the intake of additional children in September 2015.
76. Based on current estimates and market conditions it is expected that it is possible to deliver this programme with EFA capital grants, without the need for council capital funding. If the programme is not deliverable within the current programme then borrowing may be required. This risk is being monitored closely in consultation with Cabinet Members.

Performance Issues

77. Schools in Harrow perform well in comparison to national and statistically similar local authorities. The vast majority of primary schools and secondary schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by OfSTED. As at 31st March 2014, 90% of Harrow's primary and secondary schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding', compared to 85% in London and 80% nationally (Source: Ofsted Data View).
78. The Schools White Paper and Education Act 2011 maintain a focus on driving up standards in schools, and place more of the responsibility with the schools directly for their improvement. The role of the Local Authority in measuring performance and driving improvement has changed significantly and is reduced from its previous level. However, the Local Authority maintains a strategic oversight and enabling role in local education, and is likely to retain some role in monitoring educational achievement and key measures such as exclusions and absence. The Local Authority is also statutorily responsible for supporting and improving underperforming schools.

79. The Local Authority continues to monitor key education indicators. The indicators are used locally to monitor, improve and support education at both school and local authority level. They are also used within information provided to the DfE.

Year	Key Stage 2	Reading, Writing & Maths L4+	KS1-KS2 Expected Progress - Reading	KS1-KS2 Expected Progress - Writing	KS1-KS2 Expected Progress - Maths
2012	Harrow	79%	91%	93%	90%
	National	74%	90%	90%	87%
2013	Harrow	79%	90%	92%	92%
	National	75%	88%	92%	88%
2014 (P)	Harrow	82%	93%	92%	93%
	National	78%	91%	93%	93%

Source: DfE Statistical First Release, (P) - Provisional

80. The indicators fall within the following areas:

- Attendance and exclusions - remain a statutory duty for the Local Authority to monitor and improve.
- Underperforming schools – schools are assessed at Key Stage 2 & Key Stage 4 against defined floor standards.
- Closing the Gap - is a fundamental part of Ofsted's school inspection process, and accordingly, the Local Authority monitors the attainment of identified groups of pupils in its schools. The table below includes the gap at key stage 2 between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers and the gap between Harrow's SEN children and their peers – children with a SEN provision includes School Action, School Action Plus or a Statement.

2013 Key Stage 2 – Closing the Gap	Harrow	National
Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, based on pupils achieving level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2.	17%	19%
Achievement gap between pupils with special educational needs and their peers, based on pupils achieving level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2.	49%	53%

Environmental Impact

81. The Council's over-arching climate change strategy sets a target to reduce carbon emissions by 4% a year. Schools account for 50% of the council's total carbon emissions. Reducing emissions from schools is therefore a vital component in meeting the Council's target. However there is a significant risk that the expansion programme will increase emissions rather than reduce them. Phase 2 of the School Expansion Programme will have an impact on carbon emissions that will need to be carefully considered in this context.

82. The RE:FIT Schools Programme will be available to retrofit existing school buildings to improve their energy efficiency. For new-build schools, the design standards will need to ensure that they meet high energy use efficiency standards. Of particular importance will be the use of low carbon technologies – particularly for space heating – and these will need to be thoroughly investigated during the design phase.
83. For many of the projects in the school expansion, programme, planning applications will be required and part of the application will be a school travel plan. Through this process and the development of the solutions for the schools, the impact of the additional pupils and their travel modes will be addressed.

Risk Management Implications

84. The directorate and corporate risk management implications for the Council arising from school place planning are included on the directorate and corporate risk registers and are reported regularly to Cabinet in quarterly update reports on the School Expansion Programme.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

85. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, in exercising their functions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other unlawful conduct under the Act, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
86. Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on Phase 2 of the Primary School Expansion Programme. The conclusion of this assessment is that the implications are either positive or neutral. If the Portfolio Holder decides to publish statutory proposals a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on this proposal prior to determination of the statutory proposals by Cabinet.
87. Harrow's schools are successful, inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow and will build on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow's schools.

Council Priorities

The Council's vision is: **Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow**

88. The Council Priorities are as follows:
 - Making a difference for the vulnerable
 - Making a difference for communities
 - Making a difference for local businesses
 - Making a difference for families
89. The recommendation supports these priorities by:

- Ensuring Harrow Council fulfils its statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.
- Providing high quality local mainstream and special educational need provision in schools for children close to where they live.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 20 November 2014		
Name: Sarah Wilson...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 21 November 2014		

Ward Councillors notified:	YES
EqIA carried out:	YES (On Phase 2)
EqIA cleared by:	If Cabinet decides to publish statutory proposals a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on this proposal prior to determination of the statutory proposals by Cabinet

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Chris Melly, Senior Professional – School Organisation
chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk 020 8420 9270

Background Papers: None

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]