
Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 29 March 2012

Subject: St George of England High School – Request for Amendment to Date of Closure

Report of: Director of Young People & Families **Wards Affected:** Netherton & Orrell, Derby, Litherland, Ford, St Oswald's

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan?
No (Rule 15 Consent)

Exempt/Confidential

No

Purpose/Summary

The purpose of this report is determine the request from the Governing Body of St George of England High School and the proposers of the Hawthorne's Free School to bring forward the date of closure for St George of England High School by 12 months to 31 August 2012. This is to facilitate the proposed Free School which is planned to open in September 2012.

The request to bring forward the closure has been subject to consultation and the report covers the outcome of this consultation and the various implications of the decisions which the Cabinet could take.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) consider the options and information outlined in the report and the request by the local community, Free School Trust and St George's Governing body to facilitate the opening of the Free School;
- b) to respond positively to the request from the Free School Trust and the Governing Body by agreeing to bring the closure date for St George of England High School forward from 31 august 2013 to 31 August 2012 contingent upon an alternative school opening in the area in September 2012;
- c) for practical reasons and to ensure continuity of education for pupils affected, the decision in b) above is also dependent on the decision to open the Free School being approved by the Secretary of State for Education by the 25 May 2012 when the decommissioning of the school will need to commence;
- d) subject to a), b) and c) above Officers be authorised to conduct relevant negotiations with respect to St George's, land, assets, fixtures and fittings with the Free School Trust; to progress and make decisions on issues regarding employees from St George's and St Wilfrid's as outlined in this report;

- e) note the change for pupils wishing to move to the Free School and the required admission arrangements and ask Officers to work with the Free School to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible; and
- f) it be noted that the proposal was a Key Decision but, unfortunately, had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Consequently, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) has been consulted under Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made by the Cabinet as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was impracticable to defer the decision until the commencement of the next Forward Plan because of the need to progress the decommissioning of the school, lease agreements and pupil admissions if the decision is to bring forward the closure.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Children and Young People		✓	
6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		✓	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member, Children's Services is delegated as the Decision Maker to determine the proposal for the closure of St George of England High School, however, as this decision is a Key Decision it needs to be taken by Cabinet.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs: where these costs are known they are covered in the body of the report.

(B) Capital Costs: at the moment there are no known capital costs, however, there may be some impact in future years if the Free School affects other established schools.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal - the process for school closure is contained within DfE guidance and has been followed by officers. Legislation relating to Free Schools is included in the Academies Act 2010.		
Human Resources – these are set out in the body of the report		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD1457) has been consulted and her comments are included in the body of the report.

Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD 807/12) has been consulted and her comments are contained within the body of the report:

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Are there any other options available for consideration?

Available Options are discussed in the body of the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the call-in period for the minutes of this meeting

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Background Papers:

Minutes of St George of England High School's Governor's Meeting on 20 October 2011.

Consultation responses

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services approval was given on 13 July 2010 to close St George of England High School with effect from 31 August 2013. At a further meeting of the Cabinet Member Children's Services approval was also given on 19 April 2011 to close St Wilfrid's Catholic High School with effect from 31 August 2012. During that process the governing bodies and parents' associations from both schools decided to investigate the possibility of setting up a free school. This application has been progressed and The Hawthorne's Free School has now been given approval to move to the next stage by the Department for Education.
- 1.2 The Strategic Director People received a letter from the Chair of the Trustees of The Hawthorne's dated 8 November 2011 (copy attached) requesting that the date of closure of St George of England High School be brought forward by one year to 31 August 2012 to 'enable' their proposal to open The Hawthorne's Free School with effect from 1 September 2012. This request was unanimously agreed by the governors at St George of England High School at their meeting on 20 October 2011 and an excerpt of the minutes states:

".....In view of the fact that we should not be closing until 2013 the Chair of Governors made a formal proposal to write to Peter Morgan to bring forward the closure of St. George of England High School by one year contingent upon an alternative school opening in the area in September 2012.....All Governors were in favour of this proposal."

2. Modifications to the statutory proposal – DFE guidance

- 2.1 The governing legislation is the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and DFE guidance prepared under the Act states that in order to modify a statutory proposal the proposers must apply to the Decision Maker who decided the proposals. A modification should be made before the approved implementation date for the proposals is reached. The most common modification is to the implementation date.
- 2.2 Before modifying the proposals the Decision Maker **must** consult:
- the proposers or the LA who made the proposal
 - the LA, if the LA did not publish the proposals
 - the governing body, if the governing body did not publish the proposals.

The proposals should not be modified in a way that would in effect substitute new proposals. This would run the risk of successful legal challenge in the courts.

- 2.3 As the proposal is simply to modify the implementation date there is no requirement to publish this again but some consultation would need to take place with all those parties affected by the change before the final decision is made. This was reported to the Consultation Panel on 18 November and Cabinet Member – Children's Services on 6 December 2011 and approval was

given to commence consultation on the proposal to bring forward the date of closure of St George of England High School from 31 August 2013 to 31 August 2012 contingent upon an alternative school opening in the area in September 2012..

3. Consultation

3.1 The consultation period ran for 8 weeks including the Christmas holidays. It began on 14 December 2011 and ended on 17 February 2012.

3.2 The following parties were all contacted by letter:

- Families of pupils at St George of England High School;
- Staff and Governors at St George of England High School;
- Families of pupils who have expressed a preference for St George of England High School;
- Parents, staff and governors at Linacre Primary, Springwell Park Primary and Thomas Gray Primary Schools (feeder primary schools);
- Ward Councillors for Netherton and Orrell;
- Joe Benton, MP;
- Headteachers, staff and governors of all Sefton schools;
- Trade unions;
- Director of Liverpool LEA;
- Archdiocese;
- Church of England Diocese.

3.3 A total of 1,148 letters were sent and at the end of the consultation period the Authority had received ten letters of objection, one requesting further information on the consultation process (which was provided) and seventeen letters of support.

3.4 Of the ten letters of objection, one was from Unison Trade Union and nine from staff at the school. Seven letters of support were received from staff at the school and ten from Governors. There were no letters received from any other parties.

3.5 It was reassuring to note that no parents/guardians objected to the proposal to bring the closure forward and it is assumed that they are happy with the proposal to bring forward the closure to facilitate the opening of the Free School. It should also be noted that no objections were received from other established schools in the area.

4 Free School Proposal

4.1 A decision on whether the Free School will be approved or not will be taken by the Secretary of State but as the request to bring forward the closure of St George of England has been made contingent on the Hawthorne's Free School opening it is important that Members have an understanding of that proposal.

4.2 Free Schools are non-profit making, independent, state-funded schools. They are effectively a form of Academy and are covered under the provisions of the

Academies Act 2010. Free Schools are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to what local people say they want and need in order to improve education for children in their community. A Free School is generally a new provision and could cover for example, 11-16 provision, special provision or alternative provision. Existing maintained schools cannot become a Free School as they would be expected to follow the academy conversion route. More details on Free Schools can be found on the DfE website via the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools>

- 4.3 The Hawthorne's Free School proposal is for a 600 place 11 – 16, non-faith school opening with an intake of between 400 and 500 pupils in September 2012. The preferred site is the current St George of England High School site on Fernhill Rd, Bootle. The Hawthorne's Free School consultation as required by Section 10 of the Academies Act 2010 is underway and further information is available on the project website: <http://www.hawthornes.org.uk>.
- 4.4 Initial feedback from the Trust is that they have had over 700 responses with 88% supporting the Free School and over 400 expressions of interest in becoming a pupil at the Free School.
- 4.5 Lord Hill wrote to the Council in October informing us that this application had been approved to the 'pre-opening' stage of the Free School process and that the Secretary of State has a duty under Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 to consider the impact that any new school will have on existing schools in the area. Lord Hill gave an undertaking that the Secretary of State would not enter into a Funding Agreement until the Council's views and any contextual information we provide has been carefully considered.
- 4.6 Following discussion with the Cabinet Member – Children's Services a response to the consultation process on behalf of the Council has been made.

5 Issues for Consideration

The decision Members are asked to make is whether or not to bring forward the closure of St George of England High School to facilitate the opening of the Hawthorne's Free School on the St George of England site. There will be a number of issues which Members may want to take into account in their deliberations and the key issues are outlined in more detail below:

5.1 Curriculum

- 5.1.1 One of the potential implications of bringing forward the closure of St George's would be on year 10 pupils, who had started a course of study and had planned to complete this by the time the school closed in August 2013.
- 5.1.2 This issue has been raised with the Trust and they have stated that: "The intention is to teach the Year 11 former pupils of St. Wilfrid's and the Year 11 former pupils of St. George of England as two separate bands so that the pupils can follow the same curriculum subjects they were following during their Year

10.”

5.2 **School Organisation**

- 5.2.1 The Council has already made decisions to close St Wilfrid's and St George's partly because there are insufficient pupils to sustain the existing secondary school provision in the area.
- 5.2.2 The potential impact of a Free School on existing secondary schools in South Sefton is a major issue for the Council and there has been no recognition of this by either the proposers of the Free School or the Department for Education. This view is supported by analysis of the surplus places in South Sefton which shows circa 2000 current surplus places; this will be reduced to 420 by the closures of St Wilfrid's and St George's. Analysis of pupil forecasts shows a predicted decrease of secondary pupils in the South Sefton area of around 350 by 2017. Creating an additional 600 places will, therefore, bring the number of surplus places in the South Sefton area to around 1370 by 2017.
- 5.2.3 There is a significant surplus of pupil places in the South Sefton area and, from a school organisation, perspective there is not the need for a new 600 pupil school. If the Free School does open it is likely to have an impact on established schools, however it is not possible to ascertain this in any more detail at the current time.
- 5.2.4 As part of the response to the consultation on the Free School proposal the Council have requested a dialogue with the DfE over measures which could be put in place to support existing schools and mitigate this impact. This is particularly relevant given the extremely short timescales involved in opening the Free School and this provides no opportunity for existing schools to properly plan.
- 5.2.5 The Council has a statutory duty to co-ordinate the schools admissions process and ensure that all pupils have a school place. For a closure in 2013 this process would be as follows:
- Sep 2012: review of places available to ensure enough capacity to accommodate pupils in 2013 and contact heads of other local schools and agree additional places, if required.
 - Consider transport implications if other Community School provision is much further for children to travel
 - Nov 2012 :Distribute letter and application form for transfer of pupils to another school
 - Allocate places for Sep 2013 to make sure places are allocated in advance and schools and parents are informed. Schools need this in advance to budget and arrange staffing.
 - January 2013 onwards - Appeals heard for other places, if applicable

- 5.2.6 If the closure is now to take place in Sep 2012 the above process will need to be condensed into a much shorter period of time. The Council would need to establish if the children scheduled to be in St George's (approx. 200) for September 2012, wish to apply to the new Free school or wish to apply for another school in Sefton. It is important to give as much clarity as possible to parents/guardians about future admission arrangements (for the Free School and other available schools) so that parents/guardians can make informed choices and schools know how many pupils they will be admitting in September 2012 and can plan appropriately. Many Schools may have places available now but do not always have the teaching staff already in place to accommodate a full school. This will mean initiating a separate application and allocation process as soon as the decision regarding the closure is made. In addition to this, extra checks will have to be made in September 2012 to ensure all places and children are accounted and have started school because admissions to the Free school fall out side of co-ordination for the 1st Year.
- 5.2.7 The same process, above will have to be undertake for the St Wilfrid's pupils (approximately another 200) within the same time frame for 2012 closure above. These families have been written to previously but a significant number have not responded, and no allocation has yet been undertaken for those families of pupils who did not respond.

5.3 **Human Resource Issues**

- 5.3.1 The original decision to close St George of England in August 2013 meant that the staff from the school would all be made redundant at that time. An obvious impact of bringing the closure forward by 12 months is that these staff will potentially be made redundant (subject to TUPE below) 12 months earlier than originally planned..
- 5.3.2 During the early meetings on the Free School proposal in November 2011, the Council raised the view with the Trust of the application of TUPE to the Free School on the basis that this would be a school, teaching a similar pupil base on the same site as one school, delivering the same curriculum. The possibility of a TUPE from St Wilfrid's was also raised on the basis of several factors also pointing to the application of TUPE. This was identified by officers as a key issue because if TUPE applies, the impacts identified in 5.3.1 above are mitigated.
- 5.3.3 Since November 2011, Officers have been clear that Members would need to have a view from the Trust on the application of TUPE before they could properly consider the request to bring the closure forward as this would be important to their decision making. The Trust responded to requests to provide their view on TUPE on 23 February stating that: *"On TUPE, we are now clear that Free Schools are completely new and additional provision and as such TUPE does not apply. However, we expect a good number of posts in the new Free School to be available for staff at both St Wilfrid's and St George's....."*. In further discussions the Trust has maintained its view.
- 5.3.4 Officers have requested more detail on the legal basis of this view; however the

Trust declined to share their detailed legal advice.

- 5.3.5 Independent legal advice has been taken by the Council on TUPE and the views of trade unions canvassed. The issue is still not entirely clear given the uncertainty of some of the Free School plans, and the application of the law. There are still a range of views on the application of TUPE.
- 5.3.6 The Academies Act 2010 does envisage that there will be circumstances where the Secretary of State enters into Academy arrangements which result in education being provided where previously education had been provided by educational institutions that have been or are being closed. However, the legislation does not specifically deal with the question of whether the replacement of one source of educational provision with another source of educational provision will either amount to the transfer of an undertaking or amount to circumstances in which TUPE applies.
- 5.3.7 The advice the Council has received suggests that TUPE may well apply to employees from St George's and St Wilfrid's, although the position is still not legally settled. There are different factors which affect the employee groups from the two schools and given that the Trust maintain a strong view that TUPE does not apply the outcome of any TUPE challenge is difficult to predict at this stage.
- 5.3.8 If the decision is to bring forward the closure of St George's contingent on the Free School opening, as requested, it will be necessary to proceed on the basis that staff are to be given notice of the ending of employment whilst further discussions take place over TUPE (including further advice) and practical arrangements for employees. This may mean ultimately that employees will be entitled to receive entitlements as if redundant, although it is suggested that Officers ultimately make decisions on this situation based on a collaborative approach. This approach it is suggested would take into account further views and discussions (along with legal advice), consultation with employees and trade unions and information and discussions with the Free School. This would also take into account how the Free School seek to deal with their recruitment.
- 5.3.9 As part of the consultation process on bringing the closure forward, Officers have met with staff from the school to explain how the various scenarios may impact on them.
- 5.3.10 In order to mitigate redundancy and to minimise redundancy costs, Officers are seeking to ensure that all jobs in the Free School (should it proceed) are ringfenced as far as possible to staff from St George's and St Wilfrid's and to consider the situation as the matter proceeds..
- 5.3.11 The provisions of The Redundancy Payments (Continuity in Local Government etc.) Modification Order applies to the Free School as it is covered by the Academies Legislation.

5.4 **Financial**

- 5.4.1 There are a number of scenarios which each have a different financial

implication for the Council:

5.4.2 The Free School Opens and TUPE applies

If TUPE applies then, in theory, the Council would not have to meet any redundancy costs. However, the Proposers have indicated that if TUPE applies to staff from both St Wilfrid's and St George's, the Free School will not be viable to open in September 2012. In this event the Council may end up funding the redundancy costs for both cohorts of staff. The costs of the closure of both school has already been planned for and it is anticipated at this stage that these costs could be contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

5.4.3 The Free School does not open

In this scenario both staff groups would be made redundant. Funding for redundancy costs will come in the first instance from any surplus balances the closing school might have (St Wilfrid's will have a negative balance of around £1,006,000 and St George's will have an estimated fully spent budget, i.e. neither under or over spent), then from the DSG contingency fund. The funding of redundancy costs will be added to the deficits/balances of both schools 7/12ths residual funding. It is anticipated at this stage that these costs could be contained within the DSG as the closure would not be brought forward and costs would be spread over two financial years.

5.4.3 The Free School opens and TUPE does not apply

In this scenario it is likely that a number of staff from St George's and St Wilfrid's will obtain jobs in the Free School and this will limit the number of staff from the two schools who would be made redundant. Funding for redundancy costs will be as above. Cost will depend on the number of staff having to be made redundant but it is anticipated at this stage that these costs could be contained within the DSG.

5.4.4 St Georges does not close early and the Free School opens

In this scenario, although a number of staff may be employed by the Free School, the Council will have to ensure St George's is maintained as a viable school for its final year with reduced funding as pupil numbers are likely to drop. Costs would depend on the numbers of staff to be made redundant at the end of 2013 when St George's is closed.

5.4.5 If TUPE applies the Council does not pick up the costs. If TUPE does not apply and the Free School opens and employs around half of the staff from St George's and St Wilfrid's staff groups (this is the number the Trust has indicated that they require) redundancy costs to around half of the total potential cost, which should reduce financial liabilities to an estimated £1.65m. Although exact costs are not known at the moment, it is anticipated that costs would be contained within the DSG and not impact on the Council's core budget.

5.4.6 As discussed earlier, should the Free School open and be successful there will

be an adverse impact on other established schools in the South Sefton Area. At the current time it is not possible to quantify where, when or exactly what these impacts might be. If they occur over a number of years, staffing reductions may be able to be largely managed through natural wastage. In any event costs are likely to be contained within the DSG and not impact on the Council's core budget.

5.5 Land and Assets

- 5.5.1 The proposers of the Free School have indicated that the St George's site is their preferred location for the school.
- 5.5.2 Detailed negotiations would need to take place around the use of this site and associated assets (furniture and equipment), and the Proposers have been asked for their detailed expectations around the use of the site but at the time of writing these have not been received. Key issues being: the term of any lease and the rent and early discussions have suggested the Trust would want the site for a minimum of 25 years on a peppercorn rent.
- 5.5.3 It should be noted that the Secretary of State has powers to make the site available for use by the Free School, in the absence of agreement between the Council and the Free School., in accordance with Guidance issued by the Secretary of State (The Transfer and Disposal of School Land in England (July 2007) as amended).
- 5.5.4 A benefit of the Free School setting up on the St Georges site would be the continued availability of Fernhill Sports Centre, which is now part of St George of England school, for community use.
- 5.5.5 Given the very tight timescales for setting up the Free School by September, it is recommended that, subject to Cabinet agreeing to bring the closure forward, approval be given to Officers to conduct relevant negotiations with respect to St George's land, assets, fixtures and fittings with the Free School Trust.

6 Discussion and Summary

- 6.1 There are two generic scenarios arising out of the decision Members are asked to take.
- 6.2 Firstly if Members decide not to agree to the request to bring forward the closure. In this scenario there will be no immediate redundancy for staff at St Georges and in theory the school will carry on for its final year as originally planned.
- 6.3 The Proposers of the Free School have, however, stated that they would be still keen for the Free School to open in September and are doing some contingency planning around alternative temporary sites for a year until the St Georges site became available when the school closes.
- 6.4 If this were to occur it would mean that a significant number of pupils could leave which would affect the financial position of the school and potentially

mean the Council would pick up a negative balance when the school closed. Operationally there would be challenges in maintaining staff and a proper educational offer/experience for pupils who remain and it would not be possible to do this cost effectively.

- 6.5 The second scenario is if Members decide to agree to bring forward the closure. In this scenario staff are potentially being made redundant earlier (subject to the application of TUPE), however, if the Free School opens there will be opportunities the Free School for some staff to be employed beyond the 2013 closure date.
- 6.6 It is the view of Officers that whilst this decision could be subject to challenge by staff, the amount of time available for consultation should mitigate this risk.
- 6.7 If a decision is not taken at this meeting it will not be possible to properly consult with staff on redundancy proposals in time to issue notice by 31 May as contractually required. This would potentially open the Council up to challenge at Employment Tribunal. The same would go for consultation regarding TUPE and any measures which would be part of the proposal and this would put the Trust at risk of challenge from staff and unions.
- 6.8 Bringing forward the closure will have a short term financial benefit if a number of staff obtain employment in the Free School, however, there will be longer term impacts on other established school if the Free School is successful.
- 6.9 A significant risk for the Council is that if the proposal to bring forward the closure of St George's is agreed, the decommissioning process for the school commences (eg staff given redundancy notice, contracts ended) and the Free School is not approved. This would put the Council, who have a statutory duty in this regard, in the position of having to find school places for some 200 pupils by either recommissioning St George's or providing places in alternative schools. If this is likely to occur in the summer period it is not possible to achieve and there would be significant detriment to the education of the young people affected.
- 6.10 It is suggested, therefore, that if Members decide to bring forward the closure of St George of England High School as requested by the Proposer, this is contingent on the Secretary of State signing the Funding Agreement (effectively final approval for the Free School) by 25 May 2012. This is just prior to redundancy notices being given to staff which is the start of the decommissioning process for the school.
- 6.11 Cost scenarios are outlined in this report and unfortunately it is not possible to be more specific about costs at this stage. The most likely scenario to have an immediate impact on Council budgets is if the closure is not brought forward and the Free School opens on a temporary site. The Council would still have the cost of maintaining St George's as a viable school for its final year but if pupil numbers reduce funding would also be significantly reduced. If both groups of staff are made redundant and the Free School does not open the impacts will be as currently planned and will be spread over two financial years. If the free School opens there will either be a TUPE transfer or a number of

staff will be employed by the Free School, which will reduce the cost to the DSG.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 In conclusion, therefore, a decision needs to be made so that the circa 400 pupils from St Wilfrid's and St George's can take decisions regarding their future education in the knowledge of where the Free School is up to. The Council needs to be in a position to support staff through a difficult time and let them know how they will be affected by the proposal going forward.
- 7.2 Whilst the consultation on bringing forward the closure did not receive a good response the consultation by the Trust has had over 700 responses of which 88% are in favour of the Free School and over 400 'applications' for places if the Free School is approved. It should also be noted that no parent/guardians or other established schools objected to the proposal to bring forward the closure to facilitate the opening of the Free School.
- 7.3 The arguments around TUPE are still unclear but bringing forward the closure of St Georges to facilitate the Free School will allow for a number of staff from St Wilfrid's and St George's to be employed at the Free School.
- 7.4 The proposers of the Free School have indicated that if the closure was not approved they would still look to set up their Free School on another site (yet to be determined) and this would be a difficult outcome for the Council as discussed in the report.
- 7.5 Whilst there are pros and cons (outlined in the report) of bringing the closure of St George's forward it is felt that bringing the closure forward will provide the best outcomes for the pupils who want to go to the free School and maximise the opportunity for staff from the closing school to find employment.
- 7.6 A decision to bring forward the closure as requested would be a positive response from the community and the proposers of the Free School. However, in order to ensure continuity of education for pupils and to allow time to deal with school organisation and employee matters this decision should be dependent on the Secretary of State approving the opening of the Free School in September 2012 by 25 May.

The Hawthorne's Free School



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Nov 8th 2011

Dear Peter,

The Hawthorne's Free School

Thank you for facilitating the meeting this morning to begin to look at issues surrounding our school proposal. I hope we have established a basis for continuing dialogue around the key issues, especially regarding the site, TUPE and admissions processes.

I am also writing with the request, unanimously agreed by the Governors at St George of England Specialist Engineering College at their meeting on Oct 20th 2011, that you bring the closure of the school, currently scheduled for 31/8/2013, forward by one year.

This will enable our proposal for opening the Hawthorne's Free School from the beginning of September 2012.

I understand that there needs to be a further consultation following this request, and we will co-operate with that in whatever is required.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Ricky Panter (Chair of Trustees)

CC Cllr Ian Moncur, Mike McSorley, Colin Pettigrew,