

**Chaddesden Park Infant & Junior Schools  
Proposal for Formal Consultation on a Merger to create a Primary**

**SUMMARY**

- 1.1 At its meeting of 2 June 2009, Council Cabinet approved the policy of promoting infant and junior school mergers whenever possible and appropriate, once consideration has been given to a range of factors. The report confirmed the Council's preferred model for the delivery of primary education as an all-through (4-11) primary school, as opposed to separate infant and junior schools. This model offers significant advantages in terms of continuity for pupils, alongside flexibility and efficiency in respect of staffing resources.
- 1.2 The current policy is to consider 'mergers', against a set of criteria, when an opportunity arises due to a headteacher vacancy occurring in either an infant or junior school. An opportunity has arisen to consider a merger of Chaddesden Park Infant and Junior Schools due to the retirement of the Headteacher of the Junior School at the end of the 2012 spring term.
- 1.3 This report seeks Cabinet Member approval to go out to formal consultation on a proposal to 'merge' Chaddesden Park Infant and Junior Schools to form an all-through primary school from September 2012. The proposal is to close the Junior School and expand the age range and size of the Infant School to create an all-through primary. A draft timeline for the proposal is attached as Appendix 2. A draft consultation document is attached as Appendix 3.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. To approve formal consultation on a proposal to 'merge' Chaddesden Park Infant & Nursery and Chaddesden Park Junior Schools to form an all-through primary school from September 2012.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 There are clear benefits to be gained in merging the schools to create an all-through primary as outlined in this report. Council Cabinet has previously approved a policy of

promoting Infant and Junior School mergers wherever possible and appropriate.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 School mergers do not feature within the relevant regulations. Instead, mergers can be achieved through statutory procedures to close one school and simultaneously expand the age range of the linked school. The choice of which school should close and which should expand is usually based on which school has a headteacher vacancy, with that school usually the one proposed for closure. The opportunity to consider the establishment of a primary school arises due to the retirement of the Headteacher of Chaddesden Park Junior at the end of the 2012 spring term. The merger would be achieved through proposals to close the Junior School and simultaneously expand the age range and size of the Infant School. Once a “new” school is formed, it is necessary to form a single governing body to serve the new primary school.
- 4.2 There is a well established national preference for primary schools with full foundation stage provision, rather than separate schools serving individual key stages (nursery, infant and junior schools). This is based on evidence suggesting there are significant advantages of continuity, flexibility and efficiency. The main advantages are:
- A single primary school makes the transition of pupils between years 2 and 3, from infants to juniors, smoother and better for pupils and their families with less chance of ‘lost learning’ at the beginning of year 3.
  - The possibility to create a single and continuous approach to the curriculum, such as single policies for handwriting, reading, maths and behaviour.
  - School budgets are based mainly on the number of children in a school. If these go up and down year to year, it causes instability and can lead to a shortage of funding. The effects of this are often more pronounced for smaller schools as larger schools are more able to deal with fluctuations, for example leading to redundancies or lack of funds to purchase books, refurbish ICT equipment etc.
  - A larger school has more capacity to introduce remodelled posts, such as a site manager or school business manager. This releases the head and senior managers to concentrate more on the business of raising achievement for all children.
  - More development opportunities for the staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages.

#### 4.3 Analysis of the case for a merger

The opportunity to consider the establishment of a primary school arises due to the retirement of the Headteacher of Chaddesden Park Junior. At its meeting of 2 June 2009, Cabinet approved the policy of promoting school mergers whenever possible and appropriate, once consideration has been given to a range of factors. An analysis of the situation at the two schools with regard to pupil numbers and school budgets is detailed below:

*The stability of pupil numbers in the schools, including projected numbers and the potential size of the primary school.*

The table below sets out pupil number information for Chaddesden Park Infant and Junior Schools based on the 2011 School Census.

School	Number on Roll	Net capacity	Surplus Places	% Surplus
Infant	135	180	45	25%
Junior	183	240	57	24%
Total	318	420	102	24%

There are 102 (24%) surplus places across both schools, which is relatively high. However, pupil projections are suggesting an increase in pupil numbers across this cluster of schools over the next five years. This is in line with citywide primary pupil projections which are showing an increasing trend. In other areas of the city, the balance between pupil places and demand is becoming more challenging. Therefore, there is no proposal to reduce admission numbers or pupil places as part of the merger proposal.

*Any current or predicted financial issues in either school which would affect the quality of provision.*

The financial position at the Junior School is that the school is currently predicting a break even position for 2011/12 and has no reserve balances. The infant school is not in that position and is currently forecasted to have balances above the 8% threshold.

*Any relevant issues relating to the school buildings and/or site.*

If the two schools do merge, they will continue to operate within their existing buildings. The Council is currently awaiting the outcome of a bid to the government for capital funding to build a new school.

#### OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 There is an option to retain existing Infant and Junior Schools. This would result in a missed opportunity to improve standards and continuity for pupils in those schools where clear benefits are envisaged.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Robin Constable, Solicitor, Legal Services Alison Parkin, Head of Finance - CYP Linda Theakstone, HR Adviser Rita Silvester, Service Director – Performance and Commissioning, CYP
<b>For more information contact:</b>  <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Rita Silvester, Service Director – Performance and Commissioning, tel. 01332 716840, email <a href="mailto:rita.silvester@derby.gov.uk">rita.silvester@derby.gov.uk</a> None. Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Draft timeline Appendix 3 – Draft Consultation Document

## Appendix 1

### IMPLICATIONS

#### Financial

- 1.1 The financial implications of one school closing and the other extending its age range are in some respects different from the closure of two schools and their replacement by a single new school. For most of the funding streams, the allocation for the “merged” school will be based on that of the school extending its age range, only with greater pupil numbers.
- 1.2 As far as the Council’s funding formula is concerned, there will be a reduction of approximately £40,000, in terms of the current formula, across the two schools because of the removal of flat rate factors allocated to each school. This will be more than offset by the reduced costs of only having one headteacher. Beyond that, the schools may be able to make further savings in the longer term.

However, local funding formulas are currently under review in preparation for the national school funding reform, details of which are soon to be announced. It is very clear that there will be a drive to simplify local formulas and this could indeed see increases of base rates within local formulas. This could ultimately mean that changes in formula as a result of these organisational changes will become more significant.

#### Legal

- 2.1 School ‘mergers’ do not feature within the relevant regulations. Instead, mergers can be achieved through statutory procedures to close one school and simultaneously expand the age range of the linked school. The process involves consultation, publication of a statutory notice and consideration of the responses received. Subject to the outcome of this process, the implementation date is likely to be September 2012.
- 2.2 The statutory process for the proposal is prescribed under sections 19, 21 and Schedule 2 Education and Inspections Act 2006, and as set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007.

#### Personnel

- 3.1 The Council expects the budget for the merged schools will be sufficient to maintain sustainable levels of staffing set within the budgets of the separate schools. It will be the responsibility of the temporary governing bodies, in consultation with the authority, trade unions and professional associations, to determine a staffing structure for the new schools and the allocation of staff to posts within those structures.

- 3.2 Within the constraints of the powers of individual governing bodies, the Children and Young People's Department will do everything possible to ensure employment at other schools or elsewhere within the Council if this became necessary.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 4 None for consideration.

### **Health and Safety**

- 5 None for consideration.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

- 6 None for consideration.

### **Asset Management**

- 7 If the two schools do merge, they will continue to operate within their existing buildings. The Council is currently awaiting the outcome of a bid to the government for capital funding to build a new school.

### **Risk Management**

- 8 If the proposal goes ahead, there will, inevitably, be a period of adjustment while the new structure settles down. On a day-to-day basis there will be no change in routine or provision in either school. It is anticipated that the children will benefit from the potential of a wider range of resources and improved staff development.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 9 The proposal supports the Corporate Priority of building ambition, aspiration and achievement in the city's young people.

### Chaddesden Park Infant and Junior Schools 'Merger' Proposal Draft Timeline

Stages	Timeline
Discuss and agree consultation document with Heads and Governors.	By end of December 2011
Seek Cabinet Lead Member approval to go out to consultation.	10 January 2012
Start of formal consultation period, including Governing Bodies, Headteachers, parents, teachers, staff, unions and ward members.	16 January 2012 to 27 February 2012
Briefing for Staff during consultation period.	26 January 3.30pm (Tentative)
Meeting for parents.	Thursday, 2 February at 3.30pm (Tentative)
Report outcome of consultation to Council Cabinet and seek approval to move to next stage which involves publishing a Statutory Notice.	13 March 2012
Advise Heads and Governors of outcome of Cabinet meeting.	14 March 2012
Publication of Statutory Notice and circulation of Complete Proposal which marks the start of a six week representation period.	26 March to 7 May 2012
Make arrangements for a temporary Governing Body during the statutory representation period. The temporary GB would come into effect following a decision on the proposal.	26 March to 7 May 2012
Decision by: Local Authority - Council Cabinet is the decision maker but this can be delegated to Director for Children and Young People if no objections are received during the representation period. If objections are received, the decision should be taken by Council Cabinet.	26 June 2012 Cabinet or earlier if Strategic Director for CYP  (end of term is 20 July 2012)
Implementation date – school opens as a primary	September 2012



one Derby one council

Monday, 16 January  
2012

To:

Parents, Staff, Governors, Trade Unions, Derby City Councillors (Ward Members),  
Derby City Diocesan Authorities and local MP.

**PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS ON OUR PROPOSAL TO MERGE  
CHADDESSEN PARK INFANT & NURSERY & CHADDESSEN PARK  
JUNIOR SCHOOLS TO FORM A SINGLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

***Background***

It is generally accepted that all-through primary schools offer certain advantages when compared with separate infant and junior schools. The benefits include continuity for pupils, flexibility and efficiency in terms of staffing resources and improvements in terms of admissions. Where separate infant and junior schools exist, some pupils attending the infant school may not be able to access a place at the linked junior school, due to the availability of places. This can cause significant disruption for pupils and frustration for parents.

Derby City Council is consulting on a proposal to 'merge' Chaddesden Park Infant & Nursery School and Chaddesden Park Junior School to form a single primary school, within the existing school buildings, from September 2012. Both School Governing Bodies support this proposal to create a primary school.

The opportunity to consider the establishment of a primary school arises due to the retirement of the Headteacher of Chaddesden Park Junior School in March 2012. A merged primary school, of course, also provides the



opportunity to continue to raise standards for our young people. The benefits in forming a primary are outlined in more detail below.

This consultation document tells you the reason for our proposal and how the decision making process works. Please take time to read the document and let us know your views and comments on the attached Consultation Response Form. The closing date for responses is **Monday, 27 February 2012**. We hope you find the document helpful and informative.

### ***What is the proposal?***

A 'merger' is the joining of two or more schools into one, with a single governing body and headteacher. This would be achieved through the "closure" of the Junior School, in view of the retirement of the headteacher, and the simultaneous expansion of the age range of the Infant School to form a single 3 to 11 primary school. Benefits of the 'merger' proposal are set out in the next section of this paper.

The schools' currently each have an admission number of 60 and there are no proposals to change this. If the two schools do merge, they will continue to operate within their existing buildings. The Council is currently awaiting the outcome of a bid to the government for capital funding to build a new school.

### ***What are the benefits?***

The main benefits are:

- A single primary school would make the transition of pupils between years 2 and 3, from infants to juniors, smoother and better for pupils and their families with less chance of 'lost learning' at the beginning of year 3.
- The possibility to create a single and continuous approach to the curriculum, such as single policies for handwriting, reading, maths and behaviour.
- A single governing body bringing a single culture and ethos across the 3 to 11 age range.
- School budgets are based mainly on the number of children in a school. If these go up and down year to year, it causes instability and can lead to shortage of funding, job losses etc. This is often worse for smaller schools. Bigger schools, such as primaries, are better placed to cope with the fluctuations.
- One school uniform, the same policies and procedures, the same dates for staff training days and parents' evenings.
- A larger school has more capacity to introduce remodelled posts, such as a site manager or school business manager. This releases the head and senior managers to concentrate more on the business of raising achievement for all children.
- More development opportunities for the staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages.

- Better access for pupils and the families to extended services and facilities.
- The opportunity for both schools to keep improving and moving forward.

### ***What will it mean for the children?***

All of the above should have a positive impact on the quality of education that children receive. There will, inevitably, be a period of adjustment while the new structure settles down. On a day-to-day basis there will be no change in routine or provision in either school. It is anticipated that the children will benefit from the potential of a wider range of resources and improved staff development.

### ***What will it mean in terms of organisation?***

- There should be no immediate change in the way in which the schools are organised as a direct result of merger.
- The new school will receive a single budget based on pupil numbers. Conversion to a primary school gives, in the longer term, the headteacher and governors greater flexibility in using staff and resources.
- The primary school would maintain the status of community school and there will be no change to admissions criteria. Children in year 2 would automatically have a right to transfer to year 3 without having to re-apply for a place.

### ***What will it mean for the staff?***

Again, very little on a day-to-day basis, but a merger will create greater stability and security. Apart from a change of school name to a primary school, staff contracts and conditions of service will not be affected in any way.

A meeting for school staff on the proposal has been arranged to take place on Thursday, 26 January at 3.30pm at the **[infant / junior]** school.

### ***What will it mean for parents/carers?***

A merger will mean that the schools will continue to operate as usual and that parents/carers of pupils at both schools will continue to receive the same high level of quality provision. Parents/carers will not have to apply for a place in the junior part of the school once their child is on roll in the infant part of the school.

A meeting for parents on the proposal has been arranged to take place on Thursday, 2 February at 3.30pm at the **[infant / junior]** school.

### ***What will it mean for the Governing Body?***

On an agreed date, the two current Governing Bodies will end, and be replaced with one Governing Body made up of representatives from both schools. Different models are possible.

### ***What happens now?***

The consultation period starts on Monday, 16 January 2012 and ends on Monday, 27 February 2012. Following this, Council Cabinet will consider the consultation comments and will decide whether to progress to the next stage of the process.

If proposals are to be taken forward, there will then be a further six week consultation period. It is anticipated that a final decision will then be made by Cabinet in June 2012 on whether to merge the schools. If merger does proceed then the “new” school will be in place for September 2012.

### ***How can I get more information on the proposal?***

We are very interested in your views and welcome your comments. Please respond to us by using the Consultation Response Form attached to this paper. Should you wish to discuss any specific aspects of this proposal, please contact:

Hayley Millward  
Project Officer – School Organisation & Provision Team  
Derby City Council  
Tel: 642722  
Email: [hayley.millward@derby.gov.uk](mailto:hayley.millward@derby.gov.uk)

### ***Let us have your views***

Your views are very important. Please do let us know what you think and whether you agree or disagree with the proposal by **Monday, 27 February 2012**.

You can make your views known in the following ways:

- by completing the attached Consultation Response Form and returning it to us at the address provided at the end of the questionnaire.
- by email to [hayley.millward@derby.gov.uk](mailto:hayley.millward@derby.gov.uk)

**Consultation Response Form: Proposed Merger of Chaddesden Park Infant & Chaddesden Park Junior Schools**

Your views are very important, please do let us know what you think.

Please tick the relevant box.

**I am a:**

Parent / Carer of an Infant school child  
 Parent / Carer of a Junior school child  
 Parent of Pre-School child  
 Governor - Infant  
 Governor - Junior  
 Member of Staff - Infant  
 Member of Staff - Junior  
 Local Resident  
 Local Councillor  
 Other (please state)


**I support** the merger of Chaddesden Park Infant and Chaddesden Park Junior Schools to form a primary school

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**OR**

**I do not support** the merger of Chaddesden Park Infant and Chaddesden Park Junior Schools

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Please add your comments below and attach additional sheets if necessary:

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Date .....

Please return your response form to:

Hayley Millward, School Organisation & Provision Team, 27 St. Mary's Gate,  
Derby, DE1 3NN or email your comments to [hayley.millward@derby.gov.uk](mailto:hayley.millward@derby.gov.uk)  
by Monday, 27 February 2012