

	DELEGATED POWERS REPORT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CHAIRMAN
Title	Amalgamation of Dollis Junior School and Dollis Infant School
Report of	Strategic Director, Children and Young People, in consultation with the Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee
Wards	Mill Hill
Status	Public
Enclosures	Appendix A – Title Plan
Officer Contact Details	Ben Thomas, Strategic Lead, Children and Young People Ben.thomas@barnet.gov.uk

Summary

Dollis Junior School is a foundation school for children aged 7-11 and Dollis Infant School is a community school for children aged 2-7. The two schools are located next to each other on Pursley Road in Mill Hill. The schools have run a public consultation, which lasted for six weeks from 29 October 2018 to 9 December 2018, and a representation period for which notice was given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 on 10 January 2019 and ran for four weeks on a proposal to close Dollis Junior School, expand the age range of Dollis Infant School and subsequently amalgamate the two schools. Notice was published between the consultation period and the representation period. Following the consultation and representation period, the Governing Bodies of both schools have decided to proceed with the amalgamation and the Council now needs to decide whether to approve the amalgamation of the schools.

Decisions

- 1. Approval of (1) the closure of Dollis Junior School and (2) extending the age range of Dollis Infant School to create an all-through primary school for children aged 2-11 called Dollis Primary School, reducing the planned admission number to 60 per year.**
- 2. Agreement to the transfer of the land being the site of Dollis Junior School and staff from the Governing Body of Dollis Junior School to the London Borough of Barnet together with any associated contracts and liabilities, subject to obtaining any required third party consents.**
- 3. Approval of a temporary licence or lease of the site of Dollis Junior School by the Governing Body of Dollis Junior School to the London Borough of Barnet.**
- 4. Approval for the London Borough of Barnet to enter into a Commercial Transfer Agreement with the Governing Bodies of both Dollis Junior School and Dollis Infant School relating to the amalgamation which will deal with such matters as assets, third party contracts, staffing and information transfer.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Dollis Junior School is a foundation school for children aged 7-11 and Dollis Infant School is a community school for children aged 2-7. The two schools are located next to each other on Pursley Road in Mill Hill. The schools have run a public consultation, which lasted for six weeks from 29 October 2018 to 9 December 2018 and a representation period which ran from 10 January 2019 for four weeks, on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools. Following the consultation and representation period the Governing Bodies of both schools have decided to proceed with the amalgamation and it is now recommendation that the Council approves the amalgamation of the schools.
- 1.2 The amalgamation will require the closure of Dollis Junior School on 31 March 2019 and extending the age range of Dollis Infant School to 2-11 years from 1 April 2019. The amalgamated school would be a community school called Dollis Primary School. All existing children on the Junior and Infant schools' rolls would transfer onto the roll of the primary school on 1st April 2019.
- 1.3 The new school would plan to provide 60 places per year group in Reception to Year 2, and continue with 90 places per year group in Year 3 to Year 6 until all year groups have 60 pupils in each year group. The nursery and pre-school provisions will continue in their current form. The new primary school would ultimately be smaller by thirty places per year than the two existing schools in terms of the number of places available for children. This reflects the current and planned demand for places in the local area.
- 1.4 The two existing school buildings will continue to be used by the new Primary School. The head teachers for the two schools are still in post and it is proposed that there will be job share arrangements in place to cover the headship duties. This will be subject to staff consultation and, if implemented, the new Governing Body will be responsible for

reviewing the arrangement. The Governing Body of Dollis Infant School will continue, but it is proposed to form a new Governing Body, including electing new staff and parent governors and a new chair of Governors.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Barnet like most London boroughs has experienced falling rolls in Reception for the last two years (just under 8%). This has resulted in spare capacity in some areas of the borough. The place planning area around the Dollis Schools has spare capacity that would allow for the new proposed Dollis Primary School becoming a 2FE School.

2.2 The amalgamation of the two schools will have the following advantages:

- Opportunities for more efficient deployment of staff and expertise.
- Cost effectiveness for the schools by creating economies of scale in the long term.
- A greater proportion of the school's budget available for teaching and learning rather than administration due to their being for example, one budget and one inspection.
- Consistent leadership and management across key stages and one Governing Body.
- The relationship between pupils, parents and the school can build over a longer period of time, allowing the school to better understand the needs of each pupil.
- Consistency of policy and planning across key stages (the potential for cross phase policies with a key stage specific focus across Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2)
- Continuity and consistency for teaching and learning and achievement.
- Strengthened 'tracking' of pupil learning and achievement.
- Staff retention and recruitment opportunities and enhanced opportunities for professional development.
- Broader curriculum range.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 The other option considered is to continue with the current arrangements and not amalgamate the schools. This option has the following advantages:

- Broader curriculum range.
- Separate Infant and Junior schools ensure a strong focus on each particular key stage, and staff are able to develop expertise accordingly.
- Smaller schools can mean that staff know the pupils better.
- Transition of pupils from an Infant to Junior school can be good preparation for later transitions.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 A staff consultation on the TUPE transfer from Dollis Junior School to Dollis Infant School opened on the 28 Feb 2019 and is set to run until 21 March 2019. Staff will transfer to the Council's employment where appropriate.
- 4.2 A lease or licence will be put in place from the Governing Body of Dollis Junior School to the Council while the transfer of the land is agreed. The land will be transferred to the Council. The title plan showing the land owned by the Governing Body of Dollis Junior School edged red and in part edged blue can be found at Appendix A.
- 4.3 The decision will be published as mentioned at para 5.4 below.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The quality of the education offer is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. It plays a crucial part in making Barnet family friendly, with many families attracted to the area by the good reputation of Barnet's schools. Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are key to deliver the Council's vision set out in its Corporate Plan 2019-24 for:
- Barnet's schools to be amongst the best in the country, with enough places for all, and with all children achieving the best they can
 - Barnet's children and young people to receive a great start in life

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The amalgamation of the schools will require the transfer of 47 staff from Dollis Junior School to the London Borough of Barnet and the transfer of the land as shown at Appendix A.
- 5.2.2 The new amalgamated school will continue to be funded through the Barnet school funding formula but as one school rather than two. From 2020/21 the school will receive one lump sum, currently £0.121m. However, in the first year 2019/20 of amalgamation, there is protection offered of 85% of the two predecessors' schools lump sums, currently £0.205m (£0.121m x 2 x 85%).

5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders. It is not envisaged that new services will be procured as a result of this decision.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Regulations mean that, if a school proposes to close, change an age range or increase their capacity above a certain point, their proposal must be published in a statutory notice. There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed: Consultation, Publication, Representation, Decision, Implementation. The Local Authority is the decision maker in relation to closure of a school.
- 5.4.2 If the decision is not taken within 2 months from the end of the representation period, the proposals must be referred to the schools adjudicator.
- 5.4.3 Within one week of this decision the Council will publish it on their website with reasons, as required under the relevant Regulations. Notice of the decision and reasons will be sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the governing body, the schools adjudicator and others as required under the relevant Regulations.
- 5.4.4 Under the Council's constitution, at Article 9, the Director of Children and Young People as a Chief Officer has delegated authority to make decisions and approve expenditure relating to his functions and the functions of his Department, providing (1) that the sum expended is within the approved budget for the Department and/or relevant portfolio, and (2) the amount in relation to any single matter does not exceed £181,302, including to determine employment matters relating to staff including all changes to staffing structures (not including changes to terms and conditions of employment or additional payments to any individual member of staff above £100K) and to approve tender strategies and award contracts in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules within Part 2 of the Constitution.
- 5.4.5 Under the Council's constitution at Article 7, acquisition of land is dealt with by the Assets Regeneration and Growth Committee but where the amount payable is less than £181,302 an Approved Officer with authority may approve the acquisition.
- 5.4.6 HB Public Law shall assist with the drafting of a Commercial Transfer Agreement between the Council and both Governing Bodies relating to the amalgamation which will deal with such matters as assets, third party contracts, staffing and information transfer.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 There is a risk that the transfer of the land will not complete until after the amalgamation has occurred on 1st April 2019. As set out above a lease or licence will be put in place for the 1st April 2019 until the transfer completes.
- 5.5.2 There is a risk of insufficient places. However, Barnet like most London boroughs has experienced falling rolls in Reception for the last two years (just under 8%). This has resulted in spare capacity in some areas of the borough. The place planning area around the Dollis Schools has spare capacity that would allow for the new proposed Dollis Primary School becoming a 2FE School.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision-making of the council. The Equality Act 2010 and the Public-Sector Equality Duty, requires elected

Members to satisfy themselves that equality considerations are integrated into day-to-day business and that all proposals emerging from the business planning process have taken into consideration the impact, if any, on any protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place.

5.6.2 An assessment of the equality implications for the amalgamation of Dollis Infant School and Dollis Primary School is that it will have no equalities impact

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 In line with Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the council. The outcomes and priorities in the refreshed Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, reflect the council's commitment to the Corporate Parenting duty to ensure the most vulnerable are protected and the needs of children are considered in everything that the council does.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

The public consultation period lasted for six weeks from 29 October 2018 to 9 December 2018. Public meetings were held at: Dollis Infant School on 15th November 2018 and at 6.30pm Dollis Junior School on Friday 16 November. There were 35 responses to the consultation. Of the 33 that answered the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to merge Dollis Infant and Junior Schools to create an all-through primary school?', the responses were as follows:

Answer Choices	Responses	
	%age	Number
Strongly agree	60.61%	20
Tend to agree	15.15%	5
Neither agree nor disagree	6.06%	2
Tend to disagree	9.09%	3
Strongly disagree	6.06%	2
Don't Know	3.03%	1

There were the following free text comments:

- Barnet's children and young people to receive a great start in life
- It is in the children's and families best interest
- As a whole school I would like to think that there will be more consistency.
- It will be easy for me to pick up kids as of now I have to walk to the junior school and wait for about 20 min.
- Change is good stronger management force
- Great idea, I don't need to spend my time to rush two different distance.
- Prefer the timetables to be at same
- It better creates an atmosphere of community family and highly positive experience for the children's growing. It could save money for the school, streamlining resources and promote unity.
- I think smaller schools where the leadership are engaged with each family are best. I like the specialisation in early years an infant school offers in focus.
- Both schools will benefit, the children will have no transition after year 2

- Because it will be easy to collect the children
- Better for children to have continuity in their primary school education.
- One school is better financially for the school.
- Best for the children transitioning from KS1 to KS2
- Primary schools tend to have a focus on Key Stage 2 and in particular year 6. Decisions on teaching and learning can have a 'top down' approach.
- We currently have to send our children to two separate breakfast clubs which start at the same time, it takes 20 minutes to drop them off, which causes us to rush every morning for both to be on time.
- I also would like the infants' vision of wellbeing, nurture, and social-emotional achievement as well as academics to filter into the juniors and I am hopeful this will be the case especially if the current infant head could lead the new school.
- Makes sense to make it all through
- Better provision for children with seamless primary school.
- The Junior school does not have a good reputation so a new school would be good.
- They should federate and keep both budgets
- It will allow the two key stages to be more closely linked which will provide consistency in children's education.

The notice for the representation period was published on 10 January 2019 and ran for four weeks. There were no responses received.

5.9 Insight

The responses from the consultation have been used to inform the recommendations.

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation paper on amalgamation of Dollis Infant and Juniors Schools

<https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/1688/documents/1786>

Chairman: Councillor David Longstaff
Has been consulted

Signed

12 March 2019-----
Date

Chief Officer: Chris Munday- Strategic Director, Children and Young People
Decision maker having taken into account the views of the Chairman

Signed

Date
12 March 2019-----