

Officer Executive Decisions

Outcomes of Consultation for the Proposals to Amalgamate Luton Infant and Junior Schools

Delegation from Leader and Cabinet and date: On 11 June 2019, the Cabinet considered a report which provided details of the outcomes of the informal consultation period on the Council's proposal to amalgamate Luton Infant and Junior Schools by way of statutory prescribed alterations.

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of People - Children and Adults Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children's Services (Lead Member) and Education and Schools, to determine whether to approve the proposals at the end of the statutory consultation period if no objections are received. However, if any objections are received during that time then a report will be prepared and presented to Cabinet for determination (decision no. 66/2019 refers).

The report may be viewed online:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ielssueDetails.aspx?Id=25135&Opt=3>

Decision: No objections have been received, therefore in accordance with the Cabinet decision the proposals have been approved.

Reasons for Decision:

Currently, Luton Infants and Juniors are two separate schools. This means that pupils at the infants have to apply for a place at the juniors. The transition from one school to another can cause disruption for pupils, as there can be differences in approaches to teaching and learning. As one school, pupils will benefit from consistent education plans, curriculums, and policies. This will allow teachers to monitor pupils' progress more consistently. Appropriate interventions can be put in place at an early stage enabling the pupils to realise their potential to the fullest. Amalgamation will allow the school to be more financially efficient. It will have a single budget and will be able to buy supplies and services as a single school.

Securing diversity in the provision of schools

The resulting primary school will provide better continuity for parents and pupils as it will remove the transition between schools at the end of year 2. It will allow the school to provide an education pathway which will enable pupils' progress and attainment to be monitored in a consistent way so that appropriate interventions can be put in place at an early stage enabling the pupil to realise their potential to the fullest.

It is not expected that the proposals will have a detrimental impact upon the numbers or standards at the other primary schools in the area. No pupils will be displaced, and the PAN will remain the same. All pupils at the infant and junior schools will be guaranteed a place at the newly created primary school should they want one.

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Raising standards and opening up new opportunities

The management of transfer from each phase of education to the next is a key issue in children's achievement. The removal of these transitions is expected to improve outcomes for children. Luton Juniors has been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted since September 2017, and there is no reason that this would be affected negatively by the change to a primary. The consistency of approach across the whole primary phase will lead to improved performance and positive outcomes for the children who attend the school. The proposal will result in primary education as a whole in Chatham being more streamlined and sustainable, improving choice for parents and removing transition for children between the key stages.

Sufficient capacity for pupils in the area

The amalgamated school will use the buildings of the infant and junior schools, and so there will be no change to the number of places in the area.

Impact on the community

The resulting primary school will still serve the same community. There is expected to be a positive impact on the community, as children will stay at a single school for the whole of their primary education. This will allow them to build better relationships both with school staff and with other children from the local community. There is not expected to be a detrimental impact upon other local schools, as no pupils will be displaced as a result of the proposals. However, how parents choose which primary school to send their children to can depend upon each school's popularity and performance, which can fluctuate over time.

Travel and accessibility

No pupils will be displaced as a result of the proposals, and there will be the same number of places available. Therefore there will be no increase in travel due to the amalgamation.

Equal opportunities

The proposals comply with all current gender, race, and disability legislation. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) was carried out which can be found using the report link above. The DIA looks at how the proposed changes could impact upon various groups. The report shows that there could potentially be some impact upon certain groups; however it shows that any impacts are expected to be positive ones.

Special educational needs

The proposal will reduce the number of transition points, which is likely to improve the outcomes for all pupils including those with special educational needs. SEND provision will be unaffected, pupils will remain at the same site for the whole of their primary education, and therefore will have continuity.

Looked after children

Looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to all Medway schools. If necessary, the Admissions Code allows the Council to place looked after children in schools that would otherwise be deemed full. This

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ensures that the Council can secure appropriate provision for children that are looked after by the Local Authority. This strategy covers both mainstream and special schools and as such includes Luton Infant and Junior Schools and the new Luton Primary School.

Date of Decision: 23 August 2019

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Details of any other options considered and rejected:

1. Do nothing – Luton Infant and Junior schools are on adjacent sites, and children from the Infant school mostly transfer into the Junior school. However, they are currently managed as two separate schools. This results in duplication of effort and can create barriers to pupils' progress. Luton Juniors is rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, while Luton Infants is rated as 'Requires Improvement'. The schools risk growing further apart over time, rather than co-ordinating teaching and learning and becoming more integrated. It is Medway's policy that paired infant and junior schools should amalgamate when possible.
2. Federate – Instead of amalgamating, the schools could federate, which would result in a single governing body. While this would improve co-ordination, they would still be two separate schools.

Conflicts of Interest:

None