

RIVERSIDE BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE: BUSINESS CASE

April 2009

SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Riverside is a vulnerable, underperforming school with an extremely low pupil intake, high operating costs and a high risk of continued decline. In recognition of this the Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Young People, in conjunction with Cabinet colleagues, has commissioned an options review into the future viability of the School and the measures necessary to secure an improved standard of education for pupils currently at the School and those who may be considering a place.
- 1.2 This review explores six potential options for change identified by the City Council, immediate stakeholder views upon these and associated current performance measures and judgements. The following 6 options are explored:
- 1) Maintain status quo.
 - 2) Provide continued increased financial and other support to the School to ensure it remains viable and achieves sufficient improvements.
 - 3) Federate with a school that is judged to be good or better on the basis of an OfSTED inspection and pupil performance and implement revised governance, leadership and management arrangements.
 - 4) Establish flexible collaborative arrangements amongst other local authority maintained schools.
 - 5) Continue to explore the option of Riverside becoming part of a collaborative Academy and other potential Academies in the City.
 - 6) Consult upon phased school closure.
- 1.3 Consideration of the views of the school governing body: During the course of this review the school governing body has proposed two further options. They are:

- i. Development of an Academy at Riverside with an associated vocational centre/ the co-location of primary and secondary education provision on the existing Riverside site.
- ii. Maintain present building in the short term and link with an independent school to attract more aspirational parents and students.

These are explored below in the context of the 6 options identified by the City Council.

- 1.4 Consideration or representations from the National Union of Teachers: During the course of this review this trade union has proposed ideas around collaboration between Riverside and other schools (14.6 & 14.7 below)

This is explored below in the context of the 6 options identified by the City Council.

- 1.5 Consideration of the views of school staff: During the course of this review a meeting of 60 school staff discussed the options identified by the City Council. Staff comments are incorporated and evaluated at relevant points within this business case.

- 1.6 *Key conclusions and judgements are highlighted in italics throughout this document.*

- 1.7 Following review and analysis of the above, consideration of the current school context, and a range of education performance measures, financial and value for money considerations, it is concluded that there are strong educational, financial and business reasons to close this School as soon as practicably possible.

SECTION 2

SCHOOL CONTEXT AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

2. Geographic location and School estate

- 2.1 Riverside does not have a natural school community and parental choices are in part influenced by geography and physical barriers such as arterial roads; river and flood plain; and transport routes. The River Soar floodplain is a real barrier which cuts through the heart of the current priority area. There are only two significant crossing points and this in effect cuts off the school from the eastern side of the priority area. The two 'feeder' primary schools on this side of the priority area, Montrose and Granby, have, for decades, seen very few of the children transfer to Riverside.
- 2.2 The Narborough road is one of the main arterial roads into the city from the M1. For many parents from the Braunstone estate this is both a physical and psychological barrier, especially when Fullhurst School is located within the estate. A previous report on Riverside by Tribal 2007 noted that public transport within this part of the city does assist attendance at Riverside. Transport runs from north to south i.e. into and out of the city rather than across the city. As a result, the immediate barrier of the Soar valley is not overcome by access to good transport.
- 2.3 The existing school premises consist of a main building accompanied by 3 blocks of temporary/mobile accommodation. The existing entrance to the school and drop-off point is located off Lyncote Road, a quiet residential road to the north east of the site. There is a school bus drop off point off Braunstone Lane East and most pupils access the site from this direction. Noise level from both that road and nearby Marborough Road South is considerable. The site has a significant level difference between Lyncote Road and the south/south-west boundary. The Environment Agency website does not indicate the site is in the flood plain. However, immediately neighbouring properties to the south are marked as such. Hence the southern portion of the site could potentially be at flood risk.
- 2.4 The existing building was built in the 1960s. Most of the accommodation suffers from having heating problems in winter and heat gain in summer. The main building is in a tired state with small rooms, narrow corridors and is in large part inaccessible for wheelchair users. The structure is relatively sound but there are significant issues with drainage resulting in roof leaks throughout the estate.
- 2.5 The recent building condition survey report noted a practice followed by staff of sending pupils out of lessons and that this provides access to many empty and unsupervised areas of the School. This presents both behavioural and potential health and safety management issues.
- 2.6 Staff accommodation areas are generally of a poor quality. The many staff spaces, which are separate and isolated from pupils, act against the spirit of inclusion and care for pupils. They also contribute to some very small teaching spaces.

- 2.7 In terms of pupil circulation there is poor sound insulation throughout the School with glazed corridors. Classrooms tend to be very hot in direct sun or cold according to distance from boilers.
- 2.8 *The School does not have sufficient revenue or capital to maintain and develop the facilities.*
- 3.0 **Riverside and Building Schools for the Future (BSF)**
- 3.1 The Strategy for Change programme is now the main planning framework for BSF. Under this programme the phasing of schools is being reassessed to take account of a number of national and local policy changes that have occurred since the original BSF Strategic Business Case was presented to the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and Partnership For Schools (PFS). These changes include the Authority's receipt of a Notice to Improve, a number of Schools being allocated National Challenge status, the acceleration of the Academies programme, and publication of the Children's Plan and the local roll out of Integrated Services Hubs and development of the localities agenda. In response to these challenges the Transforming the Learning Environment team are working with PFS and DCSF on re profiling the phasing of the remaining schools in the BSF programme.
- 3.2 All schools' BSF projects will be complete within the next 5 years. However, it is now anticipated that the sequence of these projects will be different from that proposed in the original Strategic Business Case. The current uncertainty over Riverside viability creates consequent uncertainty over the originally proposed Riverside BSF project for 3 main reasons.
- 3.3 Firstly, Riverside was originally allocated to Phase 3 of the programme; as such the initial planning stages should be starting imminently. In view of the issues within this business case it is not thought appropriate to begin assembling an education vision for the current school at this time.
- 3.4 Secondly, the school was planned for a complete new build and was therefore allocated a large amount of the BSF capital. Again it would be prudent to refrain from taking these plans forward in the current circumstances.
- 3.5 Thirdly, the school was planned to be a PFI project and since there is uncertainty over the viability of the school and possible governance arrangements should the school be proven unviable this may also not be a prudent choice for this BSF project.
- 3.6 *For the reasons listed above Riverside has now been proposed as a Phase 6 project within the BSF programme pending completion of the current exercise concerning this school.*

4.0 **School admissions, demographics and cohort survival/ viability:**

- 4.1 Low parental preference: The current Year 7 cohort of 69 students is drawn from 19 primary schools. On 1st March 2009 the City Council issued Year 7 offer letters to only 30 parents for entry in September 2009. Of the 30 offer letters issued *only 16 had, however, registered Riverside as their first preference choice.* Of the 30 pupils two families have now registered an alternative request and a further 3 pupils have now been issued with a statement of educational needs naming alternative schools. The Year 7 cohort at offer date was therefore technically only 29. *This presents an increased risk to financial viability, sustaining an appropriate, viable curriculum offer and providing a student environment that offers broad engagement and interaction.*
- 4.2. Mid term transfers: While acknowledging the low intake it is important to note that of the 572 students currently attending the College 36% moved to Riverside after the start of Year 7. There is a significant influx of students, particularly into Years 9-11, currently 59 from other Leicester schools and 93 from outside the Local Authority (these 93 students are made up from transfers from the County, asylum seekers and transfers from other Authorities). This turbulence impacts on the overall academic performance of the students at the School.
- 4.3 Demographic projections: As part of its' planning for Strategy for Change and Primary Capital Programme the City Council continues to review demographic projections for the City as these are integral to its pupil place planning strategy. Although research indicates that pupil numbers will increase overall over the next 10 years it is apparent that this will only materialise following a period of demographic decline that will inevitably impact upon the Dedicated Schools Grant made available to the Council over these years. *For Riverside and other secondary schools this means that the numbers of pupils will continue to fall for the next 6 to 9 years and then begin to rise and continue to rise for some time.* It is also clear however that the current economic downturn will result in reduced housing gain overall across the City during this period too. *There is therefore currently no projected pupil increase within the immediate locality of the School within the next few years that might result in a marked increase in pupil intake that will alleviate the issues noted in this Business Case.*

5.0 **School category and standards achieved:**

- 5.1 Riverside Business and Enterprise College is a National Challenge School led by an Acting Principal that requires significant improvement. In summary there is fragility in leadership and core subject departments. The School has a turbulent history and was placed in Special Measures in 2003. Riverside came out of this category in 2004 following an OfSTED inspection. Being in Special Measures has however exacerbated a poor reputation within the local community. A number of parent/carers within the local community continue to choose to send their children to County schools or other neighbouring schools. This is reflected in the exceptionally low pupil intake for September 2009 (29).
- 5.2 *Achievement and standards at Riverside have been low for a number of years and are very low compared to national averages. This is why the School is included in the National Challenge initiative. Conversely the School enjoys an*

extremely high pupil teacher ratio of 1:10 in some instances. This raises a clear issue of poor value for money given the limited outcomes achieved.

- 5.3 At 975.4 Contextual Value Added for Key Stages 2-4 the School is judged as significantly below national comparisons (benchmark is 1000) and worse than the previous year. The 22% 5 A*-C including English and Maths however remains well below the national floor target of 30%.
- 5.4 **KS3 achievement, standards and value for money (VFM):** Standards at KS3 remain very low with average Contextual Value Added scores in 2007. The School's Average Point Score (APS) at KS3 is significantly below the national APS. 2008 KS3 Statutory and Floor Targets were not met in any of the core subjects and L5+ results were lower than in 2007. Progress of pupils, as indicated by two level gains, remains low; with 2008 unvalidated data indicating no growth in English and a fall in Maths.
- 5.5 **KS4 achievement and standards and value for money (VFM):** As detailed above standards at KS4 remain very low with low contextual Value Added scores. In 2008 attainment was 1% above target for both 5+A*_C and 5+A*_C including English and Maths (32% and 22%). The 22% 5 A*-C including English and Maths however remains well below the national floor target of 30%. *The School is currently predicting 31% 5 A*-C grades (including English & Maths) for 2009, however, this is at a considerable financial cost and is well above the best estimate of performance generated through the Fischer Family Trust.*
- 5.6 Overall progress to KS4 is unsatisfactory and has been so for the past three years. This is the case for overall and English and Maths Contextual Value Added (CVA) from KS2 to KS4. Progress of pupils, as indicated by two level gains, remains low; with 2008 validated data indicating a slight increase in English, but a fall in Maths. There is some evidence of a trend of improving outcomes for students between KS3 and KS4, particularly in the core subjects of English and Maths. RAISEonline data reveals that although overall KS3-KS4 CVA has remained significantly below expectations, in English and in Maths students' progress has been in line with expectations over the past two years.
- 5.7 *The School has set ambitious targets for improvement for 2009 and 2010 (31% and 34% respectively), however there are concerns about the variation between subjects in the quality of pupil tracking and interventions to support underachieving pupils. Therefore it is difficult to assess the likelihood of those targets being reached. Until early March 2009 it appeared that the School was on track to meet the National Challenge Floor Target, but, following some disappointing modular maths results, the School has recently revised its estimate from 32% to 29%, thus putting the meeting of the threshold target under question.*

6. **Pupil Numbers, AWPU, Pupil / teacher ratios and Value for Money (VFM):**

6.1 In terms of pupils the School is top-heavy at KS4 and carries lower numbers at KS3. This results in the following pupil teacher ratios:

	Numbers				Teaching Groups	Teacher: Pupil Ratio	
	Boys	Girls	Totals			Year	Key Stage
			Year	Key Stage			
Y7	45	26	71	274	4 to 7	1:18 to 1:10	1:21 to 1:14
Y8	47	26	73		4 to 6	1:18 to 1:12	
Y9	63	67	130		5 to 7	1:26 to 1:19	
Y10	70	86	156		6 to 9	1:26 to 1:17	1:25 to 1:19
Y11	74	84	158	7 to 11	1:23 to 1:14		
	Total		314	588	1:23 to 1:14		

The overall qualified pupil teacher ratio for the School (PTR) is 1:14.2. This compares with an average qualified PTR of 1:16.2 for all other City secondary schools excluding those with sixth forms.

6.2 The respective Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding calculation is as follows:

AWPU	Numbers			
	Boys	Girls	Totals	
			Year	Key Stage 3
Y7 £2,495.74	45	26	71	£177,197.54
Y8 £2,495.74	47	26	73	£182,192.02
Y9 £2,495.74	63	67	130	£324,446.20
AWPU				Key Stage 4
Y10 £2830.70	70	86	156	£441,589.20
Y11 £2830.70	74	84	158	£447,250.60
	Total			£1,572,673.56

When the level of additional resourcing detailed at 8.6 & 8.7 below is taken into account, it is clear that the School does not deliver value for money.

7. **Leadership and management/ quality of provision:**

7.1 The School has an inexperienced senior and middle leadership team which is a significant development priority. The energetic and focused Acting Principal, working with governors, has tried to ensure that staff and pupil morale remains high, but with the perceived uncertainty as to the School's future, falling roles and staffing difficulties, this is an increasingly demanding challenge.

7.2 Teaching and Learning: The most recent OfSTED judgement in March 2007 judged Teaching and Learning as 'Satisfactory'. The National Challenge Advisor reported in Autumn 2008 however that the senior leadership team were inexperienced in their knowledge and application of the OfSTED criteria on the quality of teaching and learning and consequently inconsistent in their judgements. However, strategies are in place to improve their understanding.

- 7.3 Curriculum: The most recent OfSTED inspection in March 2007 judged curriculum as 'Good' however a significant period of time has now elapsed. *The serious reduction in pupil numbers over recent years and the attendant budget issues is putting at risk the quality and breadth of the curriculum. Already there has been a narrowing in terms of the Creative and Expressive Arts offer. This combined with the impact of staffing difficulties on the teaching of ICT is currently impeding its integral role in promoting the School's business and enterprise specialism.*
- 7.4 Care Guidance and Support: This was judged as 'Good' by OfSTED in 2007 and the School rightly prides itself in the quality of its support for pupils. The need for staffing reductions in light of the large budget deficit detailed below will probably impact significantly in this area first.
- 7.5 Attendance pupil destinations: Attendance is below the national target despite significant resources being used to address this issue in successive years. (Attendance 2007/8 at 90.4 is well below the national target with 11.1% persistent absence) 14.6% of Year 11 students who left the School in 2008 were identified as Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET). This was an improvement on the 22% of pupils who left in 2007. Behaviour and attendance continue to receive support from the LA, specifically in terms of operational planning and development. The Council also provides support for the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) CPD.
- 7.6 Capacity to Improve: Despite having received an overall 'satisfactory' OfSTED judgement in early 2007, since that time the School's record of improvement is unsatisfactory overall based on pupil performance at KS4.
- 7.7 The School, the National Challenge Advisor and the National Strategies consultants have worked hard over the five months to ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to achieve improved outcomes this year and to address some of the more systemic weaknesses.
- 7.8 *Despite potential short term gains in the School's examination results that may be achieved this year, the medium and long term capacity to improve is seriously compromised by;*
- *An acting Principal who has senior and middle leadership teams of variable quality*
 - *Weaknesses in school self assessment*
 - *Pupil numbers falling significantly year on year with the subsequent negative impact on finance, staffing and curriculum.*
 - *A loss of confidence amongst some of the School's stakeholders evidenced in an extremely low parental preference rate.*
 - *Possibility of losing key staff through uncertainty about the school's future.*
 - *The need to reduce staff as a result of the current budgetary position.*
- 7.9 Independent view on the Quality of Provision: *In June 2008 the National Challenge Advisor judged that all but one of the ten aspects on which the School is judged were unsatisfactory. If accurate, such judgements would indicate a decline in quality of provision since the last OfSTED inspection in 2007. This may*

trigger further intervention. The School is anticipating an OFSTED inspection in the next few months.

7.10 Ability to meet pupil needs: *From the above it is clear that the school is failing to deliver satisfactory outcomes for its learners. The School serves an area of high levels of social and economic deprivation. 26% of students are in the most deprived 5% and 51% are the most deprived 10% of IMD scores nationally. Over 31% of students are eligible for Free School Meals, which is well above the national average as is the proportion of students identified with Special Educational Needs. Given the level of resourcing deployed to date and that projected these needs may be best met in other schools.*

8. Resource deployment & financial viability:

8.1 As a direct result of the outcome of parental preference the School is now facing a serious financial situation as a result of low pupil numbers.

8.2 For the financial year 2008/09, the School identified a predicted deficit of £300k and submitted a bid for this amount from the Schools in Financial Difficulty scheme, which was approved with an expectation that the budget would balance in the future. The School also received an additional £250k from this scheme in 2007/08.

8.3 *The Business Manager at the School has identified that the predicted situation in 2009/10 is considerably worse and is predicting a deficit of £815k. This deficit is likely to increase in future years if corrective action is not taken.*

8.4 *Any further additional support to the School would need to be met from the Schools Budget, funded by Dedicated Schools Grant. It could be accommodated in 2009/10 and 2010/11 but is not sustainable at such levels beyond April 2011.*

8.5 *It is questionable whether such levels of additional support would represent effective use of public money. National guidance suggests that local authorities should review the viability of schools in this financial position.*

8.6 National Challenge

In addition to the additional £300k identified above the school has received a further £151k in 2008-2009 from National Challenge funding to support the activities in its Raising Achievement Plan (RAP). All the funding proposals from the RAP are in place. The school improvement activities funded through the additional NC resource are aligned to each of the three RAP objectives:

Objective 1: to improve leadership and management at all levels

Objective 2: to improve literacy at all levels

Objective 3: to improve teaching and learning

8.7 Funding in respect of Specialist Status and Standards Fund

In 2008/09 the School also received the following via Specialist Schools and Standards Fund funding allocations:

Specialist Status	£86,043
Standards Funds	
B. Enterprise	£33,123
Enterprise Learning	£17,283
Personalised Learning:	£89,933
RINC:	£18,000
G &T:	£0
Aim Higher:	£20,000
EMAG:	£26,744
BIP:	£148,911
LIG:	£115,000
Total identified additional funding	£706,188

8.8 Staffing: The teaching staff complement is reported as detailed below.

Teaching staff	FTE
Qualified teachers (including the Headteacher)	41
Unqualified teachers	4
Total Full-time Equivalent	44 (FTE)
Teaching assistants	FTE
Teaching assistants trained to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)	15
Other teaching assistants	4
Total Full-time Equivalent (FTE)	19

9.1 Summary on resources deployed and outcomes achieved: *Despite the deployment of additional funds detailed above significant areas of underperformance remain and outcomes overall are inadequate for learners. Demographic and financial projections indicate, however, that without corrective action this situation will become more acute. While provision can, with Schools Forum consent, be made to provide additional resource to the School in 2009/10 and 2010/11, this cannot, as a result of projected reductions in the Dedicated Schools Grant, be sustained beyond this point without impacting upon other schools.*

9.2 *Change options must therefore be financially viable, practicable and be in the best long term interests of learners currently at the School.*

SECTION 3

EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

10. The following options have been considered:
- 1) Maintain status quo.
 - 2) Provide continued increased financial and other support to the School to ensure it remains viable and achieves sufficient improvements.
 - 3) Federate with a school that is judged to be good or better on the basis of an OfSTED inspection and pupil performance and implement revised governance, leadership and management arrangements.
 - 4) Establish flexible collaborative arrangements amongst other local authority maintained schools.
 - 5) Continue to explore the option of Riverside becoming part of a collaborative Academy and other potential Academies in the City.
 - 6) Consult upon phased school closure.
- 10.1 As detailed at 1.2 above consideration has also been given to representations made by the School Governing Body, school staff and National Union of Teachers.
- 10.2 Options (1) – (6) above *were shared with school management, the governing body and all trades unions and views invited about these and any other alternative strategies that may address this issue. Where responses have been received at the time of writing these have been incorporated within this Business Case.*
- 11. Evaluation of Option 1 - Maintain status quo**
- 11.1 In the light of educational outcomes achieved and projected, resources deployed and parental preferences expressed it is judged that this is simply not a viable solution given the context and issues identified above.
- 11.2 School staff have indicated that they too believe that this is not a viable option and that this would only lead to a reduction in the curriculum and a “slow death”. This view is not shared by the school governing body however who do not accept that achievement and standards will decline.
- 11.3 It is judged likely that the school will continue to decline, become unviable and be categorised as failing by OfSTED. This is reinforced by guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families where there is a presumption to consider closure where there is a large number of surplus places.

- 11.4 *“LAs should take action to remove empty places at schools that are unpopular with parents and which do little to raise standards or improve choice” (s. 4.34).*
- 11.5 *“The decision maker should normally approve proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places where the school proposed for closure has a quarter or more places unfilled, and at least 30 surplus places and where standards are low compared to standards across the LA” (s.4.35)*
- 11.6 *At the time of writing Riverside had 35% of places unfilled overall and 85% unfilled capacity in Yr 7.*
- 11.7 The relevant guidance on this matter can be found at www.dcsf.org.uk/schoolorg under “Closing a Maintained Mainstream School: A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies”.
- 12. Evaluation of Option 2 - Increased financial and other support to ensure the school remains viable**
- 12.1 As detailed above the School is now facing a serious financial situation as a direct consequence of low pupil numbers.
- 12.2 For the financial year 2008/09, the School identified a predicted deficit of £300k and submitted a bid for this amount from the Schools in Financial Difficulty Scheme, which was approved with an expectation that the budget would balance in the future. The School has also received an additional £250k from this Scheme in 2007/08.
- 12.3 The School currently receives a significant amount of both financial and operational support but this has not made any sustainable impact upon raising standards or increasing student numbers.
- 12.4 The Business Manager at the School has identified that the predicted situation in 2009/10 is considerably worse than expected and is now predicting a deficit of £815k. This deficit is currently being verified and is likely to increase in future years.
- 12.5 Any further additional support to the School would of course need to be met from the Schools Budget, funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This could be accommodated in 2009/10 and 2010/11 but is not sustainable at such levels beyond April 2011 given increased pressures on the DSG and reduced “headroom”.
- 12.6 The City Council has advised the Schools Forum that it continues to plan for the continuation of the School as part of its budget build exercise for 2009/10 and 2010/11. This will inevitably impact upon the funding available for all other City schools from April 2011.
- 12.7 The school governing body has responded that predicted improvement in standards at Key Stage 4 would indicate that the School should be considered for additional support over the next two years. This support need not necessarily be solely financial but may include:

- Publicity
- Staffing
- Marketing Riverside as New College has received support in the past
- Reduce admission numbers in other schools
- Investigate the provision of education in West Leicester

Responses from a recent staff meeting referred indicate that this view is shared by staff. It must be noted however that the reduction of admission numbers in other schools would of course be subject to consultation and may in fact impact adversely on other schools and indeed limit parental choice.

- 12.8 Although additional funding is always sought from alternative sources (e.g. National Challenge) this is subject to strict criteria and is closely linked to improved outcomes. It is questionable whether increased levels of additional support required would be judged to represent an effective use of public money.
- 12.9 As detailed at 11.5 & 11.6 above national guidance suggests that local authorities should review the viability of such schools.
- 12.10 *In view of the above factors it is recommended that action is taken to reduce operating costs at the School as quickly as possible and that additional resourcing is restricted solely to that agreed for 2009/10 and 2010/11 by Schools Forum at their meeting on 26 March 2009.*

13. Evaluation of Option 3 - Federate with a school that is judged to be good or better/ alternative governance, leadership and management initiatives

This option presents a number of possible developments.

- 13.1 Engagement of Executive Headteacher: *Although an Executive Headteacher working with the Acting Principal might enable levels of attainment to increase it would not improve the perception of the School within the community in the short term, so would not address the major issue around surplus pupil places and viability.*
- 13.2 Federations: School staff feel that such an approach would allow the school to share its good practice with other schools. A federation might of course also provide a means of reducing operating costs and developing curriculum specialism or greater depth. As noted in a previous Options report prepared by Tribal in 2007 however, many people did not previously see this as a popular option. It would require a radical rethink of the role played by constituent schools in any federation and broad support from governors and parents in respective schools. A “soft” Federation (one without any formal change in governance status) with a local school would not bring any financial stability to the School and would not provide a sound basis for sustained improvement. *It is unlikely that another Governing Body would wish to become part of a Hard Federation (i.e. one with shared governance arrangements) with Riverside because of its current vulnerable position. The school governing body itself have advised that they can see no other advantage in federation beyond marketing and a potential increase in student numbers.*

- 13.3 *Federation options require the active engagement of other City schools and the agreement of their parents and prospective Riverside parents. Participating schools in any federative model would need to ballot parents upon this. It is unlikely that this would secure sufficient parental support.*
- 13.4 *In any event the establishment of a formal federation with alternative governance arrangements would not address any underlying structural demographic problem as the School itself would continue as a separate entity with its own discrete budget. The low intake for September 2009 however suggests that even if partnership engagement could be assured it would be some time before parental preferences could be reversed in sufficient number to address cohort and financial viability as required at 9.2 above.*
- 13.5 Establishment of Trust School: A Trust school is a local authority maintained foundation school supported by a charitable Trust which can comprise a range of external partners such as schools, businesses, charities, universities and colleges. The Trust provides a means of developing a sustainable relationship to raise standards and key features include the appointment of governors and the provision of wide ranging support to create new and innovative ways to improve educational outcomes.
- Once a school has secured commitment from its prospective Trust partners, the governing body has to consult and publish proposals and then go through a statutory process before it can become a Trust school. *It is highly unlikely that a high achieving school would currently wish to establish a Trust in partnership with Riverside. The School would not be supported by the Schools Specialist and Academies Trust to become a Trust school in its own right because of the performance and sustainability issues identified above.*
- 13.6 The School Governing Body has however suggested that linking the school with an independent school would attract more aspirational parents and students and thus contributes to subsequent growth and improved viability. This is explored further in Option 4 below.
- 13.7 Amalgamation/ re-designation of age range: *An alternative methodology previously mooted might be to technically close Riverside School and amalgamate with another school or revise age range from 11 – 16 to say 3 – 16/19. Such an option would have clear implications for the continued existence/ viability of one or more local primary schools or other providers within the same age range. This would equally be true of other local providers of a varied curriculum/ vocational offer. This would however still leave the matter of financial viability unless an associated change guaranteed intake into the former Riverside School. E.g. re-designation with a revised age range of 3 – 16 and amalgamation with a closely associated primary school(s). This would, however, require the closure and reopening of all associated schools. It is not believed that this measure would be popular within the locality or supported by any current Riverside primary feeder.*
- 13.8 In addition, given current City Council performance ratings, any new School would need to be established via competition and submission by a range of promoters and would most likely be a Trust School outside LA control. Alternative

promoters might not meet the requirements that Cabinet have recently reaffirmed (July 2008) for educational partners including:

- A school that promotes the enduring values of comprehensive education
- Has no selection by ability, class, gender, religion or geography
- Promotes equal access
- Is free at the point of use
- Works with the City Council to promote and sustain neighbourhood revitalisation etc.

13.9 *Despite offering a range of possible alternative developments this option does not appear to address the fundamental cohort and financial viability as required at 9.1 and 9.2 above.*

14. Evaluation of Option 4 - Establish flexible collaborative arrangements amongst other local authority maintained schools.

14.1 Recent representations from the City of Leicester Teachers' Association have promoted this as a City wide school improvement model and an alternative to intervention or changes to school categories e.g. Trust schools, Academies which they characterise as mechanistic and underestimating the power of collaborative working. Collaboration has also been viewed positively by Riverside staff at their recent meeting too in the sense that this could relate to not just the curriculum but the use and deployment of resources.

14.2 A manifestation of this approach might be the reinforcement of recognised families of schools whereby primary schools and secondary counterparts forge closer working relationships. This could result in shared and improved teaching and learning practice, improved standards and families naturally expressing a preference for their local secondary school at secondary transfer. This would represent a softer arrangement to that outlined in option (3) above. This has indeed featured in an earlier options review of Riverside School however it was concluded that this alone was unlikely to impact significantly on perceptions of the School.

14.3 Improved teaching and learning practice could, it has been suggested, be fostered by the active development of a collaborative working partnership between local schools, universities and colleges. A range of other strategies has also been suggested to identify barriers to improve and drive forward positive change. These include:

- A re-invigorated curriculum
- Overcoming barriers to learning
- Deepening collaboration between schools
- Provision of CPD for quality learning
- Positive engagement with parents
- Succession training for successful management.

14.4 While the above have been suggested within a City wide context their application may of course also contribute to change at an individual school level. To secure real transformation of learning it is suggested that the active engagement of both parents and pupils is essential.

- 14.5 The above option requires a wide range of partnership working and the active engagement with parents and other schools.
- 14.6 One such model for Riverside has been proposed by City teaching unions based upon closer working collaboration between Riverside and Fullhurst with a possible re-configuring of the catchments with a view to producing two viable schools with a population of around 750. The reconfiguration of the two schools towards a 11-14 and 14-19 Federated model is also suggested drawing on and making use of the Skills Centre which is located next to Fullhurst. It is suggested that this could be further supported via cross city partnerships for both schools - currently Rushey Mead is working closely with Fullhurst and providing such support. It is suggested that a similar arrangement perhaps using Crown Hills, for Riverside could be developed.
- 14.7 Further collaborative working with Ellesmere College, both in tackling behavioural and literacy needs in the two community secondary schools is also suggested with the added benefit of providing Ellesmere with access to sports facilities. Such a working partnership, it is argued, is to the advantage of all.
- 14.8 School staff too have suggested a number of potential alternatives that reflect some of the above principles, these include:
- The development of community provision (7am – 9 pm.) to promote literacy, numeracy and employment skills
 - The development of a land base environment curriculum and the City's first Environmental College
 - Closer linkages between Riverside and Fullhurst with sixth form vocational provision and greater flexibility of pupil movement.

Staff recognise that successful operation of the above would require the full support of the Local Authority and strong partnership working with all head teachers across the city together with transportation and catchment area changes.

- 14.9 *The low intake for September 2009 however suggests that even if partnership engagement could be assured it would be some time before parental preferences could be reversed in sufficient number to address cohort and financial viability. This reflects earlier judgements about what might be achieved through a federative or collaborative arrangements where following work with focus groups reviewers concluded "few people thought that the leverage existed for effective management of change through such arrangements". The current governing body themselves have concluded that this option does not appear to solve issues but have indicated that some development of collaborative working and vocational provision may assist.*
- 14.10 The School Governing Body has however suggested an alternative strategy that of linking the school with a successful independent school. It is reasoned that this would attract more aspirational parents and students and thus contribute to subsequent growth and improved viability. It is also argued that this would support an innovative approach to the curriculum that would enable gifted and talented pupils to attend the independent school for master class sessions etc.

The law currently does not permit a formal federation of this nature between a LA maintained and independent school and therefore the vehicle for bringing about such an arrangement would be a Trust or National Challenge Trust school. As noted above however this does not provide an immediate vehicle for ensuring sustainable change nor a vehicle guaranteed to reflect the key principles for educational partnership recently re-affirmed by Cabinet.

15. Evaluation of Option 5 - Establishment of a collaborative Academy with other potential Academies in the city.

- 15.1 Although opposed by the City of Leicester Teachers' Association and other trades unions on learning outcome and ideological grounds the Local Authority have previously indicated their belief that an Academy on the Riverside site could strengthen the governance and partnership arrangements leading to a step change in performance with different approaches to pupils learning experiences.
- 15.2 Such an initiative would also enable the School to focus more extensively on basic skills and the appropriate curriculum pathways particularly at Key Stage 4. An Academy based at Riverside could lead to a significant reduction in the number of children, who live in Leicester, but attend schools across the County border and those who opt to travel to other schools within Leicester. Previous options review work at the school has however indicated some support for some alternative provision (3-16 school/ 3-19 school/ 3 – 16 school with vocational centre
- 15.3 *Whilst a business case in support of a Riverside Academy has recently been prepared and is available for inspection, recent conversations with the DCSF however suggest that 750 is the minimum size if an Academy is to be financially viable and offer a broad and balanced curriculum. The situation is compounded by the collapse of the pupil intake to a degree that there could be no certainty about the establishment of a viable 600-place school without a marked and sustained change in parental preference. In view of the site constraints noted above however location itself may also be a material factor. Previous research has indicated however that there is little support for relocation to any other site.*
- 15.4 *Given the unique circumstances at the School an Academy solution could only be realistically be explored with potential sponsors, if they were prepared to explore a collaborative Academy with other potential Academies in Leicester. The school governing body has recently expressed the view that such a collaborative Academy model may provide a way forward and a relationship between Riverside and Fullhurst has been suggested.*
- 15.5 *Once again this option requires a wide range of partnership working and the active engagement of a sponsor to be effective. A recent communication from a Riverside staff meeting to discuss these proposals makes clear however that a significant number of staff would reject this option “unanimously because of our belief in a properly locally funded community school that worked with a supportive LA and allowed for support, collaboration between schools across the city that would provide a relevant and supportive environment for both children and parents”.*

15.5 *The low intake for September 2009 however suggests that even if partnership engagement could be assured and DCSF approvals received, it would be some time before parental preferences could be reversed in sufficient numbers to address cohort and financial viability.*

15.6 In the light of the above it does not appear that Option 5 offers a way forward at this point.

16 Evaluation of Option 6 - Consultation upon school closure

16.1 Student number predictions indicate that there will be insufficient pupils to fill a 900 or even a 600 place school on the current Riverside campus. Significant changes to the current provision will be required in order to attract students who currently go to other city schools for their secondary education.

16.2 An alternative option is to close the School, stopping new admissions and taking steps to manage provision for existing pupils over a transitional period. The school governing body have stated however that this option is not worthy of consideration and state that this would only exacerbate a drift to the County of students predicted to gain 5 A* - C grades. Issues in connection with the future sufficiency of pupil places within West Leicester have also been raised. These views have also been supported by staff who have also expressed concern about a potential reduction in parental choice in West Leicester, provision of information about redeployment and redundancy procedures.

16.3 *Guidance on closure process places an imperative upon objective understanding of the current position and adherence to statutory process, the strength of the case and supporting evidence.*

16.4 *As noted at 11.5 and 11.6 above "The decision maker should normally approve proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places where the school proposed for closure has a quarter or more places unfilled, and at least 30 surplus places and where standards are low compared to standards across the LA" (s.4.35). At the time of writing Riverside had 35% of places unfilled overall and 85% unfilled capacity in Yr 7.*

16.5 *This objective situation and the inability of the other options explored above to adequately address cohort, educational and financial imperatives suggest that closure is the most appropriate course of action.*

16.6 Section 22 of the relevant Guidance provides an overview of what this five stage process would entail:

- Consultation
- Publication
- Representations
- Decision
- Appeal

16.7 Consultation: The conduct of consultation is not prescribed in regulation. Formal consultation with interested parties is however required (Section 16 Education and Inspection Act, 2006). *Adequate time is a pre-requisite, as is consultation with*

the existing governing body, families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the School and other schools who may be affected. There is a requirement to consult with trades unions, MPs and any other LA likely to be affected by such a Proposal. Section 176 of the Education 2002 Act places a duty to consult with pupils too.

- 16.8 Publication: Any proposals must contain the information specified in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuation of Maintained Schools (England) regulations (SI2007 No.1288). This takes the form of a statutory notice and a more complete proposal. Proposers are recommended to use the DCSF online statutory Notice Builder tool which can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg This also automatically generates a more complete proposal template for population. *Attention to detail at this stage and securing improved outcomes for young people would be absolutely essential.*
- 16.9 *Equally important is the need to pay due regard to the impact of change upon community cohesion, the local area and travel and accessibility issues for the affected children. For example proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs.*
- 16.10 A clear statement of all alternative provision would be required within the more complete proposal referred to above.
- 16.11 Representations: Following the publication of any statutory proposals there is a mandatory 6 week statutory period.
- 16.12 Decision & appeal: Any decision would most likely be taken by Cabinet. If objections were received then any proposal must be determined under Para 8 of Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act, 2006.

SECTION 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

- 17.1 *Riverside is a vulnerable school that is subject to events outside of the immediate control of the governing body or City Council. These include forthcoming OFSTED inspection, further reduction in parental preferences, staff resignations etc.*
- 17.2 *Reversion to a formal OfSTED category may expose the School to formal intervention and potential closure by the Secretary of State.*
- 17.3 *A range of options, including those suggested by immediate stakeholders, has been considered in this document together with known outcomes against recognised performance measures and resources deployed to date.*
- 17.4 *A review of standards achieved at KS 3 and KS 4 together with resources deployed evidences that the School does not deliver value for money and is failing pupils, many of who come from the most disadvantaged communities within the City.*
- 17.5 *Options (1) to (5) do not appear to provide the opportunity for the required step change to reverse parental preference, curriculum and financial issues noted within this report.*
- 17.6 *It is therefore concluded that that there are strong educational, financial and business reasons to close this School as soon as practicably possible.*

Report author:

Trevor Pringle
Director of Planning and Commissioning
0116 252 7702
print001@leicester.gov.uk

Appendix – School data

Leicester City school place allocations
City pupils allocated out of City schools
Riverside roll data
Feeder schools
Languages spoken at the College other than English
Pupil ability on entry
Current year 2008/09 pupil origins by ward – years 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11
September 2009 Year 7 – pupil origins by ward

APPENDIX

School data

LEICESTER CITY SCHOOL PLACE ALLOCATIONS

School	AN	Allocated 1st pref	Allocated 2nd pref	Allocated 3rd pref	Total Allocated	Available	Waiting List
Babington	210	68	9	1	78	132	
Beaumont Leys	210	204	4	2	210	0	46
Crown Hills	240	190	45	5	240	0	30
Fullhurst	180	139	3		142	38	
Hamilton	240	124	4	3	131	109	
Judgemeadow	240	214	23	3	240	0	71
Moat	210	157	43	10	210	0	7
New College	180	125	2	3	130	50	
Riverside	180	29			29	151	
Rushey Mead	270	261	9		270		39
Sir Jonathan North	240	180	30	3	213	27	
Soar Valley	255	240	15		255	0	43
The City of Leicester	220	160	39	7	206	14	
The Lancaster	240	161	9	5	175	65	

Total AN	3115	2252	235	42	2529	586	236
Total Allocations	<u>2529</u>						
Available Space	586						

CITY PUPILS ALLOCATED OUT OF CITY SCHOOLS

School	Allocated 1st pref	Allocated 2nd pref	Allocated 3rd pref	Total Allocated
2008				
Anstey Martin High	38	1	0	39
Birstall Stonehill	76	1	0	77
Brockington	8	0	0	8
Brookvale	41	5	0	46
C'thorpe Leysland	39	1	0	40
De Lisle	1	0	0	1
Kibworth High Sch	7	0	0	7
Limehurst	0	1	0	1
Market Bosworth	29	0	0	29
Oadby Gartree	5	1	2	8
Oadby Manor	9	3	1	13
Roundhill	60	4	9	73
South Charnwood	2	0	0	2
Uppingham	1	0	0	1
Wigston Abington	6	1	0	7
Winstanley	66	1	0	67
Wreake Valley	9	1	0	10
				429

Riverside Roll Data

Number of Pupils on Roll at the Start of Each Academic Year

	Sept 2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	9/10/08
7	127	119	70	65	71	72
8		124	131	116	69	73
9			135	139	129	127
10				141	162	158
11					153	156

Attendance

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
7	90.2	91	92.8	93.6
8	84.8	91.5	91.8	90.6
9	84.5	88.4	91.3	90.9
10	86.3	88.3	89.2	89.5
11	87.8	89	88.3	90.7
Overall	86.6	89.5	90.4	90.8

Students Joining School After Start of Academic Year (Year 7 i.e after 15th September)

Year	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Into	Out	Into	Out	Into	Out
7	3	16	7	16	3	9
8	15	15	12	12	73	6
9	18	18	108	10	34	11
10	122	15	26	12	41	12
11	49	43	59	37	47	22

Arrivals from Overseas

Year	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%
7	7	5.88	5	7.14	3	4.62
8	5	4.03	1	0.76	6	5.17
9	7	4.86	8	5.93	15	10.79
10	9	5.26	3	1.97	23	16.31
11	16	9.25	25	14.12	19	11.24

Feeder Schools			
	2006	2007	2008
Abbey Primary School		1	
Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School	1	1	
Avenue Primary School		1	1
Braunstone Community Primary School			9
Buswells Lodge Primary School			1
<i>Caldecote Primary School</i>	20	10	19
Catherine Junior School			3
Crescent Junior School This school no longer exists but these pupils are from Braunstone	7	7	0
Dovelands Junior School		4	1
Eyres Monsell Primary School	7	1	1
Folville Junior School	4	4	3
Forest Lodge Primary School		1	
Fosse Primary School	1		1
Fosseway School			1
Granby Primary School		2	1
Hazel Primary School	2	5	2
Highgate Primary School			1
Inglehurst Junior School	3	5	2
Marriott Primary School	2	1	1
Matley Primary School	1		
Medway Primary School			1
Montrose Junior School	1		1
Newry Junior School	5		
<i>Queensmead Junior School</i>	7		7
Ravenhurst Primary School	1		
Rolleston Junior School	1	1	
Rowlatts Hill Primary School			1
<i>Shaftsbury Junior School</i>	16	8	10
Sparkenhoe Primary School	1		1
Stephaney Primary School		1	
St Georges Primary School			1
Stokes Wood Primary School		1	
Taylor Primary School			1
Poland	1		
From Overseas		2	2
Grand Total	81	56	72

Note: Numbers may not match those at the start of each respective academic year due to changes in preference, places not taken up and subsequent admission requests after allocation date (mid term transfer)

Languages Spoken at the College Other than English

Language Code	Description	Number of Pupils
ALB	Albanian/Shqip	1
ARA	Arabic	3
ARAA	Arabic (Any Other)	1
BEM	Bemba	1
BNG	Bengali	2
CWA	Chichewa/Nyanja	1
DUT	Dutch/Flemish	1
ENG	English	426
FIN	Finnish	1
FRN	French	6
GER	German	1
GRE	Greek	1
GUJ	Gujarati	19
HGR	Hungarian	1
HIN	Hindi	5
ITA	Italian	1
KUR	Kurdish	1
MLM	Malayalam	1
MNG	Mongolian (Khalkha)	1
NOR	Norwegian	1
OTL	Other Language	5
PNJ	Panjabi	26
POL	Polish	35
POR	Portuguese	4
RUS	Russian	2
SCB	Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian	2
SHO	Shona	2
SLO	Slovak	4
SOM	Somali	4
SPA	Spanish	1
SWA	Swahili/Kiswahili	2
SWAK	Swahili (Kingwana)	1
SWE	Swedish	1
TGL	Tagalog/Filipino	1
TGLG	Tagalog	1
TUR	Turkish	4
URD	Urdu	6
YOR	Yoruba	1
ZZZ	Classification Pending	9

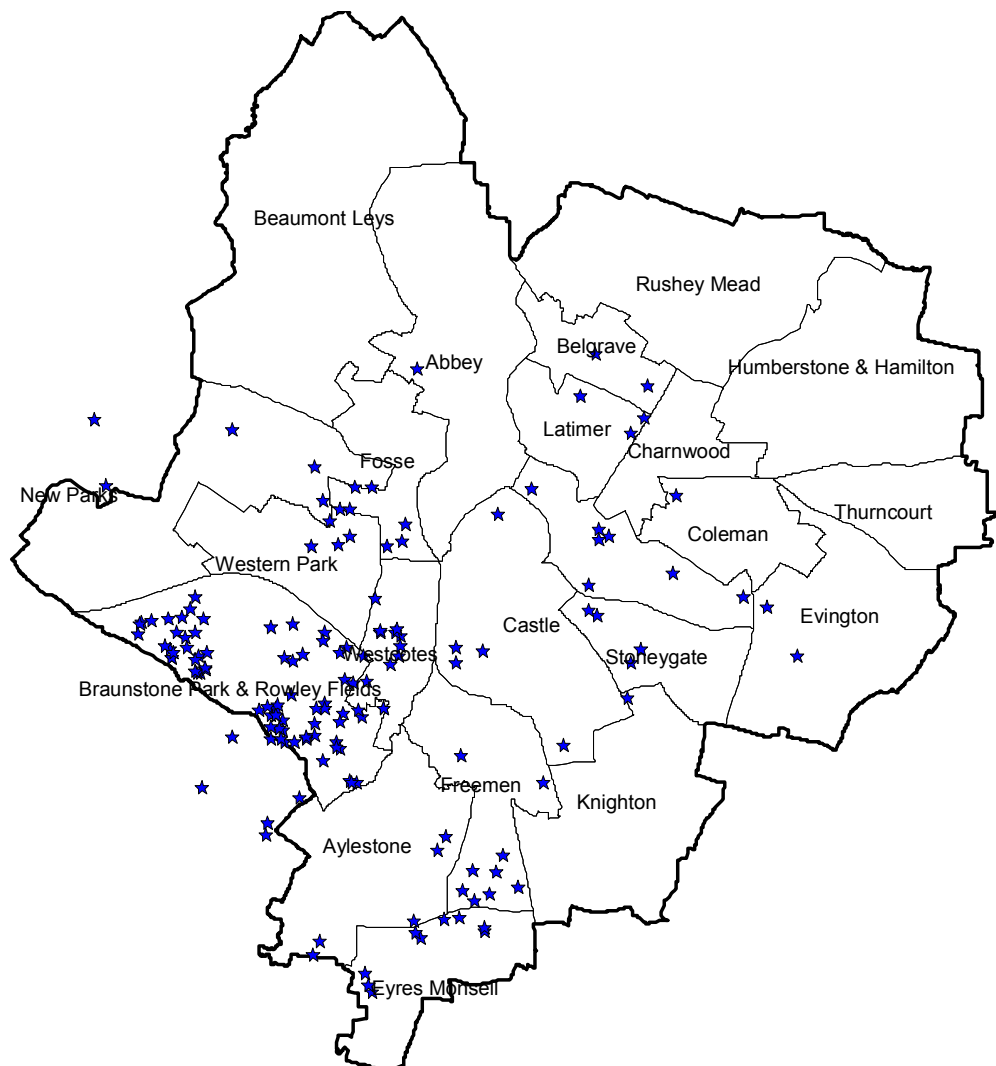
Pupil Ability on Entry

KS2	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
English below 3	21.31	15.74	19	21.31
English Level 3+	78.69	84.26	81	78.69
English Level 4+	49.18	51.85	55	49.18
Maths below 3	21.31	17.59	18.75	21.31
Maths Level 3+	78.68	82.4	81	79
Maths Level 4+	60.65	48.14	57	61
Number of students	61	126	101	66

Riverside Business and Enterprise College:

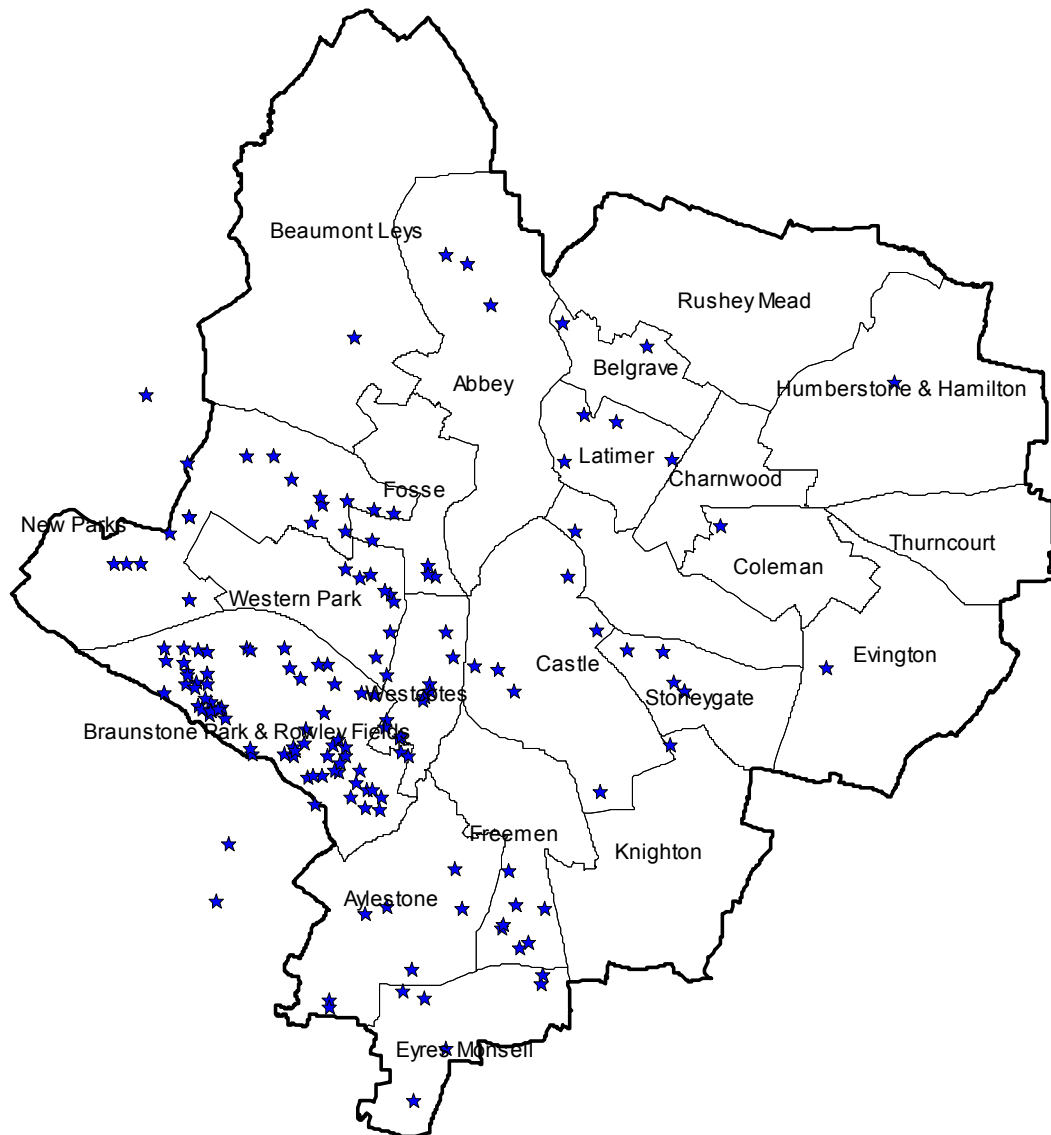
Current Year 2008/09 pupil origins by ward

Year 11 – pupils entering school in September 2004



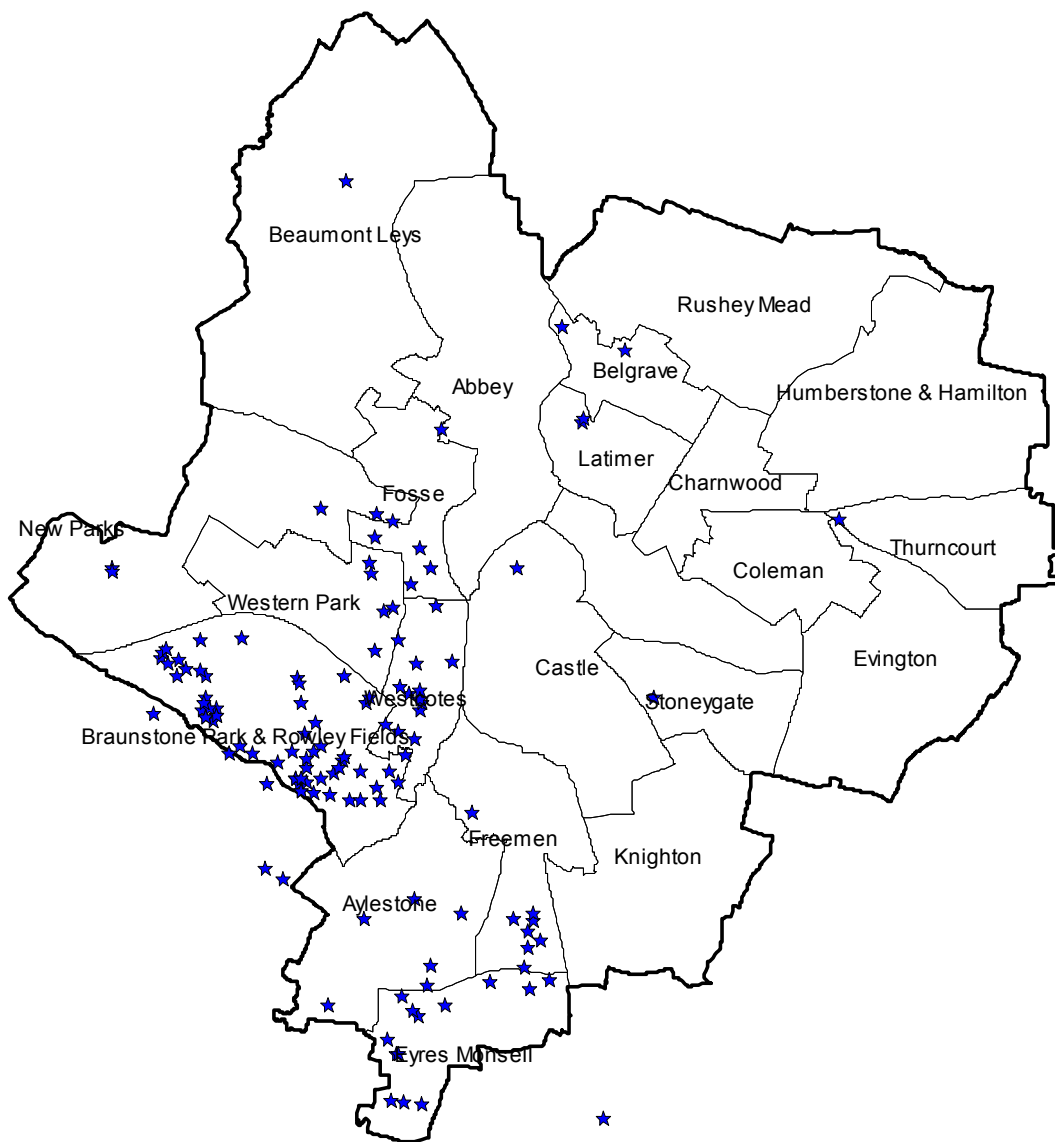
Current Year 2008/09 pupil origins by ward

Year 10 – pupils entering school in September 2005



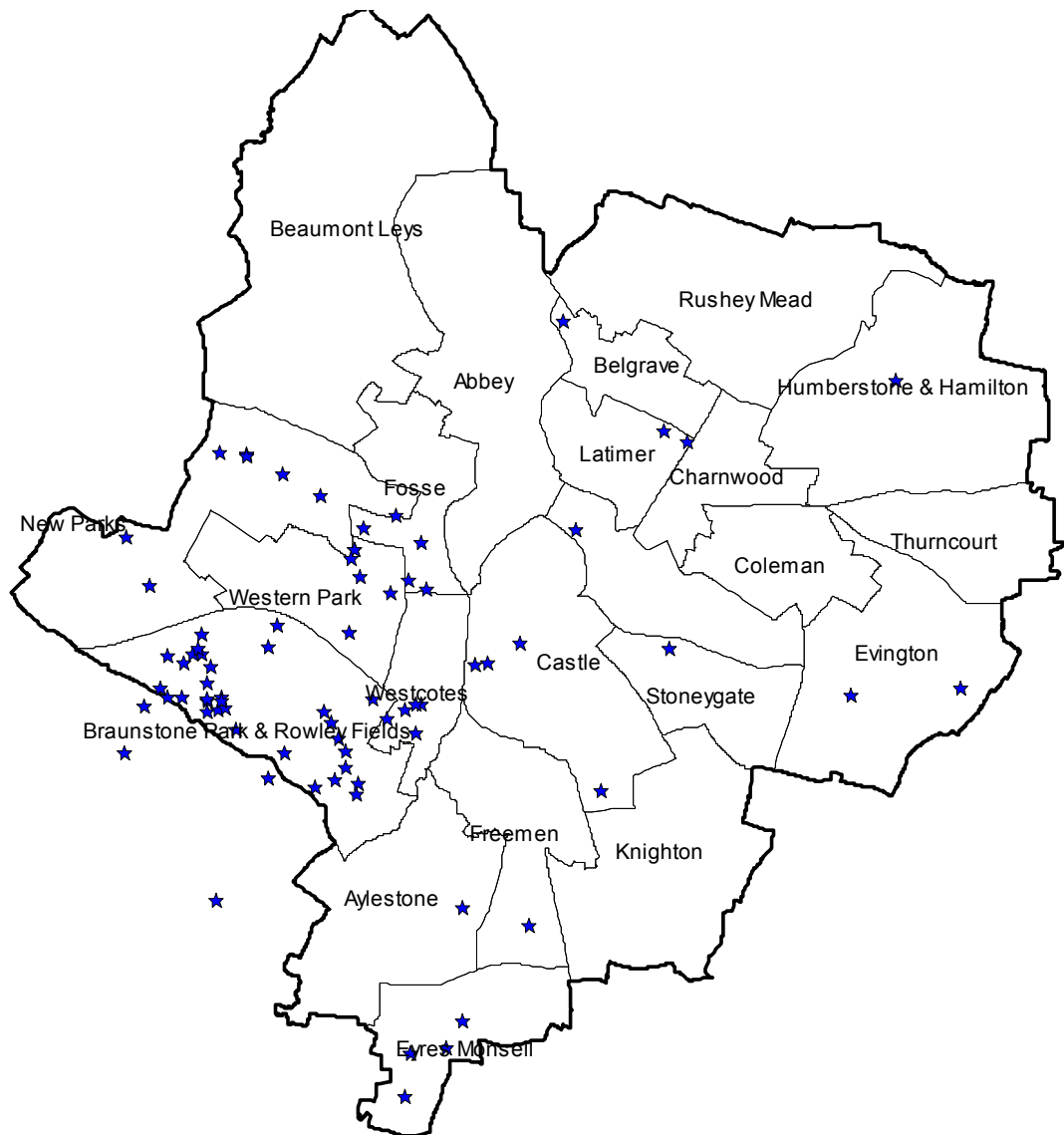
Current Year 2008/09 pupil origins by ward

Year 9 – pupils entering school in September 2006



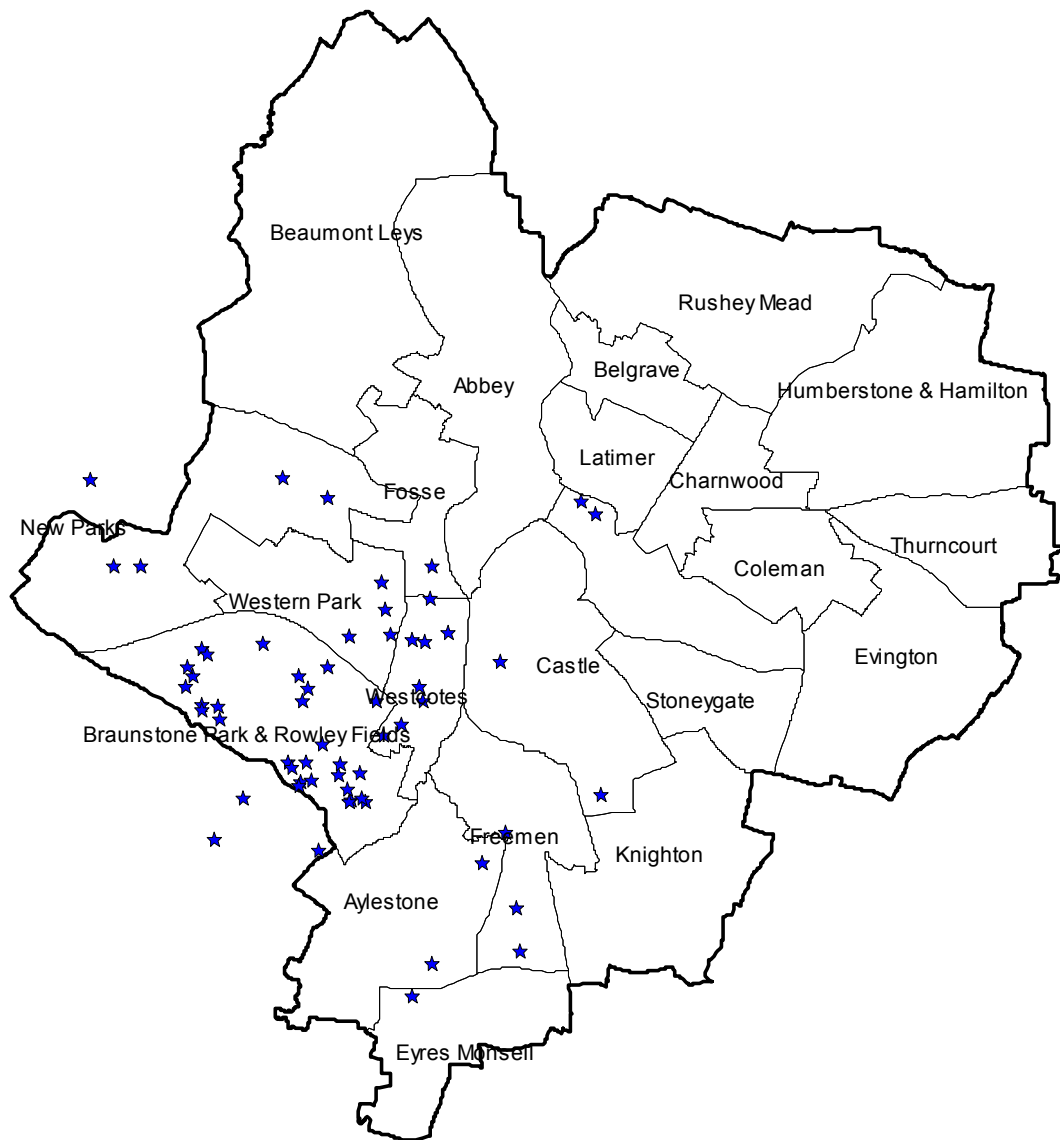
Current Year 2008/09 pupil origins by ward

Year 8 – pupils entering school in September 2007



Current Year 2008/09 pupil origins by ward

Year 7 – pupils entering school in September 2008



Riverside Business and Enterprise College
September 2009 Year 7 pupil intake origins by ward

