

Final determination report for the Executive Director of Children's Services from the School Organisation Team.

The Proposal: To amalgamate Mulbarton Infant School and Mulbarton Junior School into a single all-through primary school for pupils aged 4 -11, from 1 September 2017

Background

With the support of the governing bodies of Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior Schools, NCC proposes to reorganise these two schools to create a single all-through primary school for pupils aged 4 – 11 from 1 September 2017. In order to do this, the Local Authority published a proposal to close Mulbarton Junior School together with a linked proposal to change the age range and enlarge Mulbarton Infant School.

Consultation

Proposers of a school closure must consult organisations, groups and individuals they feel to be appropriate and must include certain information which is published in the Prescribed Information document. See Appendix 1 for the initial consultation document, Appendix 2 for the Public Notice and Appendix 3 for the Prescribed Information for each school.

The initial consultation period ran from 6 October to 22 November 2016. Following this period, the Executive Director of Children's Services agreed to proceed to statutory Public Notice. This was published on 3rd February 2017. The four week representation period ended on Friday 3rd March 2017.

No representations were received.

In coming to a decision on school organisation proposals, the decision maker is asked to address the following factors:

- Consideration of consultation and representation period
- Education standards and diversity of provision
- A school-led system with every school an academy
- Demand v. need
- School size
- Proposed admission arrangements
- National Curriculum
- Equal opportunity issues
- Community cohesion
- Travel and accessibility
- Funding
- School premises and playing fields

This report, to be read in conjunction with the prescribed information and the report prepared for the Executive Director of Children's Services requesting permission to proceed to Public Notice (Appendix 4) will address each factor in turn.

1. Consideration of consultation and representation period

All statutory requirements in relation to the statutory consultation, publication and decision-making were complied with.

Copies of the consultation document were sent to all parents, the local County Councillor, the Parish Council, CE and RC Dioceses, staff, governors and other stakeholders as outlined in the school organisation guidance. Copies of the notice were displayed at the school gates in line with regulations.

Two stakeholder meetings were held on 11th October (at the infant school) and 13 October (at the junior school). 5 parents attended the first meeting, 2 attended the second. A meeting for staff was held on 6 October at which 6 members of staff attended.

2. Education standards and diversity of provision

The most recent inspections by Ofsted in 2015 (Infant) and 2014 (Junior) judged the schools to be Good. Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior Schools are both community schools, the designated catchment school (Hethersett) is an academy (Inspiration Trust) and so the diversity of provision in the area will not change.

3. Demand

The proposal will ensure a sufficient supply of school places in response to housing growth and other demographic changes and the schools have benefited from a Basic Need building project to meet this increased demand.

4. School size

This proposal will amalgamate the schools into a single all-through primary school and increase the number of places from 368 to 420.

5. Proposed admission arrangements

The admission number for the school on the opening date will be 60 and will be expected to follow the Local Authority's standard policy for pupil admissions.

6. National Curriculum

All maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum.

7. Equal Opportunity issues

Equal opportunities have been considered as part of this proposal and did not identify any impact.

8. Community cohesion

Stronger relationships will be established with parents through consistent communication and reporting.

9. Travel and Accessibility

Norfolk County Council will continue to provide transport to those eligible under their statutory requirements.

10. Funding

There are no project costs associated with this proposal however both schools have benefited from an NCC basic need project to link both schools by a new corridor, and build four new classrooms on the site. The £1.5m project has created a better working environment for both pupils and staff.

11. School premises and playing fields

Suitable outdoor space will be available as previously, to enable children to play safely outside.

Conclusion and recommendation

- **That the Decision Maker approve the proposal to amalgamate Mulbarton Infant School and Mulbarton Junior School into a single all-through primary school for pupils aged 4 -11, from 1 September 2017.**

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Determination Notice

I hereby **approve** this proposal to extend the age ranges of Mulbarton Infant School and to close Mulbarton Junior Schools to create an all-through primary school. The reasons for this decision are that:

- The statutory procedural requirements under sections 15(1) and 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 have been met;
- The proposal meets the criteria laid down in statutory guidance in relation to the likely impact of the proposal on standards and school improvement, local choice and diversity, surplus places, community cohesion and race equality;
- The views of all interested parties, including those most likely to be affected, have been considered.

Signed:



Date:

7/3

2017

Matt Langley, Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council