

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**Meeting of the Executive**

**15 August 2005**

**Report from Director of Children and Families**

For action

Wards affected:  
**PRESTON**

**Report Title: The Response to the Public Notice on the Future Organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools**

Forward Plan ref: **CAF05/06-013**

**Reason for urgency:**

‘Decision must be obtained from the Executive prior to the School Organisation Committee meeting scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005 otherwise the decision will go before an independent adjudicator.’

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 This report sets out the responses to the Public Notice and the Council’s comments on those responses on the future organisation of Wembley Manor Infant (with a Nursery) and Wembley Manor Junior schools. The Council’s proposal is to formally close both schools and open a new Primary School (for children aged 4+ to 11, with a Nursery) in their place on the existing site, with a capacity of 4 Form Entry. The net effect of the proposals is to amalgamate the two schools and then expand the new primary school from 3 form entry to 4 form entry, with a Nursery.

1.2 This report requests the Executive's approval to proceed with the Council's proposals by:

- discontinuing Wembley Manor 3FE Infant (with Nursery) and 3FE Junior schools with effect from 31 August 2006;
- establishing a new primary school with effect from September 2006, initially with a capacity of 3FE (with nursery) on the same site, expanding to 4FE (with nursery) in January 2008 in new buildings on the same site.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

2.1 Note the outcome of the Public Notice period referred to in paragraphs 3.6 - 3.9 of this report following the publication of statutory notices required under sections 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the Council's proposals to

- discontinue Wembley Manor 3FE Infant and 3FE Junior schools with effect from 31 August 2006;
- establish a new primary school with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006, initially with a capacity of 3FE (with nursery) on the same site, expanding to 4FE (with nursery) in January 2008 in new buildings on the same site.

2.2 Agree that the objections to the proposal received during the formal consultation period be submitted to the School Organisation Committee (SOC), as the body with statutory powers to determine proposals, for SOC members to make a decision.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **Brief Background**

3.1 The Council set up a Joint Governors' (Infant and Junior Schools) Working Group to consider various aspects of the various options the Council had been considering over the future organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools. The Working Group included Governors representing staff, parents, co-opted and LEA governors. This group met frequently and in total it met ten times since 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005. It was always intended that the Governors on the Joint Working group would cascade information onto the respective Governing Bodies.

3.2 The Joint Working Group gave detailed consideration to the Council's proposals – the Joint Working Group's work programme included deliberations (among others) on :

- the case for raising education standards (led by the schools' link adviser and the Senior School Improvement Adviser);

- the modelling of the schools illustrative budgets – combined all through primary school and separate Junior and Infant Schools (led by the Assistant Director Finance and Performance);
- illustrative staffing structures mainly to confirm affordability and recognising that any structure will need to be drawn up by a new Governing Body and Headteacher;
- the design development, including the participative process the Council intends to adopt in developing the design brief and the detailed design - this session was led by a leading architect who is also a design enabler at the Commission for the Architecture and the Environment – CAFE.
- School visits - the Joint Working Group visited two recently amalgamated 4FE schools in a London Borough; staff of one of the schools also visited one of the two schools in order to see first hand the workings of a 4FE Primary School;
- An informal review of the School Organisational Plans at a national level, with the view to establishing recent experience by Local Authorities in setting up new Primary schools. Birmingham City Council's plans for primary provision was reviewed with particular attention to their plan for amalgamating separate schools. This information was reported to the Joint Working Group.

3.3 In order to better support the Joint Working group of Governors The Director of Children and Families (C&F) set up a core group of officers that included the Senior School Improvement Adviser, the Schools' Link Adviser, Head of Governors' Services, Head of Asset Management Service and the Principal Schools Planning Officer. This core group considered the issues arising from the Joint Working Group and responded to the requests for advice, information and evidence where available or appropriate.

3.4 At their meeting of 20 June 2005, Executive received a report on the outcomes of the informal consultation over the Council's proposals. The report sets out information on the Council's rationale, emphasising among others the following: The pressure on school places; the need for the renewal of the existing school buildings and the opportunity this creates for the Council's proposals to be implemented; education standards in amalgamated schools; details on the informal consultation process and the outcomes of that process identifying the main themes of the responses and the comments of the Director of C&F to each of those themes. For full details of the informal consultation please see the June Executive report attached as Attachment 1, for ease of reference.

3.5 The Executive considered the report and concluded that the Council would proceed with the publication of Statutory Notices (for the Council's proposals) under section 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

### **Public Notice – Representation Period**

- 3.6 After obtaining the agreement of the Executive in June 2005, the Statutory Notice was first published in the local papers on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005 (and re-published as a clarified notice on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 - attached as Attachment 2) and posted in libraries, the Town Hall and on the Wembley Manor school gates. There was a 6 week representation period (ending on 11 August 2005) for anyone to write in on the Council's proposals with comments, objections and support.
- 3.7 Information was distributed to the parents via the schools; with that information, a leaflet (in 8 different community languages) was made available emphasising that, where necessary and requested, translated copies of the documents would be made available. The Headteachers of the schools were also asked to advise officers of any such specific need or request locally, translated copies of the documents would be made available.
- 3.8 The Council complied to all other procedural steps both over the process of consultation and the publication of Notices relating to the Council's proposals, as required.
- 3.9 The procedure, at the point where the Public Notice and Representation Period ends, is that if there are no statutory objections then the Local Authority determines the proposals; however, if there are objections and these are not withdrawn in writing, then all written objections, suggestions, comments and support are to be sent to the School Organisation Committee (SOC) for a decision. A SOC meeting has been convened for Friday 9 September 2005, because statutory objections remain which are not withdrawn. If the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision the matter will go to the Schools Adjudicator who will then determine the Council's proposals within six weeks of receiving the referral from the SOC.

Executive meeting	20 June 2005
Representation period	30 June – 11 August 2005
Executive meeting	15 August 2005
SOC decision	9 September 2005

### **The Outcome of the Public Notice period**

- 3.10 The six week representation period began on 30 June 2005 and ended on 11 August 2005. At the close of business on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2005, 567 written responses were received. They are from, the Governing Body of the Infant school, the Governing Body of the Junior school, parents and families of pupils from both schools, Brent Unison, Chair of Wembley Manor Junior Schools' Personnel and Curriculum Committee, Brent Teachers Panel, Brent Primary Schools Headteachers Group, Sudbury Primary School Headteacher, individual Governors. For Members' information, the detailed responses of the Governing Bodies of Wembley Manor Schools Infant and Junior are summarised below in Paragraphs

3.14 and 3.13 respectively. The following table is a summary of the responses.

<b>FUTURE ORGANISATION OF WEMBLEY MANOR SCHOOLS PUBLIC NOTICE - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES</b>			
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Brent Teachers' Panel (Joint Consultative Committee)</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>National Unions of Teachers</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>Via Wembley Manor Junior School</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>Via Wembley Manor Junior School</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Via Wembley Manor Infants School</b>		<b>82</b>	
<b>Petition Signed (Via Wembley Manor Infant School)</b>		<b>170</b>	
<b>Letters signed by Parents (Via Wembley Manor Infant School)</b>		<b>180</b>	
<b>Wembley Manor Infants School Governing Body</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>Wembley Manor JM School Governing Body</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>SMSAs</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>Kitchen Staff</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>Headteacher of Sudbury Primary School</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Individual Parent</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>Individual Governors - Infants School</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Individual Governors Junior School</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Members of Staff of Wembley Manor Schools</b>		<b>9</b>	
<b>Brent Primary Schools Headteachers Group</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>* Brent Unison represents 1819 members</b>			

3.11 During this Public Notice period, the responses included a number of new issues in support of the Council's Proposals. Given that they had not been reported to the Executive before they are listed here for the Executive to note;

- Teaching will be in a modern purpose built building
- OfSTED report on similar recently merged school supports amalgamation
- Evidence from recent visits to schools in Newham support amalgamation
- New school will be designed to ensure pupils' health and safety
- Community and extended school facilities would be available with a new school
- Merging an infant and junior school in Brent 5 years ago has had educational benefits

Conversely, save for a view that the "LEA had not followed its agreement with the Teachers' Panel over school reorganisation" there were effectively no new arguments being presented against the Council's proposals that were not reported in thematic fashion to Executive on 20 June 2005 (see Attachment 1 for ease of reference). The agreement with the Teachers' Panel ceased to be in place at the time of the previous Director of Education, Arts and Libraries. The Director of Children and Families (C&F) has nevertheless taken steps to keep the Teachers' panel informed and abreast of developments, including meeting staff and Trade Union representatives.

3.12 The response of the Director of C&F to the arguments against the Council's proposals therefore remain as those set out in the 20 June 2005 report.

3.13 The Governing Body of Wembley Manor Junior School met on 13 July 2005 to discuss the Statutory Notice issued on 30 June 2005, and accordingly resolved:

'We the Governing Body of Wembley Manor Junior School support the statutory notice which has published proposals to expand to 4 forms of entry, and amalgamate Wembley Manor Infant and Junior School.'

All junior school governors present with the exception of one who chose to abstain indicated their support of the Council's proposals. The following reasons were given by individual governors in support of their decision:

- The evidence from Birmingham had been influential;
- An amalgamated school would save the handover time which was needed when children moved from infant to junior school;
- The school was in receipt of an intense support programme and this could work more effectively across one school;

- It would be easier to manage the buildings in one school and also provide extended school facilities for families and the local community;
- Experience of currently working elsewhere in an all through school showed it gave continuity in working and supporting children and their parents;
- Initially happier with retaining separate schools, one governor indicated his preference for having one school and one governing body having now experienced the politics between the two schools with each pulling in a different direction;
- Having a caretaker who had to work for two separate bosses made no sense;
- One governor saw the amalgamation as inevitable and that as a realist, was voting for it and the change it would bring;
- One governor indicated that she was supporting it because it was what she had worked for over a period of 8 years. The idea of a new building and good facilities after years of patching the existing premises was fulfilling a dream.

3.14 The Governing Body of Wembley Manor Infant School met on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005 to discuss the published Statutory Notice and accordingly resolved to lodge a formal objection to the amalgamation of the two Wembley Manor Schools. The resolution to submit a formal objection to the Public Notice was passed by nine votes to two. The grounds for the objection are summarised as follows:

- 65% of families (both schools) have expressed their opposition either by letter or petition;
- The LEA has tried to disenfranchise parents;
- No evidence from the LEA to support large schools;
- There are no clearly laid out financial models;
- The infant department within the new school would suffer financially because of the revenue funding formula;
- Large schools cannot function effectively with one caretaker, one deputy headteacher and one coordinator for each subject area;
- There is doubt over an LEA suggestion that economies can be made as a result of the amalgamation;
- The response to the original consultation was higher than the 11% claimed by the LEA;
- There is no evidence to show that pupils in large combined schools perform better;
- No building plans for the new school have been made available;
- The LEA has not dealt properly with the nursery issue;
- Previous proposals to merge the other 4FE schools in Brent were dropped and Brent has no experience of amalgamating 4FE schools;
- The amalgamation would affect the scope of the teaching staff to and management teams to know and assist the children at each stage of their development;
- There is concern about intimidation and bullying of younger pupils by older pupils;



- There is a lack of evidence to prove that the educational opportunities for young people would be enhanced from the creation of an amalgamated school;
- The LEA has not followed the correct procedures in relation to the process of consultation.

3.15 The proposed timetable, pending a decision of the SOC, is as follows:

Decision (SOC)	9 September 2005
Begin the process to recruit Headteacher Designate	Autumn 2005
Amalgamated school starts	September 2006
4FE school opens in new building	January 2008

3.16 The Executive report requesting approval to invite expressions of interest and tenders for the proposed architectural and consultancy service contract, in respect of the proposed development of the schools, was approved by the Executive in their meeting in May 2005.

#### **4. Guidance for SOC (from the DfES – School Organisation: Making Changes)**

4.1 Proposals that are published by the Council may be decided by the Council within four months of the date of publication, provided there are no objections and the proposals are not linked to any others that are to be decided by the SOC. The Council cannot give conditional approval (i.e. the Council has to be satisfied that the proposal can be implemented). Those proposals that are not decided by the Council will pass to the SOC to consider.

4.2 Where proposals are published by the Council and attract representation, the Authority are required to forward the representations to the SOC, together with their comments, within one month of the end of the representation period (or two weeks where the proposals relate to a school in special measures). Where representations have been received by the SOC, (i.e. for proposals other than those published by the Council), the SOC will seek comments from the proposers.

4.3 The SOC will decide proposals by the casting of a vote by all the groups on the committee. In reaching that decision the SOC is required to take due regard to the guidance to decision makers published by the DfES (attached as Attachment 3). A decision must be a unanimous decision of those voting – each group has one vote. An abstention does not count as a vote for or against the proposal. The SOC may decide to:

- Reject the proposals;
- Approve the proposals without modification;
- Approve the proposal with modifications following consultation with proposers and others; or
- Give a conditional approval. The categories of condition are set out in regulations and a date must be specified by which the condition must be met. Some examples of the type of conditions are; the granting of planning permission, the acquisition of a site

or playing fields, the entering into of a private finance transaction, the making of a charity scheme, the formation of a federation, the making of a charity scheme, the formation of a federation, the making of an agreement for the establishment of an Academy or agreement to change any admission arrangements. A conditional approval cannot be given that is subject to capital funding being made available.

- 4.4 Where the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision, they may pass the proposal to the Adjudicator within two weeks of their vote. The Schools Adjudicator is an independent body appointed by the Secretary of State. The SOC may defer taking a decision on proposals providing the SOC agrees this unanimously.
- 4.5 The SOC may pass proposals to the Adjudicator if two groups disqualify themselves from voting on a proposal because members have an interest in the case.
- 4.6 The options open to the Adjudicator in reaching a decision are the same as for the SOC (i.e. as at paragraph 4.3 above).

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 On 28 February 2005 the Council agreed to a capital budget provision, which included resources for the newbuild of Wembley Manor Infant School and Wembley Manor Junior School totalling £10m between 2005/6 and 2007/8. This reserve provision (subject to inflationary pressure) was based on cost consultancy in early 2004. A submission has been made to the DfES under the Targeted Capital Fund (TCF) programme (competitive bidding) for Capital resources to deliver this scheme (based on the expansion and amalgamation option - the Director of Children and Families' preferred option); the ability to co-locate a children's centre, and wider facilities for extended schooling is dependent on the success of the funding submission. The TCF bid is for £14m (with 20% match funding by the Council), which would provide for a more extensive scheme than would be possible with the £10m in the Council's Capital programme. The Project will provide an ICT-rich 21st Century learning environment and will look to provide for extended school provision in line with DfES aspirations for community use of facilities, such as a Children's Centre and extended use of the facilities in line with the Government's initiative, Every Child Matters.
- 5.2 The budget of the school would be determined by the devolved funding formula and the total cost contained within the overall Individual Schools Budget (ISB). There will be a proposal for a formula change – to be consulted on with all schools in the autumn 2005 – that will provide transitional funding for merging schools, again to be contained within the ISB. There will be no additional revenue cost to the Council arising from the proposal. The Schools Forum will be consulted on the proposal as part of its overall view of new formula arrangements at its meeting in December 2005.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

**6.1** As indicated above, proposals for a school to close or for a new school to open require statutory notices under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, formal statutory consultation and then decisions of the Schools Organisation Committee (SOC). The timetable for this process has also been set out above in this report. If the SOC cannot make a unanimous decision the matter will be referred to the Schools Adjudicator (see paragraphs 4.4 – 4.6).

## **7.0 Diversity Implications**

**7.1** There are no immediate diversity implications for the immediate purpose of this report. However:

- a new and expanded school will be open, as now to all children according to the admissions criteria, which are non-discriminatory and are set by the Council. Being larger, more local families will be able to attend it.
- the proposed increase in school places will be a benefit to families moving into Brent who are increasingly finding it difficult to find a local school place for their children.
- the new building will comply with Disability Discrimination Act regulations. The existing buildings currently do not comply.
- The existing schools have high indices of need, as measured by Free School Meals (FSM) – 37% and 41% eligibility at the Infants' and Junior Schools respectively compared to a Brent Schools average of 27% - and English as an Additional Language (EAL) – 71% and 66% at the Infants' and Junior Schools respectively, as compared to a Brent average of 55%. A fit for purpose, modern 21 Century building with a purposeful and strong leadership is better able to enhance the life chances of such learning and local communities.

## **8.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

**8.1** The temporary governing body would need to draw up a staffing structure for the new school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher posts would be advertised nationally. All other posts in the new school, both teaching and non-teaching, would be ring-fenced in the first instance, with staff employment protected. With expansion of pupil numbers, there is likely to be an expansion of posts rather than a reduction. Dependent on the new staffing structure, there are likely to be increased opportunities for promotion.

- 8.2 The existing school buildings are in a poor state of repair. Up to 40% of the pupils of the schools are housed in temporary accommodation, which has either reached the end of its useful life or will in the next 2 to 3 years. The main buildings are built of a light-weight construction and will need considerable investment in the next 5 years. The existing buildings do not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and do not lend themselves easily for adaptations to meet the act.

## **9. In Conclusion**

- 9.1 This report has set out for the Executive the process adopted since its decision of 20 June 2005 to publish Statutory Notices (of the Council's proposals) under section 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It also has reported to Members the process adopted in supporting the Governors of both schools in acquiring information, knowledge and evidence better to enable the Governors to make an informed decision on their position with respect of the Council's proposals.
- 9.2 The issues raised in the Notice Period have been carefully examined by the Director of Children and Families and he advises the Executive that they can be satisfactorily addressed. He rejects the suggestion that the consultation process has been flawed and no evidence is provided for such an assertion. The Director of C&F is keen to point out to the Executive that whereas there was silence over messages of support for the Council's proposals during the previous consultation phase (as reported to Executive on 20 June 2005), many representations have been received in support of the Council's proposals including from the Junior Governing Body, parents, UNISON and individual Governors (Infant and Junior Governing Bodies).
- 9.3 The Director of Children and Families Department therefore, and in the context of this report, requests that the Executive agree the recommendations of this report (Paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2).

### ***Background Papers***

1. Consultation documentation
2. Executive Report approved on 23 May 2005 – Wembley Manor Junior and Infants Schools – Procurement of Architectural and Consultancy Services
3. DfES Guidance – School Organisation: Making Changes

### **Appendices**

- Attachment 1 Executive Report approved on 20 June 2005 – The Future Organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools

Attachment 2          Statutory Notice

Attachment 3          Decision Makers Guidance Section 2.1 (DfES)

***Contact Officer***

**Nitin Parshotam, Head of Asset Management Service, Chesterfield House,  
9 Park Lane Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 7RW, Tele: 020 8937 3080, Fax:  
020 8937 3093 Email: [nitin.parshotam@brent.gov.uk](mailto:nitin.parshotam@brent.gov.uk)**

**Director of Children and Families – John Christie**

# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

## Meeting of the Executive

20 June 2005

### Report from Director of Education, Arts and Libraries

For action

Wards affected:  
**PRESTON**

### Report Title: The Future Organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools

Forward Plan ref: **EAL05/06-003**

#### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the public consultation process (informal stage) on the options for the future organisation of Wembley Manor Infant (with a Nursery) and Wembley Manor Junior schools. The questions are should the schools be expanded and / or should the schools be amalgamated?
- 1.2 This report requests the Executive's approval to proceed with the proposal to publish statutory notices under section 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998: to amalgamate the Infant and Junior schools as one 4 Form Entry (4FE) primary school by:
- discontinuing Wembley Manor 3FE Infant and 3FE Junior schools with effect from 31 August 2006;
  - establishing a new primary school with effect from September 2006, initially with a capacity of 3FE (with nursery) on the same site, expanding to 4FE (with nursery) in January 2008 in new buildings on the same site.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

- 2.2 Note the outcome of the informal consultation referred to in paragraphs 3.14 – 3.20 of this report;
- 2.2 Authorise the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries to publish notices required under sections 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the proposal to
- discontinue Wembley Manor 3FE Infant and 3FE Junior schools with effect from 31 August 2006;
  - establish a new primary school with effect from September 2006, initially with a capacity of 3FE (with nursery) on the same site, expanding to 4FE (with nursery) in January 2008 in new buildings on the same site.
- 2.3 To authorise the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries to determine these proposals on behalf of the Council, if either there are no valid statutory objections to the Council's proposals or if the valid statutory objections have been resolved within 6 weeks of the publication of the proposals; alternatively, should there be any objection, submit them for a decision by the School Organisation Committee (SOC), as the body with statutory powers to determine these changes.

#### **4 Detail**

##### **Pressure on School Places**

- 3.1 There is already pressure on places in the two schools in the Wembley area. Owing to the Wembley development programme and the extensive housing developments that are being built, more families will be arriving and their children will need extra school places. It is estimated that by 2014 (in an unpublished analysis by the LEA that supersedes the latest School Organisation Plan), a total of five more forms of entry will be needed across schools in the north of the Borough.
- 3.2 The Council has a statutory duty to provide school places, to match such places as closely as possible to demand, and to support and challenge schools to provide the best possible standard of education for pupils.

##### **School Buildings: Efficiency, Sustainability, Suitability**

- 3.3 The existing school buildings are in a poor state of repair. Nearly half of the classroom accommodation is in temporary huts which are now approaching the end of their lifespan. They are insufficient and unsuitable. Repair work has been undertaken, and any additional remedial work is likely to be cost ineffective.

##### **Primary Schools: Standards and Amalgamations**

- 3.4 The majority of primary schools in Brent are all-through schools. Many LEAs across the country have a policy of amalgamating infant and junior schools because of the advantages of all through education.

This Council is unaware of any new separate infant or junior schools as apposed to primary schools being established in recent years. There are good arguments for the amalgamation of schools and examples of their success across the country. Birmingham LEA is an example of an authority which has been proactive in amalgamating its separate infant and junior schools with some success (see para 3.12).

### **The Consultation Process**

- 3.5 The proposal is, should the number of school places at the schools be expanded from 3FE to 4FE, and also should the schools be amalgamated to make one primary school (see details in 3.8 to 3.11). Initial consultation has taken place on the proposals for the future organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Junior schools. The Options are outlined in paragraph 3.8.

By statute there are informal and formal consultation processes to follow.

### **Informal Consultation**

- 3.6 The consultation process started in January 2005 with a combined Governing Body meeting of both schools. A smaller group of four governors from each school was later formed as a joint working party to take the project forward. Their work programme has included meeting fortnightly, having delegated authority from their respective governing bodies to discuss and agree the consultation process with the LEA, contribute to the work programme and report back to their respective governing bodies at regular intervals. In May 2005 representatives from the joint working party made visits to two 4FE primary schools in the London Borough of Newham to gain first hand experience of the organisation of large schools. Both schools received positive reviews.
- 3.7 The wider consultation process began in May with the consultation document being issued to all interested parties. On 18 May 2005 a meeting was held for parents of both schools. The consultation documentation (distributed to all concerned in April 2005) was also issued to all schools in Brent, neighbouring boroughs, Trade Unions, Teachers Panel, Wembley Residents Association, the Diocesan Boards, One Stop Shops and Libraries in Brent, Councillors and the Early Years Group. The deadline for responses was 3 June 2005.
- 3.8 The majority of responses were in favour of the need to expand school places in addition to renewing the school buildings. The LEA consulted on four options for the future organisation of the schools. They are:
- Option 1 the two schools remain as separate 3 form entry infant and junior schools;
  - Option 2 the two schools amalgamate to create an all through 3 form entry primary school;



Option 3 the two schools expand to become separate 4 form entry infant and junior schools;

Option 4 the two schools amalgamate to create an all through 4 form entry primary school.

3.9 Option 4 is the Director of Education's preferred option. There are advantages and disadvantages to option 4, but Director's view is that the advantages considerably outweigh the disadvantages as listed below:

- (1) All through schools provide continuity for pupils and parents by removing the stress of transition from infant to junior school.
- (2) An all-through school would be better placed to provide the curriculum in a continuous and coherent way, with planning covering all 3-11 year olds.
- (3) There would be a co-ordinated, whole school approach to issues such as behaviour and parent involvement.
- (4) With a large number of children on site a single school management would help to ensure all aspects of school life are well run.

3.10 Other advantages include:

- A single structure is more cost efficient especially in the long run
- It is easier to deliver extended school provision

3.11 The disadvantages of an all-through school are:

- Initially amalgamation will cause some upheaval. It will take time to develop a common identity and shared vision for the new school.
- There will be parental anxiety about the large size but this can be overcome by an effective school design.
- High standards of school leadership and organisation are crucial to the success of any school, but the need for them, is intensified in a large school.

3.12 There are considerable benefits for all-through provision and although it cannot be guaranteed that this will lead to improved standards there is good evidence that this is likely to do so. There is evidence from other LEA's on the benefits of amalgamating infant and junior schools. For example, Birmingham LEA is at an advanced stage in its amalgamation programme after amalgamating a significant number of its 46 pairs of infant and junior schools in the last few years. Extracts from the Birmingham Chief Executive Office presentation and the Results of the Birmingham LEA First OFSTED After Amalgamation report are attached (appendices 3 and 4).

3.13 In putting the amalgamation forward as a preferred option for Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools it should be noted that this does not imply that all separate Infant and Junior schools in Brent should be amalgamated. Decisions need to be taken on the particular circumstances of each case. In the case of Wembley Manor Infant and

Junior there is the need for expansion and the opportunity of providing a new school which can be purpose- designed as a primary school.

**The Informal Consultation Outcome**

3.14 The closing date for written responses was 3 June 2005. At the close of business on 3 June 2005, 94 written responses were received, 55 from parents, 24 from staff of schools throughout the Borough, 8 from Governors and 7 from others. The Governing Body of each school submitted their separate responses (see 3.17 – 3.18). The responses received from ‘others’ included Brent UNISON and the London Diocesan Board for Schools. The findings are as follows:

Of the approximately 800 consultation papers issued the receipt of 94 represents a return of approx 11.75%, which is disappointingly low.

3.15 The preference for different options were:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Total
<b>Parents</b>	9	7	34	7	<b>57</b>
<b>Governors</b>	0	0	6*	1	<b>7</b>
<b>Staff +</b>	2	0	18	6	<b>26</b>
<b>Others</b>	0	0	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>94</b>

\* Governors are also classed as either: parents, staff or others  
 + staff includes headteachers from other schools in Brent

The above shows that of those that responded:

- 81% support the expansion of the schools from 3FE to 4FE (options 3 & 4).
- 75.5% prefer separate schools for now (options 1 & 3). Some have stressed that this is their preferred option until further evidence is provided. Others have suggested separate schools with shared facilities.
- 25% are in favour of an amalgamated school (options 2 & 4).

**Issues Raised by the Consultation**

3.16 The main reasons given for each option are attached with the LEA’s response (see Appendix 1). The main thematic issues (gathered from the parents’ meeting and written responses) and a summary of the Director’s responses are as follows, the full replies can be found in Appendix 1:

**Issue 1: The site is not big enough for 900 pupils.**

**Response:** The Wembley site is 30064m2. This is bigger than the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guideline for a 4FE school which is 25220 to 29980m2.

**Issue 2: Playtimes will not be safe for the youngest children.**

**Response:** The layout of the building will be designed in such a way that there is separate, secure play provision for the

Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2).

**Issue 3: There are not many 4FE primary schools in the country.**

**Response:** Site constraints often limit how large schools can grow in urban areas. The largest primary schools in the country are found in London. Newham has 5 out of the 10 largest schools in the country.

**Issue 4: Small schools perform better than large schools.**

**Response:** There is no national correlation between school size and performance. There is evidence that both small and large schools can perform well. In the case of 4FE schools, an analysis of the Key Stage 2 results in the ten largest schools in the country shows a number of them adding significant value.

**Issue 5: Separate infant and junior schools perform better than primary schools.**

**Response:** To analyse results, schools are grouped according to free school meals, pupils in the early stages of learning English, pupils coming from deprived neighbourhoods and pupil mobility. In Brent, there are no significant differences in the performance of separate infant and junior schools and that of primary schools, when we compare schools which are similar.

**Issue 6: There are no benefits from amalgamation and no evidence that an amalgamated school will improve standards.**

**Response:** Many LEAs across the country have a policy of amalgamating infant and junior schools. It appears that no new infant and junior schools have been established in recent years. Birmingham LEA, for example, has a proactive policy of amalgamation. In 1999 it had 46 pairs of separate infant and junior schools. It has proceeded to amalgamate those schools because it is in no doubt that there are long term benefits of mergers such as continuity for children and parents, delivery of the national curriculum, staff development, ease of site maintenance, a common ethos and sense of purpose. Where amalgamations have taken place in Brent, standards have risen. A recent new build amalgamation of two three form infant and junior schools in a nearby urban Authority resulted in significantly improved and sustained attainment levels.

**Issue 7: Large schools do not function as well as smaller schools.**

**Response:** 4FE schools can function very effectively. Visits to two of the largest primary schools in the country by governors and

staff from Wembley Manor Schools confirmed this to be the case.

**Issue 8: There will be no economies of scale in the 4FE amalgamated school.**

**Response:** Economies of scale can be quite significant in larger schools. There can be obvious economies such as: staffing, resources, running costs etc

**Issue 9: Why not build two separate schools with shared facilities.**

**Response:** This is an option but more costly than one primary school as not all facilities could be shared. The more facilities are shared the greater the co-ordination necessary. One school eliminates the need for this.

- 3.17 The Governing Bodies of each school have responded as separate bodies. Wembley Manor Infant School Governing Body have stated that they wish to support the expansion of the school to 4FE and support the provision of the new school buildings they also wish to support the retention of two separate schools (option 3) owing in their view, to a lack of sufficient evidence to convince them that a merger is in the best interest of the infant school and the community it serves. The evidence is now set out clearly in the Director's response above and in a file of supporting documentation will be made available for viewing in the two schools.
- 3.18 Wembley Manor Junior School Governing Body stated that they accept the need to expand from 3FE to 4FE. They support the need for new school building(s), and they will consider whether to support an amalgamation or two separate schools once they have received further information and that the case for a very large amalgamated school has not yet been convincingly made as they believe the Brent funding formula places a merged school at a financial disadvantage. In response to this point, the joint working group reviewed a financial model at one of its meetings which illustrated that the budget for an amalgamated school compared favourably with that of another 4FE all-through school visited by members of the working group, who considered the school to be successfully run.
- 3.19 Although provision has been reserved for the scheme - see 4.0 – Financial Implications, (based on Option 4 the Director's preferred option), the LEA has made a submission for funds under Targeted Capital Funding (TCF) in order to deliver a co-located Children's Centre, enhance extended school provision and develop 'home connectivity'. This is a measure to enable children from less privileged backgrounds (those on Free School Meals and other benefits) equal access to the schools on line learning resources. That is, allow those who would not otherwise be able to afford ICT at home, to connect to the school's web based curriculum resources, as well as allowing parents to access to relevant data and information concerning their children.

- 3.20 The Brent Teachers' Panel have responded to the consultation by saying they believe the Council should have followed a pre-Local Management of Schools and pre 1991 agreement which provided for consultation exercises to be overseen by a joint Education Committee/Teachers' Panel. The Panel have been informed that the agreement is outdated and no longer in force, but that the Panel's views are welcome. The Panel have asked for further meetings of staff at the schools with representatives of the Panel present and this can be arranged if the Executive agree to the next round of consultation.

**Formal Consultation**

- 3.21 The next step in any procedure to reorganise the schools is to publish a statutory notice in the local papers, libraries, the Town Hall and on the school gates (see Appendix 2). There will then be a 6 week period for anyone to write in to make representation on the proposals. If there are no statutory objections then the Local Authority will determine the proposals, however, if there are objections then all written objections, suggestions, comments and support will then be sent to the School Organisation Committee to consider. The Committee will make the decision probably in September or October 2005. If it SOC cannot make the decision the matter will go to the Schools Adjudicator.

3.22 The timetable for the formal consultation is as follows:

Publish Statutory Return	by 27 June 2005
Representations (six weeks)w/c 1/8/05	30 July 2005
Decision	September / October 2005
Begin to recruit Headteacher Designate	September 2006
Amalgamated school starts	September 2006
4FE school opens	
school moves new building	1 January 2008

3.23 The Executive report requesting approval to invite expressions of interest and tenders for the proposed architectural and consultancy service contract in respect of the proposed development of the schools, was approved by the Executive in their meeting in May 2005.

#### **4.0 *Financial Implications***

4.1 On 28 February 2005 the Council agreed to a capital budget provision which included resources for the newbuild of Wembley Manor Infant School and Wembley Manor Junior School totalling £10m between 2005/6 and 2007/8. This reserve provision was based on cost consultancy in early 2004. A submission has been made to the DfES under the TCF programme (competitive bidding) for Capital resources to deliver this scheme (based on Option 4 - the Director's preferred option); the ability to co-locate a children's centre, and wider facilities for extended schooling (referred to in 3.19) is dependent on the success of the funding submission.

4.2 There will be economies of scale in running the site as one school. For example there will be one headteacher. In the long term therefore the amalgamated school will be able to devote more of its resources to its pupils. If the school expands, the additional pupils will generate substantial additional funding.

4.3 The budget of the school would be determined by the devolved funding formula and the total cost contained within the overall Individual Schools Budget (ISB). There will be a proposal for a formula change – to be consulted on with all schools in the autumn – that will provide transitional funding for merging schools, again to be contained within the ISB. There will be no additional revenue cost to the Council arising from the proposal.

## **5.0     *Legal Implications***

**5.1**     As indicated in the above recommendations, proposals to require a school to close or for a new school to open require statutory notices under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, formal statutory consultation and then decisions of the Schools Organisation Committee. The timetable for this process has also been set out above in this report.

## **6.0     *Diversity Implications***

**6.1**     There are no diversity implications contained within this report, however:

- this proposal to amalgamate the schools to form one all-through school will be in line with the majority of primary schools in Brent which are all-through schools.
- the proposed increase in school places will be a benefit to families moving into the area who are increasingly finding it difficult to find a local school place for their children.
- the new building will comply to Disability Discrimination Act regulations. The existing buildings currently do not comply.

## **7.0     *Staffing/Accommodation Implications***

**7.1**     The temporary governing body would need to draw up a staffing structure for the new school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher posts would be advertised nationally. All other posts in the new school, both teaching and non-teaching, would be ring-fenced in the first instance, with staff employment protected. With expansion of pupil numbers, there is likely to be an expansion of posts rather than a reduction. Dependent on the new staffing structure, there are likely to be increased opportunities for promotion.

**7.2**     The existing school buildings are in a poor state of repair. Up to 40% of the pupils of the schools are housed in temporary accommodation, which has either reached the end of its useful life or will in the next 2 to 3 years. The main buildings are built of a light weight construction and will need considerable investment in the next 5 years. The existing buildings do not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and do not lend themselves easily for adaptations to meet the act. (see 3.3).

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 This report has examined the issues raised by the consultation. As to expansion the consultation response, though small, favours this proposal. The need is clearly there and the site is large enough. There are strong reasons to proceed to formal consultation on expansion.
- 8.2 Given the need to expand and given the opportunity for a brand new purpose-designed building there are strong grounds for amalgamation of the schools. The objective educational reasons have been discussed in the report:
- Continuity of curriculum planning and assessment
  - Removal of problems of transition at 7 years old
  - Opportunities for the deployment of staff expertise for the benefit of all students
  - Evidence of successful amalgamations in the past
  - Opportunities for the best management of a site catering for 900 pupils.
- 8.3 The issues raised in the consultation have been carefully considered and they can be satisfactorily addressed.
- 8.4 The opportunity of a new building is a critical factor, since that will enable the best design of an amalgamated school to be built. In addition to the strong educational arguments for an amalgamation this is the best value for money option.
- 8.5 It is disappointing that there has been a low level of responses to the consultation but given that low level and the fact that the Governing Body of the Junior School has not yet taken a view on amalgamation it is right that the proposal should go to the next stage of formal consultation.

### ***Background Papers***

1. Consultation documentation
2. Executive Report approved on 23 May 2005 – Wembley Manor Junior and Infants Schools – Procurement of Architectural and Consultancy Services



## **Appendices**

1. Appendix 1 – LEA’s response to the comments made at informal consultation
2. Appendix 2 - Statutory Notice
3. Appendix 3 - Birmingham Chief Executive Office Merger Presentation
4. Appendix 4 – Results of the Birmingham LEA First OFSTED After Amalgamation report

## ***Contact Officers***

**Nitin Parshotam, Head of Asset Management, Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 7RW, Tele: 020 8937 3080, Fax 020 8937 3093, Email: [nitin.parshotam@brent.gov.uk](mailto:nitin.parshotam@brent.gov.uk)**

**Judith Joseph, Principal Schools Planning Officer, Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 7RW, Tele: 020 8937 3187, Fax: 020 8937 3116 Email: [judith.joseph@brent.gov.uk](mailto:judith.joseph@brent.gov.uk)**

**Director of Education, Arts and Libraries – John Christie**

## APPENDIX 1

### Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools Informal Consultation Outcome

	<b>Option 4 Preference Key Issues</b>	<b>LEA's Response</b>
1.	The school needs to be updated.	The new school will be a brand new purpose built building.
2.	This appears to be the most educationally viable option that would sustain continuity and progression of the site.	There are long term benefits of mergers such as continuity for children and parents, delivery of the curriculum, staff development, ease of site maintenance, a common ethos and sense of purpose.
3.	Staff would have the opportunity to teach both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.	There will be more opportunity for staff development and the sharing of expertise in an all through school.
4.	Resources could be shared amongst both key stages.	The larger budget will bring greater flexibility and both key stages will benefit from economies of scale.
5.	Pupil progress could be continually monitored. Older children will have the opportunities to help younger children .....giving them responsibilities .....	Continuity is a crucial point especially for the most vulnerable children and those with special needs. It is a legitimate concern for an LEA to reduce the number of transfer points because of the potential to disrupt educational progress. OFSTED inspections of amalgamated schools in Birmingham prove this to be the case (Appendix 3 and 4).
6.	A large school needs an excellent management team.	The quality of leadership in a large school is crucial.

	<b>Option 3 Preference Key Issues</b>	<b>LEA's Response</b>
1.	I do not believe children of infant and nursery schools benefit from being part of large school especially when so many of our children have a wide variety of special needs.	<p>Headteachers of large and very large schools state that the pool of talent available to all staff and children from the large staff groups in their schools, mean that the children's learning and special educational needs can be met more readily than in smaller schools.</p> <p>Continuity is a crucial point especially for the most vulnerable children and those with special needs. It is a legitimate concern for an LEA to reduce the number of transfer points because of the potential to disrupt educational progress. OFSTED inspections of amalgamated schools in Birmingham prove this to be the case.</p>
2.	I think option 4 would be too big, unmanageable and impersonal for young children.	<p>4FE schools can function very effectively.</p> <p>There are other 4FE schools in other boroughs. The LEA and Governors have looked at them and they work. A new purpose built building is essential to make the proposed 4FE work properly. The LEA would not amalgamate without a new building.</p>
3.	Plans to merge two schools and enlarge them to hold 900 pupils appear to be a leap of faith entirely backed by inadequate research.	See the response to comment 2 above.
4.	I believe one of the schools will benefit from amalgamation but the other will not. It will create a lot of instability with parents and children.	<p>Many LEAs across the country have a policy of amalgamating infant and junior schools. This LEA is unaware of any new infant and junior schools being established in recent years. Birmingham LEA, for example, has a proactive policy of amalgamation. In 1999 it had 46 pairs of separate infant and junior schools. It has proceeded to amalgamate those schools because it is in no doubt that there are long term benefits of mergers such as continuity for children and parents, delivery of the national curriculum, staff development, ease of site</p>

		<p>maintenance, a common ethos and sense of purpose. A recent new build amalgamation of two three form infant and junior schools in a nearby urban Authority resulted in significantly improved and sustained attainment levels.</p>
5.	Educational standards will fall.	<p>There is no correlation between the size of a school and performance. 'The impact of school size and single-sex education on performance (NFER.LGA research report 33)' concluded that when other factors were taken into account, school size was not found to have any significant impact on performance.</p> <p>There is evidence that both small and large schools can perform well. In the case of 4FE schools an analysis of KS2 results in the 10 largest schools in the country shows a number of them adding significant value.</p> <p>Nationally cohort size makes little difference to standards. What is crucial is the quality of leadership in the school (Leadership in Large Primary Schools, Southworth and Weindling, NCSL 2002).</p>
6.	Having so many children in one school would affect my children's education and put too much strain on teachers and staff.	See answer to Comment 1 – Option 3 above.
7.	Children need space.	The site is 30064m <sup>2</sup> . DfES site area guidelines for a 4FE school are 25220m <sup>2</sup> to 29980m <sup>2</sup> .
8.	As Wembley is a regeneration area it would be possible to build a new school somewhere else.	The Council is currently having difficulties to find a site for a new secondary school. Available land is scarce.

9.	I have not seen anything in the documents that proves in any way that one big school is better than separate infant and junior schools.	<p>Continuity of education is crucial especially for the most vulnerable children and those with special needs. It is a legitimate concern for an LEA to reduce the number of transfer points because of the potential to disrupt educational progress. OFSTED inspections of amalgamated schools in Birmingham prove this to be the case (Appendix 3 and 4).</p> <p>To analyse results, schools are grouped according to free school meals, pupils in the early stages of learning English, pupils coming from deprived neighbourhoods and pupil mobility. In Brent, there are no significant differences in the performance of separate infant and junior schools and that of primary schools, when we compare schools which are similar.</p>
10.	The proposal does not even guarantee the jobs for staff and teachers.	All headteacher and deputy headteacher posts must be advertised nationally. The other staff posts would be 'ring fenced' which means they are considered first for the new posts in the school. In the 4FE school additional staff would be needed to be recruited and there would be an increased number of posts of responsibility. Staff would therefore be offered a wider experience of teaching and learning across the full primary range giving them greater career opportunities.
11.	There will be a high incidence of bullying given the age difference of the children sharing the same playgrounds.	The layout of the new building will be designed in such a way that there is separate, secure play provision for the foundation stage, KS1 and KS2. The site is large enough for this to be planned without difficulty. There are many examples where this segregation can be designed effectively e.g. Essex Primary School, Newham and Jubilee Primary School, Lambeth.
12.	Children should have the same set	An amalgamated school will have one

	of rules regarding behaviour.	agreed code of behaviour.
13.	With the schools being separate there has never been a problem to monitor progress.	Continuity of education is crucial especially for the most vulnerable children and those with special needs. It is a legitimate concern for an LEA to reduce the number of transfer points because of the potential to disrupt educational progress.
14.	How would you co-ordinate mealtimes for a large number of students using one facility?	Timings of meals would be planned for different groups of pupils.
15.	How would you provide parking for pick-up and drop-off?	This will be taken into account in designing the building. There will also be a traffic plan which will have to be agreed by the Planning Department.
16.	I prefer the schools to be separated and have fewer kids in each class so that they can have enough access to teachers.	There would still be the same number of children in each class (max.30) regardless to whether the school is amalgamated or left as separate schools.
17.	I believe that option 4 is only in place to save money.	There will be economies of scales with one building. It will be more efficient and cheaper to run e.g. boilers and heating will last longer and be less costly to maintain.  The school will attract more money from the extra pupils it draws.  <b>The main reason however for amalgamating the schools is to improve the education for the pupils.</b>
18.	Children as young as 4 – 5years should have a different environment from those of 8 – 11.	The layout of the new buildings will be designed in such a way that there is separation and differentiation e.g. secure separate play provision for the foundation stage, KS1 and KS2.

19.	In the long term the caring environment of the schools will suffer.	There is no proof of this. The new 21 <sup>st</sup> Century building will most likely provide a happier environment than the current dilapidated buildings
20.	Two separate schools is the best option for me unless you provide proof of evidence as to how option 4 would work with 900 children.	The LEA has evidence of successful amalgamations. The two 4FE schools that Governors visited in May 2005 are evidence that amalgamations work successfully.
21.	Separate 4FE schools can be made cost effective as facilities should be on the same site and shared eg dining facilities, playspace, caretaking and accommodation.	This is an option but more costly than one primary school as not all facilities could be shared. The more facilities are shared the greater the co-ordination necessary. One school eliminates the need for this.
22.	Young children need to be in a safe secure environment where they do not feel overwhelmed.	The LEA and the school are jointly accountable for the health and safety of the children. Welfare and safety are paramount and will be taken into consideration. Separate play areas will be designed to suit the children and cater to individual needs.
23.	The issue of leadership and management of a 4FE primary school has not been noted as a disadvantage .....The Headteacher would be a strategic leader / administrator. There would need to be highly paid Deputies and Assistant Heads to lead the curriculum. ....All of these posts and the ambitious approach to wrap around care of extended day care facilities will not save money.	The quality of leadership is crucial to the success of a school. The LEA is confident that this new school will attract high quality candidates.
24.	Since an amalgamated school will never function as one unit but as separate units it seems to be only a money saving issue.	See answer to 17 above

25.	There is no evidence presented of financial savings (other than buildings) or of improved performance.	<p>There will be economies of scale with one building. The school will also attract more money from the extra pupils it draws.</p> <p>There is no national correlation between school size and performance. There is evidence that both small and large schools can perform well. In the case of 4FE schools, an analysis of the Key Stage 2 results in the ten largest schools in the country shows a number of them adding significant value.</p>
26.	An amalgamation may well be suitable for another community but not meet the needs of this community.	The community in this area is constantly changing especially with the recently occupied housing development on East Lane and the arrival of new families into the area. Therefore the school will be designed to meet the needs of this changing community eg increased number of places, extended school facilities etc.
27.	Other business managers in facilities eg NHS do not appear to be particularly successful.	The LEA is confident that this school will be successful as is the case in the large schools visited in Newham.
28.	The school should be more modern ..... the huts are out of date.	The new school(s) will be brand new purpose built building(s).
29.	We need to know the management structure before we agree to Option 4.	The management structure will be decided by the school governors once a decision is made on the proposed amalgamation.
30.	Education and continuity issues could be addressed by a partnership scheme .....where common policies and approaches to teaching and learning could be developed.	This supports the case for an amalgamation.
31.	Children will suffer through a lack of personalisation.	A close relationship between staff and pupils can be developed in a large school.



32.	I suggest we have two separate new buildings for safety reasons.	The layout of an amalgamated school will be designed in such a way that there is separate, secure provision e.g. play areas for the foundation stage KS1 and KS2.
33.	<p>We support the expansion but it is possible that this school (Park Lane) could be affected by:</p> <p>(1) Reduction of applications to Park Lane because parents are attracted by the state of the art facilities at the new Wembley Manor.</p> <p>(2) Applications continue at present level (we are currently oversubscribed in Nursery and Reception – 86 applications for 40 nursery places) with any losses eradicated by increased demand from new housing developments.</p> <p>(3) Increased applications with parents preferring the atmosphere and ethos of a small family centred school.</p>	Pupil projections indicate that extra places at Wembley Manor will be needed. The LEA believes the new school will be attractive to parents.

	<b>Option 2 Preference Key Issues</b>	<b>LEA's Response</b>
1.	<p>4 FE schools could be made a threat financially by falling rolls and not having enough children.</p> <p>This could also signal 4FE schools across the LEA where we have two other very large infant and junior schools.</p>	<p>Projections from the Greater London Authority show that pupil numbers will rise substantially over the next 10 years. Also the number of planning permissions granted to developers is another indication of an expanding population.</p> <p>Brent Admissions Service is currently having problems finding suitable school places for both primary and secondary pupils within the borough.</p>
2.	3FEs in Brent work very well.	There are 4FE schools in other boroughs. The LEA and Governors have looked at them and they work. A new purpose built building is essential to make the proposed 4FE work properly. The LEA would not amalgamate without a new building.

3.	Brent Education Department appears to have already made up its mind.	Option 4 is the preferred option of the Director of Education. The Executive will reach a decision.
4.	I know that primary schools from ages 4 – 7 work very well in many areas.	There are many successful infant schools but many primary schools perform to a high standard.
5.	I am concerned that the site might not be large enough for 4FE.	The site is 30064m <sup>2</sup> . DfES site area guidelines for a 4FE school are 25220m <sup>2</sup> to 29980m <sup>2</sup> .
	<b>Option 1 Preference Key Issues</b>	<b>LEA's Response</b>
1.	Building work will severely limit the outdoor grounds available for play.	This will be for a limited period only.
	<b>Other Options Suggestions</b>	<b>LEA's Response</b>
1.	Two separate infant and junior schools using shared facilities.	This is an option but more costly than one primary school as not all facilities could be shared. The more facilities are shared the greater the co-ordination necessary. One school eliminates the need for this.

**DRAFT STATUTORY NOTICE TO ESTABLISH A NEW SCHOOL**

**The London Borough of Brent**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with sections 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) that Brent Council, being the Local Education Authority for the borough of Brent, intends to establish a new community primary school on the site of the existing Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools, and has made the following proposals for that purpose:

- (i) to discontinue Wembley Manor Infant School, East Lane, Wembley, HA9 7NW with effect from 31 August 2006;
- (ii) to discontinue Wembley Manor Junior School, East Lane, Wembley, HA9 7NW with effect from 31 August 2006;
- (iii) to establish a new primary school with effect from 1 September 2006, initially with a capacity of 3FE (with nursery) on the same site, expanding to 4FE (with nursery) and moving to new buildings on the same site on completion of the new proposed buildings from 1 January 2008.

The current Wembley Manor Schools accommodate a maximum of 630 boys and girls aged 4 to 11, with a 30 FTE nursery – 3 year olds. The new school will accommodate 840 boys and girls aged 4 to 11, with a 30 FTE nursery. Pupils currently at and who would have attended the existing Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools will be offered places at the new school. The new school will open in the existing premises of the two schools but will transfer to new purpose built accommodation on the existing site as soon as it is available. Until those premises are available the number of pupils admitted to the school at age 4 will be 90. Once the new accommodation is ready the admission number will increase to 120.

The extended nature of the new school and accommodation will help to promote and encourage tolerance, fairness and equality, the understanding of other cultures and faiths, good citizenship, links with the community and continuity of education.

There will be no impact on the current LEA transport arrangements.

The new school will remain a Community school therefore the Education Authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority.

Any person may submit comments and objections to the proposals within a six week representation period after the publication of this notice addressed to the Director of Education (for the attention of Judith Joseph Principal Schools Planning Officer)

Brent Local Education Authority  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Chesterfield House  
9 Park Lane  
Wembley  
Middlesex  
HA9 7RW

**Copies of all objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) in this period will be transmitted by the Authority to the School Organisation Committee together with the Authority's observations on them, within one month of the expiry of the six week period.**

**John Christie**  
**Director of Education**  
**Date**

#### NOTES

1. The Authority is publishing these proposals following consultation with the governors, parents and teachers of the Wembley Manor Schools, Trade Unions, other schools in Brent, neighbouring Education Authorities, The Learning Skills Council, Wembley Residents Association, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Diocesan Boards.
2. The effect of the proposals will be to merge Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools to form a single primary school under one headteacher.
3. The new primary school will continue to serve the communities served by the existing Wembley Manor schools. The admissions policy will give priority to local children.
4. Capital funding has been reserved by the Authority to enable the existing schools to move into brand new premises as the new school on the existing site. The target date for completion of the new school buildings is 1 January 2008. Once the new school is operating from its new premises the old Wembley Manor School buildings will be demolished.
5. Although capital funding provision has been reserved for the scheme the LEA has made a submission for funds under Targeted Capital Funding (TCF) in order to deliver the co-located Children's Centre, enhance extended school provision and develop 'home connectivity'. This is a measure to enable children from less privileged backgrounds (those on Free School Meals and other benefits) equal access to the schools on line learning resources. That is, allow those who would not otherwise be able to afford ICT at home, to connect to the school's web based curriculum resources, as well as allowing parents to access to relevant data and information concerning their children.
6. The amalgamated school will not take place if the building work does not go ahead. It will stay as a 3FE school.
7. The LEA is committed to developing a Transport Plan to encourage less car transport of pupils.

## Appendix 3

### Birmingham LEA

#### CEO's presentation - Bromford Infant and Junior schools

##### Introduction

The LEA has a duty to promote the best education for its pupils, not just those currently in a school, but future generations of pupils. It has had for many years a policy to encourage mergers as and when appropriate circumstances arise. In November 2000 the Education and Lifelong Learning Advisory Team received a report suggesting a more practice approach to the merger of separate Junior and Infant schools.

The Council subsequently resolve, following a period of consultation in March 2001, that in principle it supported the desirability of all through primary schools where this is a feasible outcome. In addition it resolved that Officers of the Education Department visit a joint meeting of all the pairs of schools to establish when in the next seven years, they would merge. This in no way precludes mergers being triggered as they have in the past by virtue of the school Governors requesting the Local Education Authority to instigate a merger at the time of the resignation of a Headteacher. Indeed the LEA sees a Headteacher resignation, a school entering special measures, a school having surplus places, or the requirement for significant building works as being triggers for any school to consider merging prior to a date they may have set during the seven-year period. In particular the removal of surplus places at the time of a merger can benefit the family of schools in a locality reducing surplus in general and also reducing mobility.

The department is in no doubt that there are long term benefits of mergers for all the reasons it has detailed around continuity for children and parents, delivery of the curriculum, staff development, ease of site maintenance, a common ethos and better use of resources. The CEO feels very strongly that one of the crucial factors in promoting all-through primary schools is the continuity it brings to schools, especially for the most vulnerable children and

those with special needs. It is a legitimate concern for an LEA to reduce the number of transfer points because of the potential to disrupt educational progress.

#### Educational Benefits.

Research undertaken by the Times Education Supplement and published on November 15 2002 is of relevance to the Authorities' position on continuity of childrens' education. Re research showed that a large group of children, often a third, sometimes nearly half appear to make no progress or even go backwards during Year 3. Professor Jean Ruddick of Cambridge University, School of Education, suggests that the key stage transfer itself may be to blame. The Authority's view is that at this acknowledged difficult stage in a child's education to transfer between an Infant and Junior Schulz could compound problems due to a change in surroundings and ethos and eat an all-though school is better plaid with single sets of learning and teaming policies and procedures to address this problem.

The department has undertaken its own research with Headteachers of most the 28 schools which amalgamated since 1994. None of these schools have regrets and indeed almost all the feedback has been positive. Some of the Headteachers have made themselves available as an advice group to give support to schools that are going through the process. The Authority shares less positive comments with Headteachers and Governors when it undertakes meetings with schools who have not yet merged. In addition, as part of a best value review of school places the department undertook a questionnaire of over 300 prospective parents in June 2000 entitled 'Which Primary School?'. Re questionnaire covered a wide variety of areas but specifically asked prospective parents about the type of school they would prefer.

57% preferred all-through primary schools, 15% preferred separate infant and junior schools and 28% had no preference. The Authority is of the opinion that the merger of schools will ultimately lead to improvements in provision in the longer term and that any disruption accompanying the merger process can be managed.

### Finance Implications

#### Revenue

Pupil led formula allocations of the combined schools remains unaltered as pupil numbers are unlikely to change.

The lump sum saving of one headteachers salary plus a minor amount of fixed clerical costs are recycled into the quantum schools budget share. Bromford Infant School receives an element for small schools which will cease; this formula allocation was intended only to assist in meeting the extra costs of being a small school.

If a school has a surplus as a separate Infant or Junior this is not lost it is transferred to the replacement school.

#### Standards Fund Issues

Entitlement to standards fund to the successor school will change, but this is not easy to quantify. The government has a policy from 2| to mainstream grants, which will have the potential to eke all schools allocations.

#### Capital

In the first instance the basic need for a combined staff room will be addressed if necessary', if other works would also facilitate the management and operation of an amalgamated school, Education Officers will assist/school management teams.

Governors, in drawing up longer-term proposals and seek ways to implement them over time using available funding resources.

#### Transport Implications

There are no transport implications arising from the proposed merger.

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2004



## APPENDIX 4 BIRMINGHAM LEA

### Results of first OFSTED after amalgamation.

School	Date of Amalgamation	Date of inspection
Hollyfield	01 .09.99	17.09.01

" Within the very shod time since the school was created the headteacher has forged a single, cohesive staff team from the two separate ones. He has gained commitment to continuous improvement from all those within the school. The parents comment favorably on what he has achieved. One example they cite is the greater continuity between what pupils learn and the way they learn it in the infant and junior departments. They also praise the way in which he has built upon the welcoming family ethos that they remember from the former infant schoolboy OFSTED Report page 10.

Firs	01 .09.99	16.03.01
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"Since the amalgamation, so far as it is possible to judge, improvement has been good." OFSTED report page 9.

"In a relatively short time two separate schools have been moulded into a single unit with a clear sense of purpose.... Teaching and support staff gathered from both the previous Infant and Junior schools have a good sense of teamwork and are clearly engaged in establishing this good learning environment together. The amalgamation has led to the appointment of a new senior management team which is working well together and leading the school in the right direction's OFSTED report page 25.

Hawkesley	01 .09.99	05.03.02
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"In a relatively shod period of time, the headteacher has successfully united the infant and junior school into on primary school and has created a common sense of purpose and achievement's OFSTED report page 24.

Billesley	01 .09.99	12.03.01
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"Since the merger, the school development plan has been appropriately lengthened; a five year plan for the new school will be in operation from September this year. The school has put into place some effective measures to move it in the right direction... This new school has made a satisfactory start and has improved satisfactorily on the key issues raised for the two former schools." OFSTED report page 10.

"The leadership of this new school has bought the two previous schools effectively and successfully through the amalgamation process. Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key stage coordinators of this newly formed school are good on both the academic and pastoral fronts. They have initiated strategies to guide the school in the right direction's OFSTED report page 21.

Harborne 01 .09.99 16.09.02

"Just two years on from the amalgamation, this new school is already providing a good education for its pupils... . Since the school was opened, they have established very good standards in many aspects of the school's worked OFSTED report page 6.

Whitehorse Common 01.09.00 02.06.03

"In it's shod life the school has made considerable progress. Standards have risen significantly and the school has been awarded a School Achievement Award by the Department for Education and Skills. There is a very good shared commitment to improve and the school is very well placed to continue to move forwarders OFSXED report page 8.

"From the time the new school opened, following amalgamation of two schools, the headteacher has provided inspirational leadership... Although the deputy headteacher is recently appointed, the head and deputy are forming an effective partnerships OFSTED report page 24.

Anglesey 01.09.00 13.01 .03

"The head teacher, senior colleagues and governors have worked conscientiously to establish the school since it's formation in September 2000 and they provide sound leadership. They have successfully created a positive and attractive learning environment with a strong commitment to including all pupils and developing good relationship's OFSTED report page 20.

Wychall Farm 01 .09.00 07.05.02

"The headteacher's clear vision of what she wants the pupils to achieve and her supportive, enthusiastic personal style have enabled the 'new' school to make remarkable progress since its opening in September 2000. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a positive, supportive ethos." OFSTED report page 19.

Rookery 01 .01.01 10.03.03

"Rookery Primary School has made a good stad since it opened in January 2001 and is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils OFSTED report page 7.

"Since the school opened in January 2001 , the headteacher and deputy headteacher have led and managed the process of creating a unified school very capably. The headteacher had begun the process of building a strong staff team when she took up the post of headteacher of the former junior school. This work continued after the merger and the headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed a strong partnership to continue the advance. To some degree, improvement has been greater in the junior classes than in the infants because the headteacher has had longer to focus on the older band. Nonetheless, the school is united and staff are committed in their work to sustain improvements OFSTED report page 24

**STATUTORY NOTICE TO DISCONTINUE EXISTING SCHOOLS AND  
ESTABLISH A NEW SCHOOL**

**The London Borough of Brent**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with sections 28(1) and 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) that Brent Council, being the Local Education Authority for the borough of Brent, intends to establish a new community primary school on the site of the existing Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools, and has made the following proposals for that purpose:

- (i) to discontinue Wembley Manor Infant School, East Lane, Wembley, HA9 7NW with effect from 31 August 2006;
- (ii) to discontinue Wembley Manor Junior School, East Lane, Wembley, HA9 7NW with effect from 31 August 2006;
- (iii) to establish a new primary school with effect from 1 September 2006, initially with a capacity of 3FE (with nursery) on the same site, expanding to 4FE (with nursery) and moving to new buildings on the same site on completion of the new proposed buildings from 1 January 2008.

The current Wembley Manor Schools accommodate a maximum of 630 boys and girls aged 4 to 11, with a 30 FTE nursery – 3 year olds. The new school will accommodate 840 boys and girls aged 4 to 11, with a 30 FTE nursery. Pupils currently at and who would have attended the existing Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools will be offered places at the new school. The new school will open in the existing premises of the two schools but will transfer to new purpose built accommodation on the existing site as soon as it is available. Until those premises are available the number of pupils admitted to the school at age 4 will be 90. Once the new accommodation is ready the admission number will increase to 120 from 1 September 2008.

The extended nature of the new school and accommodation will help to promote and encourage tolerance, fairness and equality, the understanding of other cultures and faiths, good citizenship, links with the community and continuity of education.

There will be no impact on the current LEA transport arrangements.

The new school will remain a Community school therefore the Education Authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority.

Any person may submit comments and objections to the proposals within a six week representation period after the publication of this notice addressed to the

## ATTACHMENT 2

Director of Education (for the attention of Judith Joseph, Principal Schools Planning Officer)

Brent Local Education Authority  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Chesterfield House  
9 Park Lane  
Wembley  
Middlesex  
HA9 7RW

**Copies of all objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) in this period will be transmitted by the Authority to the School Organisation Committee together with the Authority's observations on them, within one month of the expiry of the six week period.**

**John Christie**  
**Director of Education**  
**Date**

### NOTES

1. The Authority is publishing these proposals following consultation with the governors, parents and teachers of the Wembley Manor Schools, Trade Unions, other schools in Brent, neighbouring Education Authorities, The Learning Skills Council, Wembley Residents Association, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Diocesan Boards.
2. The effect of the proposals will be to merge Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools to form a single primary school under one headteacher.
3. The new primary school will continue to serve the communities served by the existing Wembley Manor schools. The admissions policy will give priority to local children.
4. Capital funding has been reserved by the Authority to enable the existing schools to move into brand new premises as the new school on the existing site. The target date for completion of the new school buildings is 1 January 2008. Once the new school is operating from its new premises the old Wembley Manor School buildings will be demolished.
5. Although capital funding provision has been reserved for the scheme the LEA has made a submission for funds under Targeted Capital Funding (TCF) in order to deliver the co-located Children's Centre, enhance extended school provision and develop 'home connectivity'. This is a measure to enable children from less privileged backgrounds (those on Free School Meals and other benefits) equal access to the schools on line learning resources. That is, allow those who would not otherwise be able to afford ICT at home, to connect to the school's web based curriculum resources, as well as allowing parents to access to relevant data and information concerning their children.
6. The LEA is committed to developing a Transport Plan to encourage less car transport of pupils.

## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### **Decision Makers Guidance Section 2.1**

Statutory Guidance - Factors to be considered - proposals for new schools

#### **■ 2.1. PROPOSALS FOR NEW SCHOOLS**

(For new nursery schools see Section 2.5 and for new sixth form schools see Section 2.6)

The following factors should not be taken to be exhaustive. Their importance will vary, depending on the type and circumstances of decisions. All proposals should be considered on their individual merits.

The Decision Maker must also consult statutory guidance in Section 1, in particular any paragraph(s) referred to in brackets.

There should be a presumption to approve proposals for a new school to replace a failing school closed by direction of the Secretary of State (paragraph 16 of Section 1).

#### **■ Effect on standards and contribution to school improvement**

- Whether the proposals will improve the standards, quality, range and/or diversity of educational provision in the area (Paras 1-3, 5, 19-23);
- Whether they advance the national and local transformation strategies set out in the documents Education and Skills: Investment for Reform and A New Specialist System: Transforming Secondary Education and the local Education Development Plan (Para 2-4);
- Whether the proposals will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum (Para 6);
- The effect of the proposals on other institutions' standards, bearing in mind the effect on quantity and quality of other schools' intakes and any suggestions put forward for collaboration, partnership or federation (Para 2-3).

#### **■ Need for places**

- Whether there is a need for additional places in the area, or whether there are surplus places (Para 18, 31);
- The extent of parental demand for the type of school in question, for example, provision for particular faiths or denominations or specialisms (Para 18, 19).

#### **■ Finance**

- Whether the proposals represent a cost-effective use of public funds (para 32);
- Whether the capital resources required are available (Para 33-34);
- Whether the sale proceeds of redundant sites are to be made available and whether the Secretary of State's consent has been obtained where necessary (Para 35-36);
- If the proposal is for a new voluntary aided school, whether the promoters have provided a statement that the governing body would be able to meet their financial responsibilities for building work (Para 37).

### ■ Views of interested parties (Para 38)

- The views of parents and other local residents, including those who may be particularly affected by the proposals or have a particular interest in them;
- The views of any Local Education Authority affected by the proposals or with an interest;
- The views of the CE and RC dioceses in the area
- The views of other schools and colleges in the area;
- The views of the Learning and Skills Council (if the proposals affect the provision of post-16 education);
- The views of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (where proposals affect early education provision).

### ■ Community cohesion, inclusiveness and partnerships

- The extent to which, and how satisfactorily in the circumstances of the community, the proposals address the need to promote community cohesion (Para 39-41);
- Where a proposed new maintained school already exists as an independent school, its current approach and contribution to community cohesion will be relevant (Para 42);
- The extent to which the proposals take account of the needs of families and the wider community (Para 43).

### ■ 14-19 issues

- Where 14-19 provision is involved, the extent to which appropriate collaborative arrangements have been considered (Para 44 – 45);
- The criteria for considering new sixth forms should also be taken into account where the proposed school includes 16-19 provision (See Section 2.6).

### ■ Equal opportunities

- Any sex, race or disability discrimination issues or other human rights issues including any sex discrimination issues in relation to proposals for a single sex school (Para 51).

### ■ Effect on school journeys

- The existence of safe walking, cycling and bus routes to the proposed site (Para 54).

### ■ Other issues

- Whether the school will provide strong links with the local community and provide family and community services (Para 56);
- (Primary provision only) Whether the proposals comply with the infant class size limit (Para 63);
- For voluntary and foundation schools where a trust is not to hold the freehold of the site, whether the land tenure arrangements are satisfactory (Para 77-80);
- For voluntary and foundation schools, whether the proposal is to join an existing group foundation body or to jointly establish a new group foundation body (Para 67);
- Whether the proposal is to join an existing federation or to jointly establish a new federation (Para 68);
- Whether the new school will meet the minimum statutory requirement for provision of school playing fields (Para 76).

■ **Proposal from an existing independent school:**

- if co-educational, whether it would provide equal opportunities for boys and girls (Para 51);
- whether it would have suitably qualified staff and the premises would be suitable for the purpose of a maintained school (Para 69).