

INFORMAL CONSULTATION – FEEDBACK SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following provides a summary of the feedback received during informal consultation on options for change to secondary school provision in Macclesfield.
- 1.2 On 7 June, the Council's informal Cabinet agreed that informal consultation should be implemented on an option to close Macclesfield High School and expand Tytherington High School, utilising both sites with effect from September 2011.
- 1.3 On 24 June, Councillor Gaddum, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Families, considered the responses received to this informal consultation and resolved to defer decision making to allow for further informal consultation up until 8 October on all options.
- 1.4 An informal consultation document was published and key stakeholders were informed of the procedure for providing feedback to the Council.
- 1.5 Public events were held on 13 and 15 July at the two high schools named in the original option and further events were held on 15 and 16 September at Macclesfield Town Hall and Macclesfield Town Football Club.
- 1.6 Responses received to this consultation between the period of 7 June (Informal Cabinet) and 8 October (closing date for informal consultation) have been included in this summary document for consideration at the meeting of the Council's Cabinet Member whereupon a decision will be taken on whether to proceed to formal consultation.

2 OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

- 2.1 The list of options that were consulted on is listed below. 'Option J' was included on this list on the recommendation of the Council's Cabinet Member on 24 June, to invite key stakeholders to submit their own suggestions for consideration.
 - A. Closure of Macclesfield High School and Expansion of Tytherington High School.
 - B. To establish a Macclesfield Academy involving Macclesfield High School and another local high school.
 - C. No change
 - D. The establishment of a single Trust working across the high schools in Macclesfield.
 - E. Creation of a 3-19 all-through school, integrating a local primary school on the Macclesfield High School site.
 - F. Re-launch of Macclesfield High School as a Specialist Vocational/'Technical' School

- G. Closure of Macclesfield High School and redistribution of pupils across the remaining secondary schools.
- H. Use of Macclesfield High School site for Post 16 provision for the whole town
- I. Current Macclesfield High schools each lose one form entry to Macclesfield High School.
- J. Your views

3 FEEDBACK SUMMARY

- 3.1 Feedback received during informal consultation has been communicated by telephone, e-mail, and letter. In addition, meetings were arranged by the Council for interested parties as 'drop in' sessions at the two high schools named in the original option (Option A) and at two neutral venues, those of Macclesfield Town Hall and Macclesfield Town Football Club. This process has resulted in a total of 847 representations to the Council in response to the Council's informal consultation on options for change. The breakdown of communications received is shown below:

Date	E-Mail	Post	Telephone	Public Events	Consultation Response Form	Total
7 June-24 June	44	8	6	0		58
24 June-8 October	72	8	12	545	152	789
Total						847

- 3.2 Many of these communications provided feedback on more than one of the Council's options (A to I) and many included additional comments and views, which have been recorded separately as feedback. This has resulted in 1099 separate entries as follows:

- 260 representations in support of one of the options (A to I)
- 121 confirming opposition to the options A to I
- 117 recommending an alternative option*
- 601 providing comments and views for consideration

*A significant number of the alternative options received, i.e. those submitted to the Council as Option J, were duplicates and this resulted in an additional 31 new options resulting in a total of 40 options for evaluation. These options are summarised in Appendix 2 to the Cabinet Member's decision paper.

- 3.3 A total of 466 parents, carers and other interested parties attended the informal consultation events with 386 attending the events at the two high schools on 13 and 15 July to receive further information about the next stage in the process and to offer feedback on the options A to J, (listed above in paragraph 2) and a further 80 people attending the later meetings held on 15 and 16 September at the Macclesfield Town Hall and Macclesfield Town Football Club.

4 FEEDBACK RECEIVED

4.1 The responses to the Council's 10 options (A to J) are summarised in the table below:

Options	For	% (of 496)	Against	% (of 496)	Totals	%
Option A	36	7.3%	71	14.3%	107	21.6%
Option B	6	1.2%	3	0.6%	9	1.8%
Option C	71	14.3%	5	1.0%	76	15.3%
Option D	15	3.0%	4	0.8%	19	3.8%
Option E	7	1.4%	10	2.0%	17	3.4%
Option F	23	4.6%	6	1.2%	29	5.8%
Option G	11	2.2%	10	2.0%	21	4.2%
Option H	38	7.7%	9	1.8%	47	9.5%
Option I	53	10.7%	3	0.6%	56	11.3%
Sub Total	260		121		381	76.8%
Option J*	115	23.2%	0	0.0%	115	23.2%
Total	375		121		496	100.0%

* Alternative options/your views

- 4.2 The majority of responses to the consultation on the options (A to J) focussed on the original option presented by the Council (Option A); and (Option C) no change to Macclesfield High School or (Option J) recommending an alternative solution. These responses represented 60.1% of the feedback and provide an indication of the level of concern felt in the community about the proposed change (Option A), which prior to 24 June had been presented as the single preferred option for change.
- 4.3 The option that received the highest opposition was the Council's original option (Option A). The responses to this option received after the meeting of the Council's informal Cabinet on 7 June and prior to the decision of the 24 June (subsequent informal consultation on *all* options) have been included in this summary.
- 4.4 Of the 496 responses the majority were submitted as Option J (your views), with almost a quarter of the responses recommending an alternative solution to the issues presented. The table above shows that this preferred option represents 23.2% of the total number of responses, suggesting that respondents would prefer to see an alternative solution to the proposed Option A.

Other responses

- 4.5 In response to the challenge faced by the Council of strengthening local secondary provision whilst addressing the issue of a continued decline in pupil numbers resulting in surplus school places, of the 601 comments and views received, the most frequent comments made were that:
- This must be a “whole town” solution;
 - Macclesfield High School should remain open and given time to address under-subscription and performance;
 - Any solution should be implemented as soon as possible to limit disruption for the pupils, parents and staff;
 - Consideration of increased travel across the town should be a key factor in this process;
 - This process must consider long term sustainability to avoid a further review in the near future;
 - Admission arrangements should be reviewed across the town to ensure equity and fair access for all;
 - The perception of Macclesfield High School across the town should be addressed;
 - There is a need to make sure that the Macclesfield High School building is used to benefit children in Macclesfield;
 - Smaller class sizes resulting from falling numbers would be of educational benefit;
 - All high schools in the town should be included in this process and not simply Macclesfield High School;
 - The impact on pupils and staffing of a split-site arrangement should be carefully considered;
 - The timing of the review and the implications of this for parents applying for places for September 2011 must be taken into account;
 - Pupil forecasting data must be accurate.
- 4.6 One of the key issues raised by interested parties was in relation to the admission arrangements in Macclesfield, with approximately 16% of the concerns raised referring to a review of the current admission arrangements as a solution to the surplus place issue and standards achieved at Macclesfield High School.
- 4.7 Respondents expressed the view that there was an inequitable distribution of pupils across the town as a result of current oversubscription criteria and admission numbers to other high schools in the area.
- 4.8 To ensure fairness and compliance with admissions legislation, at the meeting of the Cheshire East Admission Forum on 21 July 2010 full consideration was given to the admission arrangements of the four high schools and it was resolved that:
- The Forum recommends that the Governing Body of Fallibroome High School revise the admission arrangements for September

2011 to include Broken Cross Community School in order to ensure compliance with paragraph 2.72 of the School Admission Code

- That a separate objection be submitted by the Forum to the Office of School Adjudicator in the event that the arrangements determined for September 2011 are not revised in accordance with Forum advice.
- The Forum recommends that the Local Authority, together with admission authority schools in Macclesfield, review existing catchment areas.
- The Forum advises all admission authorities in Macclesfield to work together on agreeing admission arrangements for 2012 and beyond to ensure that arrangements support fair access and equity for all local families.

- 4.9 On the advice of the Admissions Forum and in accordance with legal requirements, the Council and the Cheshire East Admissions Forum submitted an objection to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) to the arrangements determined by the Governing Body of the former Fallibroome High School on the basis that the arrangements; which used named feeder schools as a level of priority for admission, had the potential to disadvantage pupils living nearer to the school from more socially disadvantaged areas and therefore breaching a mandatory requirement of the School Admissions Code. The outcome of the objections received by the OSA; which included 19 objections submitted by relevant parents, were, in part, upheld and this has resulted in a change to the determined arrangements for September 2011 to include Broken Cross Community Primary School as a named feeder school in the admission arrangements.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Responses to the informal consultation are summarised here for consideration on 8 November in order that a decision can be taken on the next steps.
- 5.2 The Evaluation Framework (included in Appendix 3 to the Decision Paper) was endorsed as a robust process by the Council's Children and Families Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 7 September. The framework includes key criteria that must be met for an option to be recommended to the Council's Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) for formal consultation and has been applied to all options received during informal consultation. The fundamental criteria are:
- Improved Outcomes for Children – Attainment and Achievement
 - Addresses Surplus Places
 - Affordability
 - Deliverability
 - Sustainability
- 5.3 The overriding requirement in this evaluation process is for any preferred option to deliver improved attainment, achievement and outcomes for children and young people and to do so an option has to meet all additional criteria.

- 5.4 In order to review the options arising out of this process, a steering group was set up chaired by the Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance Services, together with representatives of the Cheshire East Admissions Forum and officers of the Council to evaluate all options against the evaluation framework.
- 5.5 The outcome of the evaluation process is included in Appendix 3 to the decision paper.