

Cabinet

11 July 2012

Proposed Closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School



Key Decision: CYPS/05/12

Report of Corporate Management Team

**David Williams, Corporate Director Children and Young People's
Services**

**Councillor Claire Vasey, Cabinet Portfolio Member for Children's
Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to close Plawsworth Road Infant School from 31 August 2013.

Background

- 2 Consultation on this proposal was carried out from 20 February 2012 to 30 March 2012. After considering the views of those who responded to the consultation a decision was taken to proceed to the next stage in the statutory process which was to issue a public notice proposing the closure of the school from 31 August 2013.
- 3 The public notice (attached) was issued on 26 April 2012 for 6 weeks, when objections and comments on the proposal could be sent to the Local Authority.

Decision Making Process

- 4 When making a decision, Cabinet should be satisfied that the consultation that was undertaken met statutory requirements. Consultation and the publication of the statutory notice was carried out in accordance with the guidance provided by the Secretary of State on 'Closing a Maintained Mainstream School'. Paragraphs 5-10 of this report provide details of the consultation that was undertaken and provides a summary of the responses received.
- 5 Consultation documents (attached as Annex 1) were distributed widely across the local area on 20 February 2012. The consultation period lasted for 6 weeks until 30 March 2012.
- 6 A series of meetings were also held so that parents, governors, staff and the local community could share their views with officers from the Local Authority:
 - Governors meeting - 1.30 pm, 28 February 2012 (Governors response to the consultation is attached as Annex 2).

- Staff meeting - 3.00 pm, 28 February 2012 (notes of the staff meeting are attached as Annex 3).

- Drop-in session for parents - 8.30 am and 2.45 pm, 29 February 2012 (notes of the drop-in session are attached as Annex 4).
- Evening meeting for representatives of local community groups - 6.30 pm, 5 March 2012 (notes of the meeting are attached as Annex 5).

Responses to the Consultation and Views of Interested Parties

7 Cabinet is required to consider the views of all those who may be affected by the proposals.

38 written responses were received from:

- 17 parents of children at local infant, junior and primary schools who were in favour of the proposal to close the school.
- 4 parents of children at Plawsworth Road Infant School and 1 parent of a pupil at a local secondary school who were against the closure of the school.
- 4 Governors from local schools who were in favour of the proposal to close the school.
- 1 other member of the community who was against the proposal to close the school.
- 8 members of staff from a local secondary school who were in favour of the proposal and 1 member of staff from a local secondary school who was against the proposal.
- Governors of Plawsworth Road Infant School (response attached at Annex 2). Governors viewed the closure of the school as a "hugely missed opportunity to reinvigorate primary education in the area, and simply as a cost saving exercise.
- Sacriston Community and Sports Trust did not agree with the proposed closure as the school "actively participates in community life which is a huge benefit to it's pupils, enriching their educational experience and promoting positive social cohesion. To lose this would be detrimental to the children."

8 2 parents of pupils at Plawsworth Road Infant School and another primary school used the on-line response form to submit their views on the proposal. Both are against the proposal to close the school.

9 16 parents who attended the drop-in sessions would prefer the school to remain open but some parents had already started to visit other schools to help them decide which school they would want their son/daughter to go to if Plawsworth Road Infant School closed. (Notes of the meetings are attached.)

10 8 representatives from local community groups attended a meeting in the community centre (notes of the meeting are attached). In general, there was no strong case put forward to keep the school open. Much of the discussion

focused on what opportunities there could be for Sacriston if the school closed and capital receipts were accrued from the sale of the land.

(All responses are held with officers in the School Organisation and Capital Projects Team in Room 3/30, County Hall. Copies are also available in the Members' Library.)

Response to the Public Notice

- 11 No objections or comments were received by the end of the 6 week statutory notice period.

Further Considerations

- 12 Cabinet should also consider the effects this proposal could have on standards and school improvement. During the consultation, parents were made aware of the fact that if a decision was taken to close the school all pupils at Plawsworth Road Infant School could be accommodated in nearby Sacriston Nursery and Infant School. There are also some places available in other local schools

Sacriston Nursery and Infant School is an outstanding school. In light of this, officers believe that this proposal will not have a detrimental effect on standards and school improvement. If the school was to close, pupils will continue to have access to a high standard of education and to a curriculum that will help them achieve their potential. They will also continue to have access to a range of extended services.

- 13 Pupils with Special Educational Needs will continue to have their needs met at another school if they were to be displaced as a result of closure of this school. In this locality there is another Infant School, as highlighted above, a Community Primary School and Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School.
- 14 It is important that education is provided as cost-effectively as possible. Empty places can represent a poor use of resources. There are surplus places in the Sacriston area, therefore the closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School will remove some of these surplus places.
- 15 Plawsworth Road Infant School is designated by the Department for Education as a rural school. Cabinet should have regard to the need to preserve access to a local school in rural communities. When the consultation was undertaken parents were made aware that if a decision was taken to close the school all pupils could be accommodated in Sacriston Nursery and Infant School or other local schools with places available. There is unlikely to be a long term negative impact on the community resulting from the closure of this school.

Recommendations and Reasons

- 16 The Local Authority believes that proceeding with this proposal will not have a negative impact on educational standards or pupil places in Sacriston.

Cabinet is therefore recommended to agree to close Plawsworth Road Infant School from 31 August 2013.

Background papers

Delegated Decision Reports of 3 February 2012 and 4 April 2012.

Consultation Document (attached)

Public Notice (attached)

Contact: Sheila Palmerley Ext 3314

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Revenue savings within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of about £155,000 could be made if the school was closed. This saving would not accrue to the County Council but would improve the budget of all schools funded through the DSG.

Staffing

Any staff 'at risk' as a result of closure would be considered for alternative employment through Durham County Council's existing scheme and the Brokerage Scheme for teachers.

Risk

The risk of not proceeding with the proposal could result in the County Council continuing to run a small Infant School in a locality where there are sufficient places in neighbouring schools. Keeping this small school open is costly and money could be more effectively used to support all schools across the county.

Equality and Diversity

As a public body, the council must take into account the Equality Act 2010, a consolidating Act which brings together previous Acts dealing with discrimination. Decisions must be reviewed for potential impact on persons with "protected characteristics".

An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out and considered to assess the impact of the proposal on specific groups (copy attached).

S.149 of the 2010 Act also lays down the Public Sector Equality Duty whereby from the 5 April 2011, local authorities and other organisations exercising public functions must have due regard to 3 key areas:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't; and
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't.

The relevant "protected characteristics" are: age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Accommodation

All pupils from Plawsworth Road Infant School could be accommodated at Sacriston Nursery and Infant School, although parents would be able to express a preference for any school.

Crime and Disorder

N/A

Human Rights

Human rights will not be affected by this proposal.

Consultation

Following the public consultation on the proposal, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and Local Members were consulted (3 April 2012) about whether or not officers should proceed with the proposal to close the school. They agreed that the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services should use his delegated powers to approve the publication of a statutory notice.

Procurement

N/A.

Disability Issues

N/A

Legal Implications

The process for closing the school, if implemented, would be in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Plawsworth Road Infant School: Proposal to discontinue the school from 31 August 2013

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UJ intends to discontinue Plawsworth Road Infant School, Rosewood Close, Off Plawsworth Road, Sacriston, Durham, DH7 6QH on 31 August 2013.

All statutory consultation requirements relating to this proposal have been complied with.

All pupils attending Plawsworth Road Infant School at the time of the closure will be offered a place at Sacriston Nursery and Infant School, Woodside, Sacriston, Durham, DH7 6LQ. This school is approximately one mile from Plawsworth Road Infant School. Parents could still express a preference for a place at another school. Places will be offered in accordance with the County Council's Admissions Policy.

All County Durham schools subscribe to the SEN Code of Practice. The Local Authority (LA) believes this proposal will not have a negative impact on pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The needs of all pupils will continue to be met in accordance with the County Council's arrangements for pupils with SEN.

Home to school transport will be in accordance with the LA's home to school transport policy therefore the LA will not need to provide additional free home to school transport as there are alternative schools, with places available, within 2 miles of Plawsworth Road Infant School. There are also places available at other primary schools that are more than 2 miles away and the LA will assist parents/carers in securing a place at one of these schools if that is what they want although it would be unlikely that free home to school transport would be provided.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Mrs Sheila Palmerley, School Organisation and Capital Projects Team Children and Young People's Services, Business Reply Service, Licence No. DU63 (Freepost), Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5BR.

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Mr Adam Williams, School Organisation and Capital Projects Team, Children and Young People's Services, Business Reply Service, Licence No. DU63 (Freepost), Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5BR. Objections and comments can also be sent via the County Council's website at www.durham.gov.uk or e-mailed to schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk.

Signed:

David Williams
Corporate Director
Children and Young People's Services

Publication Date: 26 April 2012



Durham County Council would like to hear your views about the future of Primary Education in Sacriston



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Making a difference where you live



CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Plawsworth Road Infant School: Proposal to close the school from 31 August 2013

Introduction

Durham County Council keeps under review the pattern and provision of schools across the county to ensure that there are enough schools of a suitable size to meet local requirements and to provide the best possible education for the pupils they serve.

Recently a review of school places and education provision was carried out on the schools in Sacriston. There are currently two Local Authority Community Infant Schools and one Junior School in Sacriston. There is also a Voluntary Aided Primary School (St Bede's).

The outcome of the review has led the County Council to consult with you on a proposal to close Plawsworth Road Infant School. You will no doubt have many questions to ask about the reasons for this. This consultation document aims to answer some of these questions and explains how you can let the County Council know what you think.

1. **Why is the County Council proposing to close Plawsworth Road Infant School?**

The County Council has been concerned at the low numbers attending this school in recent years. All Local Authorities are urged to examine whether it is a good use of money to keep schools open for a few pupils if alternative provision can be provided.

Plawsworth Road Infant School can hold 90 pupils. Currently there are only 30 attending the school which makes it very costly to run. Revenue savings of about £155,000 could be made if the school closed. This money could then be put back into the County Council's schools budget to help improve education for children and young people across Durham.

2. **If the school closed, where would the pupils go?**

Sacriston Nursery and Infant School can hold 210 pupils. There are three year groups in an Infant School - Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. This school can therefore have 70 pupils in each year group, although it is not expected that there will ever be as many pupils as this seeking a place at the school.

The table below shows the numbers in each year group at Sacriston Nursery and Infant School and Plawsworth Road Infant School.

School	Number of Pupils in Each Year Group (February 2012)		
	Reception	Year 1	Year 2
Sacriston Nursery and Infant School	40	44	33
Plawsworth Road Infant School	12	8	10
Total	52	52	43
Empty places remaining from a possible maximum of 70 in each year group	18	18	27

Usually, at the end of Year 2 most pupils attending the Infant Schools go to Sacriston Junior School. This school can hold 240 pupils. There are four year groups in a Junior School - Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6. This school can therefore have 60 pupils in each year group. The table below shows the number of pupils currently attending Sacriston Junior School.

School	Number of Pupils in Each Year Group (February 2012)			
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Sacriston Junior School	47	38	39	41

The information in the tables above highlights that there is enough room for all of the existing pupils at Plawsworth Road Infant School to go to Sacriston Nursery and Infant School, and then progress into Sacriston Junior School if that is where parents request a place for their child. There are also spare places in other neighbouring schools.

3. Will there be transport available if it is further for my child to get to Sacriston Nursery and Infant School than Plawsworth Road Infant School?

Home to School Transport will be provided in accordance with the County Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Details about this policy are available from the School Admissions Team at County Hall, Durham. Free transport is not usually available if you live closer than 2 miles from the school (for under 8 year olds) or closer than 3 miles (for over 8 years old), unless the walking distance is deemed unsafe.

4. What about pupils in the future?

The County Council carries out an exercise each year to assess how many pupils may attend each school across the county in future years. This can be done by using information from the Health Service about the number of children born in each local area.

Also, sometimes if new houses are built this can result in additional pupils attending local schools. All of this information has already been included in the numbers expected in future years in Sacriston:

Projected Rolls

		Projected Rolls (January of Each Year)					
School	Capacity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Plawsworth Road Infant School	90	27	27	27	27	27	27
Sacriston Nursery & Infant School	210	111	103	102	99	100	101
Sacriston Junior School	240	187	170	171	161	163	159

5. How will the closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School affect the education of its pupils?

The County Council is confident that if pupils attend Sacriston Nursery and Infant School instead of Plawsworth Road Infant School they will continue to receive a high standard of education. In 2002 and 2006, Inspectors described Sacriston Nursery and Infant School as an **Outstanding** school. They said that pupils' achievement is outstanding and overall standards are consistently high. Inspectors received information on the progress of pupils again in July 2010 and confirmed that the school continued to provide an outstanding standard of education.

6. If Plawsworth Road Infant School closed what would happen to the staff?

If any staff were 'at risk' the County Council will ensure that they have access to the Council's alternative employment scheme which most schools have used previously when there has been proposals for school re-organisations.

7. Is closing Plawsworth Road Infant School the only option that the County Council considered?

No. The County Council looked at some other options to address school places and 'value for money' solutions:

- It would have been possible to propose the closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School, Sacriston Nursery and Infant School and Sacriston Junior School, to create one primary school. Under the Education Act 2011, if the Local Authority wanted to create a new primary school it would have to be proposed as an Academy or Free School. Following discussions with the schools themselves and the Local Authority this was not a favourable option.
- County Council officers have suggested to the Governors of Sacriston Nursery and Infant School and Sacriston Junior School that it would be a good idea for them to consider 'Federating' the two schools. Governors have agreed to investigate ways that this could be achieved. The consultation on establishing a Federation would be led by Governors with support from the County Council and would be carried out separately to this consultation on the proposal to close Plawsworth Road Infant School. Durham County Council Schools have a strong reputation for working in partnership so that facilities, staff, skills and experience can be shared across groups of schools to enhance educational provision. This could easily be achieved across Sacriston Nursery and Infant

School and Sacriston Junior School because the schools share a site. There are a number of 'Federated' schools already in the County which are working well.

- It would also have been possible to close two out of the three schools and expand the age range of the remaining school to create a Primary School. As Sacriston Nursery and Infant School and Sacriston Junior School share the same site the Local Authority's preferred option is to propose closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School in the first instance, so that education provision can then be on one site. If this was agreed, the next step would be for the Local Authority to work with the schools to develop a 'Federation' as highlighted above.

8. If Plawsworth Road Infant School closed what would happen to the existing buildings and site?

The County Council would make sure that any other Council service had the opportunity to use the site if they wanted to, before disposing of the site following the Council's agreed procedures for the disposal of buildings and land.

9. How do we respond to this consultation?

We would like to hear what you think about the proposal to close Plawsworth Road Infant School from 31 August 2013.

We are holding drop-in sessions for **parents** at the school on:

- Wednesday 29 February 2012, 8.30 - 9.30 am
- Wednesday 29 February 2012, 2.45 - 3.45 pm

Parents are invited to attend either session.

Officers from the County Council will be available at the drop-in sessions to answer any questions you have about this proposal and to listen to your own views.

You can also respond in one of the following ways by 30 March 2012:

- (i) Send in the attached response form or write to: Mr Adam Williams, School Organisation and Capital Projects Team, Children and Young People's Services, Business Reply Service, Licence No. DU63 (Freepost), Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5BR).
- (ii) E-mail your views to: schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk or complete the response form online via the Education and Learning section of the County Council's website: www.durham.gov.uk

10. What happens after the 30th March 2012 when the consultation period ends?

All the responses to the consultation will be considered and a report will be written providing a summary of the views expressed.

If the County Council decides to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published towards the end of April 2012 for 6 weeks when objections could be made. A decision on whether to close the school or not would be made in July 2012. If the decision was to close the school, the following year would be used to make alternative arrangements for staff and pupils before the actual closure on 31 August 2013.

**RESPONSE FORM - CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE
PLAWSWORTH ROAD INFANT SCHOOL FROM 31 AUGUST 2013**

1. Please tick **one** box from the list below to let us know if you are responding to this consultation **mainly** as a:

Parent/Carer of a pupil(s) at

- Nursery - which school _____
- Infant - which school _____
- Junior - which school _____
- Primary - which school _____
- Secondary - which school _____
- Special - which school _____

OR a Pupil at

- Nursery - which school _____
- Infant - which school _____
- Junior - which school _____
- Primary - which school _____
- Secondary - which school _____
- Special - which school _____

OR a

- Governor - which school(s) _____
- Member of staff - which school _____
- Resident _____
- Local Member _____
- Trade Union Representative _____
- Community Group _____
- Diocese _____
- Parish/Town Council Representative _____
- Neighbouring Authority – Which Authority? _____
- MP _____
- Other _____

2. Please let us know, by ticking the relevant box, if you think Plawsworth Road Infant School should close from 31 August 2013.

Yes

No

3. Please provide any other comments you wish to about this proposal:

Please return this form by 30 March 2012 to:

Mr Adam Williams, School Organisation and Capital Projects Team, Children and Young People's Services, Business Reply Service Licence No DU63 (Freepost), Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5BR

(The information that you send may need to be passed to colleagues or shared with partners. It may also be published in a summary of responses received to this consultation but results will not contain your name or anything that could identify you. If you require an acknowledgement to your response, please provide details below.)

Name:

Address:
.....

Signed: **Date:**

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

Children and Young People's Services

Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form for Consultation

Our aim is to be fair and we want to make it easy for everyone to tell us what they think. Your answers to the following questions will help us to find out if we have heard from a wide range of people or if there are any groups we still need to hear from. Your answers will be anonymous so we can not tell who filled in each form and we will only use the information to check how well we involved people from different backgrounds.

You only need to answer if you feel happy to do so.

Are you: Male Female How old are you?

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person? Yes No

(This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day to day life. Long-standing means that it has lasted, or is likely to last, for over a year.)

What is your religion or belief?

Christian Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh Buddhist
None Other (✓and write below)

How do you describe your sexuality:

Heterosexual/Straight Gay Woman/Lesbian Gay Man Bisexual
Other (✓and write below)

To which of these groups do you belong?

White

English Welsh
Scottish Northern Irish
British Irish
Any Other White background
(✓and write below)

Travelling Community

Gypsy/Roma
Traveller of Irish Descent
Other member of the travelling community
(✓ and write below)

Black or Black British

Caribbean African
Any Other Black background
(✓and write below)

Mixed

White & Black Caribbean
White & Black African
Any other Mixed background)
(✓and write below)

Asian or Asian British

Indian Pakistani
Bangladeshi Chinese

Other ethnic Groups

Other ethnic group
Any Other Asian background
(✓and write below)

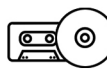
Any Other Asian background
(✓and write below)

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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Response from Plawsworth Road Infant School Governors

Please see below the response from the Governors at Plawsworth Road Infant School to the recent consultation document regarding the future provision of education in Sacriston.

"Governors feel misled that the consultation document was weighted more to pupil numbers and costs rather than academic achievement. RAISE online data illustrates Plawsworth Road Infants' excellent academic results. The most recent Ofsted report of 2009 also reports that the school is good with outstanding features.

Governors would like to point out that their school offers wide-ranging and rich educational experiences for children in their care; the school maintains active relationships with Sacriston Junior School and St Bede's Primary School, the Library, local churches and the community centre to enable the children to contribute to their community and develop positive relationships. This encourages active citizenship, high self-esteem and confidence amongst other things.

The schools small "family" set-up is particularly valued, and parents and families welcome the freedom of choice of school that Plawsworth Road being open allows. It gives unique opportunity to cater for children of all abilities, giving additional time and resources for those who may need additional support, whether this be regarding attainment, special education needs or other. It also gives the flexibility to allow those naturally gifted and able children more specific and personal tuition in order for them to flourish. This approach enables children to be supported and celebrated as individuals.

The general consensus amongst Governors was that the published revenue saving of £155K may not be the actual figure once any potential redundancies, recruitment of new staff etc are dealt with. (Please could you provide clarification that the actual saving will be £155K.) It is also worthy of note that as the savings will be divided amongst all education providers in County Durham, the sum equates to pennies per pupil, which can have no effect on provision. The inclusion of this figure is felt to be misleading to the reader.

Governors are unhappy with the consultation process,

- *the lack of open meeting to discuss the proposals in a transparent manner.*
- *the distribution of consultation documents publically, without giving Governors time to read and digest the paper.*
- *the format of the feedback form, particularly the section whereby comments are invited. It was thought that much more emphasis should have been placed on the importance of the 'comments box', and some specific questions should have been asked to give some comparative results to quantify and qualify the final decision DCC come to as a result of this consultation.*
- *Neighbours who received letters were only the very immediate neighbours, and this sharing of information should have been wider spread.*
- *The document's use of staff may be "at risk" is misleading to the reader, there are of course direct and definite risks attached to staff if the closure of the school is to go ahead*

Ultimately, Governors would like to know why education in Sacriston will improve with the closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School;

By simply closing Plawsworth Road Infants in a stand-alone process means the possibility of highly valued teaching and non-teaching staff being redirected from the area of Sacriston, and possibly completely of the education system.

The Governing body are unable to help shape and steer the future of primary education in Sacriston.

It will negatively impact on class sizes in Sacriston.

There is no certainty that a Federation will occur.

The Governors see this as a hugely missed opportunity to reinvigorate Primary Education in the area, and simply as a cost saving exercise."

Notes of the Staff Meeting held on 28 February at Plawsworth Road Infant School

Attendees: Chris Hutchinson (Teacher)
Paula Rivett (School Clerk)
Christine Dillon (Head Teacher)
Kathryn Walters (Assistant Head)
Neville Court (Caretaker)
Sheila Palmerley (School Places Strategy Manager, Durham County Council)
Graeme Plews (Senior School Places Officer, Durham County Council)
Jill Douthwaite (School and Governor Support Service, Durham County Council)
Stephen Burton (UNISON)

S Palmerley outlined the timescales for the consultation and gave an explanation of the decision making process.

Staff asked if the school would close earlier than 2013 if a large percentage of children left this year. S Palmerley explained that the proposal was to close on 31 August 2013. If a decision was taken in July 2012 to close the school in 2013 and staff/governors requested that it closed earlier, a report would need to go to Durham County Council asking them to change the proposed date of closure.

S Burton highlighted that if any staff are likely to be made redundant there is a statutory timescale that needs to be allowed for as part of that consultation.

J Douthwaite gave an explanation of how the Brokerage Scheme works (paper attached) and recommended that clerical staff look at the opportunities available through the County Council's Corporate alternative employment scheme if they were faced with possible redundancy.

Brokerage Information

	Brokerage / Alternative Employment	Redundancy Payments	Pensions
All Staff	<p>To register with the Brokerage Service staff must have at least one year's continuous service at the date of redundancy / school closure.</p> <p>The Brokerage Officer will try to find suitable alternative employment for any member of staff who wishes to pursue this opportunity. The success of this will depend on vacancies in schools and the willingness of Governing Bodies to accept applicants via the Brokerage Service.</p> <p>Staff at risk with at least 1 year's continuous service will also be registered for the Corporate Re-deployment Scheme, which means staff would receive support in identifying suitable alternative employment for non-school based posts where the essential criteria was met.</p>	<p>Compulsory redundancy payments will be made in accordance with current legislation. To qualify for a redundancy payment staff members must have at least 2 years continuous Local Authority service.</p> <p>Payments are calculated taking into account the member of staff's age, length of service and amount of weekly pay at the point of redundancy.</p> <p>The current maximum weekly amount payable for compulsory redundancy is £430. In the case of members of staff whose weekly pay is less than £430, the redundancy payment is based on their actual weekly pay.</p> <p>Enhanced redundancy payments will normally be made to eligible staff who have made every effort to secure suitable alternative employment but ultimately are unsuccessful (subject to County Council approval).</p> <p>Enhanced redundancy payments are calculated by the same method as above, but the member of staff will receive their actual weekly salary up to a maximum of £662.58 per week (subject to County Council approval).</p>	See below.
Teaching Staff			Teaching staff in a redundancy situation may apply for their pension benefits to Teachers' Pensions if they are over 55 years of age. Payments will be made at an Actuarially Reduced Benefit rate. Those over 60 years of age will receive their full entitlement*. Estimates are available on the Teachers' Pensions website (see overleaf).
Support Staff			<p>Any member of staff who is over 55 years of age, is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme, and is in a redundancy situation, will have their pension benefits released automatically.** The CYPS Staffing Team will provide estimates of pension benefits. Members of staff who are under 55 years of age will not have their pension released on redundancy and will, instead, be entitled to deferred pension benefits which will be paid from age 60 at the earliest, possibly at a reduced rate.</p> <p>Staff who are not members of the LGPS may be eligible for a gratuity, which is a one off lump sum payment. These payments are only available to staff who have had a period of service where they were not eligible to be a member of the LGPS, have been employed by DCC for more than ten years, have reached the age of 55 and are subject to a redundancy situation. Conditions are applicable (see overleaf).</p>

* Teachers who **joined** the Teachers' Pension Scheme on or after 01/01/07 are subject to revised regulations including no automatic entitlement to a lump sum upon retirement.

** Support Staff who **joined** the Local Government Pension Scheme on or after 01/04/08 are subject to revised regulations including no automatic entitlement to a lump sum.

Gratuity Information

To qualify for a gratuity a member of staff must fulfil the following criteria:

- The member must have had a period of service where they were not eligible to be a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Have been employed by the Authority for more than ten years
- Reached the age of 55 years
- Be the subject of a redundancy situation

Exclusions:

A member's service is not eligible if it falls into one of the following categories:

- Part time workers working 15 hours or more a week, were under 55 years of age on 31 March 1987, and had the opportunity to join the Pension Scheme from 1 April 1987, but chose not to do so
- Part time workers working less than 15 hours a week, were under 50 years of age on 16 August 1993, and had the right to be pensionable from 17 August 1993, but chose not to do so
- Full time former manual workers who opted not to join the scheme in 1973, and have since opted not to join in 1987, and were aged under 55 years on 31 March 1987.

Teachers' Pensions Information

To obtain an estimate of your pension benefits, access www.teacherspensions.co.uk, tab to 'Key Links' then 'Calculators' and select 'Read More', then choose appropriate options from the 'Calculators Index'. You will be asked to input the following personal information:

- Your final salary
- Your reckonable service (years and days)
- Your age in years and months as at the proposed date of retirement (ARB estimate only)

Submitting this information to the appropriate calculators will enable you to obtain an estimate of Actuarially Reduced Benefits (ARB) from the age of 55 and an estimate of unreduced pension benefits at age 60. Please note that teachers **joining** the Scheme on or after 01/01/07 are subject to revised regulations including an increase in the Normal Retirement Age from 60 to 65 and no automatic entitlement to a lump sum upon retirement (see website for more information).

All Staff

Assistance is available from: Mandie Spence, Strategy & Staffing Manager, 0191 383 3315, e-mail mandie.spence@durham.gov.uk
(for Teaching Staff) Paul Rockett, Assistant Staffing Manager, 0191 383 5667, e-mail paul.rockett@durham.gov.uk
(for Support Staff) Lynn Elliott, Assistant Staffing Manager, 0191 383 4432, e-mail lynn.elliott@durham.gov.uk
(for All Staff) Jill Douthwaite, Brokerage Officer, 0191 383 5651, e-mail jill.douthwaite@durham.gov.uk

Notes of Drop-In Sessions for Parents at Plawsworth Road Infant School

29 February 2012

8.30 - 9.30 am, 2.45 - 3.45 pm

Attendees: 12 Parents (8.30 - 9.30 am)
4 Parents (2.45 - 3.45 pm)
S Palmerley (School Places Strategy Manager, Durham County Council)
G Plews (Senior School Places Officer, Durham County Council)
Councillor Allen Turner

- Parents asked if it was possible to bring the Nursery from Sacriston Infant and Nursery School down to Plawsworth Road to help secure the future of the school.

This is not an option that the County Council would propose as the pattern of nursery provision is appropriate for the needs of the county and there is no capital funding to create a nursery at Plawsworth Road.

- Parents asked if the school would close earlier if pupils left before 2013.

S Palmerley explained that the proposal was to close on 31 August 2013. If a decision was taken in July 2012 to close the school in 2013 and staff/governors requested that it closed earlier, a report would need to go to Durham County Council asking them to change the proposed date of closure.

- Parents asked if it was possible to limit the number of pupils that went to Sacriston Nursery and Infant School so that more could go to Plawsworth Road.

The size of a school is based on the physical capacity and an admission limit is applied accordingly. Governors are consulted on a suitable admission limit for the school and the County Council decides what that number should be.

- Parents asked why the County Council can't try to market Plawsworth Road School so that more pupils might go.

The County Council's role is not to actively market one particular school in an attempt to increase pupil numbers.

- Parents asked if it costs more to educate pupils at Plawsworth Road rather than other schools.

Yes, it does. There are only 30 pupils in the school which can hold 90.

Parents also made some comments about the following:

"Pupils coming for taster days to this school are getting a good education"

"There will be more traffic congestion at Sacriston Infant School if more pupils go there"

"Some people don't know Plawsworth Road School is here. There should be better signage".

"Some parents may buy a new uniform to start this September but only be at the school for one year".

"It would be helpful to hear what other parents want to do if a decision is taken to close the school this July, but it wouldn't formally close until 2013".

Much of the discussion was about whether the school would close earlier than September 2013 if a lot of children left the school before it formally closed (assuming the decision is taken to close the school in July 2012).

**Notes of Meeting held with Representatives from
Local Community Groups in Sacriston**

**Monday 5 March 2012 - 6.30 pm
at Fulforth Centre, Sacriston**

Attendees: Brian Mulvey (Parish Councillor)
Lilian Burford (Sacriston Development Group)
David Wright (Sacriston Development Group)
Derek Robson (Sacriston Development Group at Sacriston Parish Councillor)
Anne Wright (Local Member, Durham County Council)
Alan Holden (Plawsworth and Kimblesworth Community Association)
Ralph Harrison (Sacriston Parish Council and Kimblesworth Parish Council)
Allan Turner (Local Member, Durham County Council)

Meeting led by: Sheila Palmerley (School Places Strategy Manager, Durham County Council)
Graeme Plews (Senior School Places Officer)
Councillor Claire Vasey (Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children and Young People's Services)

Representatives from the local community groups discussed the proposal to close Plawsworth Road Infant School with the officers present from the Local Authority.

They were particularly keen to ensure that any savings made from the proposed closure would be ringfenced for children in Sacriston. Officers explained that school budgets were predominantly determined by pupil numbers. The financial value attached to a pupil would transfer to the school he or she would attend if Plawsworth Road School was to close. The 'non pupil' element would be redistributed to all other maintained schools in County Durham via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Representatives were interested to know if Governors and parents had responded to the consultation. The officers explained that there had been responses received, some in favour of the proposal and some against.

There was discussion about the possibility of the school closing before September 2013 if pupils left before the closing date to secure a place at another school. No decision can be made on that just now. The proposal remains the same to close on 31 August 2013.

If the school does close, local representatives would like to see any capital receipt from the sale of the land being ringfenced for Sacriston.

Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.

You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.

Section one: Description and initial screening

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.	
Service/team or section: CYPS, Achievement Services, School Organisation & Capital Projects Team	
Lead Officer: Sheila Palmerley	Start date: 1st February 2012
Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate) Proposed closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School	
Who are the main stakeholders: General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) – General Public, Governors, Staff, Parents, Pupils, Elected Members, MPs, Neighbouring Schools, Unions, Diocese, DfE, Community Groups, Parish Council, AAP Board, Neighbouring Authorities, CYPS/DCC Staff	
Is a copy of the subject attached? Yes / No Consultation document attached to this Cabinet report.	
If not, where could it be viewed?	

Initial screening

Prompts to help you:

Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

Is there an actual/potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?

Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	N	Disability	N	Age	*	Race/ethnicity	N	Religion or belief	N	Sexual orientation	N
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*If the proposal was implemented children of Infant school age at Plawsworth Road would be educated elsewhere

How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?

Reminder of our legal duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone's disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people
- Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

The main group affected by this proposal are pupils in Reception and Year 1 of the existing school. Also, parents of pupils who have applied for a place at the school from September 2012 (letters were sent to these parents. Letter is attached). Future generations of children whose parents may have thought their children would go to Plawsworth Road Infant School for their Infant education. Letters were sent to local residents who live nearest to the school (attached).

Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – Yes/No

Date:

If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.

Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.

	Identify the impact: does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
Gender	N/A	Outcome of consultation will provide evidence (consultation ends 30/03/12)	Consider responses to consultation to identify if any new evidence emerges which would lead the Local Authority to reconsider it's proposal and impact on particular groups.
Age	N/A	Outcome of consultation will provide evidence (consultation ends 30/03/12)	
Disability	N/A	Outcome of consultation will provide evidence (consultation ends 30/03/12)	
Race/Ethnicity	N/A	Outcome of consultation will provide evidence (consultation ends 30/03/12)	
Religion or belief	N/A	Outcome of consultation will provide evidence (consultation ends 30/03/12)	
Sexual orientation	N/A	Outcome of consultation will provide evidence (consultation ends 30/03/12)	

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?

If the school closes, pupils are likely to attend another school within the same community. The closure of Plawsworth Road Infant School is unlikely to have a significant impact on the relationships between different communities.

Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.			
<p>The greatest change is that there will be one less Infant School in Sacriston for parents to apply for a place for their child. The numbers are very low (30 out of possible 90) which is why the County Council is proposing closure. All pupils can be accommodated at another infant school in Sacriston.</p>			
Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
Follow the Secretary of State's guidance on 'Closing a Maintained Mainstream School' to ensure statutory timescales for consultation and publication of a notice (if appropriate) are applied.	S Palmerley	Full process - 4 January 2012 - 11 July 2012	School Organisation and Capital Projects Team Plan
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date: 30 March 2012 (end of consultation period) Reviewed on 2nd April-No changes required. 7 June 2012 (end of notice period) - Reviewed on 10 June 2012 - no changes required.		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	No		
Lead officer - sign off: Sheila Palmerley			Date: 10 June 2012
Service equality representative - sign off: Sent to equality representative.			Date: February 2012

Please email your completed Impact Assessment to the Equality team - equalities@durham.gov.uk.

Contact: Sheila Palmerley
Direct Tel: 0191 383 3281
Fax: 0191 386 0487
email: sheila.palmerley@durham.gov.uk
Our ref: CYPS/SO/SP/SA

3 July 2012

Dear Resident

Plawsworth Road Infant School

You may be aware that Durham County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Plawsworth Road Infant School from 31 August 2013.

The purpose of this letter is to specifically alert you to the consultation as you live so close to the school.

A full copy of the consultation document can be found on the County Council's website: www.durham.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can read it in any of your local community buildings in Sacriston. The document explains the reason for this proposal and highlights how you can respond.

If there is anything you wish to ask about this proposal please feel free to contact me. You can also email your views to: schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



Sheila Palmerley
School Places Strategy Manager

Contact: Sheila Palmerley
Direct Tel: 0191 383 3281
Fax: 0191 386 0487
email: sheila.palmerley@durham.gov.uk
Our ref: CYPs/SO/SP/SA

The Parent/Carer of:

3 July 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

Plawsworth Road Infant School

You may be aware that Durham County Council has, this week, begun consultation on a proposal to close Plawsworth Road Infant School from 31 August 2013 (consultation document enclosed).

We know that you listed this school as one of your preferences for a place for your child from 1 September 2012. At the time when applications for places had to be submitted (15 January 2012) to the County Council, the decision to consult on closure had not been taken.

The purpose of this letter is to make sure that you have the opportunity to respond to the consultation as your child could be directly affected by this change if a decision was taken to close the school.

We would urge you to read the document enclosed which explains the timescale for decisions to be made and also how to respond to the consultation.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Sheila Palmerley
School Places Strategy Manager