

Cabinet – 17 March 2010

Outcome of consultation on proposal to significantly enlarge Frank F Harrison Engineering College

Portfolio: Councillor Walker, Children's Services

Service: Walsall Children's Services - Serco

Wards: Birchills Leamore

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

At the meeting on 16 December 2009, Cabinet approved consultation on a proposal to significantly enlarge Frank F Harrison Engineering College by increasing the admission number from 180 to 240 from 1 September 2014. This report provides details of the outcome of consultation on this proposal.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet approve the publication of a statutory proposal to significantly enlarge Frank F Harrison Engineering College by increasing the admission number from 180 to 240 from 1 September 2014.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Frank F Harrison Engineering College is a popular, oversubscribed school which provides secondary education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years. The school has an admission number of 180 and in October 2009 there were 952 pupils on roll.
- 3.2 Walsall has joined Wave 6a of the Building Schools for the Future Programme and as part of the work in connection with this there has been a review of the provision of secondary school places through to 2019 and beyond. This has identified a need for additional places at Frank F Harrison Engineering College and also at Pool Hayes Arts and Community School. Both schools are included in Wave 6a and a major redevelopment / rebuild of their buildings and sites is planned. In view of this, Walsall Council needs to make all decisions relating to the number of places at these schools during 2010 so that account can be taken of these in the development plans. At the completion of the building works, the schools would have the appropriate accommodation for the increased number of places.

- 3.4 Additional secondary school places are needed in order to meet an increasing demand for secondary school places in the area from September 2014 as a result of recent planned residential developments and also a recent increase in the number of births. The proposed enlargement would enable more families in the local community to obtain a place at this popular and oversubscribed school.
- 3.5 The proposal to increase the admission number at Frank F Harrison Engineering College from 180 to 240 from September 2014 would enable the school to operate with two additional forms of entry in each year group, commencing with the Year 7 admissions in the 2014/2015 school year and then progressing up through the school.
- 3.6 The proposed increase in places at Pool Hayes Arts and Community School is the subject of a report elsewhere on this agenda.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 If the proposal goes ahead, the required capital investment at Frank F Harrison Engineering College (and other schools in Wave 6a) would be met through the Building Schools for the Future Programme. The funding arrangements for this scheme will be confirmed by Partnerships for Schools at a later stage in the finalisation of the plans for schools in this wave.

4.2 Legal:

- 4.2.1 The significant enlargement of Frank F Harrison Engineering College is subject to statutory procedures. Consultation on the proposal has now taken place and it is now for Cabinet to decide whether it wishes to proceed with the proposal. Details of the consultation process are provided in section 10 of this report. If Cabinet decides to proceed, it is intended to publish a statutory proposal on 16 April 2010, following which there would be a representation period of four weeks during which objections could be made. A further report would be brought to Cabinet so that the final decision could be made in the light of any responses received during the representation period and the proposal be 'determined'. It is expected that the final decision would be taken in June 2010.
- 4.2.2 Subject to completion of the statutory processes detailed above, the admission number for the school would be increased to 240 from 1 September 2014.

4.3 Staffing:

- 4.3.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report. If the school is enlarged as proposed, the school would require additional teachers and other staff on a phased basis and these would be funded through the school's revenue budget.

5. Citizen impact

Local residents would have improved access to a place at this popular, oversubscribed secondary school for their child.

6. Community safety

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

7. Environmental impact

Should the proposal be implemented, the associated scheme would incorporate the use of sustainable resources wherever possible and the design would incorporate developments to reduce the impact on the environment.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk: If the proposed additional secondary school places are not provided, there would be very significant pressure on the supply of Year 7 places in 2017/18 when forecast demand for places is projected to peak with a risk that parents will not be able to secure a place for their child at a local secondary school.

8.2 Performance management: The adequacy of the supply of school places is assessed by the DCSF through an annual return.

9. Equality implications

If the proposal is implemented, the accessibility of the school building would be improved through the provision of replacement accommodation to current standards.

10. Consultation

10.1 Consultation on the proposal to significantly enlarge Frank F Harrison Engineering College by increasing the admission number from 180 to 240 from 1 September 2014 commenced on 11 January 2010 and ended on 21 February 2010.

10.2 A consultation document which included information regarding the proposed enlargement of Frank F Harrison Engineering College was issued to staff, governors, members of the student council and members of the Steering Group for the change to foundation status with a trust. As it would be over four years before the proposal is implemented, parents were sent a detailed letter regarding the proposal and the full consultation document was made available to them in a variety of ways. It was also sent to all Walsall schools, other stakeholders and statutory consultees and was made available to the public through local libraries and Frank F Harrison Engineering College; it was also posted on the Walsall Children's Services – Serco website.

10.3 Details of the consultation meetings are provided in the table below.

Frank F Harrison Engineering College	School Council	Staff	Steering Group
Date of meeting	25 Jan 2010 8. 30 am	19 Jan 2010 3. 15 pm	14 Jan 2010 11 30 am
Attendees	13 pupils 1 teacher	90 staff Interim Headteacher	5

10.4 The meetings took the form of a presentation by Walsall Children's Services – Serco, followed by a question and answer session. Matters raised by attendees focused on details of the arrangements for the rebuild of the school and the possible impact these would have on the school.

10.5 A total of 26 consultation response forms have been received: thirteen from pupils, ten from staff, one from a governor and two 'other'. Of these, 22 supported the proposal, three were unsure, and one was not in favour. Comments were generally supportive of the proposal and included observations about the improved facilities and resources that would be available, the fact that it would be easier for parents to get a place at the school for their child, that children would be educated within the community and that the proposal would be good for the local community. Concerns raised included a wish for reassurance that the planned BSF rebuild of the school would take full account of the increase in pupil numbers and a query regarding pupil / teacher ratios; there was also an observation about whether a possible change in government would impact on the proposal.


10.6 In the light of all of the above information, Cabinet is recommended to approve the publication of a statutory proposal to significantly enlarge Frank F Harrison Engineering College by increasing the admission number from 180 to 240 from 1 September 2014.

Background papers

Cabinet report 16 December 2009: Provision of Secondary School Places in 2019.

Author

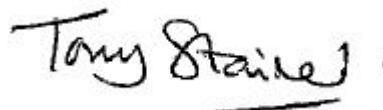
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Signed:
Executive Director: Pauline Pilkington
Date: 5 March 2010



Signed:
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Rachel Walker
Date: 5 March 2010



Signed:
Tony Stainer: Managing Director,
Walsall Children's Services - Serco
Date: 5 March 2010