

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	05 June 2015
Subject:	Proposal to consider the future of Brocklesby Park Primary School (Final Decision)

Summary:

This report invites the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the proposal to close Brocklesby Park Primary School (Final Decision) which is due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on 22 June 2015. The views of the Scrutiny Committee will be reported to the Executive Councillor as part of its consideration of this item.

Actions Required:

- (1) To consider the attached report and to determine whether the Committee supports the recommendation to the Executive Councillor set out in the report.
- (2) To agree any additional comments to be passed to the Executive Councillor in relation to this item.

1. Background

The Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services is due to consider the report on the proposal to close Brocklesby Park Primary School (Final Decision). The full report to the Executive Councillor is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Conclusion

Following consideration of the attached report, the Committee is requested to consider whether it supports the recommendation in the report and whether it wishes to make any additional comments to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services. The Committee's views will be reported to the Executive Councillor.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Report and Appendices to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on proposal to consider the future of Brocklesby Park Primary School (Final Decision)

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by John O'Connor, who can be contacted on 01522 553213 or john.c'connor@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

**Appendix 1
Executive Councillor**

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor: Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services
Date:	22 June 2015
Subject:	Proposal to consider the future of Brocklesby Park Primary School (final decision)
Decision Reference:	I009028
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

The proposal under consideration is the closure of Brocklesby Park Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015.

The school has a PAN (Published Admission Number) of 8 with a net capacity of 56. At the time of writing this report there were 14 pupils on roll (75% surplus capacity). There are no pupils due to start Reception in September 2015 and 2 leaving Year 6. Therefore there are 12 pupils expected to be on roll at the beginning of the next academic year (79% surplus capacity). There are not enough pupils in the local area to sustain an educationally and financially viable primary school without relying on attracting pupils from areas closer to other schools, many of which already have surplus capacity. 7 pupils (50%) that currently attend the school live outside of Lincolnshire. 11 pupils (79%) on roll at Brocklesby Park live closer to other schools, with only 3 pupils (21%) on roll living closer to Brocklesby Park than any other school.

Following careful consideration of how to secure a viable future for the school, the Governing Body of Brocklesby Park Primary School made the difficult decision in November 2014 to request that the Local Authority (LA) start the consultation process on the proposal to close the school. A copy of the letter from the Governing Body is attached as Appendix A.

The decision of the Governing Body to request that the LA consult on closure was taken in the context of concern over the long term sustainability of the school in relation to being able to continue to offer quality education to pupils with the resources available. Low pupil numbers in the local area and the extremely low current and projected numbers on roll do not allow the Governing Body to set a balanced budget that can continue to provide the breadth and quality of provision that children are entitled to.

It is the LA's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places to accommodate all pupils of statutory school age across the county of Lincolnshire. The LA must consider its duty to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential and balance this with the aim of enabling children to take up a school place within their local community.

The LA is co-ordinating the process following statutory guidelines published in The Department for Education (DfE) guide "School Organisation Maintained Schools Guidance for proposers and decision-makers" January 2014 (with attached Annex A and B) in accordance with the terms of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 as updated by the Education Act 2011("the Statutory Framework").

On 19 November 2014 an eight week period of consultation commenced which closed on 16 January 2015 and is further referred to later in this report in the Consultation section. A summary of written responses received is also attached in Appendix B. Following the responses received the LA extended the timescales for the first stage of the process to allow more time for the Governing Body and the LA to ensure that all alternatives to closure have been considered prior to progressing to the next stage. LA officers contacted every Trust on the list of DfE approved sponsors to explore the possibility of Brocklesby Park becoming an academy within a Multi-Academy or Umbrella Trust. This resulted in one Multi-Academy Trust expressing an interest in the school joining their Trust. The LA has continued to support the school and the Governing Body in pursuing this option in parallel with the statutory process.

Following the consultation period the decision was taken on 26 March 2015 to proceed with the publication of a Statutory Notice. This notice was published on 24 April 2015 and initiated a four week Representation Period up to 22 May 2015 when written objections and comments may be submitted. The process is now entering the final stage when the LA, as decision maker, must take the final decision regarding the proposal within 2 months of the end of the Representation Period (by 22 July 2015).

This report seeks to advise the Executive Councillor on making the final decision regarding the closure of Brocklesby Park Primary School.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor approves the proposal to close Brocklesby Park Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015.

Alternatives to Closure Considered:

1. **For the LA to retain Brocklesby Park Primary School as it is at present and not to close the school.**

This alternative would have the following advantages:

- A site would be retained within the local community for educational and community purposes.
- Pupils on roll at the school would not have to move to another school.
- This would enable a number of children to attend a school without the need for transport but this number would be very small.
- This would avoid the need for staff redeployment and potential redundancies.

However, the above alternative would have the following disadvantages:

- The school is not financially viable in the short or long term. Schools are not legally allowed to set a deficit budget without a realistic, viable and evidence based business plan showing how the situation will be reversed.
- There would remain an unacceptable level of surplus places which is currently 75% and is likely to increase from September 2015.
- The school was rated by Ofsted at the last full inspection in 2013 as Requires Improvement. The school was below floor in 2014 but there were only 5 pupils in the cohort. The School Improvement Service (CfBT) has advised that if inspected this term, current rates of pupil progress indicate good achievement and support a good judgement. However, this position could change in September with changes in staff and if all Key Stages are taught in one class. Continued low pupil numbers will make it challenging to maintain and improve standards.
- There would be concerns over the impact on the quality of the education and development of the children with such small year group numbers which may lead to one class covering all year groups in an attempt to reduce costs if pupil numbers do not increase. The school currently operates with two classes, but CfBT advises that this would be much more difficult with one class and would present significant challenges in meeting Early Years requirements and the new National Curriculum.
- With regard to the quality of teaching at Brocklesby Park; although CfBT has recognised the improvement in provision this year further work is still needed with regard to assessment in all Key Stages to ensure that teaching is consistently high and matched to the needs of all pupils. CfBT also has concerns over the school's vulnerability due to ongoing staff mobility whilst the future of the school remains uncertain. The Key Stage 2 teacher is leaving at the end of this academic year which will present significant challenges in developing leadership beyond the Headteacher and also in appointing, training and supporting another teacher to manage a class which incorporates the whole of Key Stage 2, and could lead to a single class including the whole primary age range from 4 to 11 years.

- With such low pupil numbers it would be extremely challenging to provide a wide and diverse curriculum and would limit the range of opportunities available for all pupils both for their academic and social development. For example it is difficult for such a small school to provide team game experiences and participation in choirs, orchestras and drama productions that are possible for children at larger schools. The children are therefore likely to receive a more rounded education in a larger local school (some of which will still be small rural schools, but not as small as Brocklesby Park) with greater social interaction opportunities.
- There are significant difficulties in attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality qualified teachers to a school with such low numbers and limited career opportunities. The current staffing structure comprises two newly appointed members of staff with one being a full time Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) and the other a temporary member of staff employed part time (0.6) in addition to the Headteacher. This places high demands on the Headteacher in supporting and quality assuring staff.
- The current Leadership and Management structure would continue. There are concerns that there is no middle leadership in place because the teaching team is small, relatively new and not yet established. The school had started to develop this area this year by training a member of staff. However this member of staff is leaving which will mean that leadership capacity beyond the Headteacher will again be limited. Ideally the school will need to replace that member of staff and address the middle leadership concern by appointing a teacher with a high level of skills and experience. However, given the current recruitment challenges and threat of closure it will be difficult to make an appointment that will be immediately able to teach the age range and contribute to leadership. Also, although the Governing Body has reconstituted and now provides a good range of skills, their understanding of pupil progress and quality of teaching needs securing so that effective challenges can be presented by the governors. Governance has improved with governors active in school and being well informed about pupil progress but governors' recent focus has been concentrated on keeping the school open. Should the academisation application be successful TMAT has offered to support and strengthen governance through a co-opted governor.
- The funding required to provide ongoing support to Brocklesby Park would represent a disproportionately high distribution of public funding and could have a negative impact on the distribution of funding to other local schools and potentially their future sustainability. Ensuring sustainability is vital in that it has an impact on recruiting and retaining staff of a high calibre in the area.
- The school will continue to be vulnerable given the number of current and projected primary aged pupils in the area. This continued uncertainty might also lead to parents seeking places at another more sustainable and educationally viable school resulting in even fewer pupils on roll and

consequently less funding as funding is directly related to the number of pupils on roll.

- The Governing Body has pursued federation options to enable the school to continue but these have not produced a potential successful alternative.

2 For the Executive Councillor to approve the closure of the school with an implementation date of 31 August 2016.

When the consultation process commenced in November 2014 the proposal was to consider the closure of the school with an implementation date of 31 August 2015. In any proposal regarding the closure of a school it is important that there should be no undue delay in its implementation following the closure decision to avoid as far as possible further negative impact on the pupils, their families and the local community who will already be affected by the closure.

However, it is also important that all options are fully explored and DfE guidance states that in the case of the closure of a rural school the decision maker must carefully consider any alternatives to the closure of the school.

As detailed above, in the Summary, the academisation of the school as an alternative to closure became a possibility during the consultation process. Tollbar Multi Academy Trust (TMAT) was the only potential academy sponsor that expressed an interest in supporting the school. An application to convert to Academy status by joining the TMAT was turned down by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) in March 2015 after taking advice from head teacher board (HTB) members. The RSC confirmed that the decision not to approve academy conversion was predominantly related to the low pupil numbers (Appendix D). However, the Governing Body are proposing to re-submit an application to the RSC following a more detailed case for consideration with material changes from their original submission. Their proposal is included as Appendix C. There is not sufficient time for this to be resubmitted before the end of this academic year and will only be possible if the proposal to close the school has an implementation date of 31 August 2016.

The Governing Body has submitted a response in the Representation Period. The response reaffirms the governors' commitment to try to keep the school open, to continue to pursue the application for academy status and requests a delay in the final decision to assist with this.

The Governing Body understands that in its current form the projections indicate unsustainability in both educational and financial terms. However, the Governing Body believe that as an Academy under TMAT the school will not remain in its current form and the application should be reconsidered by RSC for the following reasons:-

- The Governing Body believes that the proposal to join TMAT would enable the school to access the Trust's pooled financial and educational resources and that this would assure immediate educational viability and sustainability. TMAT will take control of staffing with a view to deploying appropriately qualified staff across all its constituent academies in ways that secure cost efficiency and excellence. TMAT will assume joint control of finance and administration along with responsibility for school improvement.
- It is proposed that the addition of Early Year's provision will increase pupil numbers and additional income.
- TMAT will use its expertise and resources to organise publicity campaigns and organise transport from villages across county borders to increase pupil numbers beyond those planned by the school's early years' proposal.
- Lord Yarborough, a governor of the school and landowner of the school playing field, has agreed to provide finances for the school to guarantee a balanced budget over the next two academic years.
- The firm commitment of TMAT to reapply for academy status and incorporation within TMAT in the next six months during which time the school will be treated as a partner school and benefit from the support of the Trust.

However, the LA has the following concerns regarding the resubmission of the application which would require the closure date to be delayed until 2016:-

- The main priority of the LA is to ensure the quality of provision at the school to which all children are entitled and the consultation on closure was commenced in the context of this concern. TMAT has confirmed that it "will use its best endeavours to ensure a full, broad and balanced educational experience for all pupils at the school". The LA must be assured that joining the Trust will guarantee the quality of provision and consider whether this is a better option for each child than attending an established local school.
- The LA has concerns about the potential negative impact on the quality of education should the Early Year's provision be provided by existing staff at the school as indicated in the school's business plan. This would place increasing pressure on staff already working hard to meet Ofsted's requirements. The proposal also potentially combines the pre-school with Reception and Year 1 pupils all in one class which is not considered best practice and might inhibit children reaching their full potential.
- The increased numbers anticipated by the school and Governors and on which the budget is based are optimistic rather than evidence based. For example the survey carried out by the school predicts an intake of 2 in 2015 with a total Number on Roll (NOR) of 15 but it is now evident that there will be no Reception children starting at the school in September

2015 resulting in a total NOR of 12. However attractive to parents the school may become the projections confirm that the numbers of primary aged children required will not be present in the locality and any successful business plan is based on the reliance on attracting pupils that live closer to other schools.

- Should the publicity campaign be successful with an academy sponsor, thus increasing the NOR, it is still likely that the school will always be a small school with a higher than average cost per pupil which does not represent best use of resources for Lincolnshire's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This can therefore have an impact on the funding for all children in Lincolnshire.
- There is no evidence to prove that the numbers of children required to ensure the viability of the Early Year's provision will actually take up a place, and having done so whether they will stay at the school for their primary education. LA officers within the Early Year's team have confirmed that from a sufficiency perspective there is no need for additional Early Years places in the locality. Sufficiency of Early Year's provision is reviewed annually across the county; the most recent information collected for this area suggests that there is sufficient provision available therefore any new setting would not be sustainable or viable. On this basis LA officers within the Early Year's team have confirmed that from a sufficiency perspective there is no need for additional Early Years places in the locality. Any requests for provision from parents in the area would be monitored, recorded and reviewed annually as part of the annual sufficiency assessment planning process.
- The officers within the Early Year's service have concerns that the business plan is not sustainable or realistic as it appears to be based upon attracting children from outside of the immediate community. This would only be acceptable and sustainable if alternative provision was not available for the families in surrounding communities; however this is not the case. LA officers are not able to support the business plan as we do not hold any information which is able to substantiate a demand for places to the level which is proposed without having negative impact on other provision in the area and the LA is not be able support this approach.
- The number on roll (NOR) at the October census determines the funding received from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) for the financial year beginning in the following April. The budget forecasts produced by the Governing Body are likely to be based on optimistic estimates with the potential result that the predicted deficit figures are likely to be higher than anticipated and it may take longer than estimated to reach a balanced budget. This would be compounded if, in addition to lower numbers for statutory aged children, the actual number of pre-school children is also lower than predicted.

- The application states that Lord Yarborough will provide finance to guarantee a balanced budget. However, this contribution is capped to £25,000 which in light of the above points may not be sufficient to balance the budget even after just one academic year if the pupil numbers do not improve. From a high level review of the school's Income and Expenditure and medium term finance plan, LA officers have estimated that the deficit could be in excess of £50,000 by the end of the 2016/2017 financial year should the position not materially change. If the academisation application is unsuccessful and the school have to close in 2016 any shortfall would be at the risk of the LA.
- The RSC recognises that joining TMAT would allow the school to benefit from greater economies of scale and would strengthen the educational expertise available to the school. However, the main reason for the RSC rejecting the application is the very low current and projected NOR. In their decision the RSC has already taken into consideration adding Early Year's provision and potential increased future predictions (up to 38 on roll). A copy of the letter confirming the decision of the RSC is attached as Appendix D. The Governing Body wish to resubmit the application on the basis that the school will no longer be in its current form and that there are material changes to the original application. It is not appropriate for the LA to predict the decision making of the RSC but it is unlikely that the application will indicate a sufficiently large enough increase in the potential NOR to affect the reasoning behind the RSC's rejection of the original application. The NOR in September 2015 will actually be lower than that expected when the original application was submitted to the RSC.
- The application recommends the installation of a mobile unit to house the Early Year's provision which would require the use of the school's Devolved Formula Capital (DFC). The LA must consider the implications of this should the school close in 2016 and whether this would represent best use of taxpayers' money in the event of a further academy application being unsuccessful.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- There has been a changing age profile of the rural population in recent years resulting in a trend towards lower numbers of families with primary age pupils choosing to live in small rural communities. There are no longer sufficient pupil numbers in the immediate area for a viable stand-alone school to remain educationally and financially sustainable.
- To reduce any detrimental effect on educational standards that can potentially occur at schools with very low numbers on roll. There are currently only 14 pupils on roll, projected to fall to 12 next academic year. To keep the school open would mean children continuing to attend a very small school and consequently placing greater demands on a small number of staff to adequately deliver the full curriculum entitlement. The staffing structure would have to reduce further to stand any chance of

setting a balanced budget with the current number of children on roll. Continued low pupil numbers will mean that the school would be unlikely to be able to generate the budget to maintain the high standard of education that all pupils are entitled to.

- To enable pupils to receive a more rounded education in a larger school (some of which will still be small rural schools, but not as small as Brocklesby Park) offering greater social interaction.
- To reduce the incidence of teaching several year groups in one class and in groups that involve teaching across more than one Key Stage. To keep the school open, the low numbers on roll may require a school organisation based on teaching all 7 year groups within one class which is not considered to be in the best interests of the children, and CfBT advise that this would present significant challenges in meeting Early Years requirements and the new National Curriculum.
- To reduce surplus capacity in the area but still provide sufficient places to meet local needs and parental preference. This decrease in surplus capacity contributes to ensuring the provision of sustainable schools across the county allowing future investment to be used more effectively to support schools in raising standards through a more efficient use of resources.
- To enhance the future sustainability of the remaining primary schools in the local area, including other small rural schools. Ensuring sustainability is vital in that it has an impact on recruiting and retaining staff of a high calibre in the area and also attracting future investment.
- To improve value for money delivered by larger schools. Very small schools require a disproportionate amount of funding. The sparsely populated county of Lincolnshire makes it necessary to sustain small schools to meet the needs of local communities across wide rural areas, and the LA's funding formula supports this. However, when numbers fall as low as they are at Brocklesby Park the situation becomes unsustainable for a stand-alone school of this size. Schools are not legally allowed to set a deficit budget without a realistic medium term plan showing how the deficit will be turned around.

1. Background

This report is written in the context of concern over the long term sustainability of the school. Despite the hard work of Governors to market the school the numbers have remained low. The number of children who live local to the school is not sufficient to support a sustainable stand-alone primary school.

To remain viable the school needs to increase the NOR by attracting pupils from further away than what would be considered the 'natural catchment area'. There

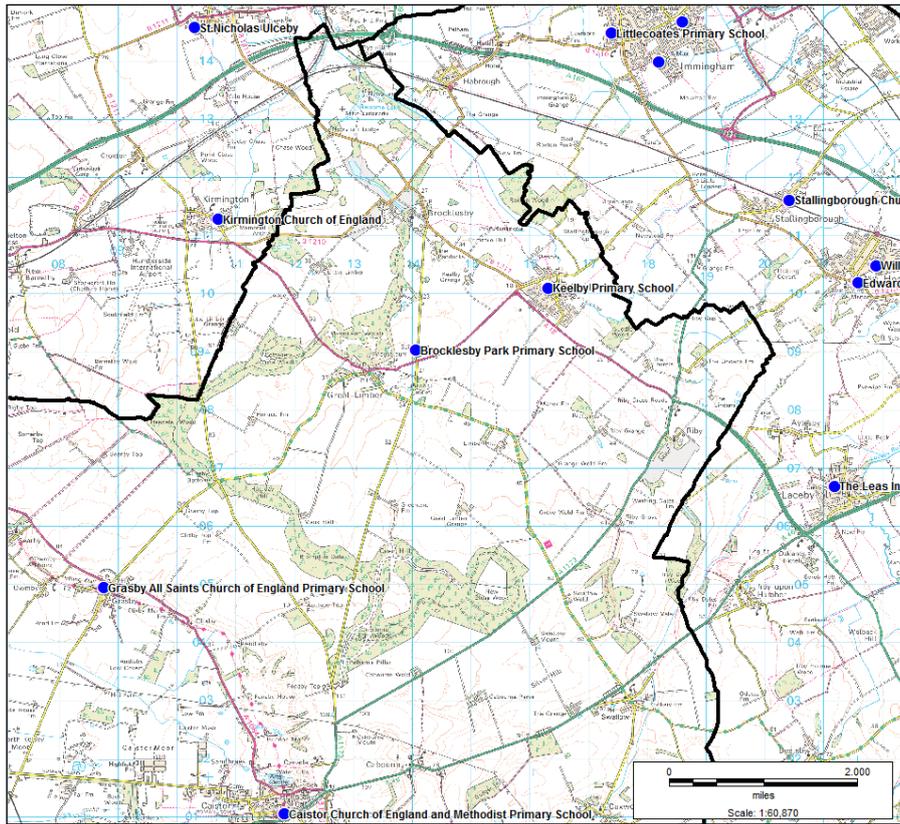
are currently 14 pupils on roll at the School which has a potential capacity for 56, leaving 75% surplus capacity. 7 pupils (50%) that attend the school live outside of Lincolnshire. 11 pupils (79%) on roll live closer to other schools, with only 3 pupils on roll living closer to Brocklesby Park than any other school.

Applications received by the LA for 2015/16 Reception places resulted in 24 pupils being offered places at Keelby Primary School for September 2015, leaving 8 available places in the area for that year group. Keelby Primary School has confirmed that they could accommodate all pupils currently on roll at Brocklesby Park. Neighbouring LAs have confirmed that were the school to close there is surplus capacity to accommodate the children from Brocklesby Park at neighbouring out of county schools that are the closest schools for some of the pupils on roll at Brocklesby Park. The admissions process for the September 2015 Reception intake received only 1 first preference application for Brocklesby Park. However since offering the place to the applicant they have turned it down and applied elsewhere. Therefore, with 2 Year 6 children due to leave at the end of the summer term, the expected NOR at September 2015 is 12.

The school undertook a survey with parents to assess potential sibling and first child intakes. The results were as follows:-

2015 = 2 (Total NOR = 15) [Note there are now no pupils due to start in September]
2016 = 6 (Total NOR = 18)
2017 = 7 (Total NOR = 21)
2018 = 4 (Total NOR = 22)
2019 = 3 (Total NOR = 23)

However, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) birth data and LA projections (using birth data, GP registrations and historic pupil movement in and out of the area) indicate continued low numbers in future years as detailed on the following page. The map below shows the school in relation to the local area and neighbouring schools, with Keelby Primary School being the closest school, 1.8 miles away:-



LA Projections for Brocklesby Park (Based on 2014 May School Census):

	2013/14 (Actual on Roll)	Yr 1 - 2014/15	Yr 2 - 2015/16	Yr 3 - 2016/17	Yr 4 - 2017/18
Age 4 (Reception)	1	2	3	1	1
Age 5 (Y1)	3	1	2	3	1
Age 6 (Y2)	2	3	1	2	3
Age 7 (Y3)	0	2	3	1	2
Age 8 (Y4)	4	0	2	3	1
Age 9 (Y5)	2	4	0	2	3
Age 10 (Y6)	5	2	4	0	2
Total On Roll	17	14	15	12	13

LA projections factor in recent migrational trends, any new housing development in the local area, ONS Birth Data and historic birth patterns to project future intakes based on a continuation of recent trends over the last 3 years. They do not take into account potential changes in parental preference.

2014 ONS Birth Data – Cohort size for Brocklesby Park local area:
(Pupils with Brocklesby Park as nearest school)

Intake year	Rec 2014	Rec 2015	Rec 2016	Rec 2017
Cohort Size	0	1	2	2

NHS GP registrations with Lincolnshire and NE Lincs GPs show the following cohort sizes per year group for the Brocklesby Park local area:

Intake year	Rec 2014	Rec 2015	Rec 2016	Rec 2017
Cohort Size	n/a	0	2	2

In order to secure an educationally and financially viable future it is vital that more pupils need to attend the school than are currently projected to do so. It is evident that the only way that a sufficient NOR will be achieved is by attracting more pupils from outside of the local area away from other schools that they live closer to.

Reaching the decision – Preliminary Considerations

The requirements for decision making relating to school organisation in LA Maintained schools are set out in Annex B of the guide “School Organisation Maintained Schools January 2014” published by the DfE.

The DfE does not prescribe the exact process which a decision maker should follow but the decision maker must have regard to this guidance. The decision maker should consider the views of those affected by the proposal and should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a view but give greatest weight to those stakeholders most likely to be affected and especially the parents of children at the school concerned.

Factors to be considered by the Decision Maker

The Consultation and Representation Period

The Executive Councillor must be satisfied that the appropriate consultation and representation periods have been carried out and that all of the responses received have been given due consideration.

Although there is no longer a prescribed consultation period prior to the publication of the Statutory Notice and Complete Proposal the DfE's guidance states *"a strong expectation on schools and LAs to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication"* and for proposed school closures a minimum of 6 weeks is recommended. The LA conducted an eight week period of consultation to fulfil this expectation and also to operate a fair and open process and ensure all views were considered. A Statutory Notice (Appendix E) and Complete Proposal (Appendix F), initiating a four week Representation Period, were published in accordance with current statutory requirements.

In addition, following the written responses received in the consultation period and the questions and comments raised at the public meeting the LA extended the initial timeline for the overall process by approximately 7 weeks to allow more time for the Governing Body and the LA to ensure all alternatives to closure were considered prior to progressing to the Statutory Notice stage.

Responses submitted during both the Consultation and Representation Period have been made available to the Executive Councillor for consideration when taking the final decision and further details of these responses are provided in section 5 of this report (**Consultation**).

Education standards and diversity of provision

The Executive Councillor should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the area and be satisfied that the proposal will meet the aspirations of parents, contribute to raising local standards of provision and lead to a closing of attainment gaps. 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 LA has carefully considered the impact on educational standards and believes that the closure of the school has the potential to protect and improve educational standards overall. To keep the school open may have a detrimental effect in that it would mean children continuing to attend a very small school and consequently placing greater demands on a small number of staff to adequately deliver the full curriculum entitlement. To keep the school open, the low numbers on roll may require a school organisation based on teaching all 7 year groups within one class, which is not considered to be in the best interests of the children. Provision at neighbouring schools is rated by Ofsted more highly than that at Brocklesby Park which was rated as Requires Improvement with the two closest Lincolnshire schools being rated as "Good" at their last inspections.

Low pupil numbers in the local area and the extremely low current and projected numbers on roll do not allow the Governing Body to set a balanced budget that can continue to provide the breadth and quality of provision that children are entitled to. The LA believes that this proposal provides the best option to maintain and improve standards of attainment with an enhanced quality of education for current and future children in the area whilst maintaining diversity.

Demand

The Executive Councillor must consider the evidence presented for the need for places but also a decision must take into account parental preference and evidence of parents' aspirations for places in the locality together with the quality and popularity of schools in the area that have surplus capacity. The DfE recognises that for parental preference to work effectively there may be some surplus capacity in the system overall but that competition for places to be taken up will lead to existing schools improving standards.

As fully explained in the Background section above the number of children who live local to the school is not sufficient to support a sustainable stand-alone primary school. LA projections (using birth data, GP registrations and historic pupil movement in and out of the area) indicate continued low numbers in future years.

Neighbouring schools in the area have available spaces and if the closure goes ahead the LA will offer all displaced pupils a place at the nearest neighboring school, Keelby Primary School, Manor Street, Keelby Grimsby DN41 8EF. There is sufficient capacity at Keelby Primary School for all displaced pupils and there will be no requirement to increase the number of school places available as a consequence of the proposed discontinuance of Brocklesby Park.

School size

Assumptions that schools should be of a certain size to be a good school should not be made although the viability and cost-effectiveness of a proposal is an important factor in the decision-making process eg the impact on a LA's budget to provide additional funding to a small school to compensate for its size.

Very small schools require a disproportionate amount of funding. The sparsely populated county of Lincolnshire makes it necessary to sustain smaller schools to meet the needs of local communities across wide rural areas, and the LA's funding formula supports this. However, when numbers fall as low as they are at Brocklesby Park the situation becomes unsustainable for a stand-alone school of this size. The school is not financially viable in the short or long term. Schools are not legally allowed to set a deficit budget without a realistic, evidence based medium term plan showing how the deficit will be turned around.

Proposed admission arrangements

Before approving any proposal that is likely to affect admissions the LA must ensure that all admissions are compliant with the School Admissions Code. If the closure goes ahead the LA will offer all displaced pupils a place at a Lincolnshire school. Admission arrangements for the academic year commencing September 2016 and subsequent intakes will be processed in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

National Curriculum

All maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum unless they have secured an exemption. If the closure goes ahead, children will be offered places at alternative neighbouring schools which all currently follow the National Curriculum and will continue to do so.

Equal Opportunity

The LA must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations and should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise out of the proposed expansion. There should 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.

Further reference is made to the LA's obligations in this regard later in this report under "*Further legal considerations*".

Community Cohesion and Community Services

The impact on the community must be considered and schools have a key part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn from and respect each other and gain an understanding of other cultures, faiths and communities. The decision-maker must take account of the community served by the school and the views of different sections of the community.

If the school closes there would be the inevitable disruption for pupils, parents and staff, but this would be short term. This proposal would address the issues surrounding a declining primary school population in an area where there are other appropriate schools in more densely populated areas with sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils. The County Council believes that this proposal provides the best solution to addressing and meeting the long term educational and social needs of the children in the area if it is not possible to sustain a viable school in Brocklesby Park.

An educational site would no longer provide services for children and young people. The LA understands that the school is an important part of the community, not just as a school but as a facility used by other members of the public. The County Council would work with the local community to try to ensure that the impact of this proposal would be mitigated.

Alternative community uses for the school building would be considered prior to any decision being made about the future of the premises.

The small size of the school limits its ability to offer a wide range of extended services which are likely to be more readily and widely available at neighbouring schools with a larger NOR. Extended services currently provided at Brocklesby Park Primary School are already in existence at other neighbouring schools. Brocklesby Park has an after school club for sport one day a week and some children access recorder lessons after school one day a week. A breakfast club will run if demand requires it. The school has held drama or craft clubs in the past but none are running presently. Keelby Primary School has a before and after school club on site Monday – Friday. In addition there are a variety of clubs most afternoons and also one on a Monday morning.

The LA has a good track record of redeployment of staff and will always seek to avoid redundancy not only to mitigate costs but also to reduce the human costs of redundancy.

Travel and accessibility

The Executive Councillor should be satisfied that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account and that proposed changes do not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. Proposals should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling 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.

The LA has considered the impact on transporting pupils to other schools should Brocklesby Park close. Many of the pupils who currently attend Brocklesby Park live closer to other local schools and it is not expected that the closure would significantly increase the number of car journeys to transport children to and from school. If all pupils currently on roll at Brocklesby Park went to their nearest local school then the combined distance of all pupils would be nearly half of what it is now. Were the school to close then transport would be offered according to LCC's school transport policy taking advantage of the established routes already in use in the area. It is not expected that costs would increase significantly even if all parents chose to take up the transport offer.

The County Council home-to-school transport policy will continue to apply - this provides free home-to-school transport for Lincolnshire resident pupils to their nearest or designated school (if it is more than 2 miles away for primary age pupils). In addition, arrangements will be made to allow displaced Lincolnshire resident children whose parents select the receiving school named above, and who live within the current designated transport area for Brocklesby Park Primary School, to have free transport to Keelby Primary School if the school is more than 2 miles from the family's home. Non-Lincolnshire resident children may be offered transport should it be appropriate to do so following discussion with the parents on a case by case basis.

Capital

There are no capital costs arising out of the proposed closure of the school. However should the school close the LA would consider alternative uses for the premises and the land would revert to the landowner. Should the premises be found to be surplus to requirements this may lead to some capital receipts.

Rural Schools

Under current DfE guidance there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but that the case should be strong and a proposal clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. In order to consider the proposal to close the school the LA has paid particular attention to the following points:-

- The likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community:

The school currently provides places for only 3 pupils from the local community. The school is not in the centre of the village it serves (Great Limber). It is located 0.7 miles out of the village which is a 10-15 minute walk. The LA understands that the school is regarded by the local community as an important facility and members of the local community believe it would have a negative impact if the school were to close. The LA would work with the local community to try to ensure that any negative impact on the community from the loss of the school would be mitigated through partnership working with other services and schools in the area and reduce any negative impact on community cohesion were the school to close.

- Educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools:

The closure of a school can potentially reduce extended services on offer. However, in this case, the small size of the school limits its ability to offer a wide range of extended services which are more readily and widely available at neighbouring schools with a larger NOR. It is also challenging to demonstrate the impact on educational standards with such a small cohort. In their current school pupils are required to mix across multiple year groups. Neighbouring schools are regarded by Ofsted and the LA as being of an equal or higher standard. Standards at neighbouring schools would not be expected to be negatively affected by taking on pupils from Brocklesby Park.

The LA has carefully considered the impact on educational standards and believes that the closure of the school has the potential to protect and improve educational standards. To keep the school open may have a detrimental effect in that it would mean children continuing to attend a very small school and consequently placing greater demands on a small number of staff to adequately deliver the full curriculum entitlement. To keep the school open, the low numbers on roll may require a school organisation based on teaching all 7 year groups within one class, which is not considered to be in the best interests of the children. Provision at neighbouring schools is rated by Ofsted more highly than that at Brocklesby Park (Requires Improvement at the last full inspection in 2013) with the two closest Lincolnshire schools being rated as "Good" at their last inspections.

- The availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools and any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effect of any such increase:

The LA has considered the impact on transporting pupils to other schools should Brocklesby Park close. Many of the pupils who currently attend Brocklesby Park live closer to other local schools and it is not expected that the closure would significantly increase the number of car journeys to transport children to and from school. If all pupils currently on roll at Brocklesby Park went to their nearest local school then the combined distance of all pupils would be nearly half of what it is now. Were the school to close then transport would be offered according to LCC's school transport policy taking advantage of the established routes already in use in the area. It is not expected that costs would increase significantly even if all parents chose to take up the transport offer.

- Any alternatives to the closure of the school:

The Governing Body, supported by the LA, has pursued potential alternatives to closure in recent years but despite the hard work to market the school the numbers have remained low. Following the request of the Governing Body to commence the closure process and comments raised during consultation the LA has given further consideration to all potential alternatives to closure. The three main alternatives which have continued to be pursued in parallel with the closure

process are the possibility of federation with another school, academisation within a Multi-Academy Trust and/or the introduction of Early Years provision at the school which are all discussed more fully below in the Consultation section.

Further legal considerations

Equality Act 2010

Apart from its obligations to consider the statutory guidance referred to the Council also 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. This involves having regard to the need to:-

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- 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.
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

(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: section 149(7). This involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:

- (a) A breach of an equality clause or rule
- (b) A breach of a non-discrimination rule

It is important that the Executive is aware of the special duties the Council owes to persons who have a protected characteristic as the duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the Executive. The duty applies to all decisions taken by public bodies including policy decisions and decisions on individual cases and includes this decision.

To discharge the statutory duty the Executive must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

The LA is well aware of the potential negative impact that may arise out of the closure of the school and this is considered more fully in the Impact Assessment (Appendix G) together with measures that could be taken in mitigation. However, the impact of closure would be felt by all the pupils and all local children and their parents, the community and all staff, and would not discriminate against anyone sharing a relevant protected characteristic. The Council believes that this proposal will not lead to any discrimination and that in recommending the proposal the Council is having due regard to its obligations under The Equality Act.

Child Poverty Strategy

The Council is under a duty in the exercise of its functions to have regard to its Child Poverty Strategy. Child poverty is one of the key risk factors that can negatively influence a child's life chances. Children that live in poverty are at greater risk of social exclusion which, in turn, can lead to poor outcomes for the individual and for society as a whole.

In Lincolnshire we consider that poverty is not only a matter of having limited financial resources but that it is also about the ability of families to access the means of lifting themselves out of poverty and of having the aspiration to do so. The following four key strategic themes form the basis of Lincolnshire's Child Poverty strategy: Economic Poverty, Poverty of Access, Poverty of Aspiration and Best Use of Resources.

The closure of the school would support the strategy as follows:-

- By reducing any detrimental effect on educational standards that can potentially occur at schools with very low numbers on roll. The LA believes that the proposal provides the best option to maintain and improve the quality of educational provision that all children are entitled to. This is likely to improve their sense of achievement which in turn can improve personal aspiration.
- The closure would avoid a disproportionately high distribution of funding into one school resulting in a better use of resources to the benefit of all the children of Lincolnshire.

- The closure of the school and consequent reduction in surplus capacity in the area will contribute to the future sustainability of other local schools to the benefit of all children within the locality.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Health & Well Being Strategy

The Lincolnshire JSNA identifies a number of needs that directly relate to young people. (Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Wellbeing).

The Lincolnshire Health & Well Being Strategy includes five main themes, with an additional theme of "mental health" running throughout the document. The planned service provision in the county supports the themes of Promoting healthier lifestyles; Improving health and social outcomes for children and reducing inequalities; and Tackling the social determinants of health.

The closure of the school would support both the JSNA strategy and the Lincolnshire Health & Well Being Strategy as follows:-

- The children are likely to benefit from a more rounded education in a larger school with greater social interaction.
- The small size of the school limits its ability to offer a wide range of extended services which are likely to be more available at schools with more pupils on roll and which the children will benefit from.
- The children are likely to achieve higher standards of attainment and promote the fulfilment of each child's potential. This will assist in improving their sense of achievement which in turn can improve personal aspiration.
- Factors which support children reaching their full potential will also promote their ability to achieve economic well-being and the positive contribution they can make.

2. Conclusion

The final decision is required from the Executive Councillor to determine whether to support the recommendation within this report.

The reasons on which the final decision is based are detailed earlier in this report in the “**Reasons for Recommendations**” section. The factors to consider in making this decision are within this report and all valid written responses received during consultation (summarised in Appendix B) and the Representation Period (see section 5 **Consultation** for further details) must be considered.

The LA believes that this recommendation is made in the best interests of local children and local parents as well as educational provision in the area whilst also enabling the LA to fulfil its statutory duty of ensuring that there are sufficient places to accommodate all pupils of statutory school age in Lincolnshire.

3. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power in accordance with the statutory provisions to propose the closure set out in the Report subject to following the statutorily prescribed process including all consultation requirements. In arriving at the recommendation a non-statutory consultation process has been undertaken which has taken into account statutory guidance. The Executive Councillor must take into consideration all matters which are required by the Statutory Framework in particular those considerations specific to rural schools and the consultation responses must be conscientiously taken into account in reaching a decision.

The Executive Councillor must also take into account the duty under Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality act) in reaching a decision on the proposal.

It would be lawful for the Executive Councillor to make a decision in accordance with the recommendation.

The proposal is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor.

4. Resource Comments:

Brocklesby Park Primary School is not a financially viable school when considering the current pupil numbers and those projected in the future. Schools with very low pupil numbers create a higher than average cost per pupil, which does not represent the best use of resources for Lincolnshire's Dedicated Schools Grant.

External funding of £25,000 has been identified to support the schools planned funding shortfall in the short-term, however within its financial planning, the school has also speculated addition funding through the creation of the early years provision to make the school financially viable. There is however no evidence that this will achieve financial sustainability for the school.

Schools are not legally allowed to set a deficit budget without a realistic and evidence based business plan. A decision to delay the school closure by one year and allow the school to implement the seemingly optimistic plan will result in an overspend where it is not achieved, which would then likely fall with the Local Authority.

5. Consultation

In order for the school to close the LA must follow the necessary statutory legal processes as required by the Secretary of State in accordance with the EIA 2006, the Education Act 2011 and the guidance of the DfE regarding expansion

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. Under the DfE guidelines which came into effect in January 2014 there is no longer a prescribed consultation period for proposed school closures although a minimum of 6 weeks is recommended. To comply with this the LA has conducted an eight week period of consultation. Any documentation issued must set out the problem that is being addressed and invite comment on one or more solutions. The LA must explain the decision making process and take all reasonable steps to draw the proposal to the attention of all those who might be interested and take into account their views.

The guidance issued by the DfE in January 2014 states that in the case of the closure of a rural primary school the parents of current pupils and the local district and parish councils where the school is situated **must** be consulted. The guidance also lists who should be consulted in connection with all proposed school closures. The list of interested parties was therefore compiled according to these principles comprising as wide a range of consultees as practicable to ensure that all interested parties were included and incorporated parents of current pupils and the Chief Executive of the District Council as well as individual County, District and Parish Councillors as appropriate.

Guidance requires current pupils to be consulted and all of the children on roll were given the opportunity to discuss the potential closure of their school. The children were encouraged to consider the things they love about their school, and the things they would miss if the school closed. The overall view expressed by the children was one of sadness at the thought of the closure of the school and, for the majority, what would be missed would be their friends.

A letter incorporating relevant information and reasons for the proposal was sent out to interested parties on 19 November 2014 to commence an eight week period of consultation. A public meeting was held at Great Limber Village Hall on 2 December to provide more detail about the proposal and enable parents and all interested parties to ask questions and raise concerns. Notes were taken at this meeting and are attached as Appendix H. There was the opportunity to provide a response to the consultation by letter, email or by returning the response form attached to the consultation document by 16 January 2015. Copies of the letter commencing consultation and the response form were also published on the County Council website under the webpage "Current Consultations" on www.Lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolorganisation

All written responses received during consultation have been provided to the Executive Councillor for consideration and further details are confirmed in this report in Appendix B. To briefly summarise, however, there were 67 valid responses in total with 2 in favour, 62 against the proposal and a further 3 responses which were neither for nor against the proposal but incorporated comments for consideration. Responses were received from 12 parents of current pupils with 11 of these being against the proposal. The largest number of responses was received from local residents with 29 of these being against the proposal. Many of the responses against the proposal supported the unique small size of the school believing this benefitted the children by providing a low staff to pupil ratio, friendly atmosphere and excellent support both educationally and emotionally.

The letter giving details of the consultation process incorporated the following details of the anticipated timeline:-

STAGE 1	STAGE 2*	STAGE 3*	STAGE 4*	STAGE 5*
Consultation 8 Weeks	Publication of Statutory Notice	Representation Period 4 Weeks	Final LA Decision	Implementation
19 th November – 16 th January	February 2015	February – March 2015	May 2015	31 August 2015

*These stages may only take place if a decision is taken to progress beyond the current stage. The process could be stopped at any stage. Please also note that the dates/months shown (other than for Stage 1) are for indicative purposes only and may be pushed back if required.

However, following the written responses received in the consultation period and the questions and comments raised at the public meeting the LA extended the timescales for stages 2 and 3 as above by approximately 7 weeks to allow more time for the Governing Body and the LA to ensure all alternatives to closure have been considered prior to progressing to the next stage. This extension to the process meant that the Statutory Notice (Stage 2) was published in April and the final decision (Stage 4) is likely to be taken in June 2015.

This extension of the process has enabled the following options to be explored in greater detail:-

1. LA officers have contacted all schools and academies in Lincolnshire and also a number of schools and academies that are in neighbouring authorities but within a reasonable travelling distance to consider the option of federation. Despite some early enquiries which didn't progress further there has not been any serious interest expressed in a school federating with Brocklesby Park Primary School.
2. LA officers have also contacted every Trust on the national list of DfE approved sponsors to explore the possibility of Brocklesby Park becoming an academy within a Multi-Academy or Umbrella Trust. This resulted in one Multi-Academy Trust (TMAT) expressing an interest in the school joining their Trust. Following discussions between the Trust and the Governing Body of Brocklesby Park School an application was made to the DfE which is further referred to in this report. The RSC turned down the application to convert to academy in March 2015. Since then the Trust and governors have worked on putting together a revised application that they are proposing to submit in Autumn 2015 if the school remains open. The LA has continued to support this option in parallel to the closure process.
3. Free Early Years Entitlement encourages parents to seek a provider of early education when children are 3 – 4 years old. The Governing Body believe that providing a pre-school facility for children aged 3 and 4 would increase the numbers attending the school, provide well-rounded education with good opportunities for social interaction for all pupils attending and ensure the medium and long term viability of the school. The Governing Body has researched the feasibility of offering Early Years provision at the school and has produced an initial business case (attached in Appendix I) predicated both on increased income from this provision and also a projected consequent increase in the NOR at the school. The provision of a nursery is not expected to eliminate the deficit until 2018/19 if pupil numbers were to increase as hoped. By providing a steady stream of pupils for the primary

school and making the school more attractive to parents generally the Governing Body believe that it will ensure the long term viability of the school.

However, LA and School Improvement officers have concerns over assumptions made in this business case which may be based on optimism rather than hard evidence. If the nursery facility is to be provided by a third party this would require a legal lease arrangement which would be subject to approval of the LA and would incur significant cost. As an alternative to a private provider on the school site the Governing Body has proposed the setting up and management of a Foundation Unit which would include an integrated Reception/Year 1 and preschool using existing staff. Due to the time pressure however there may be difficulties in completing the consultation process required to amend the school's age range and also obtaining planning permission for and siting the necessary mobile unit in readiness for the start of term in September 2015. In addition, this option would put additional pressure on the staff and Headteacher whilst continuing to work towards meeting Ofsted's requirements. It is also not considered best practice to combine preschool children with Reception and Year 1 into one class. Both of these considerations could have a negative impact on the quality of educational provision at the school for statutory aged pupils.

It is important to determine both the demand and viability of early year's provision on the school site before proceeding any further. From the LA's sufficiency perspective there is no need for additional early year's places in this area. Governors have undertaken a survey indicating a potential intake of 7 pre-school children for 2015/2016 if all those that expressed an interest were to take up a place. The Governing Body believes that this supports the need for a nursery but again this may be considered an over-optimistic viewpoint bearing in mind the NHS GP registration and birth data and the existing nursery provision. However, regardless of the evidence for demand, if the consultation responses and/or cash-flow fail to indicate a long-term viable plan the LA is unlikely to support either any tender activity to recruit a third party provider for a nursery on the school site or the extension of the age range at the school to include nursery provision. LA officers do not believe there is the evidence to support an early year's development on the school site and cannot provide any reassurance that this would be sustainable.

Following the completion of the consultation period and the extension to the original timescales all feedback was considered with a full report (which is referred to in the Background Papers section below and will also be re-considered along with this report) by the Executive Councillor and a decision was taken on 26 March to proceed to Statutory Notice. A statutory 4 week Representation Period was entered into on 24 April 2015 commencing with the publication of the Statutory Notice (Appendix E) in the local press, on the Lincolnshire County Council's website and at the school gates. The Complete Proposal, available in paper and electronic format (Appendix F) to which the Statutory Notice refers, was sent to interested parties as detailed in the statutory guidance and was also published on Lincolnshire County Council's website under the webpage 'Current Consultations' at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolorganisation.

The Representation Period provides 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. One response was received during the Representation Period which was submitted by the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of Brocklesby Park Primary School and a copy is attached as Appendix J. This response reaffirmed the commitment of the governors to try to keep the school open and their intention to ask the HTB to reconsider their decision to reject the school's application of academisation within Tollbar Multi-Academy Trust. It is essential however that the statutory process continues in parallel with the pursuit of any alternative option. In the event that none of the options considered above result in a viable alternative to closure there should be no undue delay in the closure process in order to avoid as far as possible further negative impact on the pupils, their families, staff and the local community.

Under current legislation the LA is the decision maker for the proposal and is co-ordinating the statutory process before making a final decision in June. The LA, as decision maker, must be able to show that all relevant issues raised are taken into consideration in the decision making process. Points raised can be considered unpersuasive but must not be ignored altogether.

The last stage of the statutory process would be the implementation of the proposal with the closure of Brocklesby Park Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015.

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

Yes, the local member has been made aware of the proposal to close Brocklesby Park Primary School.

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes, the Executive Councillor has been involved in the discussions regarding the proposal to close Brocklesby Park Primary School.

c) Scrutiny Comments

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will meet on 5 June 2015 to consider this report regarding the future of Brocklesby Park Primary School (final decision).

The comments of the committee to be included here when known.

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

An Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report as Appendix G.

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Governing Body letter to request consultation
Appendix B	Summary of written responses from interested parties during consultation
Appendix C	Governing Body proposal for submission to RSC
Appendix D	RSC decision on Academy application
Appendix E	Statutory Notice
Appendix F	Complete Proposal
Appendix G	Impact Assessment
Appendix H	Questions and answers at the public consultation meeting
Appendix I	Early Years Provision business case prepared by the Governing Body
Appendix J	Representation Period Response

7. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Report on the Proposal to consider the future of Brocklesby Park Primary School (decision to go to Statutory Notice)	Lincolnshire County Council Committee Records Reference I008261 26 March 2015
The DfE guide "School Organisation Maintained Schools Guidance for proposers and decision-makers" January 2014; letter to commence the operator selection process; list of interested parties; blank response form;	All available on request from the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services
Individual consultation responses	Individual responses available to be viewed by the decision maker. Content of responses anonymised and summarised in Appendix B.

This report was written by John O'Connor, who can be contacted on 01522 553213 or john.o'connor@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

APPENDIX A



BROCKLESBY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Limber
Grimsby
Lincolnshire
DN37 8JS

Tel. 01469 560219
Fax: 01469 560219
www.brocklesby-park.lincs.sch.uk
Email: jo.spriggs@brocklesby-park.lincs.sch.uk
Head Teacher: Mrs. J. Spriggs

12th November 2014

Dear Debbie,

It is with much sadness and soul searching following a governors meeting, which took place Tuesday 11th November, the governors of Brocklesby Park Primary School unanimously decided we request that the LA begin the process to consult on closure.

We appreciate that there are set procedures to follow in the next few months. However, we would also confirm that we would be looking at August 2015, as the implementation date, were closure to go ahead.

We have been informed that if this is the case then we should ideally start the consultation on 17th November if we are to begin the process and avoid key dates and school holidays for a final decision this academic year (ideally before May half term), and also to provide as much time as possible to make any potential transition arrangements, staff notice etc. were the school to close. This gives us a tight timeframe in which to share this momentous decision within and outside our school community and we trust that the LA will be fully involved every step of the way to make the route as straightforward as possible given the situation we are facing.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Spriggs

J Spriggs
Brocklesby Park Primary School

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APPENDIX B

Written Responses in the Consultation Period on the proposed closure of Brocklesby Park Primary School

Point of View	Supports Proposal	Against Proposal	Not For or Against	Other comments/Notes
Resident		Y		All communities need schools. Ours is a small close knit community and would suffer greatly if school is lost
Parent/Carer		Y		
Resident		Y		It would be a terrible loss to the village
Resident		Y		All our children loved the school and it formed an important part of the village and surrounding villages' social life
Resident		Y		Eldest child has just left this school. It's a great school and it will be huge loss to the village if this school closes. Would be interested in pre-school if it opened
Parent/Carer		Y		I have been to this school to support events like the Autumn fair. My family attend at pupils and do incredibly well. It is such a shame to see such a lovely place struggling. I think there could be more done to children to go - knock on doors, promote it. There is talk of setting up a nursery and this would be a good idea It would be such a big loss to the area if such a historical place didn't survive. The closure proposal is a surprise. Parents and friends of the school could have been involved much earlier - why weren't they told how serious the situation was?
Employer/Business		Y		
Parent/Carer		Y		My daughter went to the school and I feel it is beneficial to the community
Resident		Y		The school has been part of the village for over one hundred years. This continuity is important for village life.
Resident		Y		
Resident			Y	I was educated in a village primary school when it was closed due to lack of pupils. The village lost its heart and there was no reason for young families to live in the village. Relying on purely older people to populate rural areas is anti-social and short sighted for rural prosperity
Teacher/School Staff		Y		BPPS is the heart of the village. Our school is a facility and has been for generations...there exists an inexplicable harmony between the teachers and the pupils that allows education to occur on all levels. Closure would leave pupils with no place to call their own. There are huge benefits to our small village school - larger schools may lead to them (pupils) feeling insecure and lost.
		Y		
Resident		Y		We would like to see the school remain open for future generations

Parent/Carer	Y	It would be a great shame to lose such a wonderful school. It is precisely because the school is small and lessons and teaching can be tailored to each individual child's needs that my son has flourished here. I also believe the school provides a social situation not possible in larger schools. The teaching staff have always done their utmost to provide a diverse education with as many opportunities for trips, sporting events as possible. H would be sad to lose such a long-lived school without fully exploring preschool/outside nursery providers.
Parent/Carer	Y	All my children went to Brocklesby School. All did well and to have small numbers and your children do well is more beneficial than great numbers. It's the hub of the village.
Resident	Y	This school has always been and should continue to be part of the Great Limber community. Several of my children attended and benefitted from this school as I would like to think future generations may likewise.
Parent/Carer	Y	Very family orientated. I chose this school for my child because of the structure of the classes, the staff and because it is small. I propose sharing a head teacher with another small school to save costs and have a nursery so that children will move up from the nursery to the school.
Other	Y	A school is valuable to the community and important to the survival of any growing community
Teacher/School Staff	Y	Size of the school is unique and allows for excellent support for children educationally and emotionally. Wonderful positive atmosphere giving children confidence and stability and interaction with peers. Staff dedicated to getting most out of children and to reach their potential. Asset to the area and should be sustained.
Teacher/School Staff	Y	I have been a teacher since 1989. BPPS is the best school I have ever taught at. It is vital for the children's well being and education that this school remains open. It is part of the community and has been since 1852. This is a highly successful school, and closure would be detrimental to the children/staff/parents/community
Resident	Y	It is a good small school that local children can attend. An idea would be to provide nursery or out of school clubs to make it more attractive to working parents
Parish Councillor	Y	I would like to see shared head ship and preschool idea
Employer/Business	Y	Having been educated through the school I believe it has given me a good background in life skills. The school is a backbone of village like. I believe anything that can be done to keep the school in place must be considered. I think a pre-school is a good idea and I would support this to keep the school open
Former staff	Y	BPPS historically has always had fluctuating numbers. Due to the proximity of the school, students have come from quite a wide area because of the small numbers in the village. Perhaps a stronger leadership team and governing body could help raise numbers and standards. Whilst I was at the school we had a good Ofsted report under the previous head teacher and we were going from strength to strength. There has been a decline in numbers due to dissatisfaction and unrest with the leadership team. It would be a shame to completely write it off because of a dip.
Parish Councillor	Y	A good school and a required village asset
Employer/Business	y	Closure would harm local community. Please keep the school open but provide pre and post school facilities
Employer/Business	Y	Use money available to transport local children to another school to transport children to BPPS. Children in inner city schools often in classes over 30.
Resident	Y	How important a local school especially in rural communities
Resident	Y	Can give children such life lessons within a rural community that town schools

Governing Body	Y		Sorry, but understand the difficulties of maintaining viability. Not the nearest alternative school but do have capacity. No formal objection to the closure but sympathise with uncertainty it causes to staff, pupils and parents.
Grandparent		Y	There is a demand for good schools. BPPS is a brilliant school. We do not want to lose this facility. We are told more schools are needed, this school is an established building.
Former parent		Y	
Resident		Y	
Resident		Y	It's a shame to shut it after all these years
Teacher/School Staff		Y	This school provides a safe and fantastic education. Its history goes back many years and it should be given the chance to rebuild with a preschool for future generations to enjoy a fantastic education and learning environment.
Resident		Y	The school should not be closed for any future children that may come to live in the village
Resident		Y	
Resident		Y	It is an important part of the village. And lots of children have had a good education in the past years.
Resident		Y	Such a shame to lose the village school
Former parent & governor		Y	Unique school that offers quality care and strengthens community cohesion. Preschool provision would make school viable. Placing school under headship of Keelby with 2 full time teachers at Brocklesby Park would provide financial savings and enable quality education.
Resident		Y	I think village schools are a good thing because the children get more attention and good community spirit.
Parent/Carer		Y	Understand the school cannot financially stay open. More should have been done in last few years to boost pupil intake. Communication between school and parents is poor. Our son has flourished academically and we believe he has benefitted from quality teacher time that he may not have received in a larger school. However his social interaction has suffered from low pupil numbers. Closure would be sad - the school is part of area's heritage and the reason we moved to the village.
Resident		Y	Removing the school from the village may well be the beginning of the end what's next the shop/pub/hall
Neighbouring LA	Y		NELC supports LCC with regard to the proposal to close Brocklesby Park
Neighbouring LA		Y	North Lincs schools that serve the areas in which displaced pupils live have capacity to accept pupils and the council does not object to the proposal to close the school
Teacher/School Staff		Y	I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such dedicated and caring staff. All of my three daughters attended and I feel fortunate that they were taught in this small, wonderful school which is located in a lovely rural setting. To close this school would be upsetting for all the staff and parents and would deprive children of being taught in a caring family environment.
Parent/Carer		Y	
Parent/Carer		Y	My 3-year old attends 'Little Brocks' toddler group and attends to Montessori pre-school nearby as she is an only child and enjoys the personal family atmosphere. The physical surroundings of the school of a rural nature enhance this 'hidden gem'...I would very much like my daughter to remain part of this family throughout her primary education.
Resident		Y	
Resident		Y	

Resident	Y	I feel it would be nice to keep this small village school open as I have know many parents whose children have used this school and highly recommend it.
Teacher/School Staff	Y	School has always had a caring family feel. If transport was offered from nearby villages this might boost numbers
Resident	Y	
Resident	Y	
Parent/Carer	Y	We moved here so our children could go to this school. My child was getting lost at his last school and since they have been coming here they have come on leaps and bounds. The work my child provides is amazing and that is down to the teachers and the head at this school.
Parent/Carer	Y	My grandson started at this school and could not read or write. I have been so impressed with his progress and the care the staff take with children. Not all kids thrive in big schools. BPPS means so much to the people who know and recognise how special it is. This school has a big heart - parents are leaving kids who treat kids like their own. The problem lies in not enough people knowing about it. I think the governors have been weak and complacent and not explored every opportunity. HT is a lovely lady who has improved standards but the school needs a more dynamic manager. A pre-school would help the school build numbers. Join with another school of look at independence - to suit uniqueness
Resident	Y	
Resident	Y	
Resident	Y	I wouldn't like to see it closed
Resident	Y	From how my granddaughter was encouraged with her education. Coming from a school in Norfolk she was behind but soon improved with good teaching at BPPS
Grandparent	Y	school is hidden gem and closure would be a travesty. Hopefully a way can be found to increase pupil numbers. Having to bus pupils to another school would be expensive and outweigh benefits from the school's closure. Could sponsorship from the industrial Humber Bank companies be a possible option? My grandson has progressed extremely well at the school in a way which may not have been possible at a larger school. Pupils and staff all know each other - a very friendly family atmosphere.
Parent/Carer	Y	We chose the school because of its location, nurturing and friendly atmosphere. Children, parents and teachers are like family. The school is an important meeting place for parents. Numbers need to increase and one way of doing this would be to open a nursery. The school could be marketed better and most parents would be happy to help with this.
Governor	y	Unique family school. Management of the school has been weak and not enough has been done to build up the numbers. Nursery provision and out of hours care should be looked at. A business plan must be marketed. There needs to be closer federation with local schools e.g. head sharing. The school is in a fantastic position for parents from Brigg, Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Caistor and parents who work on Humber Bank.
Resident	Y	All my children went there and had a good education

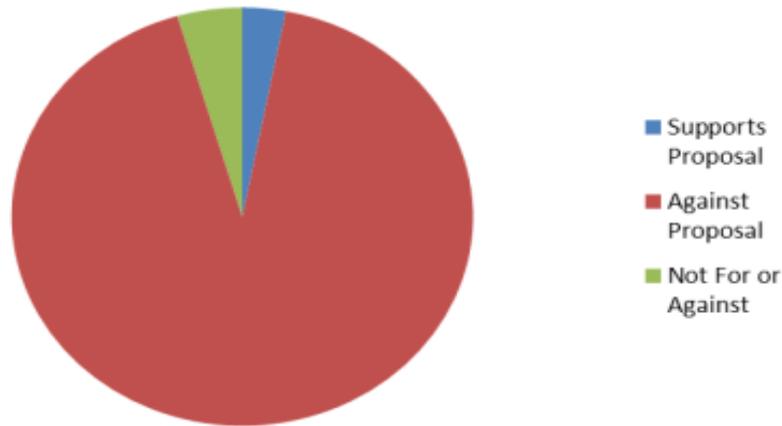
2023/24

Teacher/School Staff

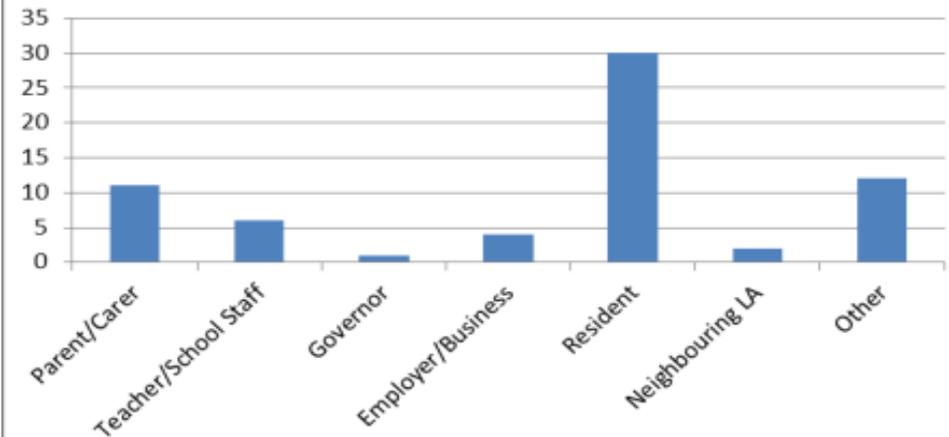
Y

For over 160 years this school has been a vital part of this community and the surrounding area. Pupils are taught in a unique environment and building which is very rare these days. Both children and adults are very supportive towards the school which is shown whenever fund raising and social event happen. The school has promising results with all the staff contributing to maintaining and raising standards, levels and results. To close the school would end years of learning traditions and values that once gone can never be reclaimed. It would be a travesty should it close for good, its loss would be irreplaceable.

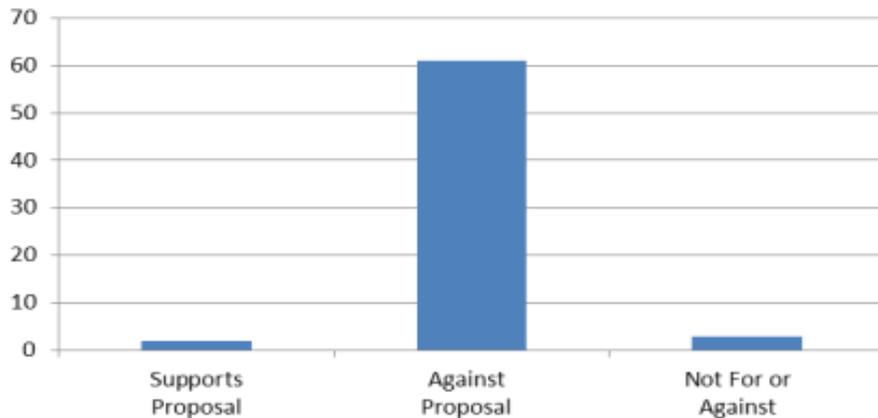
Consultation Responses Overview



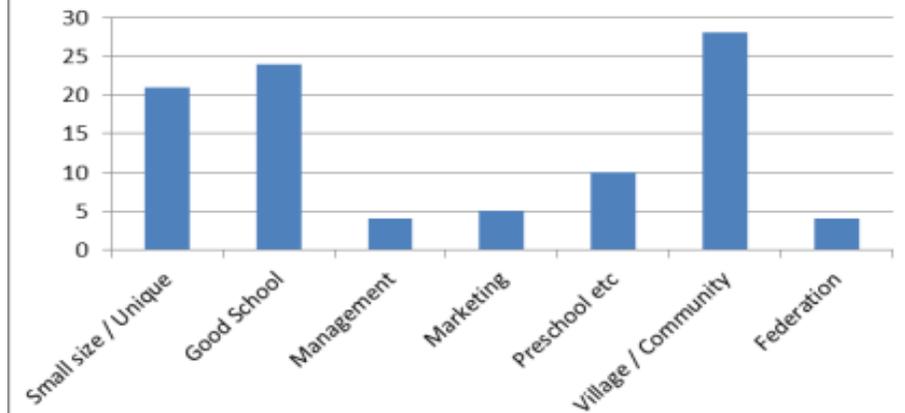
Responding Consultees



Consultation Responses Overview



Key Noted Reasons Given



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BROCKLESBY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

THE CASE FOR TERMINATING THE PROCESS TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL IN 2015

The local authority's reason for issuing a notice of closure is that, in its current form, the school's projected pupil numbers point to unsustainability in both educational and financial terms. The school fully understands this position.

The school has proposed developing its early years' provision in order to increase the numbers on roll to the extent that the school achieves financial sustainability within three years. Thus, the school would not remain in its current form. The local authority takes the view that this initiative, by itself, does not mitigate the risk to sustained educational viability.

The local authority supports a partnership between the school and Tollbar Multi Academy Trust (TMAT), whereby the school would access the Trust's pooled financial and educational resources. Furthermore, TMAT could organise publicity and transport that would increase pupil numbers beyond those planned by the school's early years' proposal. In order for this to happen, the school needs to convert into an academy. An application made to the Office of the Regional Commissioner was turned down by the Headteacher Board (HTB) on March 26th.

Feedback on this refusal suggests that the substantive reason hinges on the small size of school. A Freedom of Information (Fol) request for further detail has resulted in an uninformative and unhelpful response. The school and the TMAT feel that the HTB lacks experience of small schools and is not best placed to make judgements on future configurations that might assure their future.

In seeking new ways forward, the school has had discussions with Lord Yarborough, a governor of the school and landowner, who has agreed to fund the school to the extent of guaranteeing a balanced budget over the next two academic years, in order that the school has time to seek and plan alternative pathways to educational and financial sustainability.

The Governing Body of the school is now able to assure the local authority on three counts (from September 2015):

1. A guaranteed balanced budget over the next two years
2. Immediate educational viability and sustainability
3. A firm commitment to reapply for academy status within the next six months

A guaranteed balanced budget over the next two years

A letter of commitment from Lord Yarborough is attached (see attachment 3). Over the two year period, with the help of TMAT, the school will develop its early years' provision to 'grow' pupil numbers. In addition, over the two year period, TMAT will use its expertise and resources to increase pupil numbers through well targeted publicity campaigns and the organisation of transport from villages across county borders. These matters are already signalled in the consultation prospectus, application and supporting papers.

Immediate educational viability and sustainability

Again, as signalled in the consultation prospectus, application and supporting papers, TMAT will take control of staffing with a view to deploying appropriately qualified staff across all its constituent academies (and partner schools) in ways that secure cost efficiency and educational entitlement and excellence. In addition, TMAT will assume joint control of finance and administration, along with responsibility for school improvement.

A firm commitment to reapply for academy status within the next six months

The governing body of the school with TMAT will reapply for academy status for the school and incorporation into TMAT before February 2016. A period of time will be needed in the autumn term to engage in frank and productive discussions with the Regional Commissioner to assure the next application's success. From September, TMAT will treat Brocklesby Park as a 'partner school' and, as such, 'a school in the process of joining the TMAT'. This will allow TMAT to initiate all those strategies necessary to secure the school's long term future and, in due course, to remove it from Lord Yarborough's fixed term financial lifeline. The *quid pro quo* of this arrangement, given TMAT's monetary commitment, is that the local authority and the school commit to the TMAT solution and do not seek arrangements with alternative multi academy trusts. The governing body of the school will co-opt into its group a member of the TMAT board to develop relationships and to ensure a single and agreed development pathway. Furthermore, the local authority will devolve to the school in full all due revenue and capital funding.

The school and the Trust take the view that this alters the nature and circumstances of this school sufficiently to warrant a withdrawal of notice of closure. Governors ask that Lincolnshire County Council give this proposal due consideration. Should the Council wish to retain the notice but alter the schedule to defer the closure date then governors would ask for a one year "stay" to give the chance of one more application for academy conversion. Should this fail then all parties would cooperate in a managed closure in August 2016.

Attachments

- 1 Revenue funding projections September 1 2015 to August 31 2017
- 2 Capital funding projections September 1 2015 to August 31 2017
- 3 Letter of commitment from Lord Yarborough
- 4 Letter of commitment from the Tollbar Multi Academy Trust Board
- 5 Letter of commitment from the Brocklesby park School Governors
- 6 Letter of commitment from the Local Authority

1 Revenue funding**Two Year Budget from 1 April 2015**

	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>
Income		
Budget Share	171,447	161,244
Early years adjustment	9,662	20,434
Carry forward	13,325	(2,396)
	<u>194,434</u>	<u>179,282</u>
Expenditure		
Teaching staff	114,544	120,073
Non-teaching staff	46,598	47,107
Indirect employee expenses (car allowance)	500	500
Development and training	3,500	3,000
Building maintenance and improvement	7,390	1,000
Grounds maintenance	1,488	1,538
Cleaning and caretaking	290	300
Water services	800	820
Energy and rates	3,000	5,745
Other occupational costs	1,546	1,822
Learning resources	500	1,600
ICT learning resources	434	442
Administrative supplies	4,697	4,832
Insurance premiums	2,800	3,497
Agency supply	5,000	3,000
Bought in professional services	3,743	3,815
	<u>196,830</u>	<u>199,091</u>
Accumulated deficit	<u>(2,396)</u>	<u>(19,809)</u>

2 Capital Funding

The devolved capital figures are as set out below

B/F at 01/04/2015	37,378
2015/16	4,191
2016/17 (estimated)	4,000
	<hr/>
	<u>45,569</u>

3 Letter of commitment from The Earl of Yarborough

I am a governor of Brocklesby Park Primary School and understand that the low number of pupils currently at the school has reduced its income to the point that it can no longer afford to run.

I take the view that an initiative to provide for very young children at the school could have a beneficial effect on future numbers. Furthermore, a partnership between the school and a local multi-academy trust, known as the Tollbar Family of Academies, could bring further benefits in terms of economies of scale and increased publicity.

These initiatives take time to bed in and bring the school back to educational and financial viability. Closing the school now prevents these initiatives taking off. I would like to give the school a chance to prove the possibility of sustained viability.

To this end, should the school remain open after August 31st 2015, I will establish a fund, for a period of no more than two years, to be known as the Brocklesby Park School Trust into which I am transferring £25,000. This sum equates to more than the school's projected revenue budget deficit by August 31st 2017. The school may draw on this fund over the next two years in order to meet its full running costs and continue to balance its budget.

For further details, please get in touch with my secretary who will be given responsibility for the management of this fund from September 1st 2015 to August 31st 2017.

4 Letter of commitment from Tollbar Multi Academy Trust

Should Brocklesby Park School remain open after August 31st 2015, Tollbar Multi Academy Trust (TMAT) will use its best endeavours to ensure a full, broad and balanced educational experience for all pupils at the school. Furthermore, it will work with the school to help it reach sustainable financial viability.

Subject to an invitation from the school, the TMAT Board will volunteer a member to join the Governing Body at Brocklesby Park. The CEO of TMAT will lead on all joint initiatives liaising with the local authority as necessary.

In terms of day-to day operations, TMAT will treat Brocklesby Park as though it were a full member of the Tollbar Family of Academies, for example, in the expectations of quality, staff deployment and involvement in intra-MAT activities. At the same time, TMAT is aware of the LA Maintained status of the school and the MAT will apply common sense principles to areas of co-working.

TMAT will discuss with the LA the delivery of services to the school with a view to securing efficiency and effectiveness.

TMAT will fully support the school in re-applying to become an academy within the Tollbar family of Academies. Should the application fail then TMAT will support the local authority in the managed closure of the school.

Should the MAT have any concerns over the school's progress towards educational and financial viability it will raise these directly with the local authority.

Should the school close, TMAT would expect to reclaim any physical assets in which it has invested.

Should the MAT have any concerns over the school's progress towards educational and financial viability it will raise these directly with the local authority.

5 Letter of commitment from Brocklesby Park School Governors

Should the school remain open after August 31st 2015, Brocklesby Park School Governors will continue to fulfil their statutory duties.

In addition, through co-opting a member of the Tollbar MAT Board onto the governing body, they will work to build a deep and productive relationship with Tollbar MAT in order to develop a viable and sustainable school in both educational and financial terms.

Governors envisage a period of two years will be required to reach this point.

During the autumn term 2015 governors will open discussions with representatives from the Office of the Regional Commissioner with a view to resubmitting, by the end of February 2016, a successful application to convert to academy status and join Tollbar MAT.

Should the application fail and/or viability cannot be achieved then governors, in discussion with Tollbar MAT will ask Lincolnshire Council to proceed with enacting the closure at the end of the 2015 -16 academic year.

6 Letter of commitment from the Local Authority

Should Brocklesby Park School remain open after August 31st 2015, the local authority will continue to exercise its normal rights and responsibilities in relation to the safety and performance of pupils at the school. Until any academy conversion the school remains maintained by the local authority.

That said, the local authority will work to maintain a productive relationship with Tollbar MAT, recognising the commitment it will be making to the school. Where TMAT is providing services to the school, the local authority will seek to rebate to the school the costs that would have been paid to deliver those same services by the local authority. The local authority will apply common sense principles to areas of co-working.

Given the time, effort and resources already invested by TMAT, the local authority will not look to any other multi academy trust or chain to secure the future of Brocklesby Park.

The local authority understands that TMAT intends that the school's capital budget is to be used to fund an early years' on-site removable building. Should this proceed and the school is subsequently closed, TMAT would retain ownership of the removable building and any other significant removable investment it had made.

Should the local authority have any concerns over the school's progress towards educational and financial viability it will raise these directly with the CEO of TMAT.

The local authority will continue to give every support to the school's application to convert to academy status and become incorporated into the Tollbar Family of Academies. Should the application fail then the local authority will proceed with the closure of the school.

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Department
for Education

Regional Schools Commissioner's Office
East Midlands and Humber

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Sheffield
S1 2FJ

Tel: 0114 2742293
Email: EMH.RSC@education.gsi.gov.uk

Steve Tinagate
Chair of Governors
Brocklesby Park Primary School
Great Limber
Grimsby
Lincolnshire
DN37 8JS

27 March 2015

Dear Mr Tinagate

Thank you for your application to convert to an academy, joining Tollbar Trust. Your application was discussed at the Headteacher Board yesterday. After careful consideration, including representations received prior to the meeting, it was decided to decline Brocklesby Park Primary School becoming an academy.

I realise that this is disappointing. In reaching this decision, we could not ignore the fact that the school has very low pupil numbers and is currently only 25% full. Even with future predictions and adding a nursery, it will potentially have only 38 pupils in total and will be only 68% full. We are also aware that the local authority has commenced a consultation on the proposal to close Brocklesby Park due to concerns about its long term sustainability and capacity to offer quality education to pupils with the resources available.

I recognise that joining Tollbar would allow the school to benefit from greater economies of scale and would strengthen the educational expertise available to the school. However, the extremely low current and projected numbers on roll; the low pupil numbers in the local area and capacity available in the schools nearby would make it extremely difficult for the trust to be viable in the long term.

I am copying this letter to the headteacher and to Lincolnshire Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

JENNIFER BEXON-SMITH
Regional Schools Commissioner, East Midlands and Humber

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APPENDIX E

Statutory Notice to Propose to Discontinue Brocklesby Park Primary School

This Notice is issued to replace the Notice published on 10 April 2015. To meet the latest Department for Education legislation requirements the Representation period will run for four weeks from 24 April 2015. The end date of the Representation period is 22 May 2015.

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ proposes to discontinue Brocklesby Park Primary School, Great Limber, Grimsby DN37 8JS on 31 August 2015.

If the closure goes ahead the Local Authority will offer all displaced pupils a place at Keelby Primary School, Manor Street, Keelby Grimsby DN41 8EF. There is sufficient capacity at Keelby Primary School for all displaced pupils.

The County Council home-to-school transport policy will continue to apply - this provides free home-to-school transport for pupils to their nearest or designated school (if it is more than 2 miles away for primary age pupils). In addition, arrangements will be made to allow displaced children whose parents select the receiving school named above, and who live within the current designated transport area for Brocklesby Park Primary School, to have free transport to Keelby Primary School if the school is more than 2 miles from the family's home.

There is a proposal for Brocklesby Park Primary School to convert to an Academy under the Tollbar Multi-Academy Trust. If the conversion of the school to academy status goes ahead then this proposal will be withdrawn and the closure process will end. The school would then continue as an Academy. This is dependent on a funding agreement being signed and agreed by the Department for Education. The academy conversion process will continue to run in parallel with the closure process until an outcome is known (no later than the end of the school term).

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal with further detail can be obtained by writing to: School Organisation Planning, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by calling 01522 553329 or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk or under "Current Consultations" via www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolorganisation

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to School Organisation Planning, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk by the deadline of 22 May 2015.

Further details on the consultation which has led to this proposal can be accessed on-line under "Current Consultations" via <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolorganisation>

Signed: Debbie Barnes
Executive Director of Children's Services
Lincolnshire County Council

Publication Date: 24 April 2015

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Complete Proposal
to Discontinue
Brocklesby Park Primary School

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 OF THE EDUCATION AND
INSPECTIONS ACT 2006

PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

24 April 2015

Contact details

This proposal is issued to replace the Complete Proposal published on 10 April 2015. It has been published by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ regarding the potential closure of Brocklesby Park Primary School, Great Limber, Grimsby DN37 8JS. The school is a Community school maintained by the Local Authority (LA).

Implementation

The proposal is to discontinue Brocklesby Park Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015. There is also an option being explored for Brocklesby Park Primary School to convert to an Academy. If the conversion of the school to academy status goes ahead then this discontinuance proposal will be withdrawn and the closure process would end. The school would then continue as an Academy if a Funding Agreement were entered into with the Department for Education (DfE).

Objectives and reason for closure

The proposal detailed in this document is to discontinue Brocklesby Park Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015 and is not related to any other school organisation proposal. LAs are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential whilst at the same time meeting the aim of enabling children to take up a school place within their local community. To help the LA meet these duties and restructure local provision they have the power to close all categories of maintained schools. The objective of this proposal is to safeguard and protect the standard of provision of primary education for pupils currently attending Brocklesby Park Primary School and for children in the area. This proposal considers the discontinuance of the school 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 and supports the Council's aim of ensuring that as many children as possible can reach their full potential.

Following careful consideration of how to secure a viable future for the school, the Governing Body of Brocklesby Park Primary School made the difficult decision to request that the LA start the consultation process on the proposal to close the school. The decision of the Governing Body to request that the LA consult on closure has been taken in the context of concern over the long term sustainability of the school in relation to being able to continue to offer quality education to pupils with the resources available. Low pupil numbers in the local area and the extremely low current and projected numbers on roll do not allow the Governing Body to set a balanced budget that can continue to provide the breadth and quality of provision that children are entitled to.

The Statutory Notice has been published to propose the discontinuance of Brocklesby Park Primary School for the following reasons:-

- To comply with the wishes of the Governing Body in exploring the options for the future of the school.

- A changing age profile of the rural population in recent years resulting in a trend towards lower numbers of families with primary age pupils choosing to live in small rural communities. There are no longer sufficient pupil numbers in the immediate area for a viable school to remain educationally and financially sustainable.
- To reduce any detrimental effect on educational standards that can potentially occur at schools with very low numbers on roll. To keep the school open would mean children continuing to attend a very small school and consequently place greater demands on a small number of staff to adequately deliver the full curriculum entitlement. The staffing structure would have to reduce further to stand a chance of setting a balanced budget with the current number of children on roll. Continued low pupil numbers will mean that the school would be unlikely to be able to generate the budget to maintain the high standard of education that all pupils are entitled to. It would be difficult to provide a wide and diverse curriculum and would limit the range of opportunities available for all pupils both for their academic and social development. The LA cannot financially support the school outside of the funding formula applied to all schools.
- To enable pupils to receive a more rounded education in a larger school offering greater social interaction.
- To reduce the incidence of teaching several year groups in one class and in groups that involve teaching across more than one Key Stage. To keep the school open, the low numbers on roll may require a school organisation based on teaching all 7 year groups within one class in the future, which is not considered to be in the best interests of the children.
- To reduce surplus capacity in the area but still provide sufficient places to meet local needs and parental preference. This decrease in surplus capacity contributes to ensuring the provision of sustainable schools across the county allowing future investment to be used more effectively to support schools in raising standards. If the school were to remain open there would be an unacceptable level of surplus places which is currently over 70% and may possibly increase in September.
- To enhance the future sustainability of the remaining primary schools in the local area. Ensuring sustainability is vital in that it has an impact on recruiting and retaining staff of a high calibre in the area and also attracting future investment.
- To improve value for money delivered by larger schools. Very small schools require a disproportionate amount of funding. The sparsely populated county of Lincolnshire makes it necessary to sustain smaller schools to meet the needs of local communities across wide rural areas, and the LA's funding formula supports this. However, when numbers fall as low as they are at Brocklesby Park the situation becomes unsustainable for a stand-alone school of this size. The school is not financially viable in the short or long term. Schools are not legally allowed to set a deficit budget without a realistic evidence based medium term plan showing how the deficit will be turned around.

- To enable the process to continue to the next stage and allow a further opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal and ensure that they will be taken into account by the Executive Councillor prior to the final decision being taken. This continuation of the process will allow more time for all potential alternatives to closure to be fully and robustly explored.
- To enable the statutory and legal processes to proceed in accordance with DfE guidelines.

Pupil numbers and admissions

This proposal is written in the context of concern over the long term sustainability of the school. Despite the hard work of Governors to market the school the numbers have remained low. The number of children who live local to the school is not sufficient to support a sustainable stand-alone primary school.

To remain viable the school needs to increase the number on roll by attracting pupils from further away than what would be considered the 'natural catchment' area. There are currently 14 pupils on roll at the School which has a potential capacity for 56 leaving 75% surplus capacity. There is also some surplus capacity at neighbouring schools where there are spaces available to accommodate the children from Brocklesby Park were the school to close. The admissions process for the September 2015 Reception intake has received only 1 first preference application and therefore the expected number on roll at September 2015 is 13. The latest LA projections (May 2014) estimated that potentially 15 pupils would be on roll for the 2015/16 academic year. The same projections indicate up to only 13 pupils on roll for the 2017/18 academic year.

The school has undertaken their own survey with current parents to assess potential sibling and first child intakes for future Reception intakes as follows:-

2015 = 2 (Total NOR = 15)
 2016 = 6 (Total NOR = 18)
 2017 = 7 (Total NOR = 21)
 2018 = 4 (Total NOR = 22)
 2019 = 3 (Total NOR = 23)

These figures are more positive, but are still too low to demonstrate a sustainable number on roll in the long term. Further data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) birth data and LA projections (using birth data, GP registrations and historic pupil movement in and out of the area) indicate continued low numbers in future years emphasising the need to attract pupils from outside of the local area to sustainable viable pupil numbers for a stand-alone primary school.

Displaced pupils

Neighbouring schools in the area have available spaces so offer the opportunity for parental choice. If the closure goes ahead the LA will offer all displaced pupils a place at the nearest neighboring school, Keelby Primary School, Manor Street, Keelby Grimsby DN41 8EF. There is sufficient capacity at Keelby Primary School for all displaced pupils and there will be no requirement to increase the number of

school places available as a consequence of the proposed discontinuance of Brocklesby Park.

Impact on the community

There would be the inevitable disruption for pupils, parents and staff if this proposal proceeds, but this would be short term. This proposal would address the issues surrounding a declining primary school population in an area where there are other appropriate schools in more densely populated areas with sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils. The County Council believes that this proposal provides the best solution to addressing and meeting the long term educational and social needs of the children in the area if it is not possible to sustain a viable school in Brocklesby Park.

An educational site would no longer provide services for children and young people. The LA understands that the school is an important part of the community, not just as a school but as a facility used by other members of the public. The County Council would work with the local community to try to ensure that the impact of this proposal would be mitigated.

Alternative community uses for the school building would be considered prior to any decision being made about the future of the premises.

The small size of the school limits its ability to offer a wide range of extended services which are likely to be more readily and widely available at neighbouring schools with a larger number on roll. Extended services currently provided at Brocklesby Park Primary School are already in existence at other neighbouring schools.

The LA has a good track record of redeployment of staff and will always seek to avoid redundancy not only to mitigate costs but also to reduce the human costs of redundancy.

The LA does not consider that there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that will arise if the school closes. The LA continues to be committed to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area and aims to ensure that such opportunities are open to all believing that this will be met by the remaining schools in the area.

Balance of denominational provision

Brocklesby Park Primary School is a community school with no designated religious character and therefore the proposed closure will not have any impact on the balance of denominational provision and associated parental choice in the area.

Rural primary schools

Under current DfE guidance there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but that the case should be strong and a proposal clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. In order to consider the proposal to close the school the LA has paid particular attention to the following points:-

- The likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community:

The school currently provides places for only 4 pupils from the local community. The school is not in the centre of the village it serves (Great Limber). It is located 0.7 miles out of the village which is a 10-15 minute walk. The LA understands that the school is regarded by the local community as an important facility and members of the local community believe it would have a negative impact if the school were to close. The LA would work with the local community to try to ensure that any negative impact on the community from the loss of the school would be mitigated through partnership working with other services and schools in the area and reduce any negative impact on community cohesion were the school to close.

- Educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools:

The closure of a school can potentially reduce extended services on offer. However, in this case, the small size of the school limits its ability to offer a wide range of extended services which are likely to be more readily and widely available at neighbouring schools with a larger number on roll. It is also challenging to demonstrate the impact on educational standards with such a small cohort. In their current school pupils are required to mix across multiple year groups. Neighbouring schools are regarded by Ofsted and the LA as being of an equal or higher standard. Standards at neighbouring schools would not be expected to be negatively affected by taking on pupils from Brocklesby Park.

The LA has carefully considered the impact on educational standards and believes that the closure of the school has the potential to protect and improve educational standards. To keep the school open may have a detrimental effect in that it would mean children continuing to attend a very small school and consequently placing greater demands on a small number of staff to adequately deliver the full curriculum entitlement. To keep the school open, the low numbers on roll may require a school organisation based on teaching all 7 year groups within one class, which is not considered to be in the best interests of the children. Provision at neighbouring schools is rated by Ofsted more highly than that at Brocklesby Park with the two closest Lincolnshire schools being rated as "Good" at their last inspections.

- The availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools and any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effect of any such increase:

The LA has considered the impact on transporting pupils to other schools should Brocklesby Park close. Many of the pupils who currently attend Brocklesby Park live closer to other local schools and it is not expected that the closure would significantly increase the number of car journeys to transport children to and from school. If all pupils currently on roll at Brocklesby Park went to their nearest local school then the combined distance of all pupils would be nearly half of what it is now. Were the school to close then transport would be offered according to LCC's school transport

policy taking advantage of the established routes already in use in the area. It is not expected that costs would increase significantly even if all parents chose to take up the transport offer.

- Any alternatives to the closure of the school:

The Governing Body, supported by the LA, has pursued potential alternatives to closure in recent years but despite the hard work to market the school the numbers have remained low. Following the request of the Governing Body to commence the closure process and comments raised during consultation the LA has given further consideration to all potential alternatives to closure. The three main alternatives which are continuing to be pursued in parallel with the closure process are the possibility of federation with another school, academisation within a Multi-Academy Trust or the introduction of Early Years provision at the school which are all discussed more fully below in the Consultation section.

Special educational needs (SEN) provision

The proportion of children at the school with special educational needs (SEN) is very high (65% in January 2014). Should the school close this would be an opportunity for improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision. Places for all displaced pupils would be available at the 2 closest Lincolnshire schools whose proportion of pupils with SEN at the same date was 18% and 13%. This proposal would therefore likely lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children currently at the school through ensuring a more balanced proportion of pupils with SEN integrated in mainstream schools with specialist facilities to help ensure all pupils have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Consideration of pupils with SEN will take place and the LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEN.

Travel

Only 4 of the current pupils attending Brocklesby Park Primary live within walking distance of the school. These children would have to travel further than at present, potentially increasing transport costs, although this effect is expected to be minimal in the long term due to the small number of children. Some local children already choose to travel to alternative schools, and some children not local to the school choose to travel from outside of the village.

For these pupils and those who are currently not within walking distance, most journeys to alternative schools would not be lengthy and well within the County Council's guidelines for maximum journey times for primary age pupils of 45 minutes. In many cases there are alternative schools with places available that would result in shorter distances travelled than at present.

The County Council home-to-school transport policy will continue to apply - this provides free home-to-school transport for pupils to their nearest or designated school (if it is more than 2 miles away for primary age pupils). In addition, arrangements will be made to allow displaced children whose parents select the

receiving school named above, and who live within the current designated transport area for Brocklesby Park Primary School, to have free transport to Keelby Primary School if the school is more than 2 miles from the family's home.

Pupils travelling over 2 miles and meeting the free transport criteria would be provided with transport by means of local bus services or contracted vehicles, which is considered to be the safest and most environmentally cost-effective method of transportation over medium distances. This will make use of the established routes already in use in the area and it is not expected that costs would increase significantly even if all parents choose to take up the transport offer. Many of the pupils who currently attend Brocklesby Park live closer to other local schools and it is not expected that the closure would significantly increase the number of car journeys to transport children to and from school.

Consultation

In order for the school to close the LA must follow the necessary statutory legal processes as required by the Secretary of State in accordance with the EIA 2006, the Education Act 2011 and the guidance of the DfE regarding expansion

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. Under the DfE guidelines which came into effect in January 2014 it is no longer prescribed how statutory consultation is carried out. There is no longer a prescribed consultation period for proposed school closures although a minimum of 6 weeks is recommended which should also avoid school holidays. To comply with this the LA has conducted an eight week period of consultation. Any documentation issued must set out the problem that is being addressed and invite comment on one or more solutions. The LA must explain the decision making process and take all reasonable steps to draw the proposal to the attention of all those who might be interested and take into account their views. All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposal have been complied with.

The guidance issued by the DfE in January 2014 states that in the case of the closure of a rural primary school the parents of current pupils and the local district and parish councils where the school is situated **must** be consulted. The guidance also lists who should be consulted in connection with all proposed school closures. The list of interested parties was therefore compiled according to these principles comprising as wide a range of consultees as practicable to ensure that all interested parties were included and incorporated parents of current pupils and the Chief Executive of the District Council as well as individual County, District and Parish Councillors as appropriate.

Guidance also requires current pupils to be consulted and all of the children on roll were given the opportunity to discuss the potential closure of their school. The children were encouraged to consider the things they love about their school, and the things they would miss if the school closed. The overall view expressed by the children was one of sadness at the thought of the closure of the school and, for the majority, what would be missed would be their friends.

A letter incorporating relevant information and reasons for the proposal was sent out to interested parties on 19 November 2014 to commence an eight week period

of consultation. A public meeting was held at Great Limber Village Hall on 2 December to provide more detail about the proposal and enable parents and all interested parties to ask questions and raise concerns. Notes were taken at this meeting and are attached as Appendix A. There was the opportunity to provide a response to the consultation by letter, email or by returning the response form attached to the consultation document by 16 January 2015. Copies of the letter commencing consultation and the response form were also published on the County Council website under the webpage "Current Consultations" on www.Lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolorganisation

All written responses received during consultation have been provided to the Executive Councillor for consideration and further details are confirmed in Appendix B. To briefly summarise, however, there were 67 valid responses in total with 2 in favour, 62 against the proposal and a further 3 responses which were neither for nor against the proposal but incorporated comments for consideration. Responses were received from 12 parents of current pupils with 11 of these being against the proposal. The largest number of responses was received from local residents with 29 of these being against the proposal. Many of the responses against the proposal supported the unique small size of the school believing this benefitted the children by providing a low staff to pupil ratio, friendly atmosphere and excellent support both educationally and emotionally.

The letter giving details of the consultation process incorporated the following details of the anticipated timeline:-

STAGE 1	STAGE 2*	STAGE 3*	STAGE 4*	STAGE 5*
Consultation 8 Weeks	Publication of Statutory Notice	Representation Period 4 Weeks	Final LA Decision	Implementation
19 th November – 16 th January	February 2015	February – March 2015	May 2015	31 August 2015

However, following the written responses received in the consultation period and the questions and comments raised at the public meeting the LA extended the timescales for stages 2 and 3 as above by approximately 7 weeks to allow more time for the Governing Body and the LA to ensure all alternatives to closure have been considered prior to progressing to the next stage. The process is now continuing through stages 2 and 3 with the Statutory Notice (Stage 2) being published on 24 April and the final decision (Stage 4) likely to be taken in June 2015 but no later than the end of the school term in July.

This extension of the process has enabled the following options to be explored in greater detail:-

1. LA officers have contacted all schools and academies in Lincolnshire and also a number of schools and academies that are in neighbouring authorities but within a reasonable travelling distance to consider the option of federation. Despite some early enquiries which didn't progress, to date there has not been any serious interest expressed in a school federating with Brocklesby Park Primary School.
2. LA officers have also contacted every Trust on the list of DfE approved sponsors to explore the possibility of Brocklesby Park becoming an academy within a Multi-Academy or Umbrella Trust. This has resulted in a

Multi-Academy Trust expressing an interest in the school joining their Trust. An initial application has been made to the DfE for the school to convert to an academy and join a Multi-Academy Trust. The LA will continue to facilitate discussions between the school and potential sponsors and pursue this option in parallel to the closure process.

3. The Governing Body has researched the feasibility of offering Early Years provision at the school and has produced an initial business case predicated both on increased income from this provision and also a projected consequent increase in the number on roll at the school which may potentially produce a surplus budget for the first time in 2018/2019. As a stand-alone school, LA and School Improvement officers have some concerns over assumptions made in this initial business case. In order that it can be demonstrated to be viable and realistic, further work and a more robust evidence based plan would be required to enable the LA to support it prior to the final decision being made on the future of the school.
4. The Executive Councillor has taken the decision to proceed to Statutory Notice therefore initiating a 4 week Representation Period. This will give more time for the above 3 options to continue to be explored and also be 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 by the Executive Councillor later this year. It is essential however that the statutory process continues in parallel with the pursuit of these options. In the event that none of the above three options result in a viable alternative to closure there should be no undue delay in the closure process in order to avoid as far as possible further negative impact on the pupils, their families and the local community.

Under current legislation the LA is the decision maker for the proposal and is co-ordinating the statutory process before making the final decision. The LA, as decision maker, must be able to show that all relevant issues raised are taken into consideration in the decision making process. Points raised can be considered unpersuasive but must not be ignored altogether.

Objections and Comments

Any person or organisation may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk to be received by the deadline of 22 May 2015.

At the close of the 4 week representation period (statutory formal consultation) on 22 May 2015 responses will be collated and analysed and a further report will be presented to the Executive Councillor for a final decision on the discontinuance of the school. This decision is likely to be taken in June 2015 but will be no later than the end of the term in July 2015. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal and ensure that they will be taken into account by the decision maker.

Appendix A

**Brocklesby Park Primary School Public Consultation Meeting
Great Limber Village Hall
6.30-8.00pm on 2 December 2014**

In attendance from the Local Authority (LA), CfBT and the school:-

Debbie Barnes: LA - Director of Children's Services (Chair)

Mrs P Bradwell: Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services

Steve Tinegate: Chair of Governors

Jo Spriggs: Head Teacher

Gill Curtis: CfBT School Improvement Service

Matt Clayton: School Organisation Planning Manager

35 parents, staff, governors and members of the local community attended

- *Introduction from Debbie Barnes as to how the meeting would proceed together with an outline of the consultation process.*
- *Introductions from each member of the panel.*
- *Introduction from Chair of Governors, Steve Tinegate, including reasons for proposing closure, in that there are not enough pupils to make the school viable and the consequent inability to set a balanced budget. This led to the Governing Body taking the difficult decision to ask the LA to commence consultation on closure.*

Where appropriate, further details have been added to the following answers to clarify any uncertainty. This document will be updated should further questions be received during the consultation period. All questions and comments will be considered along with all response forms received during the 8 week consultation period which closes on 16 January 2015.

Q & A

Q Regarding the budget, please clarify what you mean by medium term and long term

A Here the Governing Body (GB) is viewing the medium term as the financial year 2015/2016 and the long term 2016/17/18

Q If the numbers at the school for the academic year were up to 27 would this 100% guarantee the school would stay open?

A There would not be 100% guarantee.

Q If not 100%, then what sort of percentage would you think?

A The GB cannot give percentage guarantees but if the numbers were up to 27 this might buy time for the school to stay open for another academic year which could potentially offer more of a chance of staying open in the long term.

Q What is a "balanced budget"?

- A** A balanced budget is one in which income exceeds expenditure whereas a deficit budget is one in which expenditure exceeds income
- Q** Can we reduce expenditure at the school eg reduce the staffing costs to balance the fall in pupil numbers?
- A** To reduce the staffing further would not be acceptable to Ofsted and would likely lead to the children not receiving the standard of education they deserve
- Q** Please confirm the numbers of staff employed at the school
- A** 8 teaching and non-teaching staff but not all full time. The teaching staff comprises 1 full-time and 1 part-time member with the Headteacher also teaching part-time. To reduce the staffing level so that all the children would have to be taught in one class (Reception through to Y6) would present significant difficulties in both meeting the needs of all the children and offering the full curriculum. This would likely compromise the children's education and progress that they should make.
- Q** The numbers have been low for some time – what have the GB done to plan for this?
- A** The GB has tried to market the school and employed a professional service to assist. Conversion to Academy status, either alone or as part of a Trust, has been explored. The school has joined a collaborative partnership with other local schools for support and to help reduce costs.
- Q** Parents have been unaware of all this – what did you discover and what was discussed?
- A** The school is too small to convert to Academy status and needs the support of the LA. We are also too small for Multi Academy Trusts to be interested in us being sponsored by them. Similarly other local schools were not interested in federating in the light of our low numbers. Demographic information does not suggest any increase in numbers.
- Q** Should we not explore these options fully?
- A** The LA will look at all possibilities during the consultation period and would want to fully explore Academy and federation options, but agree that Academy sponsors are unlikely to be interested with such low pupil numbers. Matt Clayton confirmed that NHS GP registration data and ONS birth data for the local area has been provided to the GB. Also the Headteacher has researched further information from parents (both current and future) regarding siblings and potential applicants for Reception to obtain a clearer picture but the numbers still look to remain low through to 2017/8 and are unlikely to get above the low twenties
- Q** The trend seems to be to close small schools and if this trend continues will we not be left with a small number of large schools? These do not suit all children – will there be a choice for a parent looking for a small school?
- A** The rural nature of Lincolnshire means that it is important to support small schools. The DfE considers a primary school to be sustainable when it has more than 100 pupils. In Lincolnshire we have over 100 schools with less than 100 pupils. In 2011 the government made changes to school funding leaving the LA with very little

discretion. The financial model that Lincolnshire operates does support small schools but even with this support the numbers at Brocklesby Park have dipped so low that they are below what is viable and demographics indicate that future school numbers will continue to be very low. Viability must also include educational as well as financial sustainability.

Q Has the GB considered offering a pre-school? The Little Brocks toddler group has 6/8 children regularly attending.

A The GB has not explored this option, but is open to the idea.

Q If we can fundraise and subsidise the school's income, would this help?

A If we had another income stream this may help but how can this extra income be generated and sustained? The GB needs your ideas.

Q As parents we wish that you had told us of the position 2 years ago rather than at the last minute.

A Noted.

Q The school is part of the estate heritage. What is the Estate's involvement?

A Lord Yarborough and Kit Read are both on the GB and are aware of the situation. They have been fully involved with the GB's activities.

Q I understand that they are aware but what is the Estate's input?

A Both Lord Yarborough and Kit Read share the parents' concerns and are keen for the school to continue. They are interested in hearing ideas from parents and would welcome the setting up of a working group and also new members to fill the vacancies on the GB.

Q There are no easy solutions – Great Limber has an ageing population.

A Noted.

Q What will happen to the land and buildings if the school closes?

A The playing fields are estate land and would therefore revert to the estate. The LA has the freehold on the remaining land and buildings which would revert to the LA in the event of closure.

Q We appreciate that the numbers are low but as parents we were shocked to learn of the proposal to close the school. Many parents want to be involved and do have ideas eg federation, setting up a pre-school/out of school provision such as a breakfast club but are concerned that there will not be enough time to implement these ideas. We need to know exactly what has been done and who will process these ideas – can it be us as parents? The school may not be financially attractive but has so much to offer – history, heritage, buildings, nurturing environment.

A Working with other schools has been explored and many benefits have been gained from entering into the collaborative partnership eg mentoring, support, sharing good practice and resources. With regard to saving specific costs following

federation – even if 1 head teacher is shared the savings would not be significant and there would still be the running costs of each school.

Q How much money do we actually need?

A The following figures are based on the number on roll continuing on the existing basis:-

- We will enter the 2015/16 financial year with a £10k surplus which will be a £16k deficit by the end of the year
- Deficit at the end of the financial year 2016/2017 of £46k
- Deficit at the end of the financial year 2017/2018 of £83k

Q My 4 children have all attended the school during which time the numbers have fluctuated considerably – even as low as now. The listed building status has sometimes hampered improvements. It is a small school but with big support. It has a very supportive and nurturing environment which is of particular benefit to SEND children.

A Noted. We have a record of the numbers on roll back to 1975 which do not show numbers as low as now – but these figures are as recorded on the census day each year and do not represent all the fluctuations within an academic year.

Q Can we view this as an opportunity ie save the school from closure and use it as a test case of how to protect rural schools?

A This would have to be funded somehow.

Q We have all chosen this school for our children and just want the opportunity to raise funds. We believe there is the potential here but are concerned that there will not be enough time to implement our ideas.

A Noted.

Q What costs are involved in closing a school – could these costs be used to subsidise the school budget?

A As previously advised schools funding is prescribed by the government and the LA has limited discretion. If redundancies were involved there would obviously be costs but we cannot give a figure at this stage. The LA has a good track record of redeployment and will always seek to avoid redundancy not only to mitigate costs but also to reduce the human costs of redundancy. Other closure costs will include security and maintenance of the buildings while empty but the LA would not want the buildings to remain empty for long so disposal options would be looked at as quickly as possible and such costs would come out of the county budget and not the schools budget.

Q Are there any covenants on the buildings or land?

A At this initial stage we are not aware of any covenants but we will look into this fully should the closure proposal be pursued.

Q Failing businesses usually either diversify or specialise. Could we consider specialising eg concentrate on special needs? Do SEND pupils bring with them a

pupil premium? There is a trend towards inclusion but mainstream schools are often unwilling to offer special needs places.

A Lincolnshire places very few SEND pupils out of county and there is not an issue in placing SEND pupils. All schools are expected to meet SEND requirements of their pupils. There is a good special school in Brigg but we are not aware of the details of SEND places in North Lincs and North East Lincs. There are specialist costs associated with SEND pupils eg 1:2:1s etc and specialising in SEND provision would be likely to increase the school's costs and therefore not help in trying to balance the budget.

Q I chose this school as it is small and as a whole provides a nurturing environment. Bigger schools have to create a special group within their school to provide nurturing support. Why spend money on creating such groups when our school already provides a nurturing environment?

A All schools seek to provide nurturing support particularly for vulnerable children and it is one of the factors that Ofsted look for in their inspections.

Q The crux of the problem is the low numbers and if we could get 6 or 7 more children this would buy us time but we need another year to get the numbers up and look at the ideas already suggested such as a nursery so that the school would benefit from rent paid by the nursery provider and the children would flow up to the main school.

A Noted. With regard to the idea of running a nursery there would have to be evidence of demand to attract a private provider. The Birth to Five Service at the council would be able to advise and assist in preparing a business case.

Q Referring to a previous question – I disagree that all schools are nurturing. My son has attended 3 different schools with very varied support and it is only at this school that he has thrived. The nurture and support at this school is one of its strengths.

A Noted

Q I would be interested to hear what the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher think is actually going to happen.

A It is encouraging that every parent is being positive. We need your ideas and input. This may result in bringing up the numbers – but it is all about the low numbers at the school

Q Do we want to carry on – is it worth it?

A All parents – Yes

Q If the school closes can you please clarify transport issues and the offer of a guaranteed school place. The letter contained a lot of detail which is difficult to take in.

A If the process proceeds to a Representation Period a Statutory Notice will be published which will name a school or schools where a place is guaranteed for all the children on roll. The named school has not been decided at this stage and transport will be provided according to the LA's policy, but it may apply to all

children on roll whether they live in or out of county. It is not possible to confirm details at this stage as further consultation with parents will be required if the process proceeds to the next stage and the circumstances for each family would then be carefully considered on a case by case basis.

Q How much will this cost eg the provision of additional transport?

A It is impossible to quantify at this point but it will be fully looked into – there are only 4 children out of the 15 on roll for whom Brocklesby Park is their nearest school.

Q It is a parent's right to choose a school for their child – by only offering transport to a named school are you not restricting this right?

A It is difficult to comment on individual circumstances and we will have a clearer idea following discussions with parents.

Q Where do we go from here? Where do we take our ideas?

A To the GB.

Q Is the GB full? Is there a parental support group?

A There are 3 vacancies on the GB – please speak to Claire as the clerk to governors. There is a 'Friends of the School' association which organises fund raising activities.

Q We understand that the issue is low numbers. The idea of a pre-school is a good one. Are there any issues with having a nursery and mainstream school on the same premises?

A There are many models operating in Lincolnshire eg LCC maintained nursery school/ mainstream school with LCC nursery class/ nursery provision provided by a private provider on the premises of a mainstream school. There are registration requirements and Ofsted requirements which may involve physical alterations eg separate playgrounds. The LA's Birth to Five Service would be happy to advise.

Q Would the council implement this nursery provision?

A We have found that the most successful model is one that is run by a separate management committee which has the advantage of the expertise of the provider together with potential transition benefits. The nursery can operate as a separate entity and not compromise the efficient running of the school.

Q But this will all take time - do we have to have this setup before the Representation Period or just come up with the plan? And who will fund the setting up?

A The Birth to Five Service will advise and assist without any charge. Please put forward your ideas and any viable option will be given consideration.

Q There must be lots of children in this rural area that require transport to school. Could we offer to transport children to our school eg from the village of Habrough?

A A number of schools do offer to transport pupils although these are usually secondary schools/academies. The LA could not fund this – as the LA must seek to

treat all schools the same and could not offer additional funding not available to all schools.

Q Could we use the £10 k surplus? Could we get a sponsored vehicle or look into a lease vehicle?

A The LA would not object to the school looking into this.

Q We have ideas and want to fund raise but can we have another year?

A The GB will look into all ideas. A school can operate with a deficit budget for one year under exceptional circumstances but there must be a demonstrable sustainable plan to move to a balanced budget at the end of the year.

Q Could we share a minibus with one that already provides transport in the area?

A As above, the LA would not object to the school looking into this.

Q We have only just become aware of the difficulties at the school. Can the discussions be more open and transparent so that as parents we can help?

A The minutes of GB meetings are available to parents at the school office. The questions and answers raised at this meeting will be published on the LCC website and updated as and when any further questions are submitted. (Follow the link to [Current Consultations](#))

Q There is a 50 plus seat bus that provides school transport for only 2 children at the school. Can we get rid of this bus and save money?

A School transport is provided and organised by PC Coaches and this would not save any money. PC Coaches usually co-ordinate provision to operate on a dual basis covering secondary provision after primary in the same locality. We will take this back to colleagues in Transport for consideration.

Summary at the end of meeting which closed at 7.50pm

Debbie Barnes thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the many positive contributions.

The consultation period ends on 16th January and we would encourage you to submit a response form. All responses will be considered when the decision is taken as to whether to proceed to the next stage of the process. If the process continues to the next stage there will be a 4 week Representation Period commencing with the publication of a Statutory Notice.

If there are further questions please contact either the school, the GB or the LA.

Contact details for the LA

Email: schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Via Post: School Organisation Planning Team, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ

Tel: Matt Clayton 01522 553535
Linda Duffield 01522 553392

APPENDIX B

Written Responses in the Consultation Period on the proposed closure of Brocklesby Park Primary School

Point of View	Supports Proposal	Against Proposal	Not For or Against	Other comments/Notes
Resident		Y		All communities need schools. Ours is a small close knit community and would suffer greatly if school is lost
Parent/Carer		Y		
Resident		Y		It would be a terrible loss to the village
Resident		Y		All our children loved the school and it formed an important part of the village and surrounding villages' social life
Resident		Y		Eldest child has just left this school. It's a great school and it will be huge loss to the village if this school closes. Would be interested in pre-school if it opened
Parent/Carer		Y		I have been to this school to support events like the Autumn fair. My family attend at pupils and do incredibly well. It is such a shame to see such a lovely place struggling. I think there could be more done to children to go - knock on doors, promote it. There is talk of setting up a nursery and this would be a good idea It would be such a big loss to the area if such a historical place didn't survive. The closure proposal is a surprise. Parents and friends of the school could have been involved much earlier - why weren't they told how serious the situation was?
Employer/Business		Y		
Parent/Carer		Y		My daughter went to the school and I feel it is beneficial to the community
Resident		Y		The school has been part of the village for over one hundred years. This continuity is important for village life.
Resident		Y		
Resident			Y	I was educated in a village primary school when it was closed due to lack of pupils. The village lost its heart and there was no reason for young families to live in the village. Relying on purely older people to populate rural areas is anti-social and short sighted for rural prosperity
Teacher/School Staff		Y		BPPS is the heart of the village. Our school is a facility and has been for generations...there exists an inexplicable harmony between the teachers and the pupils that allows education to occur on all levels. Closure would leave pupils with no place to call their own. There are huge benefits to our small village school - larger schools may lead to them (pupils) feeling insecure and lost.
		Y		
Resident		Y		We would like to see the school remain open for future generations

Parent/Carer	Y	It would be a great shame to lose such a wonderful school. It is precisely because the school is small and lessons and teaching can be tailored to each individual child's needs that my son has flourished here. I also believe the school provides a social situation not possible in larger schools. The teaching staff have always done their utmost to provide a diverse education with as many opportunities for trips, sporting events as possible. It would be sad to lose such a long-lived school without fully exploring preschool/outside nursery providers.
Parent/Carer	Y	All my children went to Brocklesby School. All did well and to have small numbers and your children do well is more beneficial than great numbers. It's the hub of the village.
Resident	Y	This school has always been and should continue to be part of the Great Limber community. Several of my children attended and benefitted from this school as I would like to think future generations may likewise.
Parent/Carer	Y	Very family orientated. I chose this school for my child because of the structure of the classes, the staff and because it is small. I propose sharing a head teacher with another small school to save costs and have a nursery so that children will move up from the nursery to the school.
Other	Y	A school is valuable to the community and important to the survival of any growing community
Teacher/School Staff	Y	Size of the school is unique and allows for excellent support for children educationally and emotionally. Wonderful positive atmosphere giving children confidence and stability and interaction with peers. Staff dedicated to getting most out of children and to reach their potential. Asset to the area and should be sustained.
Teacher/School Staff	Y	I have been a teacher since 1989. BPPS is the best school I have ever taught at. It is vital for the children's well being and education that this school remains open. It is part of the community and has been since 1852. This is a highly successful school, and closure would be detrimental to the children/staff/parents/community
Resident	Y	It is a good small school that local children can attend. An idea would be to provide nursery or out of school clubs to make it more attractive to working parents
Parish Councillor	Y	I would like to see shared head ship and preschool idea
Employer/Business	Y	Having been educated through the school I believe it has given me a good background in life skills. The school is a backbone of village like. I believe anything that can be done to keep the school in place must be considered. I think a pre-school is a good idea and I would support this to keep the school open
Former staff	Y	BPPS historically has always had fluctuating numbers. Due to the proximity of the school, students have come from quite a wide area because of the small numbers in the village. Perhaps a stronger leadership team and governing body could help raise numbers and standards. Whilst I was at the school we had a good Ofsted report under the previous head teacher and we were going from strength to strength. There has been a decline in numbers due to dissatisfaction and unrest with the leadership team. It would be a shame to completely write it off because of a dip.
Parish Councillor	Y	A good school and a required village asset
Employer/Business	y	Closure would harm local community. Please keep the school open but provide pre and post school facilities
Employer/Business	Y	Use money available to transport local children to another school to transport children to BPPS. Children in inner city schools often in classes over 30.
Resident	Y	How important a local school especially in rural communities
Resident	Y	Can give children such life lessons within a rural community that town schools

Governing Body	Y		Sorry, but understand the difficulties of maintaining viability. Not the nearest alternative school but do have capacity. No formal objection to the closure but sympathise with uncertainty it causes to staff, pupils and parents.
Grandparent		Y	There is a demand for good schools. BPPS is a brilliant school. We do not want to lose this facility. We are told more schools are needed, this school is an established building.
Former parent		Y	
Resident		Y	
Resident		Y	It's a shame to shut it after all these years
Teacher/School Staff		Y	This school provides a safe and fantastic education. Its history goes back many years and it should be given the chance to rebuild with a preschool for future generations to enjoy a fantastic education and learning environment.
Resident		Y	The school should not be closed for any future children that may come to live in the village
Resident		Y	
Resident		Y	It is an important part of the village. And lots of children have had a good education in the past years.
Resident		Y	Such a shame to lose the village school
Former parent & governor		Y	Unique school that offers quality care and strengthens community cohesion. Preschool provision would make school viable. Placing school under headship of Keelby with 2 full time teachers at Brocklesby Park would provide financial savings and enable quality education.
Resident		Y	I think village schools are a good thing because the children get more attention and good community spirit.
Parent/Carer		Y	Understand the school cannot financially stay open. More should have been done in last few years to boost pupil intake. Communication between school and parents is poor. Our son has flourished academically and we believe he has benefitted from quality teacher time that he may not have received in a larger school. However his social interaction has suffered from low pupil numbers. Closure would be sad - the school is part of area's heritage and the reason we moved to the village.
Resident		Y	Removing the school from the village may well be the beginning of the end what's next the shop/pub/hall
Neighbouring LA	Y		NELC supports LCC with regard to the proposal to close Brocklesby Park
Neighbouring LA		Y	North Lincs schools that serve the areas in which displaced pupils live have capacity to accept pupils and the council does not object to the proposal to close the school
Teacher/School Staff		Y	I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such dedicated and caring staff. All of my three daughters attended and I feel fortunate that they were taught in this small, wonderful school which is located in a lovely rural setting. To close this school would be upsetting for all the staff and parents and would deprive children of being taught in a caring family environment.
Parent/Carer		Y	
Parent/Carer		Y	My 3-year old attends 'Little Brocks' toddler group and attends to Montessori pre-school nearby as she is an only child and enjoys the personal family atmosphere. The physical surroundings of the school of a rural nature enhance this 'hidden gem'...I would very much like my daughter to remain part of this family throughout her primary education.
Resident		Y	
Resident		Y	

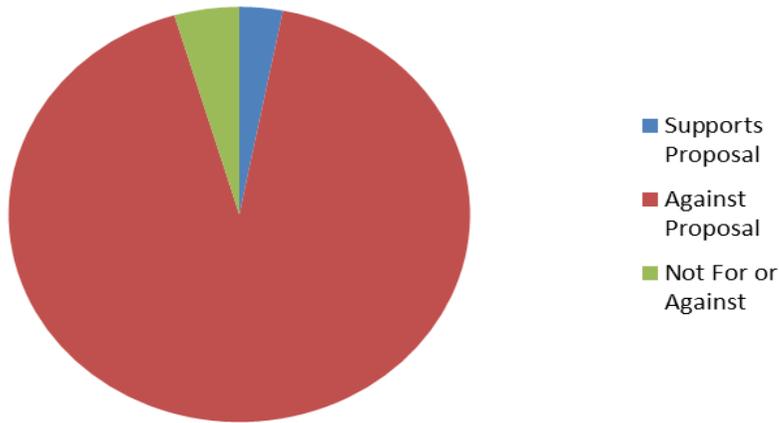
Resident	Y	I feel it would be nice to keep this small village school open as I have know many parents whose children have used this school and highly recommend it.
Teacher/School Staff	Y	School has always had a caring family feel. If transport was offered from nearby villages this might boost numbers
Resident	Y	
Resident	Y	
Parent/Carer	Y	We moved here so our children could go to this school. My child was getting lost at his last school and since they have been coming here they have come on leaps and bounds. The work my child provides is amazing and that is down to the teachers and the head at this school.
Parent/Carer	Y	My grandson started at this school and could not read or write. I have been so impressed with his progress and the care the staff take with children. Not all kids thrive in big schools. BPPS means so much to the people who know and recognise how special it is. This school has a big heart - parents are leaving kids who treat kids like their own. The problem lies in not enough people knowing about it. I think the governors have been weak and complacent and not explored every opportunity. HT is a lovely lady who has improved standards but the school needs a more dynamic manager. A pre-school would help the school build numbers. Join with another school of look at independence - to suit uniqueness
Resident	Y	
Resident	Y	
Resident	Y	I wouldn't like to see it closed
Resident	Y	From how my granddaughter was encouraged with her education. Coming from a school in Norfolk she was behind but soon improved with good teaching at BPPS
Grandparent	Y	school is hidden gem and closure would be a travesty. Hopefully a way can be found to increase pupil numbers. Having to bus pupils to another school would be expensive and outweigh benefits from the school's closure. Could sponsorship from the industrial Humber Bank companies be a possible option? My grandson has progressed extremely well at the school in a way which may not have been possible at a larger school. Pupils and staff all know each other - a very friendly family atmosphere.
Parent/Carer	Y	We chose the school because of its location, nurturing and friendly atmosphere. Children, parents and teachers are like family. The school is an important meeting place for parents. Numbers need to increase and one way of doing this would be to open a nursery. The school could be marketed better and most parents would be happy to help with this.
Governor	y	Unique family school. Management of the school has been weak and not enough has been done to build up the numbers. Nursery provision and out of hours care should be looked at. A business plan must be marketed. There needs to be closer federation with local schools e.g. head sharing. The school is in a fantastic position for parents from Brigg, Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Caistor and parents who work on Humber Bank.
Resident	Y	All my children went there and had a good education

Teacher/School Staff

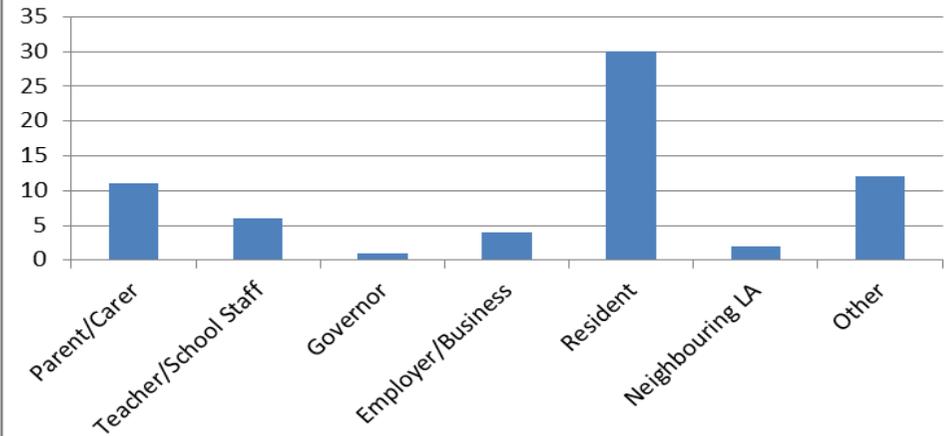
Y

For over 160 years this school has been a vital part of this community and the surrounding area. Pupils are taught in a unique environment and building which is very rare these days. Both children and adults are very supportive towards the school which is shown whenever fund raising and social event happen. The school has promising results with all the staff contributing to maintaining and raising standards, levels and results. To close the school would end years of learning traditions and values that once gone can never be reclaimed. It would be a travesty should it close for good, its loss would be irreplaceable.

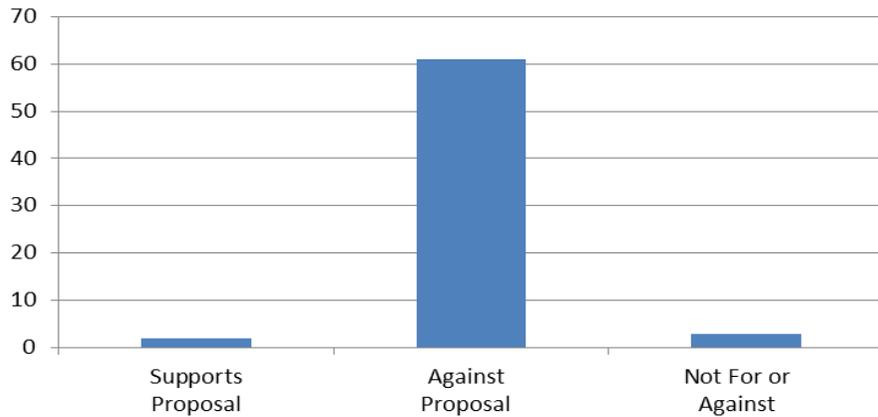
Consultation Responses Overview



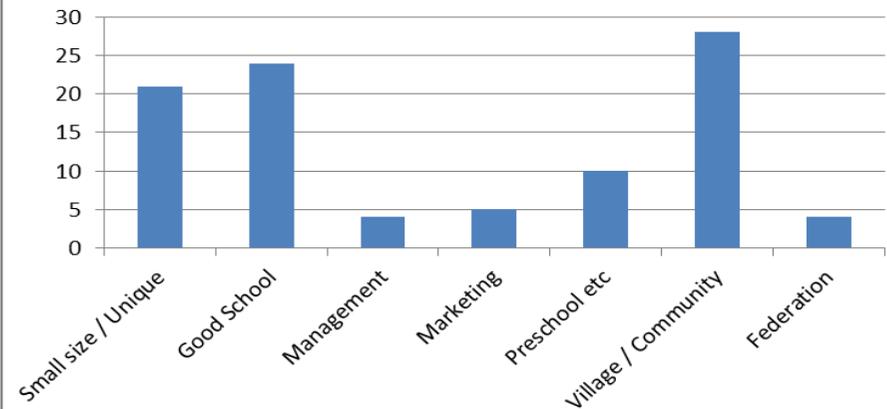
Responding Consultees



Consultation Responses Overview



Key Noted Reasons Given



APPENDIX G Impact Analysis to Enable Informed Decisions

Background Information

Directorate	Assistant Director area	Service area	Lead officer	Person / people completing analysis	Date of workshop / meeting	Version
Adults & Children's	Children's Services	School Organisation Planning Team	John O'Connor	Linda Duffield		3
Title of the policy / project / service being considered	The future of Brocklesby Park Primary School					
General overview and description of The future of Brocklesby Park Primary School	The overall proposal under consideration is the future of Brocklesby Park Primary School with the possibility of closure of the school. The Governing Body met on 11 November 2014 and unanimously decided to request that the LA begin the statutory process to consult on the closure of the school. The statutory process has now reached the stage of the final decision to which this version of Impact Analysis (number 3) refers.					
The status of The future of Brocklesby Park Primary School	Existing			LCC Directly Delivered		
Timescales for implementation	The consultation process commenced on 19 November 2014 with a letter sent out to all parents of current pupils and other interested parties initiating a 8 week period of consultation. A public meeting was held in the village on 2 December 2014. A Statutory Notice was published on 24 April initiating a 4 week Representation Period which ended on 22 May. A report has been written which will be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 5 June to inform the final decision which is due to be taken on 22nd June by the Executive Councillor with an implementation date of 31 August 2015.					

Analysis

1. What is the current situation?	The statutory process to consult on the closure of the school is ongoing. Stages 1 (Consultation), 2 (Publication of Statutory Notice) and 3 (Representation Period) have been completed. The next stage is Stage 4 (Final LA decision) and this decision is due to be taken by the Executive Councillor on 22 June following consideration by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 5 June.
2. What are the drivers for change?	(a) Political - To ensure the LA meets its statutory duty of providing a sufficient number of primary school places in Lincolnshire. This duty is not simply to provide a required number of places but also the LA must consider its duty to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential with the aim of enabling children to take up a school place within their local community. (b) Social - To ensure the provision of primary places is planned so as to promote high standards and sustainability therefore enabling children to fulfil their potential. Also ensuring that pupils have peers to learn from and aid development in a suitable social setting. To enhance the future sustainability of the remaining primary schools in the local area. Ensuring sustainability is vital in that it has an impact on recruiting and retaining staff of a high calibre in the area and also attracting future investment. (c) Economic- to ensure that the required primary capacity is provided with best use of the LA's resources. Very small schools require a disproportionate amount of funding. The sparsely populated county of Lincolnshire makes it necessary to sustain smaller schools to meet the needs of local communities across wide rural areas, and the LA's funding formula supports this. However, when numbers fall as low as they are at Brocklesby Park the situation becomes unsustainable for a stand-alone school of this size. Schools are not legally allowed to set a deficit budget without a realistic medium term plan showing how the deficit will be turned around.

3. What difference will we make?	A sustainable long term solution within the local area will provide enhanced educational provision and promote the fulfilment of every child's potential. Also a more effective use of public funding.	
4. What are the assumptions about the benefits?	By reviewing the future of the school the LA will have the opportunity to consider the best way of providing a sustainable solution. This will provide the required school places in the area to meet projected demand and also promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. Neighbouring schools with surplus capacity will be potentially made more viable with additional funding that will contribute to the education of a greater number of pupils.	
5. How are you testing your assumptions about the benefits?	The LA undertakes an annual review of capacity within all schools as compared with the projected demand to ensure a sufficient number of primary school places in Lincolnshire. Ofsted inspections will test the quality of provision which is also monitored by the school improvement service.	
6. What are the assumptions about any adverse impacts? Could it have a negative effect on anyone?	Yes	
6.1 Which groups/individuals could it have a negative impact on?	(a) children on roll at the school (b) local children and their parents (c) the local community (d) staff employed at the school	
6.2 How could it have a negative impact on these groups/individuals? Please refer to the list of protected characteristics to assist your answer	(a) children on roll at the school might have to move to another primary school, although the majority of the pupils live closer to other schools (b) children who live in the area might have to travel further to attend what is their most local school, although the majority won't. If the school were to close this may be considered by parents a restriction in parental preference. (c) the school is regarded by the local community as an important facility and believe it would have a negative impact if the school were to close, although they do have a village hall closer to the village which was extended and refurbished in 2001. (d) If the school were to close staff may be made redundant or have to travel further for alternative employment. Under The Equality Act 2010 the LA must take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a protected characteristic as being different to the needs of persons who do not share it. The impact of closure would be felt by all in (a), (b), (c) and (d) and would not negatively impact on anyone sharing a relevant protected characteristic.	
7. How are you testing your assumptions about adverse impacts?	A wide range of interested parties including parents and staff was consulted and a public meeting was held to ascertain potential adverse impact. Should the decision be taken which results in the closure of the school the measurement of negative impact would be undertaken by the appropriate LA team eg School transport would be able to analyse the actual costs of transporting displaced pupils to an alternative school; School Admissions would be able to provide data on parental preference and school place allocation; HR would be able to provide the costs of redundancy or redeployment of staff.	
7.1 What further evidence do you need to gather?	The statutory guidelines with regard to who and how to consult have all been met to enable the decision maker to take the final decision and all points raised will be taken into consideration. Potential options regarding academisation within Tollbar Academy Trust and the introduction of Early Year's provision on the school site will continue to be explored in parallel with the statutory consultation process.	
8. Who are the stakeholders and how will they be affected?	<p style="text-align: center;">Primary (those directly affected, either positively or negatively by the organisation's actions)</p> <p>Parents/carers and the Council - see items 2 and 6 above in this analysis section. Staff and Governors will also benefit from the proposal being conducted in accordance with statutory guidance.</p>	

Secondary (intermediaries, people or organisations who are indirectly affected by the organisation's actions)

Local children and their parents and members of the local community - see items 2 and 6 above in this analysis section.

9. How are you assessing the risks and minimising adverse impacts?

The LA is aware of the potential negative impact of the closure of a rural school as detailed in item (6) above and will consider the following to mitigate this:-

Children on roll will be guaranteed a place at Keelby School which is rated more highly by Ofsted than Brocklesby Park and with a larger number on roll (NOR) is likely to avoid the potential detrimental effect of attending a very small school with increasing demands on a small number of staff to adequately deliver the full curriculum. It will also reduce the incidence of teaching several year groups in one class. The larger NOR is also likely to ensure more extended services and more opportunities for social interaction.

Provision at neighbouring schools is rated more highly than that at Brocklesby Park with the 2 nearest Lincolnshire schools being graded as "Good".

Transport will be provided according to LCC's policy and displaced children who live in the current designated transport area for Brocklesby Park will receive free transport to Keelby Primary School if the school is more than 2 miles from the family's home.

There is not expected to be a significant negative impact on the environment arising out of increased car journeys as many of the pupils live closer to other schools than Brocklesby Park and if all pupils went to their closest school the combined travelling distance of all pupils would be halved. LA officers do not expect that costs will increase significantly even if all parents choose to take up the transport offer so minimising any negative impact on the school transport budget and making best use of resources.

Neighbouring schools in the area have available places so the opportunity for parental choice will be maintained.

An educational site would no longer provide services for children. The LA understands that the school is an important part of the community, not just as a school but as a facility used by the public and will work with the community in partnership with other services to try to ensure that the impact of the closure would be mitigated. This would include the consideration of alternative uses for the building before any decision is made about the future of the premises.

The LA has a good track record of redeployment of staff and will always seek to avoid redundancy not only to mitigate costs but also reduce the human costs of redundancy.

10. What changes will the Council need to make as a result of introducing the policy / project / service etc?

There will be no changes to any LCC policy or procedures.

11. How will you undertake evaluation once the changes have been implemented?

Analysis and consideration of projected demand for school places and capacity within schools will be continued by LA officers to ensure that the LA meets its statutory obligation of providing a school place for every child of statutory school age in Lincolnshire.

Further Details

Are you handling personal data?	Yes	If yes, please give details	consultation and representation period responses incorporated name and address of respondent but these details will remain confidential.		
How was this analysis undertaken? Facilitated workshop? Who attended?	Details of the proposal and response forms were sent to a wide range of interested parties in line with statutory guidance, and details were also made available on the Council's website. 67 responses were received with 2 in support, 62 against and 3 which were neither for nor against the proposal but raised points to be considered. All responses were recorded and analysed to be taken into consideration by the decision maker. A public meeting was held on 2 December to provide more detail about the proposal and enable parents and all interested parties to ask questions and raise concerns. One response was received in the Representation Period which was submitted by the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of Brocklesby Park Primary School. This response confirmed the Governing Body's intention to get the Headteacher Board of the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office to reconsider their decision to reject the application to convert to academy status and requested a delay in the decision to allow more time for this to be pursued and another application be submitted later in the year.				
Are you confident that everyone who should have been involved in producing this version of the Impact Analysis has been?	Yes	If No, who needs to be involved?			
If this is new, or requires a decision by Councillors to revise, has this impact analysis been included with the committee report?	Yes	If No, why?			
Actions required including any actions that have been identified in this analysis for monitoring in the service area workplan?	No	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	
		N/A	N/A	N/A	
Signed off by	John O'Connor		Date	22-May-15	

Appendix H

**Brocklesby Park Primary School Public Consultation Meeting
Great Limber Village Hall
6.30-8.00pm on 2 December 2014**

In attendance from the Local Authority (LA), CfBT and the school:-

Debbie Barnes: LA - Director of Children's Services (Chair)

Mrs P Bradwell: Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services

Steve Tinegate: Chair of Governors

Jo Spriggs: Head Teacher

Gill Curtis: CfBT School Improvement Service

Matt Clayton: School Organisation Planning Manager

35 parents, staff, governors and members of the local community attended

- *Introduction from Debbie Barnes as to how the meeting would proceed together with an outline of the consultation process.*
- *Introductions from each member of the panel.*
- *Introduction from Chair of Governors, Steve Tinegate, including reasons for proposing closure, in that there are not enough pupils to make the school viable and the consequent inability to set a balanced budget. This led to the Governing Body taking the difficult decision to ask the LA to commence consultation on closure.*

Where appropriate, further details have been added to the following answers to clarify any uncertainty. This document will be updated should further questions be received during the consultation period. All questions and comments will be considered along with all response forms received during the 8 week consultation period which closes on 16 January 2015.

Q & A

Q Regarding the budget, please clarify what you mean by medium term and long term

A Here the Governing Body (GB) is viewing the medium term as the financial year 2015/2016 and the long term 2016/17/18

Q If the numbers at the school for the academic year were up to 27 would this 100% guarantee the school would stay open?

A There would not be 100% guarantee.

Q If not 100%, then what sort of percentage would you think?

A The GB cannot give percentage guarantees but if the numbers were up to 27 this might buy time for the school to stay open for another academic year which could potentially offer more of a chance of staying open in the long term.

Q What is a "balanced budget"?

- A** A balanced budget is one in which income exceeds expenditure whereas a deficit budget is one in which expenditure exceeds income
- Q** Can we reduce expenditure at the school eg reduce the staffing costs to balance the fall in pupil numbers?
- A** To reduce the staffing further would not be acceptable to Ofsted and would likely lead to the children not receiving the standard of education they deserve
- Q** Please confirm the numbers of staff employed at the school
- A** 8 teaching and non-teaching staff but not all full time. The teaching staff comprises 1 full-time and 1 part-time member with the Headteacher also teaching part-time. To reduce the staffing level so that all the children would have to be taught in one class (Reception through to Y6) would present significant difficulties in both meeting the needs of all the children and offering the full curriculum. This would likely compromise the children's education and progress that they should make.
- Q** The numbers have been low for some time – what have the GB done to plan for this?
- A** The GB has tried to market the school and employed a professional service to assist. Conversion to Academy status, either alone or as part of a Trust, has been explored. The school has joined a collaborative partnership with other local schools for support and to help reduce costs.
- Q** Parents have been unaware of all this – what did you discover and what was discussed?
- A** The school is too small to convert to Academy status and needs the support of the LA. We are also too small for Multi Academy Trusts to be interested in us being sponsored by them. Similarly other local schools were not interested in federating in the light of our low numbers. Demographic information does not suggest any increase in numbers.
- Q** Should we not explore these options fully?
- A** The LA will look at all possibilities during the consultation period and would want to fully explore Academy and federation options, but agree that Academy sponsors are unlikely to be interested with such low pupil numbers. Matt Clayton confirmed that NHS GP registration data and ONS birth data for the local area has been provided to the GB. Also the Headteacher has researched further information from parents (both current and future) regarding siblings and potential applicants for Reception to obtain a clearer picture but the numbers still look to remain low through to 2017/8 and are unlikely to get above the low twenties
- Q** The trend seems to be to close small schools and if this trend continues will we not be left with a small number of large schools? These do not suit all children – will there be a choice for a parent looking for a small school?
- A** The rural nature of Lincolnshire means that it is important to support small schools. The DfE considers a primary school to be sustainable when it has more than 100 pupils. In Lincolnshire we have over 100 schools with less than 100 pupils. In 2011 the government made changes to school funding leaving the LA with very little

discretion. The financial model that Lincolnshire operates does support small schools but even with this support the numbers at Brocklesby Park have dipped so low that they are below what is viable and demographics indicate that future school numbers will continue to be very low. Viability must also include educational as well as financial sustainability.

Q Has the GB considered offering a pre-school? The Little Brocks toddler group has 6/8 children regularly attending.

A The GB has not explored this option, but is open to the idea.

Q If we can fundraise and subsidise the school's income, would this help?

A If we had another income stream this may help but how can this extra income be generated and sustained? The GB needs your ideas.

Q As parents we wish that you had told us of the position 2 years ago rather than at the last minute.

A Noted.

Q The school is part of the estate heritage. What is the Estate's involvement?

A Lord Yarborough and Kit Read are both on the GB and are aware of the situation. They have been fully involved with the GB's activities.

Q I understand that they are aware but what is the Estate's input?

A Both Lord Yarborough and Kit Read share the parents' concerns and are keen for the school to continue. They are interested in hearing ideas from parents and would welcome the setting up of a working group and also new members to fill the vacancies on the GB.

Q There are no easy solutions – Great Limber has an ageing population.

A Noted.

Q What will happen to the land and buildings if the school closes?

A The playing fields are estate land and would therefore revert to the estate. The LA has the freehold on the remaining land and buildings which would revert to the LA in the event of closure.

Q We appreciate that the numbers are low but as parents we were shocked to learn of the proposal to close the school. Many parents want to be involved and do have ideas eg federation, setting up a pre-school/out of school provision such as a breakfast club but are concerned that there will not be enough time to implement these ideas. We need to know exactly what has been done and who will process these ideas – can it be us as parents? The school may not be financially attractive but has so much to offer – history, heritage, buildings, nurturing environment.

A Working with other schools has been explored and many benefits have been gained from entering into the collaborative partnership eg mentoring, support, sharing good practice and resources. With regard to saving specific costs following

federation – even if 1 head teacher is shared the savings would not be significant and there would still be the running costs of each school.

Q How much money do we actually need?

A The following figures are based on the number on roll continuing on the existing basis:-

- We will enter the 2015/16 financial year with a £10k surplus which will be a £16k deficit by the end of the year
- Deficit at the end of the financial year 2016/2017 of £46k
- Deficit at the end of the financial year 2017/2018 of £83k

Q My 4 children have all attended the school during which time the numbers have fluctuated considerably – even as low as now. The listed building status has sometimes hampered improvements. It is a small school but with big support. It has a very supportive and nurturing environment which is of particular benefit to SEND children.

A Noted. We have a record of the numbers on roll back to 1975 which do not show numbers as low as now – but these figures are as recorded on the census day each year and do not represent all the fluctuations within an academic year.

Q Can we view this as an opportunity ie save the school from closure and use it as a test case of how to protect rural schools?

A This would have to be funded somehow.

Q We have all chosen this school for our children and just want the opportunity to raise funds. We believe there is the potential here but are concerned that there will not be enough time to implement our ideas.

A Noted.

Q What costs are involved in closing a school – could these costs be used to subsidise the school budget?

A As previously advised schools funding is prescribed by the government and the LA has limited discretion. If redundancies were involved there would obviously be costs but we cannot give a figure at this stage. The LA has a good track record of redeployment and will always seek to avoid redundancy not only to mitigate costs but also to reduce the human costs of redundancy. Other closure costs will include security and maintenance of the buildings while empty but the LA would not want the buildings to remain empty for long so disposal options would be looked at as quickly as possible and such costs would come out of the county budget and not the schools budget.

Q Are there any covenants on the buildings or land?

A At this initial stage we are not aware of any covenants but we will look into this fully should the closure proposal be pursued.

Q Failing businesses usually either diversify or specialise. Could we consider specialising eg concentrate on special needs? Do SEND pupils bring with them a

pupil premium? There is a trend towards inclusion but mainstream schools are often unwilling to offer special needs places.

A Lincolnshire places very few SEND pupils out of county and there is not an issue in placing SEND pupils. All schools are expected to meet SEND requirements of their pupils. There is a good special school in Brigg but we are not aware of the details of SEND places in North Lincs and North East Lincs. There are specialist costs associated with SEND pupils eg 1:2:1s etc and specialising in SEND provision would be likely to increase the school's costs and therefore not help in trying to balance the budget.

Q I chose this school as it is small and as a whole provides a nurturing environment. Bigger schools have to create a special group within their school to provide nurturing support. Why spend money on creating such groups when our school already provides a nurturing environment?

A All schools seek to provide nurturing support particularly for vulnerable children and it is one of the factors that Ofsted look for in their inspections.

Q The crux of the problem is the low numbers and if we could get 6 or 7 more children this would buy us time but we need another year to get the numbers up and look at the ideas already suggested such as a nursery so that the school would benefit from rent paid by the nursery provider and the children would flow up to the main school.

A Noted. With regard to the idea of running a nursery there would have to be evidence of demand to attract a private provider. The Birth to Five Service at the council would be able to advise and assist in preparing a business case.

Q Referring to a previous question – I disagree that all schools are nurturing. My son has attended 3 different schools with very varied support and it is only at this school that he has thrived. The nurture and support at this school is one of its strengths.

A Noted

Q I would be interested to hear what the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher think is actually going to happen.

A It is encouraging that every parent is being positive. We need your ideas and input. This may result in bringing up the numbers – but it is all about the low numbers at the school

Q Do we want to carry on – is it worth it?

A All parents – Yes

Q If the school closes can you please clarify transport issues and the offer of a guaranteed school place. The letter contained a lot of detail which is difficult to take in.

A If the process proceeds to a Representation Period a Statutory Notice will be published which will name a school or schools where a place is guaranteed for all the children on roll. The named school has not been decided at this stage and transport will be provided according to the LA's policy, but it may apply to all

children on roll whether they live in or out of county. It is not possible to confirm details at this stage as further consultation with parents will be required if the process proceeds to the next stage and the circumstances for each family would then be carefully considered on a case by case basis.

Q How much will this cost eg the provision of additional transport?

A It is impossible to quantify at this point but it will be fully looked into – there are only 4 children out of the 15 on roll for whom Brocklesby Park is their nearest school.

Q It is a parent's right to choose a school for their child – by only offering transport to a named school are you not restricting this right?

A It is difficult to comment on individual circumstances and we will have a clearer idea following discussions with parents.

Q Where do we go from here? Where do we take our ideas?

A To the GB.

Q Is the GB full? Is there a parental support group?

A There are 3 vacancies on the GB – please speak to Claire as the clerk to governors. There is a 'Friends of the School' association which organises fund raising activities.

Q We understand that the issue is low numbers. The idea of a pre-school is a good one. Are there any issues with having a nursery and mainstream school on the same premises?

A There are many models operating in Lincolnshire eg LCC maintained nursery school/ mainstream school with LCC nursery class/ nursery provision provided by a private provider on the premises of a mainstream school. There are registration requirements and Ofsted requirements which may involve physical alterations eg separate playgrounds. The LA's Birth to Five Service would be happy to advise.

Q Would the council implement this nursery provision?

A We have found that the most successful model is one that is run by a separate management committee which has the advantage of the expertise of the provider together with potential transition benefits. The nursery can operate as a separate entity and not compromise the efficient running of the school.

Q But this will all take time - do we have to have this setup before the Representation Period or just come up with the plan? And who will fund the setting up?

A The Birth to Five Service will advise and assist without any charge. Please put forward your ideas and any viable option will be given consideration.

Q There must be lots of children in this rural area that require transport to school. Could we offer to transport children to our school eg from the village of Habrough?

A A number of schools do offer to transport pupils although these are usually secondary schools/academies. The LA could not fund this – as the LA must seek to

treat all schools the same and could not offer additional funding not available to all schools.

Q Could we use the £10 k surplus? Could we get a sponsored vehicle or look into a lease vehicle?

A The LA would not object to the school looking into this.

Q We have ideas and want to fund raise but can we have another year?

A The GB will look into all ideas. A school can operate with a deficit budget for one year under exceptional circumstances but there must be a demonstrable sustainable plan to move to a balanced budget at the end of the year.

Q Could we share a minibus with one that already provides transport in the area?

A As above, the LA would not object to the school looking into this.

Q We have only just become aware of the difficulties at the school. Can the discussions be more open and transparent so that as parents we can help?

A The minutes of GB meetings are available to parents at the school office. The questions and answers raised at this meeting will be published on the LCC website and updated as and when any further questions are submitted. (Follow the link to [Current Consultations](#))

Q There is a 50 plus seat bus that provides school transport for only 2 children at the school. Can we get rid of this bus and save money?

A School transport is provided and organised by PC Coaches and this would not save any money. PC Coaches usually co-ordinate provision to operate on a dual basis covering secondary provision after primary in the same locality. We will take this back to colleagues in Transport for consideration.

Summary at the end of meeting which closed at 7.50pm

Debbie Barnes thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the many positive contributions.

The consultation period ends on 16th January and we would encourage you to submit a response form. All responses will be considered when the decision is taken as to whether to proceed to the next stage of the process. If the process continues to the next stage there will be a 4 week Representation Period commencing with the publication of a Statutory Notice.

If there are further questions please contact either the school, the GB or the LA.

Contact details for the LA

Email: schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Via Post: School Organisation Planning Team, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ

Tel: Matt Clayton 01522 553535
Linda Duffield 01522 553392

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APPENDIX I

BROCKLESBY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

BUSINESS PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body of Brocklesby Park Primary School has devised a business plan which will ensure the long term viability of the school. The Governing body firmly believe that providing a pre-school facility for children ages 3 and 4 will increase numbers and provide well-rounded education with good opportunities for social interaction for all pupils attending.

Due to a reduction in the number of children attending the school, the Governing Body will be unable to set a budget for the 2015/16 financial year which does not show an excess of expenditure over income. Because of this a request was made to Lincolnshire County Council in November 2014 to start a consultation process on the future of the school that could lead its closure on 31 August 2015.

Since the consultation period commenced in November 2014, new governors have been appointed to fill the previously vacant roles and to provide fresh experiences and perspectives. An action group has been formed consisting of parents, staff and friends of the school.

The Governing Body believe that providing a nursery for children aged 3 and 4 would increase the numbers attending the school, ensure its medium and long term viability and thus remove the threat of closure.

FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN WITHOUT A NUSERY

The expected finances of the school for the financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19 are shown in **Appendix 1**. The number of pupils attending the school, or numbers on roll, is expected to be:

- October 2015 : 13
- October 2016 : 13
- October 2017 : 15

The numbers on roll in October determine the funding the school receives from Lincolnshire County Council for the financial year beginning on the following 1 April. Thus the numbers on roll in October 2015 would determine the funding for the 2016/17 financial year.

The numbers on roll are expected to lead to accumulated deficits as shown below:

- 2015/16 : £14,707
- 2016/17 : £51,462
- 2017/18 : £92,022
- 2018/19 : £136,128

NURSERY PROVISION

Evidence from research has highlighted that Free Early Years Entitlement means that parents are seeking a provider of early education when children are 3 – 4 years old.

The proposal is to provide both a morning and an afternoon session of nursery care per day, five days a week. This would start in September 2015.

The school already runs a parent and toddler group, "Little Brocks", which meets twice a week. Over 18 months numbers attending have increased from 1 to 6. A nursery therefore would be a natural progression for these children.

Governors have undertaken a survey to establish the need for a nursery. A summary of the results together with the questionnaire and poster is set out in **Appendix 3**.

The proposal is to provide morning and afternoon sessions per day, five days per week. This would start from September 2015. The capacity of the nursery would be 10 children per session. However, the revised financial plan set out in **Appendix 2** is based on a maximum of 8 children per session. It is expected that the nursery will boost the number of children attending the school by providing a steady stream of children moving up from the nursery and also by making the school as a whole more attractive to parents.

The modifications needed to the school site in order to provide nursery care would be minimal. A partition would need to be erected at a cost. The school's devolved capital budget would be used to provide the funding for this.

It is anticipated that the extra annual expenditure incurred in running the nursery will be minimal. However, both teaching and non-teaching costs are expected to increase because:

- A teaching assistant will have to be employed for 1 extra day per week, and
- Extra teaching cover will be needed to replace a teaching assistant who would work with the children attending the nursery, and
- Additional teaching staff will be needed in year 2018/19 because of the increase in pupil numbers.

Other costs that are expected to increase are:

- Insurance
- Educational materials
- Water
- Sundry expenses

FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN WITH A NURSERY

The expected finances of the school with a nursery are shown in **Appendix 2**. The numbers on roll at the nursery in each financial year are expected to be:

- 2015/16 : Autumn term 6, Spring term 9
- 2016/17 : Summer term 9, Spring term 10, Summer term 11
- 2017/18 and 2018/19: 16 throughout the year.

As a result of the nursery the numbers on roll are expected to increase as shown below

- October 2015 : 15
- October 2016 : 22
- October 2017 : 38

The additional income produced by the nursery and the additional numbers on roll is expected to eliminate the deficit by 2018/19, when there is an accumulated surplus of £2,844 as shown below:

- 2015/16 : £8,849 : deficit
- 2016/17 : £26,614 : deficit
- 2017/18 : £18,113: deficit
- 2018/19 : £2,844 : surplus

EDUCATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Since the school's last Ofsted inspection, June 2013, the governors, Head teacher and school have worked tirelessly on the areas for development which have now been fully addressed. There have been new teachers appointed. There is focused assessment to inform planning; regular monitoring between schools; meaningful assessment for learning is in place; APP is used to identify gaps and barriers in learning; regular PPMs and professional development reviews hold teachers to account; intervention is appropriate and effective and there is very clear evidence of accelerated progress which can be seen through the school's detailed tracking system.

All pupils are on track for making good or better progress because of the robust systems that are now in place in the school. All of which will continue as the school continues to increase pupil numbers in the future. See **Appendix 4 & 5**

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROVISION

Governors are also exploring the arrangements for providing a before and after school club, which is hoped to encourage children of working families, so that we can also offer quality wrap around care for those who may need it. It is felt that this may encourage new families' to want to enrol their children at our school. As a result of the questionnaire analysis 3 parent/carers have indicated that they would be strongly interested in using the before & after school provision 5 times a week.

SUMMARY

The provision of a nursery is not expected to eliminate the deficits until 2018/19. However by providing a steady stream of pupils for the primary school and making the school more attractive to parents generally it is expected that it will ensure the long term viability of the school.

Governors are confident that the educational provision for Brocklesby Park's pupils is of a good standard, which will attract parents and therefore make the school's future sustainable.

The Governing Body understands the need to actively market the school in the local community and beyond in order to build on the foundations contained in this business plan.

Brocklesby Park Primary School Governors : February 2015.

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BROCKLESBY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Response of the Governors of Brocklesby Park Primary School to the Statutory Notice to Propose to Discontinue Brocklesby Park Primary School

At their meeting on 16 April 2015 the governors re-affirmed their commitment to work to try and keep the school open.

The governors are very appreciative of the support given by Lincolnshire County Council to the application to convert to an academy and to join the Toll Bar Multi-Academy Trust.

Governors are attempting to get the Headteacher Board of the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office to reconsider their decision to reject the School's application to convert to an academy. In view of this we should be grateful if the final decision to close the School could be delayed beyond 22 June 2015, if at that date there remains a reasonable chance that the decision may be reversed.

Steve Tinegate

Chair of Governors : Brocklesby Park School

Jo Spriggs

Head Teacher

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