

Education & Children's Services Scrutiny 30.10.12

**PROPOSED REORGANISATION OF
BRAUNSTONE FRITH INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

Lead Director: Rachel Dickinson



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: New Parks
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- Report version number: 2.0

1. Summary

Background and summary of current position:

- On 12 June 2012, the City Mayor agreed to publish proposals to make school organisational changes to Braunstone Frith Infant and Junior Schools. The proposals, if approved after consultation, would enable:
 - The enlargement of Braunstone Frith Infant School and change of age-range to include provision for Key Stage 2 pupils (year groups 3 to 6), creating an 'all through' primary school, and;
 - The closure of Braunstone Frith Junior School
- This purpose of this report is to provide an update on the outcome of the consultation stage of the proposals and to seek approval to proceed to the statutory notice stage of the process.

2. Main report:

2.1 The consultation process:

- The consultation commenced on 17 September and ran until 14 October 2012.
- The consultation involved the distribution of over 600 consultation leaflets to a wide range of stakeholders including, pupils, parents/carers, staff and their representatives, governors, local schools and the community.
- In addition a dedicated web page and online response form through the City Council corporate consultation platform were created which allowed for online responses to be received.
- To support the consultation there has been a number of meetings with staff and their representatives, governors, parents/carers and pupils where the City Council and the Headteachers of the Schools have explained the proposals and provided opportunities for questions to be asked.

- All those consulted were asked the key question:
 - Do you agree with the proposal to expand the age range of Braunstone Frith Infant School to create an 'all through' primary school and the closure of Braunstone Frith Junior School?
- In addition, there was also an opportunity to give any comments.
- The consultees were advised that this was not a vote or a referendum, but a chance to make their views known so that they could be taken into account when a decision was made.

2.2 Results of the Consultation:

- By the close of the consultation on 14 October a total number of 86 respondents had submitted comments online or through the post.
- Analysis of the responses shows a very strong support to make the changes:
- 89.5% of respondents support the proposals, whereas 4.7% do not support the proposals and wish to maintain the status quo, and 5.8% have not expressed a specific view.
- Some of the main comments for supporting the proposals included:
 - Develops stronger community within the school
 - Good leadership and management of the existing Infant School Headteacher
 - Benefits to the children
 - Removes the need for the Infant/Junior admission transfer process
 - Creates opportunities for teacher development by working across Key Stages
- Some of the main comments given for not supporting the proposals included:
 - Concerns over staff workload / security of position
 - Behaviour management of pupils due to larger school numbers
 - Lack of space within the Infant building (a misinterpretation that 'closure' of the Junior school would mean sale of the site and Junior pupils physically located with the Infant building)
- Some other general comments included:
 - Need for a new building for the 'all through' school
 - Both schools should close and a new one open
 - Impact on duplicate staff posts within the schools
- In addition to the formal comments above, both schools carried out pupil engagement of the proposals through class discussions titled 'Imagine the Infants and Juniors became one school'. Each pupil was asked to complete a

worksheet and give comments on 'What would be the good things about this?' and 'What would be the bad things about this?'.

- Some of the positive comments from the pupils included:
 - Being able to see siblings/cousins/friends
 - Being able to make new friends/play together
 - The older children would help the younger children
 - They could stay in the same school
 - They could learn new things
 - They could meet new/old/more teachers
 - Might get a new uniform/book bag
 - They could go on joint trips
- Some of the negative comments included:
 - Concerns about space/noise
 - The school would get too big
 - Behaviour of younger/older children when together
 - Crowded buildings/playgrounds
 - There might be new rules
 - The lunch queue would be bigger
- In addition at the end of the session, all pupils had a class 'vote' with the results being:
 - In the Infant school, 79% in favour, 20% not in favour and 1% unsure
 - In the Junior school 84% in favour and 16% not in favour
- Appendix 1 attached provides a summary of all responses received to the consultation.

2.4 Conclusions and next steps

- The outcome of the consultation have shown that there continues to be strong support for the proposals and that the current leadership / management arrangements that have been put in place are having a positive impact on the pupils and have the support of parents/carers, staff and governors.
- Following the outcomes of the consultation, combined with the educational arguments for creating a single, 'all through' primary school, it is proposed to proceed to the next stage of the proposals; publication of a statutory notice followed by a six week period for statutory representations. At the end of which a further decision will need to be taken whether to implement the proposals or not.

3. Details of Scrutiny

As detailed above, the purpose of the report is to advise on the outcome of a

consultation process to make changes to Braunstone Frith Infant and Junior Schools. The consultation process included meetings with stakeholder groups together with opportunities to ask questions and the completion of response forms either online or through the post / collection from the schools.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

If the reorganisation takes place in the financial year 2012/13 the existing budgets for the two schools will be combined arithmetically.

For 2013/14 a new budget will be prepared for the combined school which will be different from a simple sum of the existing budgets. A new combined budget has not yet been calculated and a new funding formula will apply from 2013/14. Minimum funding guarantee protection should apply to prevent budget reductions year on year in excess of 1.5% for 13/14 and 14/15.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, Ext 39 7500

5.2 Legal implications

The requirements for closing one school and expanding another follow a very similar five stage process of consultation, publication of proposals, allowing for a period of representations, making a decision and implementing the decision. As the proposals are “related” in law, they must be decided upon together by the Local Authority. It is important to note that all that is being sought at this stage is approval to progress to Stage 2. This requires merely consideration of the views expressed during that period before reaching any final decision on whether to publish statutory proposals. Approval of the actual closure or expansion is not sought, and the Council must be clear not to express too firm a view upon the merits of the ultimate decision(s) at this early stage.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, Ext 6311

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There is no climate change implication associated with the consultation or statutory representation process. Climate change implications may result in the future if any construction takes place. A larger overall building footprint may result in greater carbon emissions although a building constructed to modern standards should produce fewer emissions per m² floor area.

Mark Jeffcote
Environment Team, Ext 6765

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5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

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5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

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6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses received.