

**OUTCOME OF PROPOSALS FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF PRENTON INFANT SCHOOL AND PRENTON JUNIOR SCHOOL**

1.0 **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 At its meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005, Cabinet decided that following consultation with governing bodies, staff and parents, notices should be published regarding the amalgamation of two schools – Prenton Infant and Prenton Junior. This report describes the outcome of the subsequent representation period and recommends that the proposals to amalgamate the two schools be approved.

2.0 **Background**

- 2.1 The outcome of the consultation was described in the January 13<sup>th</sup> report to Cabinet, the relevant paragraph of which I include below.

*“The process of the consultation was relatively low key. The number of parents attending the parents’ meeting was small compared to similar consultations in the past. This probably reflects the reality that from a parental perspective the amalgamation of these two schools, who already share a common building, would not constitute a major change for them. Both schools are well regarded and enjoy the confidence of the community. There are inevitably some concerns about possible disruptive effects of amalgamation. Whilst reassurances can genuinely be given regarding the very successful experiences of the Authority in previous amalgamations (which were more problematic involving changes of site and major building work), it is understandable that proposed change always provokes some uneasiness. Nevertheless the advantages of amalgamation would appear to be considerably greater than such potential disadvantages. From the perspective of the Authority as a whole this amalgamation would be a small but significant step in the rationalisation of primary school provision which is currently the subject of wide ranging reviews. In terms of the position at Prenton, while pupil numbers have been relatively stable to date it would appear unlikely that the schools will escape the general demographic trend. When numbers fall, as appears likely, the larger school would find it very much easier to manage the structural adjustments that schools need to make when faced with falling rolls. The wider context of workforce remodelling makes this a good time for a new school to be established out of two existing ones.”*

3.0 **Proposal Publication**

- 3.1 Proposal notices were widely published, including the local press, entrances to both schools, and in a prominent community building. Copies of these notices are attached at Annexe A.
- 3.2 Following the publication of notices, there is a statutory six week representation period during which objections or comments on any proposal can be sent to the Director of Education and Cultural Services. This was clearly stated on the notices.

4.0 **Outcome of the Representation Period**

- 4.1 The statutory representation period ended on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2005. During this time, the Director of Education and Cultural Services received no written objections.

4.2 As no objections were made to any of these proposals during the statutory representation period, under Schedule 6 Part I paragraph 4(1a) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by paragraph 115(3) of Schedule 21 to the Education Act 2002, the Council can determine the proposals relating to the amalgamation of Prenton Infant and Prenton Junior school within four months of the date of publication of notices.

## 5.0 **Comment**

5.1 During consultation, it emerged that parental perspective on the amalgamation of the two schools was that it would not constitute a major change, although there were some concerns about possible disruptive effects of amalgamation. It is therefore not entirely unexpected that no formal objections to the proposals were made during the representation period.

## 6.0 **Financial and Staffing Implications**

6.1 There are no direct implications for the Council's Revenue budget. The amalgamated and larger school will be more cost effective in terms of management and administrative costs (such as the requirement for only one headteacher and one set of service agreements etc). This is reflected in the formula for funding schools which would only provide one lump sum element. Overall therefore the effect at the school is broadly neutral but the efficiency saving is redirected automatically by the formula back into the Individual Schools Budget as a whole.

6.2 If approved there will be a need for some capital works to establish common administrative and staff work/social areas, enhanced Disability Discrimination Act access and other modifications. It is expected that such works could be incorporated within the Education Capital Programme as a proposal for 2005/2006.

6.3 It would be for the new governing body (and in the interim a shadow governing body if proposals are approved) to determine the profile of expenditure at the school. If this had staffing implications then any staff not required would be redeployed under the agreed procedures.

6.4 In the interim period prior to Cabinet's decision, Prenton Infant and Prenton Junior schools have been allocated a 5/12ths budget for 2005/2006. The remaining 7/12ths budget would be allocated to the amalgamated Primary school if Cabinet determines the proposals.

## 7.0 **Equal Opportunities Implications**

7.1 There are no significant Equal Opportunities implications.

## 8.0 **Human Rights Implications**

8.1 There are no significant Human Rights implications.

## 9.0 **Local Agenda 21 Statement**

9.1 The provision of efficient and effective education is a vital part of serving local communities. Inefficient use of resources is wasteful both in educational and physical resource terms.

## 10.0 **Community Safety Implications**

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 **Planning Implications**

11.1 Any building proposals which may arise from amalgamation would be subject to the usual planning consents.

12.0 **Local Member Support Implications**

12.1 Prenton Infant School and Prenton Junior School are both in Prenton Ward.

13.0 **Background Papers**

13.1 Previous Cabinet reports.

14.0 **Recommendations**

14.1 The following recommendations are made:

- (i) That the proposals for the amalgamation of Prenton Infant School and Prenton Junior School into a single primary school be approved.
- (ii) That all relevant parties be informed, including the Secretary of State, Wirral School Organisation Committee and governing bodies of Prenton Infant and Prenton Junior School.

**Howard Cooper**  
**Director Education & Cultural Services**

**April 2005**