

FORMAL CONSULTATION – FEEDBACK SUMMARY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 On 8 November 2010, a report was presented to Councillor Gaddum, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, detailing the outcome of informal consultation on a range of options for change to secondary school provision in Macclesfield and requesting permission to proceed with formal consultation on the preferred option of the closure of Macclesfield High School on 31 August 2011 upon the establishment of an 11-16 Academy on the same site with a pupil admission number of 120.
- 1.2 Formal consultation was authorised and this commenced on 15 November 2010 and concluded on 14 January 2011. As part of this formal consultation process, in addition to inviting written feedback on the proposal, two ‘drop in’ style events were organised in Macclesfield at Macclesfield High School on Monday 6 December between 16.00-20.00 and Macclesfield Town Football Club on Tuesday 7 December over two sessions between 13.30-15.30 and 17.00 – 20.00. Representatives from Macclesfield College, including the Principal, also attended to provide information at both events. Attendance at these events was low with only 47 attendees in total comprising of 32 people who attended the Macclesfield High School event and 15 attending the event organised at Macclesfield Town Football Club. A further event, organised by the College sponsor on 12 January, between 16.00-20.00, and was attended by officers of the Local Authority to facilitate further feedback on the Local Authority’s proposal to close Macclesfield High School. 20 people attended this event.
- 1.3 The following provides a summary of all feedback received during formal consultation. Copies of all the submissions are available for Cabinet Members to view at the Cabinet Office, Westfields, Sandbach, by arrangement with Diane Rogers and will be available for Members at the Cabinet meeting on 14 February. Members are advised to familiarise themselves with the consultation responses prior to the meeting.

2 FEEDBACK SUMMARY

- 2.1 Formal consultation has resulted in a total of 88 representations in response to the Council’s school closure proposal., which is illustrated in the following table.

Feedback Received			
For	Against	No View	Total
40	22	26	88

- 2.2 The various consultation events and feedback mechanisms implemented by the Local Authority have generated a total number of 88 responses. In addition to the questions raised about the school closure proposal, a number of questions have been directed to the Local Authority about the separate

proposal by Macclesfield College for the establishment of an Academy on the same site with effect from 1 September. It is important to note that this document is concerned with the feedback on the closure and not the proposed Academy. However, as the closure is to be conditional upon the establishment of an Academy on the same site, any concerns raised in relation to an Academy have been included in this summary and full details are available in the Feedback log, which is available for Members as mentioned in paragraph 1.3 above. In addition, all correspondence received, which has raised questions about the Macclesfield College proposal for an Academy, has been forwarded on to the Sponsor.

- 2.3 Included in the 88 responses is the feedback recorded at the public 'drop in' events held in December together with any feedback presented to the Local Authority about the school closure proposal at the event held by, Macclesfield College, the preferred Academy sponsor, on 12 January.
- 2.4 Of the 88 responses received, 40 indicate support for the proposed closure of Macclesfield High School. This is compared with only 22 responses confirming opposition to the proposed closure. Included in the 88 responses are 26 submissions not expressing a view on the proposed closure, but instead raising a number of questions, including many queries about the College proposal to establish an Academy, which have been forwarded on to the sponsor as part of this process.
- 2.5 Comments received by the Local Authority have been in relation to a number of issues perceived by consultees as key to this school reorganisation process. These include concerns about the viability and sustainability of the proposal and future curriculum delivery and staffing issues. Once again, many of these queries relate specifically to the proposed Academy and not the Local Authority proposal to close Macclesfield High School, but as they are relevant to the decision-making process they have nevertheless been summarised for Members in this report.

3 Areas of Concern - Feedback During Formal Consultation

- 3.1 The main areas of concern raised by interested parties are shown in the table below. The number of responses received about each concern illustrates that, these are, broadly speaking, of equal importance to consultees. However, it is interesting to note that the majority of comments focused on the viability and sustainability of the proposal to close Macclesfield High School and establish an Academy on the same site.

Specific Areas of Concern	Total
Viability & Sustainability	48
Curriculum Delivery	46
Staffing at the Academy	37
School Management	25
Academy/Sponsor	31

- 3.2 A list of extracts from the consultation responses are listed below to indicate to Members the feedback received in relation to these specific areas of concern. Feedback has been received on other issues, such as transitional measures for pupils, general views about the proposed reorganisation and the impact on other mainstream schools in the Macclesfield area. Some of the comments stated by respondents were to demonstrate support for the proposed closure and others to justify the decision to oppose the proposal. The extracts below have therefore been organised to reflect this.

Viability and Sustainability - Support for the Proposal

'I am convinced that the establishment of an Academy that can build on the considerable effort that has already gone into the establishment of an educational partnership with the College is a good idea.'

'The proposals represent a positive step forward for Macclesfield's families, pupils and schools and, in particular, are very important for the future of the provision of education in the south of the town.'

Viability and Sustainability – Opposition to the Proposal

'What school can possibly thrive when it can't offer a full curriculum? And a school with 120 in each year group, staffed accordingly, cannot possibly offer that.'

'Is this sufficient to provide funding for a broad and balanced 11-16 curriculum? If not and the school wishes to expand and is successful in doing so will this not bring instability to other schools in Macclesfield?'

Curriculum Delivery - Support for the Proposal

'We were really saddened by the threatened closure of the school which we feel has outstanding facilities and were disappointed that such a new establishment could face the axe....As a community perhaps we can back this "flagship" school. Its connections with the college can only benefit students as they progress through the education system.'

'There is a broad range of subjects both academic and vocational offered to allow students of all abilities to achieve their maximum potential.'

Curriculum Delivery – Opposition to the Proposal

'We do not want our son put in a position where curriculum options are reduced or, in the worst case scenario, the school closes and pupils have to be redistributed.'

'How can the choice in the curriculum still be sustained or expanded with the loss of staff?'

'I am concerned about the school being perceived as a school which offers mainly vocational courses, thus deterring parents of more academically minded students and creating a skewed intake.'

Staffing at the Academy and School Management - Support for the Proposal

'The academy needs strong leadership with particular attention to discipline and behaviour balanced with effective pastoral care.'

'Crucial to its success is the recruitment of a "Super Head".'

'I also feel that the pastoral care offered by the High School is very good and I wouldn't want to see this suffer.'

Staffing at the Academy and School Management – Opposition to the Proposal

'Will they retain the current national conditions of service for school teachers that will ensure recruitment of well trained high calibre teachers who will be necessary to the school's success in the longer term.'

'The results achieved at the High School have been increasing over the last year and there is a good and strong commitment to its future from parents, students and staff.'

The Academy Sponsor - Support for the Proposal

'The academy proposal is very exciting.'

'I acknowledge that the College has a good Ofsted report and feel that the High School will only benefit from their support.'

'We support the running of an academy by the college management as the most logical use of the site and in the hope it will provide similarly high standards in the new academy.'

'I feel that the links between the School and the College are essential and therefore support the closure of MHS to facilitate this. It is important that opportunities are made available for young people.'

'I support the proposal to open Macclesfield High School as an academy. The facilities and teachers are wonderful and it would be a waste if the school closed.'

The Academy Sponsor – Opposition to the Proposal

'If the school should fail, and not get enough numbers, presumably the excellent facilities will go to the College, and not to the school children of Macclesfield, for whom it was built.'

'I'm uncertain that this proposal, unlike the one that superseded it, solves the current problem. In the eyes of many parents, the new academy will be the old school re-badged.'

General Comments – Support for the Proposal

'It is extremely important that the academy is seen to be offering 11-18 education since it will be in competition with other 11-18 secondary schools in the town and will be seen as "the poor relation" by parents and others if not.'

'Having a son (at MHS) with special educational needs I want to ensure there is the least possible disruption to his school life as possible.'

'Let's hope a decision is made with some speed as this uncertainty cannot help both students their parents and even the staff from a very hard working school.'

General Comments – Opposition to the Proposal

'The development of collaborative working arrangements across the town will be lost and there will be a return to a very competitive educational environment...'

'Changing the name of the school and down sizing it to suit the numbers the school can attract does not fundamentally improve the school.'

4 Pupil Participation – MHS

4.1 In the week commencing 10 January 2010, pupils in all year groups at the High School were presented with information by staff at the school on the proposal to close Macclesfield High School upon the establishment of an Academy on the same site and were invited to submit their comments in response to a set of specific questions as listed below:

- 1 Do you hope the school remains open on this site?
Do you think the proposed academy provides a good solution for the
- 1a area?
- 2 Do you have any concerns about the proposed academy?
Would you like someone from the college to speak to your house or
- 3 year group?
Do you think that a student committee would be helpful to present
- 3a your views?
Do you think informing you through assemblies and form periods
- 3b would be sufficient?
- 4 Do you think there are benefits to the proposed Academy?

4.2 The outcomes of the consultation for all year groups are shown below.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE	NOT ANSWERED	TOTAL	TOTAL ANS
1	421	25	75	5	526	521
1a	240	59	219	8	526	518
2	80	339	95	12	526	514
3	131	207	145	43	526	483
3a	148	173	154	51	526	475
3b	256	107	113	50	526	476
4	192	75	226	33	526	493

4.3 The question with the highest level of response was question 1, which asked for the pupils' views about the proposed closure of the school. Of the 526 pupils that took part and provided a response, the outcomes show that whilst 421 pupils expressed the view that they hope that the school remains open on the current site, 240 pupils demonstrated support of an Academy as a good solution for the area with only 59 against and a further 219 who were unsure. In answer to question 4, 192 pupils indicated that they saw the benefits of the proposed Academy compared with only 75 pupils who did not. A further 226 pupils were unsure. However, when asked in question 2 if the Academy proposal caused them any concerns, a majority of 339 pupils confirmed that it did not compared with only 80 confirming that it did and only 95 pupils who were unsure. When asked how they wished to be kept informed about the proposed changes, most pupils indicated that they were happy to be kept informed in assemblies and form periods.

4.4 Overall, the level of response was very high and provided a clear indication that the priority for pupils attending Macclesfield High School was for a school to remain on the Macclesfield High School site in the future.

4.5 The questions and concerns listed below have been extracted from the feedback questionnaires and reflect the views expressed by many of the Macclesfield High School pupils.

- It will solve the money problem and will hopefully give us more opportunities
- All the academy proposal is doing is saving the school, changing the sponsors and funding.
- Does it mean we will carry on as normal?
- Do we need a different uniform?
- Not really changing anything but the school name
- Get better links with the college so we can do courses with our A levels
- You get a place in the 6th form and the school a chance to stay open
- It might make more people come to the school, also it would give the school a good reputation
- There will be no change in teaching and learning areas.
- Also people won't lose their jobs
- How will you pick the teachers to stay and teachers to go?

- More GCSE options
- Better opportunities
- The school stays open - no competition to get into other schools
- The plan might fail then we will have no school

5 Other Key Submissions

5.1 Members will wish to consider the following key submissions:

Governing Body, Macclesfield High School

The Governing body of Macclesfield High School have indicated their support for the proposal to close the high school upon the establishment of an Academy on the same site. However, governors have indicated that they feel that the Academy should be presented as part of the full 11 to 18 provision and beyond that would be available as part of the Macclesfield Learning Zone.

The submission also stated that 'parent governors felt that it was important that their children would continue to be taught in the sixth form by those good teachers who had previously taught their children at KS3 and KS4'.

The submission confirmed that the view of the governing body is that 'the establishment of an academy sponsored by the college creates the opportunity for all-through provision on the Learning Zone site with sixth form provision that will go beyond the provision offered in a traditional 11 to 18 school'.

Macclesfield High School Staff

The level of responses from staff employed at Macclesfield High School has been very low with only 3 submissions as set out below:

Of the feedback received, one staff member confirmed support for the establishment of an Academy stating that it could build on the considerable effort that had already gone into the establishment of an educational partnership with the College, but expressing concern about the viability and sustainability of a small 4-form entry school and without some transitional funding.

A separate response demonstrated support for the establishment of an academy that offers 11 to 18 educational provision on the Macclesfield Learning Zone campus stating that this would be in line with the original concept of the Macclesfield Learning Zone as an inter-related group of partner educational establishments on one site feeling also that the transition for students from MHS to the Academy would be seamless.

The final response confirmed support for the proposal but expressed concern about the unknown implications for current staff if an Academy is established.

Acting Executive Headteacher, Macclesfield High School.

In addition, concern has been expressed that the proposal to retain four providers of secondary education in the town does not address the issue of surplus places and has the potential to impact on collaborative working practices by increasing competition between schools in the town. Further concern has been raised about the impact on sixth form provision if the college becomes responsible for the LZ6 (Learning Zone) provision at a time when reductions are proposed in sixth form and FE sector funding. Confirmation has been received that this view is supported by the majority of governors of Tytherington High School.

David Rutley, MP for Macclesfield

The submission received stated that 'the proposals represent a positive step forward for Macclesfield's families, pupils and schools and, in particular, are very important for the future of the provision of education in the south of the town'. However, whilst it was acknowledged that many options had been actively considered during this reorganisation process but that no others had met the agreed evaluation criteria, it was considered regretful that more options were not available for parents to consider during formal consultation.

Diocese of Shrewsbury

The issues raised by the Diocese are around sustainability with concern about 'the increasing competition amongst the four schools for a declining student population'. The view expressed is that any plans for the future provision of education 'should not seek solely to address immediate issues'. The Diocese is concerned that an Academy will not address the surplus places problem affecting Macclesfield but could instead have a 'deleterious impact on the curriculum, staffing and financial planning of the other three schools' if an Academy is successful in increasing the number of applications for places at the school. These views have been echoed by the Governing Body of All Hallows Catholic College.

Governing Body, All Hallows Catholic College

The Governing Body has confirmed its support for parental choice and diversity of provision, but has concerns that the proposal does not address the surplus place issue if four schools are to continue, increasing competition between schools at the expense of collaborative working.

Disappointment has been conveyed that the option of establishing a split site school through the closure of Macclesfield High School and the expansion of Tytherington High School had been dismissed 'in favour of re-branding Macclesfield High School', acknowledging that 'in linking Macclesfield High School to another school in order to improve educational standards seemed a logical solution to the performance issues'.

Full details of the aforementioned responses are available for Members to view in the Cabinet Office between 28 January and 14 February.

6 Consultees

6.1 The guidance requires those bringing forward proposals to consult all interested parties. The mechanisms employed by officers together with a list of consultees are provided below at paragraph 6.2.

6.2 List of Consultees

Pupils at the school	Macclesfield High School	Pupil Questionnaire
Governing body of the school	Macclesfield High School	Email & Meetings
Teachers and other staff at the school	Staff body	Letter/Briefings/Email
Families of pupils at the school and potential future pupils for 2011	Parents and carers	Letters mailed to Parents/Carers, public events
Neighbouring Local Authorities - where potential for significant cross-border movement of pupils	Stockport, Derbyshire Staffordshire, Trafford	Letter by Email
Governing bodies, teachers and other staff	At schools potentially affected	Briefings & Email
Families of pupils at MHS feeder primary schools	Whirley, Ash Grove, Broken Cross, Gawsworth, Hollinhey, Ivy Bank, St John the Evangelist, Wincle, Park Royal, Puss Bank	Email to be cascaded to pupils (newsletter/pupil post)
Other Primary schools	Macclesfield	Email to be cascaded to pupils (newsletter/pupil post)
Diocesan Authority and the Bishop of	Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury Anglican Diocese of Chester	Letter by Email:
YPLA (LSC) - directly funding 16 - 19 provision	North West	Letter by Email:
MP of the constituency affected	David Rutley MP	Letter by Email:
Councillors - Ward Members	Macclesfield	Letter by Email
Local District / Parish where the subject school is located	Bollington, Gawsworth, Henbury, kettleshulme, Mottram St Andrew, Nether Alderley, Prestbury, Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough	Letter by Email:
Trade Unions of staff	At schools potentially affected	Letter by Email
Any other interested party	Cre8 youth and community project, Macclesfield Youth Achievement Foundation, Macclesfield School Sport Partnership (SSP)	Letter by Email
The wider community	Macclesfield and beyond	Local press releases, radio, Cheshire East website, public consultation events.

