

## KEY DECISION REPORT

<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	Services for Children and Young People
<b>SUBJECT MATTER:</b>	<b>OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON ST JAMES' AND HURST KNOLL ST JAMES' PRIMARY SCHOOLS PRIMARY CAPITAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	17 June 2009
<b>DECISION TAKER</b>	Cllr Gerald P Cooney - Cabinet Deputy Lifelong Learning
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Jim Taylor - Executive Director for Services for Children and Young People
<b>REPORT SUMMARY:</b>	<p>As part of identifying the initial spending priorities the Council's Primary Strategy for Change, the suggestion was made that Hurst Knoll and St James' Primary Schools could come together. This was suggested because the two schools are close together; they are both voluntary controlled schools within the same parish and both are in need of significant investment. The schools are in different wards, Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School is in Ashton Hurst ward and St James' Primary School is in Ashton St Michael's ward.</p> <p>A consultation document was compiled and the two options for consultation were:</p> <p><b>OPTION 1</b> To close Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary School and open a new, 2 form entry, 420 place primary school and 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery on the Hurst Knoll site.</p> <p><b>OPTION 2</b> To remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools.</p> <p>Additionally, it was stressed throughout the consultation that if option 2 is the outcome of the consultation, the extent of the remodelling at the schools would be dependent on a number of factors. The funding allocated within the Primary Capital Programme is limited and the nature of the buildings and site constraints mean that it is unlikely that the Council would be able to rebuild St James' school, however, given the building needs of Hurst Knoll it may be better value for money to rebuild the school.</p> <p>During March 2009, consultation was undertaken on the options to close or remodel the schools. The schools involved were invited to hold meetings for staff, parents and governors. Meetings were held with staff, parents and governors at both Hurst Knoll St James' and St James'. Other partners consulted were diocesan representatives, unions and professional associations, ward Councillors and the Member of Parliament.</p> <p>In total 389 responses to the consultation were received of which 247 were written responses and 142 names were submitted on petitions. Out of the 389 responses, three were in favour of Option 1 and 386 were in favour of Option 2. Additionally, the Council was made aware of an online petition and three Facebook sites in favour of Option 2. From all the</p>

	<p>responses received as part of the consultation, there was almost unanimous support for Option 2. Within that support for Option 2, respondents were particularly concerned about the impact on community cohesion in the area if St James' Primary School was closed. This was particularly a concern for Manchester Diocesan Board of Education. Very few respondents expressed a wish for St James' to be rebuilt as a new school instead expressing a preference for St James' to be remodelled but there were high levels of support for a new building for Hurst Knoll St James'.</p> <p>The Council has also considered other relevant factors such as traffic management on Ladbrooke Road, the birth rate and the inability of current accommodation to support the delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum at both schools.</p> <p>It is clear that many respondents to the consultation see St James' as the focal point for community cohesion in the area, and believe that this would be lost if the school were to close. There is also a perception that parents will continue to choose their most local school for their children which would become The Heys rather than a new school on the Hurst Knoll site. This may have an impact on both the schools and the local area and have a potentially negative impact on the cohesiveness of the community in continuing the successful community cohesion work.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	That Option 2 of the consultation be adopted, that is to remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools. The extent of the remodelling will be the subject of an options appraisal
<b>JUSTIFICATION FOR DECISION:</b>	The majority of respondents to the consultation were in favour of Option 2 to remodel both schools. Consideration was also given to the need to maintain St James' Primary School as a focal point for effective community cohesion initiatives.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED (if any):</b>	The consultation had two options. Option 1 was to close Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary School and open a new, 2 form entry, 420 place primary school and 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery on the Hurst Knoll site. Whilst Option 1 would have provided a new school for the area, the option was rejected as there were concerns raised by the Diocese and community regarding the potential impact on community cohesion and consideration was given to the points made by the respondents to the consultation.
<b>CONSULTEES:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents</li> <li>Schools</li> <li>School governing Bodies</li> <li>Elected members</li> <li>Manchester Diocese</li> <li>Unions            NUT</li> <li>                          NASUWT</li> </ul>

	<p>NAHT</p> <p>ASCL</p> <p>ATL</p> <p>UNISON</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by Borough Treasurer)</p>	<p>A previous report to Executive Cabinet on 2 July 2008 indicated that £6m of funding was available for use on this scheme during financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13 as part of the overall Primary Capital Programme strategy that was subsequently approved by the Department for Children Schools and Families. This figure was based on the estimated cost of providing a new build 420 place school on the Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School site which would have replaced both Hurst Knoll St James' and St James' CE Primary Schools. As the recommended option is to remodel the existing schools, detailed feasibility studies will be conducted and options appraisals will be produced to enable revised estimated costs to be produced.</p> <p>The funding being used to support the costs on this scheme and the other Primary Capital Programme schemes scheduled to take place during financial years 2009/10 through to 2012/13 is a combination of :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specific Primary Capital Programme grant full allocation estimated at £15.89m over 4 years</li> <li>2. An allocation of £3.9m over 4 years from the Modernisation capital grant</li> <li>3. Devolved Formula Capital contributions from Schools where schemes are taking place of £ 0.8m over 4 years</li> <li>4. Potential Capital Receipts from the sale of Dale Grove, Manchester Road and Russell Scott Primary School sites</li> </ol> <p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families have not yet formally confirmed the capital funding allocated to Councils for the financial years 2009/10 to 2012/13 and the current economic climate has reduced the potential for capital receipts from the sale of the School sites. The eventual allocations and disposal values of the sites may result in the overall funding available to the Primary Capital Programme schemes being reduced.</p> <p>The remodelling works at Hurst Knoll St James' and St James' Primary Schools should result in reduced future revenue funded premises costs being incurred by both schools.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by Borough Solicitor)</p>	<p>The Council has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996, to secure sufficient and suitable places for pupils in its area. In deciding whether to make the decision set out in the recommendation the Cabinet Deputy must satisfy himself that it will deliver the most efficient and effective use of resources to raise educational achievement for the young people of the Borough.</p>
<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT:</b></p>	<p>The recommendations in this report will help to maintain community cohesion in the area in which the schools have a major role to play.</p>

<b>LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN:</b>	The Community Strategy is centred around building a cohesive community. The recommendations outlined in this report will promote access to a high quality educational experience for children in Ashton by ensuring that education provision meets their long term needs.	
<b>ACCESS TO INFORMATION:</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Consultation document St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools Primary Capital Strategy Consultation</b>
	<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>Map showing where pupils live in relation to St James', Hurst Knoll St James' and The Heys Primary Schools</b>
	<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>Pupil ethnicity statistics for St James', Hurst Knoll St James' and The Heys Primary Schools</b>
<p>The background papers (including consultation documents and responses) relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer by:</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 3302</p> <p> e-mail: <a href="mailto:catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk">catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk</a></p>		

## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Tameside Council recently submitted the Primary Strategy for Change to the government Department for Children, Schools and Families. This was in response to the government announcing the Primary Capital Programme. This is capital investment to support wider transformation in the primary sector by rebuilding or improving at least half of all primary schools, bringing them up to 21st century standards with wider services for children and families at the heart of their communities over the next 14 years.
- 1.2 Every local authority has been required to develop a Primary Strategy for Change to show how the capital investment will improve the outcomes for young people in Tameside.
- 1.3 The local authority has the lead role in preparing the strategy. This is because, as commissioner of local services, the authority both reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community and contributes to national and local priorities. The local authority is best placed to plan strategically and join up planning and funding so that the total capital investment is focused on services for children and families. The Primary Strategy for Change must consider the needs of all eligible schools across the whole primary school estate including primary age special schools and voluntary aided schools.

## **2 TAMESIDE PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE**

- 2.1 The strategy has been developed with a small planning group. The small planning group included Headteachers, School Advisors, Early Years experts and Services for Children and Young People staff. The group was led by the then Director of Education. The Asset Management Planning Advisory Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Deputy for Lifelong Learning has also been consulted throughout the development of the strategy.
- 2.2 Officers from the Diocese of Manchester have been involved in formulating the Primary Strategy for Change and have formally agreed to support the overall Tameside strategy.
- 2.3 The baseline analysis considered the following:
  - Building condition (based on asset management information held on each school)
  - Capacity (based on current admission numbers)
  - Demand (based on birth rate)
  - Key Stage 1 and 2 attainment (based on 2007 results)
  - Achievement of contextual value added (a measure of how much impact the school is having on attainment, based on 2007 assessments)
  - An assessment of whether or not the school building is capable of supporting the delivery of the curriculum for the 21st century (based on advice from education advisers)
  - Deprivation (based on the needs of pupils attending the school not the post code of its location)
  - The extent to which the school is able to deliver extended services including childcare.
- 2.4 Taking into account the baseline data, each primary school was assessed and categorised as one of the following:
  - A Building has been rebuilt or more than 50% of floor area remodelled in last 10 years
  - B Minor remodelling or investment is required
  - C Significant remodelling required in excess of £250,000
  - D School buildings because of their condition, suitability, accessibility and/or capacity deficiencies need replacing rather than remodelling
  - E School buildings need replacing and the site will realise a contribution from disposal to the bigger project and therefore bring an economic benefit.

- 2.5 Each primary school was informed of its categorisation and Headteachers were asked to confirm their agreement to the categorisation. Both Hurst Knoll St James's Primary School and St James' Primary School were categorised as C/D.
- 2.6 The strategy was accepted by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November 2008 as having met all the required elements. Copies of the full strategy can be obtained from Catherine Moseley using the contact details at the end of this consultation document.

### **3 BASIS FOR CONSULTATION**

3.1 Within the initial investment priorities, the suggestion that Hurst Knoll and St James' Primary Schools could come together was made. This option was suggested because the two schools are close together; they are both voluntary controlled schools within the same parish and both are in need of significant investment. The schools are in different wards, Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School is in Ashton Hurst ward and St James' Primary School is in Ashton St Michaels' ward.

3.2 A consultation document was compiled (**Appendix 1**) and the two options for consultation were:

- OPTION 1 To close Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary School and open a new, 2 form entry, 420 place primary school and 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery on the Hurst Knoll site.
- OPTION 2 To remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools.

3.3 Additionally, it was stressed that if option 2 is the outcome of the consultation, the extent of the remodelling at the schools will be dependent on a number of factors. A detailed options appraisal is needed to address the building and educational needs of both schools. The funding allocated within the Primary Capital Programme is limited. If the outcome of the options appraisals is that one school requires a complete rebuild, the budget to remodel the other school will be restricted.

3.4 The nature of the buildings and site constraints mean that it is unlikely that the Council would be able to rebuild St James' school, however, given the building needs of Hurst Knoll it may be better value for money to rebuild the school.

### **4 CONSULTATION PROCESS**

4.1 During March 2009, consultation was undertaken on the options to close or remodel the school. The schools involved were invited to hold meetings for staff, parents and governors. Meetings were held with staff, parents and governors at both Hurst Knoll St James' and St James'. Other partners consulted included:

- Diocesan representatives
- Unions and professional associations
- Ward Councillors and the Member of Parliament

4.2 Copies of the consultation document were distributed to both schools and the document was available on the Tameside MBC website. All consultees were given the opportunity to respond in writing.

4.3 In total 389 responses to the consultation were received of which 247 were written responses and 142 names were submitted on petitions. Out of the 389 responses, three were in favour

of Option 1 to close Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary School and open a new, 2 form entry, 420 place primary school and 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery on the Hurst Knoll site and 386 were in favour of Option 2 to remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools. Additionally, the Council was made aware of an online petition and three Facebook sites in favour of Option 2, however, no documentation relating to these sites was submitted to the consultation. All petitions were cross checked with individual responses to ensure respondents were only counted once in the consultation exercise.

4.4 The responses for each school and other interested parties have been grouped into comments and concerns followed by the Council's response.

## 5 COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM STAFF, GOVERNORS AND PARENTS OF HURST KNOLL ST JAMES' PRIMARY SCHOOL

5.1 One petition was received containing 68 names stating ***"I, the undersigned would like to support OPTION 2 of the proposed options available for HURST KNOLL PRIMARY SCHOOL"***. There were 23 responses from parents with 1 in favour of Option 1 and 22 in favour of Option 2. There were 22 responses from staff members including the Headteacher, all were in favour of Option 2, four governors submitted a response including the Chair of Governors, all were in favour of Option 2. Additionally, 23 pupils from Year 6 wrote letters and drew pictures and submitted them together with a joint letter from the nine pupils on the School Council, all were in favour of Option 2.

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
Small school is better, staff notice problems and intervene quickly. School has good pastoral care	Within Tameside, many schools successfully operate with 45 or 60 in their Reception class and issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
A bigger school will mean less outside space and loss of trees	The design of any new school would take into account the area where the building is planned to go and would provide adequate outside space to meet the requirements of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century curriculum.
Not be able to go to church together	It is true that the church may struggle to accommodate all pupils from a 420 place school at one time.
Disruption through building and /or change	It is inevitable that, when building work is taking place on a school site, some disruption will occur. However, Services for Children and Young People officers would work very closely with the head teacher to identify possible problems and to minimise any disruption to the school. The construction site would be cordoned off from the occupied school and other appropriate measures put in place such as no deliveries during morning and evening when children are arriving for and leaving school. This is standard practice and worked well at other recently constructed primary school buildings
Cost of a new uniform	Parents eligible for clothing grants can apply each year to help with the cost of school clothing and footwear.
Conflict as two schools merge together	Services for Children and Young People is aware that there may be difficulties in bringing the pupils of two schools together. However, Services for Children and Young People will work with the governing body and Headteacher of any new school to ensure that the process will be as smooth as it can be.

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
A new school would increase traffic congestion and pupil travel	A traffic impact analysis would be carried out in advance of the development of any proposed new school. Appropriate traffic management arrangements would be put in place if required around the school and engineers would determine the number of parking spaces and drop off areas within the school site. School travel plans will be required for any proposed new school.
A new school building with a Foundation Unit would be good	Any new school building is likely to include a Foundation Unit in order to meet the demands of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century curriculum.
Larger school would be underused as people in St James' area opt for a more local school	Pupils would only be able to move to other schools if there are places available for them to move to. Additional places would not be created at any other local schools as part of these proposals.
The schools serve two distinct communities	<p>The map attached at Appendix 2 shows where pupils travel from to Hurst Knoll St James', St James' and The Heys Primary Schools and shows that there is little overlap between the areas that Hurst Knoll St James' school populations travel from. Most pupils attending Hurst Knoll St James' travel to school from the north and most pupils attending St James' travel from the south of Curzon Road and Ladbrooke Road. The Heys on the other hand appears to attract pupils from a less constrained area.</p> <p>The ethnicity statistics for both schools (Appendix 3) show that Hurst Knoll St James' pupil ethnicity closely matches that of Tameside as a whole whereas St James' has a more ethnically diverse mix of pupils.</p> <p>It would appear that the schools do serve two distinct communities. However, all of these pupils would transfer to the new school and therefore a diverse mix of pupils could be maintained at the new school. Pupils would only be able to transfer to other schools if there were places available.</p>
A large school divides infants and juniors	The way the curriculum was delivered would be decided by the Headteacher of the new school. Having separate infant and junior provision would be one way of delivering the curriculum.

5.2 The one parent in favour of Option 1 said ***“I agree to this idea. Hurst Knoll is a very run down school.”***

## 6 COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM STAFF, GOVERNORS AND PARENTS OF ST JAMES' PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Two petitions were received containing 74 names. One states ***“We, the undersigned oppose the proposition to close St James C of E Primary School, and open a new primary school on the Hurst Knoll site. We wish to make our views known that we would like St James to remain open. St James is an excellent Community school, and has maintained wonderful links with the local Community, alongside achieving good Ofsted results.”*** The second petition states ***“We, the undersigned parents and guardians of pupils at St James' Primary School are opposed to the amalgamation of the school with Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School. We urge the council and relevant authorities to proceed with option 2, namely the remodelling of both school on their existing sites.”*** There were 72 responses from parents with 1 in favour of Option 1 and 71 in favour of Option 2. There were 21 responses from staff members including the

Headteacher, all were in favour of Option 2, three governors submitted an individual response together with a response from the governing body of the school, all were in favour of Option 2.

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
Small school is better, staff notice problems and intervene quickly. School has good pastoral care	Within Tameside, many schools successfully operate with 45 or 60 in their Reception class and issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
Disruption through building and /or change	The design of any new school would take into account the area where the building is planned to go and would provide adequate outside space to meet the requirements of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century curriculum.
Conflict as two schools merge together	Services for Children and Young People is aware that there may be difficulties in bringing the pupils of two schools together. However, Services for Children and Young People will work with the governing body and Headteacher of any new school to ensure that the process will be as smooth as it can be.
Pupils from St James' Primary School would have a long way to travel	The distance between St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' is small, it is 0.35 as a straight line and 0.55 walking route. The statutory walking distance for children under the age of eight is 2 miles and so most pupils from St James' would still be travelling less than that distance. Whilst the distance might not be great, it is acknowledged that the walking route to Hurst Knoll from St James' is up a significant hill.
A new school would increase traffic congestion and pupil travel	A traffic impact analysis would be carried out in advance of the development of any proposed new school. Appropriate traffic management arrangements would be put in place if required around the school and engineers would determine the number of parking spaces and drop off areas within the school site. School travel plans will be required for any proposed new school.
<p>The schools serve two distinct communities</p> <p>St James' is at the heart of the community</p> <p>St James' is an important tool in these times of mistrust and ignorance in the inclusion of all multi-cultural diversity and faiths</p> <p>The different cultures and religions would be less likely to meet and all too soon barriers and prejudices would emerge</p>	<p>The map attached at Appendix 2 shows where pupils travel from to Hurst Knoll St James', St James' and The Heys Primary Schools and shows that there is little overlap between the areas that Hurst Knoll St James' school populations travel from. Most pupils attending Hurst Knoll St James' travel to school from the north and most pupils attending St James' travel from the south of Curzon Road and Ladbrooke Road. The Heys on the other hand appears to attract pupils from a less constrained area.</p> <p>The ethnicity statistics for both schools (Appendix 3) show that Hurst Knoll St James' pupil ethnicity closely matches that of Tameside as a whole whereas St James' has a more ethnically diverse mix of pupils.</p> <p>It would appear that the schools do serve two distinct communities. However, all of these pupils would transfer to the new school and therefore a diverse mix of pupils could be maintained at the new school. Pupils would only be able to transfer to other schools if there were places available.</p>
The Hurst Knoll St James' site is too small for the size of the proposed school	The Hurst Knoll St James' site is large enough to accommodate a 420 place primary school.
Current site is small but the	Services for Children and Young People agrees that St James'

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
<p>school has coped with this including extended school facilities and the children's centre provision</p> <p>Current building has flexible work space and has had investment</p>	<p>has coped extremely well with the limited space available to it but the service has a duty to look to provision that will meet the needs of pupils in future generations as well as those who are currently at the school. The Children's Centre provision is satellite provision from the Rosehill Children's Centre and may stay on its current site or could also move to a new site.</p>
<p>Relationships with the local community have taken years to develop and will not easily transfer</p>	<p>Schools are usually successful because of their staff and pupils. Both staff and pupils would transfer to the new school and so these relationships should be maintained.</p>
<p>Impact on The Heys as Asian heritage parents choose their nearest school</p>	<p>Pupils would only be able to move to other schools if there are places available for them to move to. Additional places would not be created at any other local schools as part of these proposals.</p>
<p>St James' has a long history and is an historical landmark</p>	<p>The proposal to close the school does not necessarily mean that the school building would be demolished. The future use of the building has not been decided.</p>
<p>One school would limit parental choice in the area</p>	<p>It is true that Option 1 would reduce the number of schools that parents could apply for.</p>
<p>Pupils attend the mosque after school. The mosque is close and this needs to be maintained</p>	<p>Services for Children and Young People is aware that many of the pupils from St James' attend a madrassah after school and this should be maintained. The distance between St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' is just over half a mile so this should not unduly affect attendance at the madrassah.</p>
<p>Worried about large class sizes</p>	<p>The Infant Class Size Initiative means that no class in Key Stage 1 will have more than 30 children in it.</p>
<p>To close the school would be a waste of money already spent on the school</p>	<p>All schools have an element of devolved capital in their budgets and this is spent on maintaining the school buildings for current and future pupils. Whilst any proposals are being considered, schools should still fulfil their duties to their current pupils and offer as good a standard of accommodation as they can.</p>
<p>Birth rate is rising in St Michael's but falling in Hurst not logical to move the school there</p>	<p>Across all the Ashton wards, additional places are being offered to take account of the rising birth rate in the area as a whole.</p>
<p>Merging a 'good' school with a 'satisfactory' school</p>	<p>Schools that have good educational standards do so because of the high quality staff they have. Services for Children and Young People seeks to retain those quality teaching staff and to extend that good practice for the benefit of all of the children who are affected by the re-organisation. Children and staff would additionally benefit from improvement in buildings.</p>
<p>Bias in the consultation document towards Option 1</p>	<p>The original consultation document presented both options fairly and equally.</p>
<p>Community garden would be lost</p>	<p>Should Option 1 be the outcome of the consultation, the current community garden may be lost. However, the future use of the building has not been decided. Additionally, a new garden could be created at the new school.</p>
<p>Child would have to find a new childminder</p>	<p>This would be a matter of parental preference.</p>

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
Recent OFSTED report did not say that accommodation was an issue	It is accepted that OFSTED did not raise accommodation as an issue currently. However, Services for Children and Young People has to be concerned with future provision as well as what is available now. The potential for developing and improving the current building is limited.
This is just a cost saving exercise	This is a consultation on the best way to spend allocated Primary Capital funding.
Having the Children's Centre nearby has been really useful There is space available for a new build near the Foundation Unit	The Children's Centre provision is satellite provision from the Rosehill Children's Centre and may stay on its current site or could also move to a new site. The site that the Children's Centre occupies is not large enough for a new school.
Extend St James' by putting an extra floor on the school	If the outcome of the consultation is for St James' and Hurst Knoll to remain as separate schools, there will be no need for additional accommodation on the St James' site.

- 6.2 One pertinent point received from governors at St James' was ***"The governors recognise that the building issues of Hurst Knoll are very different from those of St James' school and do not wish or expect an equal share of money should option 2 be selected."***

## 7 COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

- 7.1 There were 63 responses from other interested respondents. Of these, one was in favour of Option 1 and 62 were in favour of Option 2.
- 7.2 A response to the consultation was received from Manchester Diocesan Board of Education. As both schools are voluntary controlled school, the response is reproduced in full:

***"The two proposals were taken to the Schools Committee of Manchester Diocesan Board of Education on Friday 27 February 2009 which is Chaired by the Bishop of Middleton. The two proposals were outlined and information given to the Committee by officers involved and by individual research by Committee members prior to the meeting."***

***The outcome of the Committee was to support this proposal for the following reasons:***

- ***Talks with other faith leaders in the St James' area emphasised the importance of St James' within the community cohesion agenda which has been working well for a number of years. Inter-faith dialogue and co-operation is strong in this area and the school is seen as a focal point for the whole community.***
- ***Members also emphasised that faith leaders believed children who currently attended St James' would not go to a new, larger school on the Hurst Knoll site, leaving any new school potentially under-subscribed and putting pressure on places in other nearby schools.***
- ***Issues with unequal remodelling (for St James') were not seen as a reason to go for the proposal to build a new 2FE primary school on the Hurst Knoll site.***

***It was therefore unanimously recommended that the second option, "To maintain the two existing St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools and remodel both buildings", should be supported by the Schools Committee of the Manchester Diocesan Board of Education."***

7.3 Responses from other interested parties were received from far and wide including from Sale, Macclesfield, New Mills, North and South Wales. The comments and concerns were:

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
Small school is better, staff notice problems and intervene quickly. School has good pastoral care	Within Tameside, many schools successfully operate with 45 or 60 in their Reception class and issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
One school would limit choice in the area	It is true that Option 1 would reduce the number of schools that parents could apply for.
Option 2 would be the cheaper option	One new 420 place school would be cheaper than two 210 place schools but this consultation has said that two new 210 place schools would not be an option within the funding available and the overall funding for the two schools would remain the same whatever the outcome.
The Hurst Knoll St James' site is too small for the size of the proposed school	The Hurst Knoll St James' site is large enough to accommodate a 420 place primary school.
Impact on The Heys as Asian heritage parents choose their nearest school	Pupils would only be able to move to other schools if there are places available for them to move to. Additional places would not be created at any other local schools as part of these proposals.
Larger school would be underused as people in St James' area opt for a more local school	Pupils would only be able to move to other schools if there are places available for them to move to. Additional places would not be created at any other local schools as part of these proposals.
There are concerns in the local area about building a bigger school	The design of any new school would take into account the area where the building is planned to go and would be subject to consultation as part of the usual planning permission process.
The ethnic balance at St James' will be lost and closing the school will lead to polarisation in the local community	All the current pupils of both schools would transfer to the new school and therefore a diverse mix of pupils could be maintained at the new school. Pupils would only be able to transfer to other schools if there were places available.
A new school would increase traffic congestion and pupil travel	A traffic impact analysis would be carried out in advance of the development of any proposed new school. Appropriate traffic management arrangements would be put in place if required around the school and engineers would determine the number of parking spaces and drop off areas within the school site. School travel plans will be required for any proposed new school.
Pupils from St James' Primary School would have a long way to travel	The distance between St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' is small, it is 0.35 as a straight line and 0.55 walking route. The statutory walking distance for children under the age of eight is 2 miles and so most pupils from St James' would still be travelling less than that distance. Whilst the distance might not be great, it is acknowledged that the walking route to Hurst Knoll from St James' is up a significant hill.
Disruption through building and /or change	It is inevitable that, when building work is taking place on a school site, some disruption will occur. However, Services for Children and Young People officers would work very closely with the head teacher to identify possible problems and to minimise any

Concern	Services for Children and Young People response
	disruption to the school. The construction site would be cordoned off from the occupied school and other appropriate measures put in place such as no deliveries during morning and evening when children are arriving for and leaving school. This is standard practice and worked well at other recently constructed primary school buildings
The schools serve two distinct communities	<p>The map attached at Appendix 2 shows where pupils travel from to Hurst Knoll St James', St James' and The Heys Primary Schools and shows that there is little overlap between the areas that Hurst Knoll St James' school populations travel from. Most pupils attending Hurst Knoll St James' travel to school from the north and most pupils attending St James' travel from the south of Curzon Road and Ladbrooke Road. The Heys on the other hand appears to attract pupils from a less constrained area.</p> <p>The ethnicity statistics for both schools (Appendix 3) show that Hurst Knoll St James' pupil ethnicity closely matches that of Tameside as a whole whereas St James' has a more ethnically diverse mix of pupils.</p> <p>It would appear that the schools do serve two distinct communities. However, all of these pupils would transfer to the new school and therefore a diverse mix of pupils could be maintained at the new school. Pupils would only be able to transfer to other schools if there were places available.</p>
Pupils could maintain the gardens they created if the school stays open	Should Option 1 be the outcome of the consultation, the current community garden may be lost. However, the future use of the building has not been decided. Additionally, a new garden could be created at the new school.
Update the facilities at King George Playing Fields so that pupils wouldn't need to travel to Oxford Park Sports Centre	This consultation was only about St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools as the Primary Strategy for Change can only be used for primary school capital projects and not community facilities.

7.4 From all the responses received as part of the consultation, there was almost unanimous support for Option 2. Within that support for Option 2, respondents were particularly concerned about the impact on community cohesion in the area if St James' Primary School was closed. This was particularly a concern for Manchester Diocesan Board of Education. Very few respondents expressed a wish for St James' to be rebuilt as a new school instead expressing a preference for St James' to be remodelled but there were high levels of support for a new building for Hurst Knoll St James'.

## 8 OTHER FACTORS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 A range of additional factors have been considered when making recommendations relating to consultation proposals.
- 8.2 The school buildings at both St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' because of their condition, suitability, accessibility and/or capacity deficiencies need replacing or significant remodelling in excess of £250,000.
- 8.3 Traffic is currently a significant issue on Ladbrooke Road at the start and end of the school day and appropriate traffic management arrangements would be put in place if required

around the new school. School travel plans will be required for any proposed new school. However, it is acknowledged that even with traffic management arrangements, this could remain an issue into the future with double the number of pupils travelling to the new school every day.

- 8.4 In their current accommodation, neither school is able to fully deliver the 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum for a variety of reasons, however, it is not essential to open one new school to make this possible.
- 8.5 The impact that closing St James' Primary School would have on community cohesion was an issue for many respondents to the consultation. Many felt that moving the St James' school population up to the Hurst Knoll site would have a detrimental effect on community cohesion in the area. The recent OFSTED report for St James' Primary School published in February 2009 said ***"The school works very successfully to promote inclusion and good community cohesion. Examples include the provision of bilingual support for the homework club, which is open to parents as well as pupils, parenting classes, the family holiday time provision and the development of a community garden where, for example, parents can grow herbs. As a result, the school successfully ensures that all pupils have equality of opportunity and do not suffer from discrimination."*** Many of these initiatives will be reliant on the staff at the school who will transfer to the new school but it is clear that the school is used by the local Asian heritage community and there is a perception that this level of use by the community will reduce if the school is moved to the Hurst Knoll site.
- 8.6 The map attached at Appendix 2 shows where pupils travel from to Hurst Knoll St James', St James' and The Heys Primary Schools and shows that there is little overlap between the areas that Hurst Knoll St James' and St James' school populations travel from. Most pupils attending Hurst Knoll St James' travel to school from the north of Curzon Road and Ladbrooke Road and most pupils attending St James' travel from the south of Curzon Road and Ladbrooke Road. The Heys on the other hand appears to attract pupils from a less constrained area. There is a perception amongst respondents that Asian heritage parents will opt to send their children to The Heys Primary School rather than to the new school. This may be true but the sibling links to the new school may be a clear motivation for parents to opt for the new school.
- 8.7 The ethnicity statistics for both schools (Appendix 3) show that Hurst Knoll St James' pupil ethnicity closely matches that of Tameside as a whole whereas St James' has a more ethnically diverse mix of pupils. The perception amongst some respondents to the consultation that the ethnic make up of the school populations is entirely different are not borne out by the figures.
- 8.8 All of the pupils currently on role at St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools would transfer to the new school and therefore a diverse mix of pupils would initially be maintained. Pupils could only transfer to other schools if there were places available. However, the impact on community cohesion in future years must also be considered.
- 8.9 Primary school places are currently allocated on the basis of a straight line distance measurement of the home address from the school. With only 0.17 miles as a straight line and 0.24 miles walking route between St James' and The Heys, should the local Asian community opt to send their children to the most local school, it is likely that many of them will be allocated places at The Heys on the basis of distance. Over time, there is potential for The Heys Primary School to become monocultural and this is not desirable for community cohesion and attainment. ***"We believe that in the long term the community around St James' school would be reluctant to travel across the park and opt for a more local school putting pressure on The Heys Primary School which in turn will cause greater polarisation of ethnic communities."***(St James' Primary School governing body)

- 8.10 The successful initiatives that St James' Primary School have implemented over a number of years work partly because of where the school is located in relation to the two communities and the involvement of many faith organisation in the school such as St James' Church, the Jamia Masjid mosque and the Indian Community Centre. Moving the school to the Hurst Knoll site may impact on the new school's ability to maintain the current level of community involvement which has led to effective communication and understanding between different communities.
- 8.11 It is clear that many respondents to the consultation see St James' as the focal point for community cohesion in the area, ***“the role that St James School plays in the immediate area in developing and enhancing community cohesion and overcoming prejudice.”*** and believe that this would be lost if the school were to close. There is also a perception that parents will continue to choose their most local school for their children which would become The Heys rather than a new school on the Hurst Knoll site. This may have an impact on both the schools and the local area in continuing the successful community cohesion work.

## 9 SUMMARY

- 9.1 As part of identifying the initial spending priorities the Council's Primary Strategy for Change, the suggestion was made that Hurst Knoll and St James' Primary Schools could come together. This was suggested because the two schools are close together; they are both voluntary controlled schools within the same parish and both are in need of significant investment. The schools are in different wards, Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School is in Ashton Hurst ward and St James' Primary School is in Ashton St Michael's ward.
- 9.2 A consultation document was compiled and the two options for consultation were:
- 9.2.1 OPTION 1 To close Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary School and open a new, 2 form entry, 420 place primary school and 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery on the Hurst Knoll site.
- 9.2.2 OPTION 2 To remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools.
- 9.3 Additionally, it was stressed throughout the consultation that if option 2 is the outcome of the consultation, the extent of the remodelling at the schools would be dependent on a number of factors. The funding allocated within the Primary Capital Programme is limited and the nature of the buildings and site constraints mean that it is unlikely that the Council would be able to rebuild St James' school, however, given the building needs of Hurst Knoll it may be better value for money to rebuild the school.
- 9.4 During March 2009, consultation was undertaken on the options to close or remodel the schools. The schools involved were invited to hold meetings for staff, parents and governors. Meetings were held with staff, parents and governors at both Hurst Knoll St James' and St James'. Other partners consulted were diocesan representatives, unions and professional associations, ward Councillors and the Member of Parliament.
- 9.5 In total 389 responses to the consultation were received of which 247 were written responses and 142 names were submitted on petitions. Out of the 389 responses, three were in favour of Option 1 and 386 were in favour of Option 2. Additionally, the Council was made aware of an online petition and three Facebook sites in favour of Option 2. From all the responses received as part of the consultation, there was almost unanimous support for Option 2. Within that support for Option 2, respondents were particularly concerned about the impact on community cohesion in the area if St James' Primary School was closed. This was particularly a concern for Manchester Diocesan Board of Education. Very few respondents expressed a wish for St James' to be rebuilt as a new school instead expressing a preference

for St James' to be remodelled but there were high levels of support for a new building for Hurst Knoll St James'.

- 9.6 The Council has also considered other relevant factors such as traffic management on Ladbrooke Road, the birth rate and the inability of current accommodation to support the delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum at both schools.
- 9.7 It is clear that many respondents to the consultation see St James' as the focal point for community cohesion in the area, and believe that this would be lost if the school were to close. There is also a perception that parents will continue to choose their most local school for their children which would become The Heys rather than a new school on the Hurst Knoll site. This may have an impact on both the schools and the local area and have a potentially negative impact on the cohesiveness of the community in continuing the successful community cohesion work.

## **10 RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 That Option 2 of the consultation be adopted, that is to remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools. The extent of the remodelling will be the subject of an options appraisal.

### St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools Primary Capital Strategy Consultation

#### BACKGROUND

Tameside Council has recently submitted a Primary Strategy for Change to the government Department for Children, Schools and Families. This was in response to the government announcing the Primary Capital Programme. This is capital investment to support wider transformation in the primary sector by rebuilding or improving at least half of all primary schools, bringing them up to 21st century standards with wider services for children and families at the heart of their communities over the next 14 years.

Every local authority has been required to develop a Primary Strategy for Change to show how the capital investment will improve the outcomes for young people in Tameside.

The local authority has the lead role in preparing the strategy. This is because, as commissioner of local services, the authority both reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community and contributes to national and local priorities. The local authority is best placed to plan strategically and join up planning and funding so that the total capital investment is focused on services for children and families. The Primary Strategy for Change must consider the needs of all eligible schools across the whole primary school estate including primary age special schools and voluntary aided schools.

#### TAMESIDE PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

The strategy has been developed with a small planning group. The small planning group included Headteachers, School Advisors, Early Years experts and Services for Children and Young People staff. The group was led by the then Director of Education. The Asset Management Planning Advisory Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Deputy for Lifelong Learning has also been consulted throughout the development of the strategy.

The baseline analysis considered the following:

- Building condition (based on asset management information held on each school)
- Capacity (based on current admission numbers)
- Demand (based on birth rate)
- Key Stage 1 and 2 attainment (based on 2007 results)
- Achievement of contextual value added (a measure of how much impact the school is having on attainment, based on 2007 assessments)
- An assessment of whether or not the school building is capable of supporting the delivery of the curriculum for the 21st century (based on advice from education advisers)
- Deprivation (based on the needs of pupils attending the school not the post code of its location)
- The extent to which the school is able to deliver extended services including childcare.

Taking into account the baseline data, each primary school was assessed and categorised as one of the following:

- A Building has been rebuilt or more than 50% of floor area remodelled in last 10 years
- B Minor remodelling or investment is required
- C Significant remodelling required in excess of £250,000
- D School buildings because of their condition, suitability, accessibility and/or capacity deficiencies need replacing rather than remodelling
- E School buildings need replacing and the site will realise a contribution from disposal to the bigger project and therefore bring an economic benefit.

Each primary school was informed of its categorisation and Headteachers were asked to confirm their agreement to the categorisation. Both Hurst Knoll St James's Primary School and St James' Primary School were categorised as C/D.

The strategy was accepted by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November 2008 as having met all the required elements. Copies of the full strategy can be obtained from Catherine Moseley using the contact details at the end of this consultation document.

## **OPTIONS FOR HURST KNOLL ST JAMES' AND ST JAMES' PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Within the initial investment priorities, the suggestion that Hurst Knoll and St James' Primary Schools could come together was made. This option was suggested because the two schools are close together; they are both voluntary controlled schools within the same parish and both are in need of significant investment. The schools are in different wards, Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School is in Ashton Hurst ward and St James' Primary School is in Ashton St Michaels' ward.

## **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS**

Both schools have recently been inspected by OFSTED. Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School was last inspected in January 2008. The report said that this is a satisfactory school. Achievement is satisfactory overall and for most pupils standards are broadly average. St James' Primary School was last inspected in January 2009. The report said this is a good school. Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from starting points that are below those typical for their age when they enter Nursery to attain average standards overall by the end of Year 6.

## **DIOCESAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONSULTATION**

Officers from the Diocese of Manchester have been involved in formulating the Primary Strategy for Change and have formally agreed to support the overall Tameside strategy.

The Diocesan Board of Education have issued guidance for officers involved in the review of school provision and the Primary Capital Strategy that includes the following Diocesan Board of Education Criteria:

- 1 Ensure that parents have the option of choosing to send their children to a Church of England school.
- 2 To maintain the historic provision of Church of England places by maintaining the proportion of Church of England places across an authority.
- 3 Where there is demand for Church of England places, to increase voluntary aided places.

Additional criteria are:

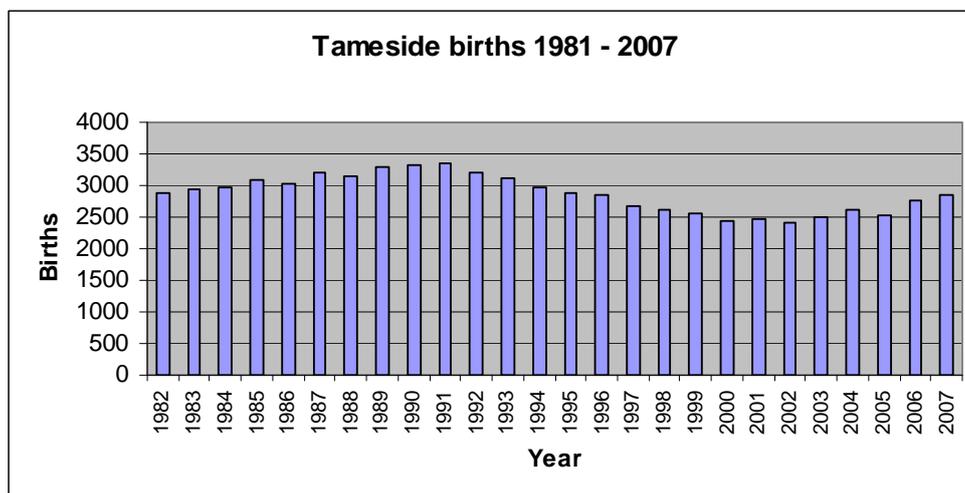
- 4 To promote and support the amalgamation of infant and junior schools to become primary schools.
- 5 To take into consideration Local Authority criteria in primary provision. For example, standards, surplus places, building condition and suitability, community need, finance.
- 6 Seeking to standardise admission numbers for example: 1 form entry (30); 2 form entry (60); or exceptionally, 1.5 form entry (45), whilst allowing for small rural schools.
- 7 To take into consideration Diocesan criteria in primary provision for example: parish boundaries; site provision (split site, size, ownership) ; and, governing body opinions.
- 8 Federation or amalgamation (providing they retain Church of England status).

The diocese is supporting the consultation and have not expressed a view as to their preferred outcome.

## BIRTH RATE IN TAMESIDE

The birth rate in the borough has seen a large increase over a five year period from 2002 when there were 2,409 births to 2007 when there were 2,855 births. Predictions for the final birth rate numbers in 2008 obtained from the Primary Care Trust (as at the end of October) are around 2,900. The Office for National Statistics predicts that the birth rate in Tameside will remain around 2,800 per year with a drop from 2021 to 2,700.

Overall birth rates in Tameside from 1981 to 2007 are as follows:

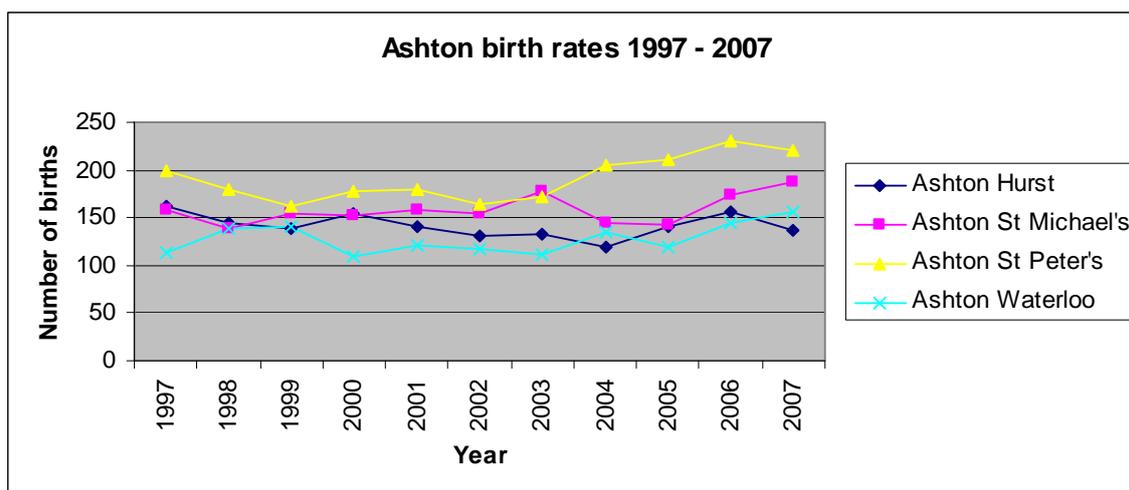


Source: Tameside Primary Care Trust

Birth rates in the Ashton wards from 2000 to 2007 are as follows:

Ward	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Trend
Ashton Hurst	190	154	141	130	132	120	141	156	136	↓
Ashton St Michael's	164	152	159	155	178	144	143	173	187	↑
Ashton St Peter's	260	177	179	165	171	206	211	230	220	↑
Ashton Waterloo	146	110	122	117	112	135	120	144	157	↑
<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>Increasing</b>

Source: Tameside Primary Care Trust



As can be seen from the above birth rate data, there has been an increase in the birth rate in three out of the four Ashton wards but Ashton Hurst has seen a decrease since 2000. The birth rate is also still considerably less than it was at its peak in 1990. The table below (January 2009 data) shows that there are places available in almost all classes at both schools.

	PAN	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Hurst Knoll	30	29	23	24	29	30	27	28	190
St James'	30	29	25	29	25	22	26	28	184

Whilst in Tameside as a whole, there is a need to increase primary schools places, this is not consistent across areas. Both schools currently have some capacity to respond to an increase in pupil numbers. Therefore the intention is to retain the same number of places across both Hurst Knoll St James' and St James' primary schools whatever the outcome of the consultation.

## **CONSULTATION OPTIONS**

There are 2 options for consultation. They are:

- 1 To close Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary School and open a new, 2 form entry, 420 place primary school and 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery on the Hurst Knoll site.
- 2 To remodel both Hurst Knoll St James' Primary School and St James' Primary Schools.

### **Remodelling**

If option 2 is the outcome of the consultation, the extent of the remodelling at the schools will be dependent on a number of factors. Therefore, there is a need to undertake a detailed options appraisal to address the building and educational needs of both schools. The funding allocated within the Primary Capital Programme is limited. If the outcome of the options appraisals is that one school requires a complete rebuild, the budget to remodel the other school will be restricted.

The nature of the buildings and site constraints mean that it is unlikely that the Council would be able to rebuild St James' school, however, given the building needs of Hurst Knoll it may be better value for money to rebuild the school.

## **HOW TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN**

It is important to stress that **no decisions have been made**. Tameside Council wishes to consult widely, particularly with parents and the schools. A response sheet is attached to the back of this document for you to comment on the proposals.

All those interested are invited to comment in writing, using the attached comment form, to: Catherine Moseley, Senior Education Officer, Services for Children and Young People, Room 2.111, Council Offices, Wellington Road, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6DL or E-Mail [catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk) by 12 noon on Friday **17 April 2009**.

The consultation process will take the following pattern:

### **Consultation Meetings**

Meetings will take place with staff, governors, and parents from primary schools as appropriate as well as local councillors, unions and interested parties. There will be separate meetings for staff, governors and parents. LEA officers will consult with parents on a 1:1 basis at the school meetings.

### **Key Decision Report**

At the end of the 6-week consultation period, the Council will prepare a Key Decision Report for the Cabinet Deputy for Lifelong Learning based on feedback received during the consultation process. At the Key Decision meeting, which will take place in May 2009 the Cabinet Deputy will make a decision based on recommendations contained in the Key Decision report.

### **Public Notices**

Following the Key Decision, any proposals to make changes to school organisation will be the subject of a statutory notice. This will be published in a local newspaper, in local information points and on school entrances. There will then be another six week period during which formal objections may be submitted to the Schools Adjudicator regarding any aspect of the proposal.

**St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools  
Primary Capital Strategy Consultation Response Form**

Please give all the details you can

Name

Address

Email

I am (please tick one box)

Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>
At (please name the school)					
I am not in one of the above categories but still wish to comment on the proposals					<input type="checkbox"/>

**I wish to make a comment on the following proposals**

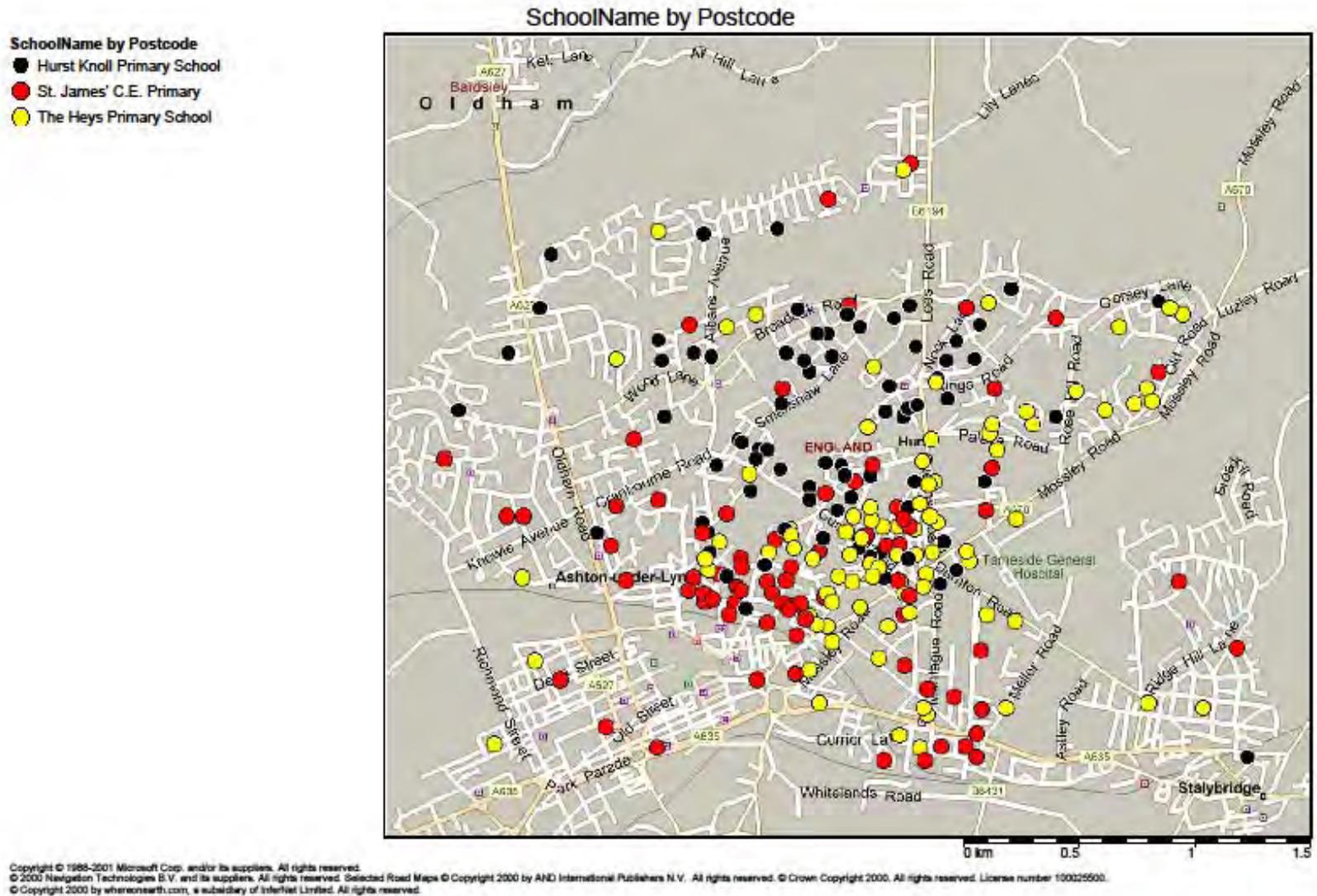
Proposal	Comment (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)
To close St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools and build a new 60 place primary school with 26 FTE nursery provision on the current Hurst Knoll St James' site	
To maintain the two existing St James' and Hurst Knoll St James' Primary Schools and remodel both buildings	
General comments, suggestions	

**Thank you**

*This document is also available online at <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/>.*

Please send your comments to Catherine Moseley, Senior Education Officer, at Council Offices, Wellington Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside OL6 6DL by 12 noon on Friday 17 April 2009.

Any information you provide will be treated in confidence and processed in accordance with requirements under the Data Protection Act 1998.



## APPENDIX 3

### January 2009 School Census (4 to 16 Year Olds in Schools excluding 6th Forms) Ethnicity Numbers and %

SchNo	Sch Name	Percentage																			
		Any Other Asian Background	Any Other Black Background	Any Other Ethnic Group	Any Other Mixed Background	Any Other White Background	Bangladeshi	Black - African	Black Caribbean	Chinese	Gypsy / Roma	Indian	Information Not Yet Obtained	Pakistani	Refused	Traveller of Irish Heritage	White - British	White - Irish	White and Asian	White and Black African	White and Black Caribbean
2037	The Heys Primary School	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	2.5%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%	25.1%	0.0%	0.0%	56.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3019	Hurst Knoll Primary School	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	1.1%	8.4%	0.0%	0.0%	78.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3022	St. James' C.E. Primary	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	3.8%	2.7%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	32.6%	0.0%	0.0%	47.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
<b>Tameside schools total</b>		0.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.9%	4.4%	3.5%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%	0.6%	3.3%	0.2%	0.0%	82.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.6%