

Open Report on behalf of the Executive Director, Adults and Children's

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 October 2011
Subject:	Proposed closure of Gleed Boys' School and Expansion of Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College in Spalding and change from single sex to co-education

Summary:

The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College and the Gleed Boys' School are secondary schools in Spalding operating within a selective education system. The girls' college is a popular school which also has a co-educational vocational sixth form with a total number on roll (including sixth form) of 889 as at the May 2011 census (capacity 893). The boys' school does not have a sixth form and has a total number on roll of 637 (capacity 718).

Schools of this size and nature are facing increasing educational challenges operating as relatively small stand alone schools. They are experiencing the following difficulties which are further detailed later in this report:-

- Falling numbers on roll due to demographic trends
- Increasing pressure on standards of pupil attainment
- Breadth of curriculum
- Recruitment and retention of high quality teaching and leadership staff
- Financial sustainability

This report seeks to advise the Executive on making a decision regarding the merging of the two schools to form one co-educational establishment through the proposal to close Gleed Boys' School and expand The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College together with the change from single sex to co-education all with effect from 1 November 2011. This will result in the formation of one new co-educational secondary school incorporating a sixth form with effect from 2 November 2011. The idea for a co-educational establishment was put forward initially by the governing bodies and Headteachers of the two schools as the potential to provide a new, forward-looking and first class educational opportunity and has the full support of the Local Authority (LA).

This consultation process has been carried out by the LA and the governing bodies of the two schools. If this proposal goes ahead it will assist the governors with their intention to convert to a co-educational Academy during 2012 and this will be independently consulted on through a separate process which will be led by a sponsor, likely to be the CfBT Education Trust.

There are three related statutory processes that must take place in parallel to enable this amalgamation to take place and each process is conditional on the other going ahead. The proposal comprises the following three elements and all are to be effective from 1 November 2011:

- (a) to expand The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College
- (b) to change from single sex to co-education at The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College
- (c) to close Gleed Boys' School

This proposal is being made in order to provide the best quality of education for children and young people in the Spalding area. Enabling the formation of a co-educational school is the next logical step to ensure appropriate sustainable educational provision in Spalding which will fully meet the needs of the children and parents in the area but which will also be economically viable. The LA has a duty to balance the raising of standards with the maintenance of diversity of provision, parental choice and a focus on local communities. The proposal will create the conditions for the co-educational school to achieve this and enable children and young people in the community to access strong educational opportunities. The LA considers this proposal to be in the best interests of local children and educational provision in the area. It reinforces the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and supports the Council's aim of ensuring that as many children as possible can reach their full potential.

In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and guidance of the Department for Education (DfE), previously the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Lincolnshire County Council has consulted on the three related statutory proposals detailed above. Following the first consultation stage of the statutory process the decision was made to go to the Statutory Notice stage. The Statutory Notice was published on 18 August 2011 which initiated the 6 week statutory period during which representations (i.e. objections or comments) can be made. This period ended on 29 September 2011 and the process is now entering the final stage when the LA as decision maker must take the final decision.

If this proposal goes ahead it will assist the governors with their intention to later convert to a co-educational Academy. This, however, will be the subject of a completely separate process and will be carried out independently and be led by the sponsor and the governing body of the newly merged school.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider, comment and support the proposals detailed in this report, which will be considered by the Executive on 1 November 2011, to close Gleed Boys' School, to expand The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College together with the change from single sex to co-education there to enable the formation of one co-educational secondary school in Spalding.

1. Background

The following information will be presented in a report to the Executive at its meeting on 1 November 2011, where the following recommendation will be considered:

Recommendation(s):

The Executive is recommended to approve the following three related proposals with an implementation date of 1 November 2011:-

- (a) to expand The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College
- (b) to change from single sex to co-education at The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College
- (c) to close Gleed Boys' School

These three proposals are related and one cannot go ahead without the others.

Alternatives Considered:

1. That the three related proposals detailed in this report are not approved and the consultation process is stopped. This would mean that both the girls' college and the boys' school will remain open as they are currently constituted so that pupils would continue with their education on the same site and at the school at which they are currently on roll.

However, this alternative would have the following disadvantages:

As stand alone schools they would continue to experience the difficulties highlighted in this report with regard to number on roll, standards, curriculum, staff recruitment and financial sustainability. This would in turn lead to the inability to deliver an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum thus limiting the range of opportunities available for students.

As stand alone schools it is likely that both schools will enter a deficit budget in the near future.

This alternative would make it more difficult to provide a wider range of services and facilities to the local community.

This alternative is unlikely to provide enriched provision and integrated services for children and young people in the area.

2. That the three related proposals detailed in this report are not approved and the consultation process is stopped with both schools continuing in their current form but with consideration given to other federation or collaboration possibilities.

However, there are no other appropriate schools within Spalding with the nearest secondary school being in Holbeach where the LA has already consulted on and commenced a reorganisation resulting in the formation of the University Academy Holbeach sponsored by the University of Lincoln.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- The Council would not be actively participating in this process if it did not see significant advantages for children and young people, their parents/carers and the local communities in Spalding. The appropriate educational provision in Spalding has been on the Council's agenda for a number of years and this proposal will both sustain provision and enhance the quality of provision as detailed in the reasons for the recommendation below. The LA has a statutory obligation under the Education Act 1996 to raise standards, promote educational opportunities for all, maintain diversity of provision, promote choice for parents and have a focus on local communities. This proposal will assist the Council in fulfilling these obligations as it creates a sustainable solution to enable educational opportunities for all which reflects community needs.
- The proposal will enable better and more effective use of resources so that all pupils can have access to the facilities available at both schools.
- The new co-educational school will be able to provide a full range of courses to meet students' academic and vocational needs. This greater curriculum choice, including access to specialist vocational facilities, will provide the opportunity for young people in Spalding to achieve their maximum potential.
- The proposal recognises the strengths and experience of both schools in that the intention is that Key Stage 3 classes will be taught in single sex groups and option groups at Key Stage 4 will be mixed to allow for a greater breadth of opportunity for students. It is likely that core subjects at Key Stage 4 will continue to be taught in single sex classes. This will enable the co-educational school to maximise new opportunities whilst maintaining the positive traditions of the separate boys' and girls' schools.
- Access to a comprehensive menu of study support activities throughout the year will also be provided as an integral part of this wider curriculum.
- The LA believes that the formation of a co-educational school will provide the opportunity for standards and results to improve.
- The new co-educational school will provide significant stability to the education of young people in the local area and will ensure that secondary provision remains sustainable for the future.
- The revised staffing structure and other economies of scale that will follow the reorganisation as one school will enable better management of costs and assist in avoiding entering into a budget deficit.
- The proposal will enable wider access to a range of extended services and improved opportunities for community and family learning supporting the LA's Children's Services vision and the CYPP.

- The new co-educational school will benefit from the significant expertise and leadership of the senior management teams from both schools.
- The proposal will offer wider development opportunities for all staff, which will help maintain stability and provision of high quality teaching and learning whilst enhancing recruitment and securing the quality of staffing. It will also enable a greater focus on the development for senior and middle leadership models so increasing leadership capacity.

Further Background Information

Schools of this size and nature operating as stand alone schools are facing increasing educational challenges, as further detailed below, and this is particularly so for the boys' school.

Number on roll

At the boys' school the Published Admission Number (PAN) is 134 which, if all places were full, would give a potential number on roll of 670. However, the school is consistently undersubscribed and received only 98 first preference applications for the Year 7 intake in September 2011. Subsequently 106 offers of places were made for the Year 7 intake in September which were accepted. The projection figures detailed in the consultation document (Appendix A) indicate that the total number on roll is likely to fall below 600 in 2014/2015 and remain so in following years. Under DfE guidance the recommended number on roll for a secondary school to be educationally and financially viable is 600 as a minimum with preferably over 1000. Based on the October 2010 school census return over 30% of pupils living in the natural catchment area do not attend the school but choose to take up a place at an alternative school.

The girls' college received 112 first preference applications with a PAN of 162. Subsequently 121 offers of places were made for the Year 7 intake in September 2011 of which 120 were accepted. The projection figures for Years 7 – 11 detailed in the consultation document (Appendix A) indicate a similar fall in the total number on roll figures for the girls' school over the next 7 years and, although well above the DfE minimum figure of 600, these will still be significantly below the DfE preferred figure of 1000 for total number on roll for a viable secondary school. Based on the October 2010 school census return, over 20% of pupils living in the natural catchment area do not attend the school but choose to take up a place at an alternative school.

One of the reasons for children taking up places outside of their natural catchment area that has been given by parents in feedback received by the admissions team has been the lack of co-educational secondary education in Spalding forcing parents to look at schools outside their natural catchment for a co-educational place for their child. The impact of this is compounded by the falling intakes as smaller cohorts feed through the primary sector into Year 7 and larger cohorts leave mainstream education in Year 11.

Standards of pupil attainment

DfE Number	Centre Name	Pupil Count		% of Pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths		% of Pupils achieving 5+ A*-C		% of Pupils achieving 5+ A*-G		% of Pupils achieving 5+ A*-A	
		2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009
-	England	-	-	53.0%	50.0%	75.0%	70.0%	93.0%	92.0%	-	-
925	Lincolnshire (All)	8,737	8092	59.0%	57.0%	80.0%	75.0%	95.0%	95.0%	21.0%	18.0%
925	Lincolnshire (Academy)	1,142	741	53.0%	54.0%	84.0%	79.0%	96.0%	96.0%	19.0%	16.0%
925	Lincolnshire (Maintained)	7,595	7351	59.0%	57.0%	79.0%	75.0%	95.0%	95.0%	21.0%	18.0%
9254025	Spalding Gleed Boys' School	126	134	26.0%	31.0%	44.0%	43.0%	98.0%	95.0%	-	-
9255416	Spalding The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College	154	149	49.0%	41.0%	64.0%	50.0%	97.0%	97.0%	-	-
9254603	Spalding Grammar School	118	141	99.0%	98.0%	100.0%	99.0%	100.0%	100.0%	44.0%	34.0%
9254027	Spalding High School	150	150	95.0%	99.0%	100.0%	99.0%	100.0%	100.0%	53.0%	43.0%
9254029	Holbeach George Farmer Technology and Language College	140	137	46.0%	46.0%	85.0%	72.0%	99.0%	98.0%	-	-
9254030	Long Sutton The Peele Community College	134	123	58.0%	46.0%	70.0%	58.0%	98.0%	86.0%	-	-
9254010	The Deepings School	230	230	61.0%	63.0%	88.0%	81.0%	97.0%	98.0%	-	-

The comparative results of the two schools at Key stage 4 in 2010 using the measure of the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C including English and maths (5ACEM) show the girls achieving a significantly higher score which also represents an improvement from the 2009 results. The percentage result achieved by the boys is not only lower but also represents a decline from their 2009 results using the 5ACEM measure. These results for both the boys and girls schools are well below the average for all Lincolnshire Schools. Provisional results for 2011, although not validated at this stage, indicate an improvement at the boys' school, however, results remain below the average for all Lincolnshire Schools. The LA believes that the advantages detailed in this document that will come with the formation of a co-educational school will provide the opportunity for the results to improve.

Breadth of curriculum

The PAN proposed for the co-educational school is 270 (the current combined PAN for the two separate schools is 296), giving an expected 1350 on roll for ages 11 – 16 and around 300 in the sixth form. These pupil numbers will enable the school to provide a wide range of curriculum options to meet pupil aspirations and provide viable group sizes to stimulate learning through social interaction to promote the sharing of ideas, information and experiences as well as enabling pupils to participate meaningfully in team games, sports and other community activities.

The secondary curriculum is increasingly broad and complex, and is largely structured around subject families, making it difficult to compare schools offering different subjects and different number of options. The introduction of the new English Baccalaureate (EBac) qualification will place further pressures on schools in delivering the appropriate curriculum and this is particularly so for smaller schools. The recent DfE White Paper encourages schools to offer a broader set of academic subjects to age 16 and this proposal will enable exactly that.

Recruitment of teaching staff

Most secondary schools near to Lincolnshire's east coast experience difficulties from time to time in recruiting and retaining qualified teaching staff with appropriate subject specialisms. The recruitment of staff will be enhanced by this proposal as a larger school will offer teaching and non-teaching staff greater stability and greater promotional opportunities.

Financial sustainability

The school budgets for both schools operating as two separate entities are currently under pressure especially as rolls continue to fall. A revised staffing structure and other economies of scale made possible under the reorganisation as part of the formation of one school will provide the basis for the better management of revenue costs and assist in avoiding any budget deficit.

Factors to be considered by Decision Makers

In reaching a decision the Executive must have regard to Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State as detailed in the attached guides in Appendices B, C and D and referred to in the following paragraphs.

A System Shaped by Parents

The Government's aim is to create a schools system shaped by parents which delivers excellence and equity by implementing a dynamic system in which weak schools that need to be closed are closed quickly and replaced by new ones where necessary and the best schools are able to expand and spread their ethos and success. The LA has put forward the current proposal as the best and preferred option to meet these criteria. As detailed above under "Standards of Pupil Attainment" the results for both the boys and girls schools remain below the average for all Lincolnshire Schools and the LA believes that the advantages detailed in this document that will come with the formation of a co-educational school will provide the opportunity for the results to improve.

The Executive must take into account the extent to which the proposal is consistent with the LA's duty to respond to representations from parents about the provision of schools. There were no submissions from parents in the Representation Period. Of the responses received in the consultation period approximately half were from parents, and out of a total of 63 parental responses 17 were against the proposal. All responses have been made available to the Executive and must be fully considered.

Diversity is covered under its own heading later in this report.

Standards

The Executive should be satisfied that the proposal will contribute to raising local standards of provision and will lead to improved attainment for children and young people paying particular attention to the effect on groups that under-perform with the aim of narrowing attainment gaps. As detailed earlier in this report the current and future standards of attainment at both schools as stand alone schools are one of the main justifications for the changes recommended in this report. The LA believes that the three related proposals will lead to improved standards of attainment, will enable the children and young people of Spalding to access strong educational opportunities and will present them with the best opportunity of reaching their full potential.

Diversity

The Government's aim is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice so that every child receives an excellent education whatever their background and wherever they live. The Executive should consider how the proposal will affect local diversity taking account of the range of schools in Spalding and the impact on the aspirations of parents, and whether the proposal will help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps. As referred to above the LA believe that the proposal will lead to improved standards of attainment and therefore contribute to the narrowing of attainment gaps. Further, there remains significant diverse provision in Spalding to meet the aspirations of young people and their parents providing a wide range of activities and facilities.

Balance of Denominational Provision

If this proposal goes ahead there will be no change to the number of denominational places provided in the area and therefore there will be no negative impact on the balance of denominational provision.

Every Child Achieving their Potential

The Executive should consider how the proposal will help every child and young person achieve their potential. This should include considering how displaced pupils will continue to have access to extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and applied learning training, measures to address barriers to participation and support for children and young people with particular needs (eg looked after children or children with special educational needs and disabilities). The LA believes that the proposal will provide greater curriculum choice including greater access to specialist vocational facilities, together with wider access to a range of extended services including referral to support services. It will also enable access to a comprehensive menu of study support activities throughout the year and improved opportunities for community and family learning. The proposal will enable better and more effective use of resources so that all pupils can benefit from the facilities available at both schools.

Need for Places - Provision for Displaced Pupils; the Expansion of Popular and Successful Schools and Surplus Places

When considering a proposal to close a school the Executive should be satisfied that there will continue to be sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils taking into account the overall supply and likely future demand for places and considering the quality and popularity of existing provision. Similarly, when expanding an existing school the Executive should consider whether there is a need for expansion and take care not to create unnecessary surplus capacity.

It is anticipated that pupils attending the boys' school at the time of closure will transfer onto the roll of the current girls' college so that there will be no displaced pupils. If this proposal is approved the number of school places in the secondary sector in Spalding will slightly reduce to fall in line with projected numbers. The current capacity for Years 7 – 11 of the boys' school is 723 and for the girls' school is 899 and after alterations have been made the proposed capacity will be a minimum of 1350. This will provide sufficient places for current and forecast secondary pupil numbers. The proposal to expand The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College will involve expansion onto the site of Gleed Boys' School but will only go ahead if the boys' school closes.

The Government is committed to ensuring that every parent can choose an excellent school for their child with the wishes of parents being taken into account. There is a strong presumption that proposals to expand popular and successful schools should be approved. The latest Ofsted report rated The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College's overall effectiveness as good with its capacity for sustained improvement also as good. The girls' college is a popular one and a very large majority of parents who recently returned questionnaires to Ofsted were positive about the college agreeing that teaching is good and that the college is led and managed effectively.

14-19 Curriculum and Provision

The basis of achieving the government's plan, as part of Raising the Participation Age (RPA), to increase post-16 participation rates and improve learners' skills is a transformed, coherent 14-19 phase offering a rich mix of learning opportunities from which young people can choose tailored programmes and gain qualifications appropriate to their aptitudes, needs and aspirations. The LA believes that the newly formed co-educational school will offer post-16 provision of a high standard and quality with good progression routes for all pupils which in turn will increase learner satisfaction leading to increased levels of participation.

Impact on the Community and Community Cohesion and Race Equality

The Executive must consider the effect on the local community of the closure of a school which is the focal point for family and community activity. Although this proposal involves the closure of a school the site will continue to be used for the new co-educational school and the proposal should not have any negative impact on community cohesion but rather is likely to lead to improved access to

extended services. The two existing sites will continue to operate as educational establishments with the same facilities with continued community use. Both schools currently deliver the extended services agenda which will not be negatively affected by the closure of Gleed Boys' School and the LA believes that the proposal will actually lead to improved opportunities for community and family learning.

The question of race equality is referred to below in the "*Equal Opportunity Issues*" paragraph.

The loss of single sex secondary modern educational provision in Spalding will have an impact on the community. However any potential negative impact will be mitigated by this proposal as it recognises the strengths of both schools in that the intention is that Key Stage 3 classes will be taught in single sex groups and option groups at Key Stage 4 will be mixed. It is likely that core subjects at Key Stage 4 will continue to be taught in single sex classes. This will allow a greater breadth of curriculum enabling the maximisation of new opportunities whilst maintaining the positive traditions of the separate girls' and boys' schools.

Travel and Accessibility for All

The Executive should be satisfied that facilities are accessible by being located close to those who will use them and that proposed changes do not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. Proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable routes. The proposal should be considered on the basis of how it will support and contribute to the Council's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

Under the current proposal all displaced pupils will be able to continue their education at the newly expanded co-educational school. As the Gleed Boys' School and The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College are on adjacent sites and the co-educational school will continue on the two existing sites, the current Gleed Boys' pupils will not be displaced following the discontinuance of the Gleed Boys' School and there will therefore be no impact on current travel arrangements or journey distance and times for pupils and the proposals should not lead to any increased car use. No specific arrangements are proposed for the travel of any displaced pupils to other schools.

The County Council home-to-school transport policy will continue to apply – this provides free home-to-school transport for pupils to their nearest designated school (if it is more than 3 miles away for secondary aged pupils).

Funding and Land

For any expansion proposals the Executive should be satisfied that any land, premises or capital required to implement the proposals will be available. This expansion proposal is conditional on the closure of Gleed Boys' School. There will be no capital receipts involved. The land and premises of Gleed Boys'

School will continue to be used for educational use as part of the co-educational school. Therefore if Gleed Boys' School closes there will be sufficient land and premises to implement the proposal and meet statutory requirements. There is not expected to be any significant capital cost other than capital to aid transition. This could include changes to toilets and changes to enable the provision of suitable subject areas amongst other possibilities. Any further modification to either of the two sites is not essential to the implementation of the proposal and will be reviewed within the County Council's capital programme for possible inclusion in the future.

Equal Opportunity Issues

The Executive should consider whether there are any sex race or disability discrimination issues that arise out of the change being proposed. There needs to be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all. There are no sex, race or disability discrimination issues arising from this proposal. The LA will continue to be committed to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

The Executive should consider the impact of the proposal on the Special Educational Needs provision taking into consideration the guidance laid down in the guide and be assured that the proposal is designed to improve on existing arrangements and enable all children to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

The following key factors must be considered in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate likely improvements in provision:

- a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment, with reference to the LA's Accessibility Strategy;
- b) improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services;
- c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
- d) improved supply of suitable places.

As education is continuing on the two existing sites there is likely to be no impact on SEN provision other than an opportunity to improve the provision with better access to resources and consistently good quality teaching, learning and leadership at the newly expanded co-educational school. Consideration of pupils with SEN will take place should there be any relocation of pupils to an alternative part of the existing sites and physical access will be assured should a need be presented. The LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEN.

Views of Interested Parties

The Executive should consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them. This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during both the consultation phase and the Representation Period. The Executive should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the Executive should give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders most likely to be directly affected by the proposals. All representations, especially from the direct stakeholders, must be considered by the Executive in relation to this proposal prior to the decision being taken. All responses to the consultation period have been received and made available to the Executive (In Appendices E and F) and are also referred to later in the Consultation section of this report. There were no responses received during the representation period.

The Decision

In considering the proposals the Executive can

- reject the proposals
- approve the proposals
- approve the proposals with a modification (e.g. the school closure date) or
- approve the proposals subject to the meeting a specific condition

All decisions must give reasons for the decision whether rejected or approved.

2. Conclusion

It is recommended that the proposal is implemented to ensure the best educational opportunities for the children and young people of Spalding. The advantages of implementing this proposal are detailed in “Reasons for Recommendation” earlier in this report. The proposal was initiated by the two Headteachers and the governing bodies of the two schools and has the full support of the LA.

This proposal presents the children and young people of Spalding with the best opportunity to reach their full potential. The factors to consider in making this decision are within this report and all responses made during the consultation phase and the representation period must be considered. (summarised in Appendix E and F)

3. Consultation

In order for the two schools to merge to enable the formation of one co-educational school, the LA must follow the necessary statutory legal processes as required by the Secretary of State in accordance with the Education and Inspection Act (EIA) 2006 and the guidance of the DfE regarding closure (Appendix B), expansion (Appendix C) and change of gender (Appendix D). All applicable statutory requirements to consult have been complied with.

Under these guidelines the LA must ensure that sufficient time and information are provided for people to understand and form a view on the proposal and make a response. The consultation document must set out the problem that is being addressed and invite comment on one or more solutions. The LA must take all reasonable steps to draw the consultation to the attention of all those who might be interested and take into account their views.

The Education Act 2002 states the requirement for current pupils to be consulted and this was further extended by subsequent legislation to also include all pre-school children over the age of 3. The Education & Inspections Act 2006 specifically includes as interested parties the registered parents of registered pupils at the school and also the appropriate District and Parish Councils for the area. The Headteachers have actively consulted with the students currently attending the two schools, and will continue to do so during this process to explaining the proposal being consulted on. Pupils were all given the opportunity to feedback through School Council representatives and summaries of their responses are attached. (Appendix F)

A letter (Appendix G) was sent out to interested parties (listed in Appendix H) on 9 June 2011 to commence a six week period of consultation. A public meeting was held on 22 June 2011 which was attended by representatives of the LA and the two schools together with parents/carers and other interested parties. All attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions and notes were taken which were published on the County Council website under the webpage Current Consultations on www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/provisionplanning and are also attached here as Appendix I. Following discussion at the public meeting a revised consultation document was issued to clarify that the proposal to merge the two schools to form a co-educational school is completely separate to the potential later conversion to Academy status and each must be consulted on as independent processes. Copies of the letter commencing consultation and the consultation document were also published on the County Council website. There was the opportunity to provide a response to the consultation by letter, email or by returning the response form (Appendix J) attached to the consultation document by 21 July 2011.

The written responses received during consultation have been provided to the Executive Councillor for consideration and are also summarised in this report in Appendix E. In total there were 120 valid responses with 56 supporting the proposal, 50 against and 14 expressing views neither in favour nor against the proposal. 52% (63) of all the consultation responses were from parents with 38 in favour, 17 against and 8 neither for nor against. 43% (52) of responses were from teachers and non-teaching staff members of the two schools and other local schools. Of these responses 16 were for the proposal, 32 against and 4 neither for nor against. 2 responses were received on behalf of organisations, these being Norfolk County Council (in favour) and the governing body of a local secondary school (neither for nor against), with all other responses being received from individuals.

The Executive Councillor took the decision to proceed to Statutory Notice which was published in the press, at the schools' gates and within the local community on 18 August 2011. This also marked the start of a 6 week Representation Period giving a further opportunity for people and organisations to express their views and ensure that they are taken into account when the final decision is taken at the meeting of the Executive on 1 November 2011. The LA, as decision maker, must be able to show that all relevant issues raised are taken into consideration in the decision making process and points raised can be considered unpersuasive but must not be ignored altogether. There were however, no responses received during the Representation Period. The last stage of the statutory process would be the implementation of the proposal on 2 November 2011 if it is decided to proceed.

Information regarding this proposal has been updated and made available through the County Council website since official consultation began on 9 June 2011. The local and district councillors have been actively involved in the consultation for this proposal. The local County Councillor has been kept informed of developments and proposals through the Executive Councillor for Children's Services who has been engaged throughout the entire process. The issue has also been aired in the local media on many occasions.

If this proposal goes ahead it will assist the governors with their intention to later convert to a co-educational Academy. This, however, will be the subject of a completely separate process and will be carried out independently and be led by the sponsor and the governing body of the newly merged school.

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

Yes

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Policy Proofing Actions Required

An approved Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed for this report. (Appendix K)

Apart from its obligations to consider the statutory guidance referred to which includes Equal Opportunity Issues (referred to in the background section of this paper above) the Council's has obligations under the Equality Act 2010 which must be taken into account by the Executive when coming to a decision.

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 s 149(1). The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: s 149(7).

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.

Sex is a protected characteristic and the Council must therefore have due regard to its obligation under the Equality Act 2010. Cognisance must be taken of the change from single sex to co-educational status. The matters set out on page 10 of this report under "Equal Opportunity Issues" will assist the Executive in this regard. The Equality Act "due regard" obligation must be balanced against the Council's obligation to provide appropriate standards of education.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Consultation Document
Appendix B	DCSF Guide "Closing a Maintained Mainstream School"
Appendix C	DCSF Guide "Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School"
Appendix D	DCSF Guide "Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School"
Appendix E	Summary of written responses
Appendix F	Summary of students' consultation responses
Appendix G	Letters to commence consultation
Appendix H	List of Interested Parties
Appendix I	Notes of public meetings
Appendix J	Consultation response form
Appendix K	Equality Impact Assessment Form

5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006	https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-10544006X
Proposal to publish a Statutory Notice regarding changes at The Gleed Girls' CAL and Technology College and the Gleed Boys' School in Spalding	Lincolnshire County Council Committee Records (Reference 01906 : Decision Date 8 August 2011)

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