

# REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	15 July 2010
<b>Subject:</b>	Future Organisation of Longfield First School and Longfield Middle School
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Heather Clements, Director Schools, Quality Assurance and Commissioning
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	Yes
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Annexe 1 – Letter from Longfield First School Governing Body Annexe 2 – Letter from Longfield Middle School Governing Body

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out the outcome of the statutory consultation about the future organisation of Longfield First School and Longfield Middle School, and the recommendations of the governing bodies that the two schools amalgamate in September 2011.

From September 2010, Harrow's school reorganisation proposals will be implemented. Longfield First School will become an infant school (Reception to Year 2), and Longfield Middle School will become a junior school (Year 3 to Year 6).

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Consider the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendation from the governing bodies.
2. Approve the publication of statutory notices to combine Longfield Infant School and Longfield Junior School.

**Reason: (For recommendation)**

Combining the two schools would give the opportunity to further improve educational standards by enabling planning as a coherent whole across the primary phase of the national curriculum and providing greater flexibility across and between key stages. Access to the whole primary curriculum supports and informs whole school planning, assessment, pastoral systems, etc, and provides opportunities for wider staff development and experience across the full primary phase.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

1. Harrow's vision is to provide high achieving schools at the centre of community services, and to continue improvement in schools to make education in Harrow even better. In order to further this vision, in October 2007 Cabinet agreed its strategic approach to school organisation.

### **Options considered**

2. The Headteacher of Longfield First School has resigned and will leave at the end of the Summer Term in July 2010. During the Spring Term 2010, the governing bodies commenced the process to amalgamate the two schools in accordance with the Council's October 2007 amalgamation policy. The October 2007 amalgamation policy requires separate first and middle schools to amalgamate when one or more of the triggering circumstances arise unless there are compelling and over-riding reasons not to, and a headteacher vacancy in either or both schools is one of the triggering circumstances. This report sets out the outcome of the statutory consultation.

### **Consultation**

3. Consultation activity by the governing bodies commenced in the Spring Term 2010. At a joint meeting of the governing bodies on 25 February 2010 the governors created a steering group to begin the consultation process with a view to combining the two schools in September 2011. The steering group prepared a consultation paper, a cover letter for responses and a proposal evaluation document, which were agreed by the governing bodies. On 30 March 2010, the steering group wrote to all parents/carers of pupils at the two schools informing them of the plan to hold a statutory consultation in the Summer Term and giving

the contact details of the Steering Group members should they have any questions or queries in advance of the consultation process.

4. The statutory consultation was held from Thursday 22 April 2010 until Thursday 27 May 2010. The consultation paper was sent to all parents, members of staff and governors on 22 April 2010. Two formal parents consultation meetings for parents of both schools were held on 28 April 2010 to enable discussion. The proposal evaluation document was made available from the school offices and Harrow Council website, and was available at the parents meetings.
5. On 22 April 2010, Harrow Council sent the consultation paper to interested parties in accordance with the Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance, including neighbouring local authorities, diocesan authorities, local MPs and elected members, voluntary and community organisations, and Harrow Youth Council. Information about the amalgamation policy, the consultation paper and proposal evaluation were also made available on the Harrow Council website.
6. The two schools distributed the consultation paper and response form to 734 parents and 113 staff. The schools received 185 written responses to the consultation from parents and staff. The responses are as follows:
  - 77 responses from parents and staff (41.6%) supported amalgamation of the two schools;
  - 77 responses from parents and staff (41.6%) wanted the schools to stay separate;
  - 31 responses from parents and staff (16.8%) were not sure.The comments from parents and staff included in the consultation responses have been collated and made available to the governing bodies so that the comments and issues can be considered in subsequent future planning.
7. The two governing bodies met on 10 June 2010 to decide their recommendations. Longfield Middle School Governing Body decided it is in favour of the proposal that the two schools amalgamate based on the information available to it. The letter from the Chair of Longfield Middle School Governing Body is attached to this report at Annexe 2. The Longfield First School Governing Body decided that that it would be beneficial to discuss further the issue of acquiring academy status for Longfield First School before finally deciding on the issue of amalgamation. An extraordinary meeting of the Longfield First School Governing Body was convened on 16 June 2010 and decided not to go ahead with acquiring academy status. The Longfield First School Governing Body accepted that following the consultation process there were no compelling reasons evident that could be considered as a bar to amalgamation taking place, and therefore agreed to support the amalgamation process. The letter from the Chair of Longfield First School Governing Body is attached to this report at Annexe 1.
8. Harrow Council received two responses to the consultation. The Headteacher of Whitmore High School fully supports the amalgamation of Longfield First School and Longfield Middle School. Harrow Association of Disabled People cannot see why there should be any difficulties for disabled children providing both sites are fully accessible and it does not effect changes in educational statements, and also because it is anticipated that transition issues would be less.

## **Other considerations**

9. A combined school would retain the existing pupils. A new staffing structure reflecting the needs of the school would be developed. The structure would be subject to consultation with all staff and their professional associations / unions and appointments would be made to the new staffing structure over time. No redundancies have arisen in the schools amalgamated to date and there is no reason for the situation to be different in this instance.
10. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, it is proposed that these will be published in September 2010, and considered by Cabinet for determination in November 2010 following the representation period. In accordance with practice under the October 2007 amalgamation policy, the statutory route to establish a combined school would be to discontinue the school where the headteacher vacancy has arisen, and to extend the age range and expand the capacity of the other school. Cabinet would need to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the representation period.
11. If Cabinet decides to approve the publication of statutory notices to combine the two schools, it is proposed that the age range of Longfield Junior School is extended and the capacity expanded, and that Longfield Infant School is discontinued. This is based on the fact that, from September 2010, Longfield Infant School would not have a substantive headteacher. This proposed approach was stated in the consultation paper.

## **Recommendation**

12. The Director of Schools, Quality Assurance and Commissioning recommends that Cabinet publish statutory proposals that if approved would combine the two schools in September 2011. Combining the two schools would give the opportunity to further improve educational standards by enabling planning as a coherent whole across the primary phase of the national curriculum and providing greater flexibility across and between key stages. Access to the whole primary curriculum supports and informs whole school planning, assessment, pastoral systems, etc, and provides opportunities for wider staff development and experience across the full primary phase.
13. The statutory proposals would be:
  - A prescribed alteration to extend the age range of Longfield Junior School to establish a primary school with an age range of 4 years (Reception) to 11 years (Year 6) with attached nursery class from 1 September 2011;
  - A prescribed alteration to expand the capacity of Longfield Junior School from 1 September 2011;
  - A notice to discontinue Longfield Infant School on 31 August 2011.

## **Legal comments**

14. Cabinet is the decision-maker on proposals to make changes to schools and to close schools. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, the decision must be made with regard to the representations and feedback provided by stakeholders. Cabinet must have regard for the Secretary of State's guidance in their decision making.
15. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory proposals, there would be a 6 week statutory period during which representations could be made. Cabinet would need to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the

representation period, giving due regard to the representations received during the representation period. Cabinet's decision is subject to appeal to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator and / or judicial review. In the event Cabinet does not make a decision within two months of this period, the decision must be referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, whose decision is also subject to judicial review.

### **Financial Implications**

16. Previous experience suggests that amalgamating schools usually leads to a small reduction in revenue spend of approximately £40k for the combined school. This is a result of having one headteacher instead of two and rationalising administrative functions. Schools also benefit from having fewer Service Level Agreement (SLA) charges for some services, for instance, at present first and middle schools are charged separately for the Schools Finance SLA. This changes to only one charge after amalgamation.
  
17. Currently it is not anticipated that any capital works will be required as a necessity to enable the amalgamation to proceed. However there may be changes to the premises that would enhance the workings of the school as a combined school. There is currently no funding in capital programme for such works and they would have to be considered as part of agreeing the future capital programme.

## Performance Issues

18. Delivering School Reorganisation so that Harrow's schools are in line with the national agenda is Council Improvement Plan project IP7D and contributes to a range of performance indicators, in particular the following from the new National Indicator Set. NI 72 – 107 'Enjoy and Achieve' indicators covering Key Stage achievement and progression, narrowing the gap for lower performing and vulnerable groups, attendance, behaviour, special educational needs. These are all areas of priority for Harrow as is reflected in Harrow's results, which are broadly inline with the national picture.

<b>Primary National Indicators 2008-09</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>National</b>
Ni 102- achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving level 4 and above in both English and maths at KS2	34.4%	22.3%
Ni 104- The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths	45.1%	N/a
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>White British</b>	77.2%	73.2%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>White Irish</b>	87.5%	79.6%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>White Other</b>	74.2%	69.5%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Mixed White Black Caribbean</b>	75.0%	69.5%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Mixed White &amp; Asian</b>	91.9%	79.1%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Mixed Other</b>	72.5%	74.7%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Indian</b>	89.2%	80.6%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Pakistani</b>	65.5%	64.5%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Asian Other</b>	79.2%	75.3%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Black Caribbean</b>	54.1%	63.0%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Black African &amp; White and Black African</b>	59.7%	66.1%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Black Other</b>	57.1%	62.7%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Any Other Ethnic Group</b>	66.2%	66.8%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>All pupils</b>	76.6%	73.0%

19. Whilst Harrow's performance is currently above national and statistical neighbours' averages at all Key Stages, Harrow's targets, which are set annually for the Department for Education, are highly challenging. The table below presents Harrow's performance against its targets and the national averages.

### Harrow's 2008 – 09 Results

<b>EYFSP</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
NI 72 - % children achieving 78 points or more AND at least 6 points in Social & Emotional & Communication, Language and Literacy areas of learning	50%	49.1%	52%
NI 92 - Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP and the rest of the Local Authority Area	38.1%	33.96%	33.9%
<b>KS1</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
Reading L2+	86%	Not set	84%
Writing L2+	83%	Not set	81%
Maths L2+	91%	Not set	89%
Science L2+	88%	Not set	89%
<b>KS2</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
English L4+	82%	Not set	80%
Maths L4+	81%	Not set	79%
Science L4+	88%	Not set	88%
English & Maths	75%	79%	72%
<b>GCSE</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
% 5+ A*-C	74.8%	Not set	70.0%
% 5+ A*-C inc English & Maths	60.8%	64%	49.8%

### **Environmental Impact**

20. There is no significant environmental impact arising from these proposals.

### **Risk Management Implications**

21. A summary of high level risks is provided.

<b>High Level Risks</b>	<b>Consequences</b>	<b>Mitigating/Control Actions</b>
Challenge to Cabinet decision making.	Delay.	Cabinet must have due regard to the Secretary of State's guidance for decision makers in reaching its decisions on school reorganisation proposals.
School reorganisation changes.	Confusion for stakeholders.	The consultation paper included information about the school reorganisation changes in September 2010.
Clarification of the Council's Amalgamation Policy.	Confusion for stakeholders.	In response to issues raised by the DCSF in regard to the amalgamation policy, and a corporate complaint investigation relating to a school involved in a school reorganisation process, Cabinet agreed a clarified policy at its October 2008 meeting. This clarification does not change the policy requirements.

## Equalities implications

22. The equality impact assessment indicates that the equalities impact of Cabinet's decision will be effectively neutral. No children would be displaced if the schools amalgamate or if they stay separate.

## Corporate Priorities

23. The proposed amalgamation of the two Longfield schools will support corporate priorities by providing opportunities to enhance educational standards and to further promote the Every Child Matters outcomes by ensuring the most effective and coordinated extended services support to families and children, and the use of school facilities.

## Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	21 June 2010		
Name:	George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	17 June 2010		

## Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name:	David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date:	21 June 2010		

## Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name:	Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date:	16 June 2010		



## **Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Chris Melly, Senior Professional, Transforming Learning Team  
020 8420 9270 [chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers:**

Consultation paper on the Future Organisation of Longfield First School and Longfield Middle School.

Consultation responses.

Equality Impact Assessment.

Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance for decision makers [www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg)

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

**NOT APPLICABLE**

*(for completion by Democratic  
Services staff only)*