

Decision Maker: Education Portfolio Holder

Date: For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 19 March 2013

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Key

Title: **CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: PROPOSALS TO RESTRUCTURE BROMLEY ROAD AND WORSLEY BRIDGE SCHOOLS**

Contact Officer: Mike Barnes, Head of Access and Admissions
Tel: 020 8313 4865 E-mail: mike.barnes@bromley.gov.uk
Kevin Gerred, Partnerships and Planning Officer
Tel: 020 8313 4024 E-mail: kevin.gerred@bromely.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Terry Parkin, Executive Director of Education and Care Services

Ward: Copers Cope Ward

1. Reason for report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council Members with the outcomes from consultation on a proposal to restructure Bromley Road Infant School from a 3 forms of entry infant to a 1 form of entry primary school from September 2014 and a proposal to restructure Worsley Bridge Junior School from a 3 forms of entry junior to a 2 forms of entry primary school from September 2014. The report seeks Education Portfolio Holder approval to progress both restructures.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 **Members of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:**

- (i) review the outcomes from the consultations;
- (ii) consider the case for changing the age range of both Bromley Road Infant School and Worsley Bridge Junior School;
- (iii) offer any comments on the above to the Education Portfolio Holder.

2.2 **The Education Portfolio Holder is asked to:**

- (iv) consider any comments arising from the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee;
- (v) agree the proposed change of age range at Bromley Road and Worsley Bridge so that both schools become all through Primary Schools with effect from 1 September 2014;
- (vi) authorise officers to undertake the formal statutory processes (these are outlined in section 6 of this report).

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Primary Schools' Development Plan
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Bromley Road: Estimated Cost: £150k capital allocated to be funded from the Basic Need Programme 2013/14 & 2014/15 and Suitability Programme 2013/14 & 2014/15
Worsley Bridge: Estimated Cost: £450k capital allocated from the Basic Need Programme 2013/14 & 2014/15 and Suitability Programme 2013/14 & 2014/15
 2. Ongoing costs: Non-Recurring Cost
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Basic Need Capital Grant/Suitability (Capital Maintenance Grant)
 4. Total current budget for this head: £9,919,662 (Basic Need Capital Grant & Suitability)
 5. Source of funding: DfE Basic Need Capital Grant & Capital – 100% capital grant
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 4 staff from the ECS Department are involved in the consultation process to varying degrees
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: approx 40 staff hours in total
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement: The Education and Inspections Act 2006, The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007. The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009.
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): When full, Bromley Road would accommodate 210 pupils and Worsley Bridge would accommodate 420 pupils. The pupils and their families will be the beneficiaries.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: As at 15 Feb 2013 no comments received. Cllr Michael Tickner attended the Consultation meeting at Worsley Bridge on 30 Jan 2013.

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 Bromley Road Infant and Worsley Bridge Junior are 'linked' (i.e. automatic pupil transfer from the infant to junior school) schools. However, they are three-quarters of a mile apart which creates difficulties for parents with children at both schools. Creating two separate all-through Primary Schools will overcome this problem and so offers particular benefits to families.
- 3.2 The Local Authority (LA) believes the potential advantages of an all through primary school include:
- strengthened leadership and management across key stages;
 - consistency of policy and planning;
 - continuity of curriculum organisation and teaching and learning across key stages;
 - continuity in pupil assessment and pupil tracking;
 - staffing - the efficient deployment of expertise and curriculum range and enhanced opportunities for professional development;
 - consistent governance;
 - no transition for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1.
- 3.3 The LA is committed to financing building development at both schools to help their transition to all through primary schools.
- 3.4 The LA believes that the Proposals represent the best practical way to provide high quality school places for children within the areas of the schools.
- 3.5 The Proposals do not represent an expansion of pupil numbers, as the overall effect of the school restructures on pupil numbers is neutral – there is a combined total of 630 school places before and after restructuring. Bromley Road would go from 270 to 210 places and Worsley Bridge would go from 360 to 420. The strength of the Proposals lies in restructuring both schools together in order to ensure stability of place offer locally.

Consultation

- 3.6 The Consultations ran from 11 January to 15 February 2013. Consultation letters were distributed as a basis for consulting parents/carers, staff, school governors, prospective parents of the School, local residents, Head Teachers/Principals, Chairmen of Governors, neighbouring Local Authorities, Council Members and other interested parties. The letters summarised the reasons for the Proposals, identified the issues for consideration and explained the arrangements for Consultation. The Consultations were publicised via the Schools, posters and the Council's website. A Consultation meeting for parents/carers and local residents was held at Bromley Road on 30 January at 2pm, attracting approximately 50 people, and at Worsley Bridge on 30 January at 7pm, attracting 45 people – both sets of parents were invited to attend either meeting. Ward Council Members have been made fully aware of the Proposal.
- 3.7 The Consultation produced 46 Bromley Road responses and 23 Worsley Bridge responses. Both Governing Bodies have written in support of the proposal for their respective schools. Bromley Road Governors conclude that "the Proposal is essential to secure school improvement, overcome some current difficulties and achieve our ambition of becoming a centre of excellence in our community." Worsley Bridge Governors conclude that "they are fully supportive of the Proposal as an opportunity to build on the strengths of our school." The

children of both schools were consulted via their School Councils – both School Councils support restructuring; specific points raised will be addressed by the schools. There were only two respondents against the proposal, a prospective parent of Bromley Road (no reasons given for being against the proposal) and a parent of Bromley Road who was concerned about the lack of outdoor space at the school. Hard copies of Consultation responses are available to view in the Members’ Room and at Civic Centre Reception.

Table 1 - Number of Responses: **Bromley Road**

Agree	41
Disagree	02
Don't Know/Undecided	03
Total	46

Table 2 – Category of Respondents

Category	Agree	Disagree	Do Not Know/Undecided	Total
Bromley Road Governing Body	1			1
Bromley Road School Council	1			1
Bromley Road Parent/Carer	19	1	1	21
Prospective Parent of Bromley Road	5	1	2	8
Local Residents	7	-	-	7
Bromley Road Staff	4	-	-	4
+Others	4	-	-	4
Total	41	2	3	46

+ Others: HT from another school, a Co-opted Member of Education PDS Committee and 2 Bromley Road School Governors
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Table 1 - Number of Responses: **Worsley Bridge**

Agree	23
Disagree	00
Don't Know/Undecided	00
Total	23

Table 2 – Category of Respondents

Category	Agree	Disagree	Do Not Know/ Undecided	Total
Worsley Bridge Gov Body	1			1
Worsley Bridge School Council	1			1
Worsley Bridge Parent/Carer	6	-	-	6
Prospective Parent of Worsley Bridge	5	-	-	5
Worsley Bridge Staff	7	-	-	7
+Others	3	-	-	3
Total	23	-	-	23

+ Others: HT from another school, a Co-opted Member of Education PDS Committee and 1 Worsley Bridge School Governor

Note: No Local Residents responded to this Consultation

Key Issues Arising from Consultation

3.8 **Key Issue 1:** 64 of the 69 respondents were in favour; the main reasons were:

- (i) Primary School favoured over separate Infant and Junior Schools:
 - Continuity of education and continuity of relationships between children and staff
 - Avoids disruptive transition from key stage 1 to 2
 - More convenient for parents to have siblings at one school
 - Will help to raise standards at the school
- (ii) Shortage of good primary schools in this area of Beckenham – a local primary school is required and will be attractive to local residents
- (iii) Avoid parents having to drive children between the 2 schools

Response – The LA agrees with all of the above reasons.

Key Issue 2: Concern about how the admissions process to both schools would work during the transition period.

Response – Admission arrangements would ensure that Y3 pupils in 2014 and 15 would secure a place in either Bromley Road or Worsley Bridge, with applicants being prioritised by sibling or proximity.

Existing pupils at Worsley Bridge will be able to complete their education at Worsley Bridge until secondary transfer.

All pupils currently in Y2 at Bromley Road will be able to transfer to Worsley Bridge in September 2013, as in previous years.

For pupils currently in Y1 at Bromley Road, they can complete Y2 at Bromley Road, and then there will be 30 Y3 places available at Bromley Road and 60 at Worsley Bridge in September 2014.

For pupils currently in Reception at Bromley Road, they can complete Y1 and Y2 at Bromley Road, and then there will be 30 Y3 places available at Bromley Road and 60 at Worsley Bridge in September 2015.

For new pupils seeking reception places from September 2014, there will be 30 places at Bromley Road and 60 at Worsley Bridge.

Key Issue 3: Concern about the reduction in the total number of pupil places at Bromley Road and whether a one form of entry school would be sufficient to meet the demand for places in the Beckenham area.

Response - Currently, when full, Bromley Road Infant School accommodates 270 children in 9 classes. If it became a one form entry primary school it would accommodate 210 children in 7 classes, when full. As a consequence of the changes, the proximity circle for admissions to the school will reduce. Most one form entry schools serve a community within a half to one mile radius. There are plans to consult on the permanent expansion of Clare House Primary school by one form of entry – this will help to ease pressure on places at Bromley Road. Harris Federation has submitted applications for two new Free Schools, one in Beckenham and one in Shortlands. This would increase the number of places available for local parents but, given the significant increase in birth-rate, all schools are likely to be full for the next few years.

Key Issue 4: Request from Bromley Road Infant School for Bromley Council to consider reserving car parking spaces in St George's public car park for Bromley Road staff, thereby freeing up playground space in the school.

Response: Bromley Road Infant School Governing Body has been advised to register this as a formal request to the Director of Environmental Services.

3.9 Other matters raised by individuals are summarised at Appendix 1.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Bromley Council has an established policy for the review and strategic planning of school places and related school organisation. The need to ensure sufficient school places and efficiency of organisation is a priority within the Council's Strategy 'Building a Better Bromley' and contributes to the strategy to achieve the status of an Excellent Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Changes in pupil numbers within an individual school are reflected in the school's delegated budget share funded from the Dedicated Schools' Grant. As the schools will remain as two separate schools there are no financial implications regarding the lump sum payment to schools.

5.2 Capital implications:

Bromley Road - £150k for multi use games area and other minor adaptations.

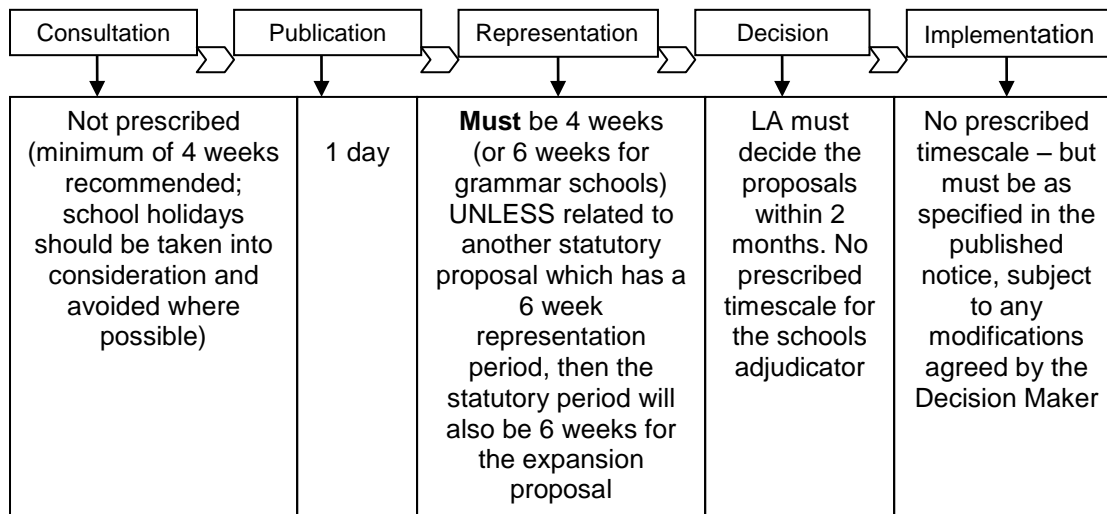
Worsley Bridge - £450k for 2 new classrooms and other associated minor adaptations.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A restructuring of a school is subject to a formal statutory process. Proposed changes that are of a temporary nature do not constitute a school reorganisation that triggers the statutory process for consultation. However, if at a later stage any temporary changes were to become permanent, then the designated process would need to be complied with.

6.2 In considering the establishment of a new school provision, expanding existing provision or changing the nature of maintained schools the LA is required to publish Public Notices and undertake formal consultation. This consultation must include parents, teachers, professional associations, neighbouring LAs and other interested agencies. Outcomes from consultation are considered for a formal decision by the Education Portfolio Holder and the Executive of the Council.

6.3 There are 5 statutory stages for a statutory proposal for an excepted expansion:



7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no immediate implications for staffing arising from this report. However should the proposals to restructure the schools be progressed, Bromley Road and Worsley Bridge will require support on an individual basis tailored to their specific staffing structures. Staffing implications may arise as both schools develop as dependent on pupil numbers the number of teaching Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff required to facilitate the curriculum and support the infrastructure may increase or decrease which could give rise to a potential redundancy situation. In this event detailed consultation with staff and Trade Union representatives would be undertaken with a view to mitigating the impact of any potential redundancy. Further considerations may include the grading for the Head Teachers as the Individual School Range may be affected.

Non-Applicable Sections:	None
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Committee Report ED12058: Review of Primary School Development Plan: Outcomes – 6/11/12 ED PDS Committee 2. Consultation Letter to Parents, Staff, Governors & Local Residents – 11/1/13 3. Circular Letter to Other Interested Parties – 11/1/13 4. Poster advertising the consultation 5. Notes from Parent/Carer Consultation meeting held on 30/1/13 6. Consultation Responses (hard copies available to view in Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception)

OTHER MATTERS RAISED VIA CONSULTATION

(i) Will there be enough money to undertake the necessary building work and will the building work would be completed in time?

Response: The building works required at Bromley Road are relatively straightforward and could be scheduled within school holiday periods. The creation of new reception classes at Worsley Bridge would be completed before the school admits Reception aged pupils, again with as much of the work being completed within school holiday periods as possible. Building works will be carefully managed to keep disruption to a minimum. There will be no need to use temporary buildings or decant children from either site. The Authority has a very successful track record of undertaking buildings developments on occupied school sites with minimal disruption to the pupils' education. Building work will be carried out in a sensitive fashion to ensure health and safety requirements are met fully. Health and safety and child protection will be of paramount importance and will be handled as such between the LA and the schools.

(ii) Will there would be provision for nursery age children at Bromley Road?

Response: There is currently no proposal to add nursery provision, but the Governors could consider this in the future, particularly given the reduction in pupils on the site which could free up suitable space for a nursery.

(iii) How will Bromley Road cope financially with the changes?

Response: Governors recognise the proposal will have an impact on both school income and expenditure. By working in collaboration with the Local Authority's 'Schools' Finance Team' predictions for budgets have been created. The Governors have concluded that the financial implications are manageable and that the proposed change is essential to secure school improvement.

(iv) Impact of a Harris Free School in Beckenham?

Response: Harris Federation had submitted applications for two new Free Schools, one in Beckenham and one in Shortlands. This would increase the number of places available for local parents but, given the significant increase in birth-rate, all schools are likely to be full for the next few years.

(v) Are there plans to make Worsley Bridge a 3 form of entry school in the long term?

Response: The current proposal is for a 2 forms of entry primary school but the site has the potential to become a 3 forms of entry primary school in the future.

(vi) Is the aim to create extra school places through these proposals?

Response: The proposals address the problem of having separate infant and junior schools which are located three-quarters of a mile apart. It is not about creating additional school places, as the number of places will not increase as a result of the implementation of these proposals – they will stay the same. Converting both schools to primary schools will help to make them full schools, rather than having vacancies.

(vii) What will be done to ensure that the youngest children at Worsley Bridge are safe and feel secure?

Response: Should the proposal go ahead, in September 2014 Worsley Bridge would have 2 Reception classes but no Year 1 or Year 2 classes. The Governing Body and Head Teacher are aware of the need to devise management strategies to address this and reassure parents.

(viii) Will school uniform change?

Response: This will be a matter for the Governing Bodies of both schools to determine.

(ix) A parent of Bromley Road commented that the outside space at the school will be too small to accommodate older children. Also, implementation of the Proposal would not allow younger children to mix with older children - this is necessary to prepare them for secondary school.

Response: The school is looking at ways to use its outdoor space to maximum effect e.g. installation of a multi-use games area. An all-through primary school will facilitate the mixing of younger and older children.