

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Preston East and Preston
North West

**Proposal for split site arrangements for Ashton Community Science College:
Report on Stage 1 Consultation and Permission to Publish Statutory Notices**
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

On 27 September 2012, approval was given to conduct stage 1 consultation on a proposal for the split site operation of Ashton Community Science College with effect from 1 September 2013.

The proposal seeks to make permanent the temporary split site arrangements of Ashton Community Science College that arose as a result of the closure of the City of Preston High School and that now enable the College to deliver vocational provision from the 'Renaissance Centre' on the Ribbleson Campus. The proposal will also benefit the pupils of Sir Tom Finney Community High School, which is to be co-located with the Renaissance Centre, and will secure an educational presence on the Ribbleson Campus which will benefit local young people and the local community.

Under the statutory process the authority is now required to consider the responses to the consultation and to decide whether to proceed to the next stage and publish a Statutory Notice of the proposal. The purpose of this report is to provide the information necessary for that decision to be taken.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Children and Schools is recommended to:

- (i) Note the consultation arrangements that were undertaken;
- (ii) Note the responses that were received in respect of the authority's proposal and officers' comments on the responses; and
- (iii) Request that a Statutory Notice be published on the proposal to establish permanent split site arrangements for Ashton Community Science College by adding the permanent use of the Ribbleson Campus, which is to be shared with Sir Tom Finney Community High School, with effect from 1 September 2013.

Background and Advice

On 27 September 2012, the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools approved a period of stage 1 statutory consultation on the split site operation of Ashton Community Science College with effect from 1 September 2013.

The Consultation Process

For a proposal to make a prescribed alteration to a maintained school there is a five stage statutory process that the authority, as the proposer, must follow:

1. Consultation on the proposal
2. Publication of a Statutory Notice (if it is decided to proceed)
3. A six week period for representations
4. A decision on the proposal
5. Implementation of the decision.

Below are the requirements around consultation contained within DfE guidance 'Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School' and evidence of the authority's compliance with each requirement:

Stage 1 consultation: (Para 1.1) There should be specific proposals, not options, for the consultation to qualify under the terms of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Arrangements: The consultation information provided a specific proposal.

(Para 1.2) Proposers should '(a) allow adequate time; (b) provide sufficient information for those being consulted to form a considered view on the matters on which they are being consulted; (c) make clear how their views can be made known; and (d) be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the views expressed during consultation in reaching any subsequent decision as to the publication of proposals.'

Arrangements: (a) a consultation period ran from 22 October 2012 to 7 December 2012 (six weeks during term time); (b) the consultation document (at Appendix 'A') provided full details of the proposal and a public meeting was offered at Ashton College on 8 November 2012; (c) consultation information including the consultation document was provided for all statutory consultees and others which explained how to make views known (d) this report provides details of the views expressed during stage 1 consultation.

(Para 1.3) provides a statutory list of those to be consulted

Arrangements: all on the statutory list were consulted (Appendix 'A' page 11 refers).

(Para 1.4) refers to the duty to consult pupils on any proposed changes to local school organisation that may affect them.

Arrangements: Pupils' views were invited through the consultation arrangements and the questionnaire that consultation respondents were invited to complete.

(Para 1.5) It is for proposers to decide what their consultation arrangements will be and for example, whether to hold public meetings. It is recommended that stage 1 consultation should be for at least 6 weeks.

Arrangements: A consultation document was provided (Appendix A) and widely circulated. An appointment led consultation event was offered at Ashton College on 8 November 2012. Consultation was held for 7 weeks in total, 6 of which were during term time.

(Para 1.6) refers to the possibility of considering new options if they arise in the consultation

Arrangements: the consultation response section below reports views that were expressed. No different options or alternatives were proposed.

The Consultation Response

99 written responses were received within the consultation period and these are summarised in the table below.

In response to the statement: *'I support the proposal to permanently establish the split site operation of Ashton Community Science College at the Ashton Campus and the Ribbleson Campus'* the following responses were received:

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
90	3	1	3	2

The vast majority of responses came from those connected to Ashton Community Science College: 53 from staff members; 23 from students; 13 from parents / carers of students; and 5 from governors. All responses apart from four were from individuals that lived locally.

All responses received have been placed on a file available in the Members' Retiring Room. All consultation responses are background papers to this report and are available for public inspection through Lancashire County Council Pupil Places, Access and Capital service (Telephone 01772 531957).

The consultation event offered at the school was not attended by anyone.

Summary of the main issues raised during the consultation

The main points raised during the consultation are set out and responded to in the following paragraphs.

Support

94% of respondents supported the proposal but the vast majority provided no comment as to their reason. The reasons that were given for supporting the proposal were mainly around the benefits of the Renaissance Centre for students and the wider community.

Opposition / Concerns

Only 5 in total (5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. Two were parents of pupils and three were from members of staff at Ashton College. Two provided no reason for their opposition. One parent stated that they would have sought alternative provision for their child if they had known that this would happen. The other two provided reasons as follows:

- Concerns about split site arrangements; and
- Concerns about the breadth of subjects offered, the funding of them and value for money of the provision.

Comment:

Split site arrangements: It is generally desirable to have provision that is single sited for curriculum delivery, management and financial reasons. However, this is not always possible and, in this particular case, the vocational offer at the Renaissance Centre means that the vast majority of students only attend one of the school's sites and the two sites can effectively be separately managed. In addition, the co-location of Sir Tom Finney Community High School with the Renaissance Centre brings significant benefits for the pupils which a single site could not offer, due to site area constraints.

Vocational offer: The proposal is about the permanent use of the Ribbleson Campus by Ashton Community Science College in order for it to continue to be able to offer vocational provision from the Renaissance Centre. Concerns about the quality and value for money of the provision could only be considered if the proposal concerned the establishment or discontinuance of provision. It is, therefore, advised that the comment should not be taken into consideration in the decision making process.

Conclusions

The consultation process has demonstrated overall support for the permanency of the split site arrangements at Ashton Community Science College and the previous report dated 27 September 2012 detailed the benefits of the proposal to children, young people and the wider community. It is, therefore, recommended that the Local Authority progress to the publication of Statutory Notices on the proposal.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

If the authority does not progress the proposals there is a risk that all of the maintenance costs of the Ribblesdale campus would fall to Sir Tom Finney Community High School which would place an undue burden on the school budget and place the school at financial risk. Furthermore, there is a risk that there would ultimately be no educational presence on the former City of Preston High School site which is located in a disadvantaged community with high levels of NEET.

Finance

A detailed assessment of the cost of providing the required accommodation has not yet been carried out as this is subject to design requirements. The capital costs of the whole project (including the Sir Tom Finney Community High School element) will be met, in part, from schools access funding contained in the 2008/11 allocation and the remainder will be taken from the 2012/13 schools capital allocation.

Revenue funding for an exceptional split site allowance will be found from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Equality and Diversity

The possible impact and implications of the proposal have been considered in the context of the public sector equality duty in s.149 of the Equality Act 2010. The proposals improve vocational and educational access for those not in education, employment or training.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Written responses received to Stage 1 consultation	Oct to Dec 12	Steph Rhodes, Directorate for Children and Young People, Ext 31957

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A