



Executive
10th October 2005

**Report from the Director of
Children and Families**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Approval by the School Organisation Committee of the
Council's Proposals on the Future Organisation of
Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools**

Forward Plan Ref: NONE

Reasons for Urgency

The finality of the School Organisation Committee's (SOC) approval decision on 9 September 2005 means that the Council can now implement the reorganisation proposal without delay.

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report informs the Executive of the approval by the School Organisation Committee (SOC) with regard to Council's proposals for the future organisation of Wembley Manor Infant (with a Nursery) and Wembley Manor Junior schools. The Council's proposals were to 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. The name of the new school will be decided by the Temporary Governing Body.

2.0 Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

2.1 Note the approval of the SOC decision (the body with statutory powers to determine the proposals) referred to in paragraphs 3.5 - 3.8 of this report following their meeting of 9 September 2005.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 At their meeting of 20 June 2005, Executive received a report on the outcomes of the informal consultation over the Council's proposals. The Executive 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Representations (and the Council's response to those representations) to the Public Notice of the Future reorganisation of Wembley Manor Infants and Junior Schools were reported to the Executive on 15 August 2005.
- 3.4 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 was convened for Friday 9 September 2005, because statutory objections to the proposals remained which were not withdrawn.
- 3.5 At their meeting on 9 September 2005 the SOC considered the Council's proposals, the written representations, the Council's response to those representations, the evidence presented by the Director of Children and Families, oral representations made by 9 individuals (five against and four in favour) and the Director's response to them.
- 3.6 After asking questions SOC members broke into their relevant groups to make their decision.
- 3.7 The five SOC constituent groups (of a possible maximum of six) present at the meeting voted unanimously to approve the Council's proposals. The groups were: Members, Roman Catholics, Church of England, Other Faiths and Schools.
- 3.8 The formal reasons for approval as stated in the SOC decision letter are that the proposal:
 - Meets the need for additional primary places.
 - Offers an opportunity to raise standards by creating a purpose-built primary school which provides curriculum continuity,

cohesive pupil progression and greater availability of staffing expertise.

- Meets the need to replace inadequate buildings with modern premises.

3.9 The SOC considered oral and written representations on the Council's proposals including those from Governors and Parents of Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools. On balance the Committee felt that the concerns expressed about children's safety and staff workloads could be satisfactorily addressed and that the proposal for a new primary school offers a special opportunity to raise standards.

3.10 The DfES, Governing Bodies of both schools, all who made representations and the Joint Governing Working Group have been informed of the SOC's decision.

3.11 The proposed timetable for the future organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Junior Schools is as follows:

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

3.12 The report to the Executive 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. The Executive will receive a report on tenders from design service in November 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 (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.

4.2 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 –

currently being 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 is being consulted on the proposal as part of its overall view of new formula arrangements at its meeting in December 2005.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Council proposals are now required to be implemented as the SOC decision is a final one. The SOC decision was unanimous and so there can be no reference to the Adjudicator.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 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.

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.

Background Papers

1. Executive Report approved on 15 August 2005 – The Response to the Public Notice on the Future Organisation of Wembley Manor Infants and Wembley Manor Junior Schools.
2. Executive Report approved on 20 June 2005 – The Future Organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools
3. Executive Report approved on 23 May 2005 – Wembley Manor Junior and Infants School – Procurement of Architectural and Consultancy Services.
4. SOC Secretary's Report to SOC - 9 September 2005
5. Office File on the Council's Proposals for the Future Organisation of Wembley Manor Infant and Wembley Manor Junior Schools.

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