

Final determination report from the Executive Director of Children's Services.

I have considered the Proposal:

- **To change the age range of Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School, and Hethersett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School to the full primary age range from 1 September 2019**
- **To relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site, north of Hethersett from 1 September 2019**
- **To expand the junior school to accommodate the increase in pupils from 1 September 2019**

Background on School organisation process for changes to maintained schools

The DfE guidance on 'Making prescribed alterations to maintained schools', April 2016 sets out the school organisation process.

- Stage 1 is the publication of the statutory notice and proposal,
- Stage 2 is the formal consultation. It must be a 4 week formal statutory consultation.
- Stage 3 is the decision, made by the Local Authority Decision-maker, and should be made within 2 months of the closing date of the Public Notice.
- Stage 4 is the implementation stage.

Although there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that schools and Local Authorities will consult interested parties, in developing their proposal prior to publication, as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations.

Background to the proposal

With the support of the governing bodies of Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School and Hethersett CE VC Junior School, NCC proposes to reorganise these two schools to create two single all-through primary schools for pupils aged 2 – 11 from 1 September 2019. In order to do this, the Local Authority published a proposal to expand and relocate Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School and the LA and Governing Board of Hethersett CE VC Junior School published a linked proposal to change the age range and enlarge Hethersett CE VC Junior School for pupils aged 2 - 11.

Consultation

Proposers of prescribed alterations for changes to maintained schools 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 12 June to 21 July 2017. Following this period, I agreed to proceed to statutory Public Notice (Stage 1). This was published on 8 September. The four week representation period (Stage 2) ended on Friday 6 October 2017.

Two objections were received in Stage 2. The first, from a parent of a pupil attending Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School disagreed with the proposal but gave no reason. The second, from a resident, disagreed with the proposal and asked 'what is planned for the current site on Firs Road?'

In coming to a decision on school organisation proposals, I am required to address the following factors:

1. Consideration of consultation and representation period
2. Education standards and diversity of provision
3. Demand v. need
4. School size
5. Proposed admission arrangements
6. National Curriculum
7. Equal opportunity issues
8. Community cohesion
9. Travel and accessibility
10. Funding
11. School premises and playing fields

This report, to be read in conjunction with the prescribed information and the report prepared for me 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.

Four stakeholder meetings were held on 20 and 26 June (at the infant school) and 21 June and 4 July (at the junior school). 14 attended the first meeting, 10 attended the second, 32 attended the third and 14 members of staff attended the fourth.

2. Education standards and diversity of provision

The most recent inspections by Ofsted in 2007 (Infant) and 2017 (Junior) judged the infant school to be outstanding and the junior school to be Good. Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School is a maintained community school and Hethersett CE VC Junior School is a voluntary controlled school. 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 create two all-through primary school with 420 places at each school.

5. Proposed admission arrangements

The admission number for the schools 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 local authority 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

All parents in Hethersett will receive consistent communication and reporting from both schools building stronger relationships in the community.

9. Travel and Accessibility

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

10. Funding

Funding is available in the approved capital budget as follows:

- Hethersett new primary – the scheme is at development stage and the current budget allocation of £500k will take the preparation to full planning stage.
- Hethersett CE VC Junior School, refurbishments and expansion – the scheme is at initial development stage and is funded at present for £50k development costs.

For both schools, further funding as the scheme develops will be drawn, first, from available Section 106 funding and, secondly, from Basic Need unallocated. Approvals will be sought through the 2018/19 corporate capital development process starting in September 2017.

11. School premises and playing fields

Suitable outdoor space will be available as previously and will be provided at the new site, to enable children to play safely outside.

My conclusion and recommendation – Stage 3

- That the proposal to extend the age ranges of Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School and Hethersett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School to the full primary age range, and to relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site, north of Hethersett and to expand the current junior school to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers, from 1 September 2019, should proceed.

Determination Notice

The Proposal:

- To change the age range of Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School, and Hethersett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School to the full primary age range from 1 September 2019
- To relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site, north of Hethersett from 1 September 2019
- To expand the junior school to accommodate the increase in pupils from 1 September 2019

I hereby **approve** this proposal to extend the age ranges of Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School and Hethersett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School to the full primary age range, to relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site, north of Hethersett and to expand the current junior school to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers. The reasons for this decision are that:

- The statutory procedural requirements under sections 19(1) and 19(3) 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: 19th October 2017
Matt Dunkley, Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council