

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

### **WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM - 15th JULY 2015**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **AMALGAMATION OF PENSBY HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND PENSBY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides details of the effect on school funding for the amalgamated school of Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In September 2014, the Governing body of the Pensby High Schools Federation approached the Council to ask to begin a formal consultation on the amalgamation of the two schools to form a single mixed sex school in Pensby.

The reasons given by the Governing body were:

- The impact the decrease in pupil numbers in each school is having on providing the broadest curriculum offer, the best teaching and learning and therefore outcomes for students;
- Numbers across both schools have fallen and will not increase to the pupil admission number of 150 for each school in the foreseeable future if at all;
- The current numbers in each school mean the schools on their present separate but adjacent sites are financially unsustainable.

In November 2014, Cabinet approved a six week public consultation be held on the proposed amalgamation of the two schools, through closure of Pensby High School for Boys, and changing the gender intake of Pensby High School for Girls to form a mixed sex secondary school in Pensby.

In March 2015, Cabinet approved the following proposals:

- 1) The closure of Pensby High School for Boys from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015
- 2) A prescribed alteration to the gender intake of Pensby High School for Girls from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.
- 3) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to publish these proposals and ensure the prescribed procedures are followed in furtherance of the proposals.

#### **SCHOOL FUNDING**

School funding guidance allows amalgamating schools to receive 85% of their combined lump sum in the following year. In this case, the amalgamated school would be allocated an additional lump sum payment of £70,000 ((£100,000 x 2) x 85% - £100,000) in 2016/17.

The effect of this is to transfer the remaining £30,000 from lump sums into the overall school pot in 2016-17.

Local authorities may apply for an exceptional factor to pay a further allowance to amalgamating schools in the second year after amalgamation. Applications to the EFA must specify the level of protection sought and will be considered on a case by case basis.

It is anticipated that the local authority would apply for a second year of this exceptional factor. If successful, a further £70,000 would be transferred into the overall school pot with effect from 2018-19 (ie a year later than would otherwise happen). The reason for applying for an additional second year is to help support the overall budget management and planned cost reductions within the school.

Local authorities may also wish to apply to exclude the exceptional factor payment from the MFG baseline.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Schools Forum supports the proposal that there is an application to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for an Exceptional Factor which will maintain the additional Lump Sum payment to Pensby High School in the 2017-18 funding formula.

**Julia Hassall**  
**Director of Children's Services**