



Proposal to amalgamate New King's and Sullivan schools on the New King's site

Report on the final stage of the consultation, representations made following the publication of public notices

**This report forms Appendix D of the Cabinet Decision Report
6 January 2014**

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1. Introduction

This report outlines the findings from the final stage of consultation on the proposal to amalgamate New King's Primary School and Sullivan Primary School, through the closure of Sullivan Primary School to form an enlarged New King's Primary School on the New King's site.

In July 2013 the Cabinet Member for Education gave authorisation to begin a full consultation process involving all stakeholders including parents, governors, all staff at both schools, the local MP and ward members. The first stage in the procedure was a consultation that started on 16 July and ran for 12 weeks, finishing on 8 October.

In the course of this lengthy initial consultation period, detailed Q&As were published, public meetings and briefing meetings for staff at the schools were held and detailed questions were answered.

There was a very high level of interest in the consultation. Strong opinions were voiced both for and against the proposal. It is entirely usual for a consultation to be used as a vehicle to present a wide array of opinions and thoughts; indeed this is the very nature of a thorough consultation. A majority of responses to the original stakeholder feedback survey opposed the proposals: 2,226 against, and 1,367 in favour. In addition to these hard copy and online response forms, two petitions objecting to the proposal were received as well as several submissions from local organisations, mostly expressing disagreement with the proposal. Nevertheless, when the responses of the 2,143 parents (rather than staff, residents or other respondents) were analysed, a majority (1,107) supported the proposals.

In order to be completely transparent, responses were placed on public display for two days at Lilla Huset Professional Centre, on Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 November, from 9.00am to 8.00pm.

Following full consideration of the consultation responses received, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Education agreed to proceed with the publication of statutory notices about the proposal and authorise the Director of Schools Commissioning and Director of Legal Services to undertake the necessary procedures.

The report on the initial consultation findings, the full proposals and the council's decision paper following the consultation, plus all related documents, [are published on the council's website here](#)» (Cabinet Members' Decisions 18 October 2013, in the Council and Democracy section of the lbhf.gov.uk site).

Following the publication of the statutory notices on 21 October 2013 there was a further period for representations on the proposal, the findings of which are reported in this document.

2. Representations made

Statutory notices were published on 21 October 2013, starting a six-week period representation period - the final opportunity for individuals and organisations to express their views, objections as well as support for the proposals. The complete proposals were published on October 30, 2013 and the six-week period for representations was extended to December 11 2013 at Sullivan school's request.

The notices were published widely, as legally required, and the period for representations and public viewing sessions for the original consultation responses were publicised on the website, in residents' e-newsletter mailings and by press releases.

The majority of the representations received by the close of the agreed period remained opposed to the proposal.

Nine representations from organisations were received objecting to the proposal, plus a further 100 from individuals and a letter signed by 10 LBHF headteachers and a 'Stop the closure of Sullivan Primary' petition with 969 signatures.

A representation supporting the proposal was made by New King's Primary School; a further three were received supporting the proposal, two from individuals, and one from the Chairman of the West London Free School Academy Trust.

The Fulham Boys School (FBS) made a strictly neutral representation. Letters of supporting FBS but not commenting on the amalgamation proposal were received from 37 businesses, individuals, educators and faith groups, including a letter signed by 68 members of a Fulham church congregation.

There was considerable correspondence in this period between organisations and individuals and the council (Members and officers). For the purpose of this analysis, the figures quoted refer to the number of people making specific representations rather than their several items of correspondence.

2a. Representations opposing the proposal

Nine representations objecting to the proposal were received from organisations:

Sullivan Primary School

London Diocesan Board for Schools

The National Union of Teachers in Hammersmith & Fulham

Hammersmith & Fulham Liberal Democrats

Peterborough Road and Area Residents' Association (PRARA)

The Hurlingham and District Residents' Association (HDRA)

City Events Ltd., Polo in the Park

Mathias Kulubya, a Sullivan parent, on behalf of Sullivan Court Residents' Association

Wasim Kempson, Imam Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust

For summaries of these representations see section 3, pages 6-16; for full copies, see Appendix D1 (Sullivan), Appendix D3 (others)

In addition to the nine representations noted above, a further 100 were received objecting to the proposal, plus a letter signed by 10 LBHF headteachers and a 'Stop the closure of Sullivan Primary' petition with 969 signatures.

These included correspondence from 24 people who made it clear they are parents at Sullivan Primary and 11 members of staff at the school. Two former chairs of governors at the school wrote to object, as did five other current or former chairs or governors of other local schools. 15 local teachers opposed the proposal, 10 of them headteachers, two of them deputy headteachers. Of those objecting, 14 were associated with the school as former pupils or relatives of current pupils; 11 described themselves as local residents and commented from that perspective, including a QC and the Rt. Hon. Earl of Woolton. Most others clearly were also residents in the area, as shown by their comments or addresses.

As represented in the PRARA and HDRA submissions summarised on pages 13 & 14, the potential impact on the local area of the siting of a large secondary school on the site remains a concern for many in the area. Only a handful of objections focused solely on that issue, though many others referred to it as well as praising Sullivan and seeking its retention.

Other key themes included expressions of distrust of the council's motives and handling of the process. There was much criticism of the recognition given to the views of "potential parents at FBS" when the views of "real parents" of pupils at the two schools concerned have been ignored" and a perception voiced that the views of the clear majority, including concerned local residents, have not been taken into account.

Sullivan parents responding attested to the school's educational effectiveness and pastoral care. Many feel that the disruption will be harmful to the pupils and say that the educational benefits for Sullivan children have not been demonstrated. Several of the messages received later in the process referred to the recent Gold Club award from the Mayor of London, with Sullivan one of 114 schools across London recognised for their performance in the Key Stage 2 SATs tests. All demanded its retention.

Additional support for Sullivan was expressed separately in the school's own representation, including a letter signed by 10 LBHF primary headteachers and provision of the petition with 969 signatures, as noted above.

There were no additional representations against from any parties associating themselves with New King's.

2b. Representations supporting the proposal

A representation supporting the proposal came from headteacher Miles Chester, for New King's Primary School and Thomas's London Day Schools.

For a summary, see page 17; see Appendix D2 for a full copy.

In addition to the representation from New King's noted above, a further three were received supporting the proposal.

These responses specifically express support for the amalgamation proposal or the council taking the difficult decision to proceed. One came from Toby Young, Chairman of West London Free School Academy Trust (for a summary see page 17, see Appendix D3 for a full copy), another from the pastor of Twynholm Baptist Church, Fulham.

There were no additional representations of support from any parties associating themselves with New King's.

2c. Neutral representation

Fulham Boys' School (FBS) submitted a representation declaring that "FBS maintains a strictly neutral stance on the proposed merger".

For a summary, see page 20; for a copy, see Appendix D3

The appendices provided in the school's hard copy pack carried copies of many letters of support for FBS - 37 of these letters were received in total, plus a letter signed by 68 members of a Fulham church congregation.

The letters and emails came from local parents, residents, businesses and faith groups, stating in similar ways that they endorse plans for FBS and hope that "in the noise generated by the consultation the council does not lose sight of the need for a CE secondary for boys in Fulham". As was the case with the response from FBFS itself, these did not state explicit support for the amalgamation of the two primary schools.

A letter received from Greg Hands MP is also included in Appendix D3.

The letter from Chelsea and Fulham M.P., Greg Hands, does not state his final position on the proposal, though it says he has not opposed the overall position during the consultation because he feels the council is fulfilling its obligations to the local community by looking to increase school places. Mr Hands' letter sought answers to points raised in his earlier consultation response, particularly on the merits and demerits of the respective school sites, urging investigation of the option of merging New King's into Sullivan on the Sullivan site. The Leader responded to Mr Hands about the issues raised.

3a. Summarised representations opposing the proposal

Representations from organisations opposing the proposal are summarised here.

They are appended in full for reference.

Sullivan Primary School

The Sullivan representation was, as was to be expected, a substantial document arguing the school's case against the proposal.

Introductory paragraphs outlined its position in the first section, '*Response of the governing body of Sullivan Primary School*'.

"LBHF is well aware that the Governing Body is wholly against the proposal to close down a well managed, popular (increasing roll), well-resourced, high-achieving school, that it considers the consultation phase was conducted in an unfair and incompetent manner, and that the continued refusal to comply with standards of fairness and transparency such as the publication of inaccurate data on its website means the whole process is flawed to the point of being unlawful and that any decision to proceed with closure is simply irrational.

This response to the Statutory Proposals is submitted in the context of continued disapproval and legitimate concerns over the consultation phase and in no way is a concession that the process to date has been conducted properly."

The use of the term 'irrational' is subsequently explained in a claim that public law principles have been breached: "The threshold of irrationality is that the decision is so unfair that no reasonable Authority could ever have come to it."

The representation asserts that the council failed to conduct the consultation in a procedurally fair manner. Ways in which the representation claims the consultation was flawed include the following.

- The terms of the consultation document - not set out in a fair and open manner; not about a plan to reduce surplus capacity but about a decision to close a school.
- Discounted responses - only hard copy and online response forms considered; petitions and letters disregarded.
- The conflation of the Fulham Boys' School site with the reduction of surplus primary school places. By including reference to FBS and releasing the site for the secondary school, the consultation was widened from what it purported to be. Instead of people considering the consultation on the basis of primary school provision, people responded on the basis of secondary school

provision. This was evidenced in the way parents' views were reported by the council - "The majority supported amalgamating the schools" - when the school's analysis showed that 970 of the 1,107 parental responses made reference only to FBS, not to the amalgamation of the schools, the point under consultation. The council stated that this was not a consultation on FBS but sought to rely on responses made purely in support of FBS and is proceeding on a course with which the majority of respondents disagree.

- The wrong information - factually incorrect information about numbers on roll at the school published in the consultation document and thereafter on the website, misleading consultees.

The irrationality of decision making claimed in the section on '*Public law principles*' details the school's position on budget, pupil numbers, Ofsted rating, governing body, comparison with borough Key Stage 1 & 2 standards and views of parents. All are represented positively. The Mayor of London's recognition of the school's achievements by awarding it membership to the Gold Club School Members scheme on 22 November 2013 is also cited.

The section also asserts that LBHF has failed to conduct the consultation in a procedurally fair manner and has breached legitimate expectations.

[It should be noted that there has been considerable correspondence between the council and the legal representatives of the school and the council stands by its consultation document and procedure and thoroughly refutes these claims.]

The representation offers detailed scrutiny of "evidence from the council's public consultation", drawn from the school's inspection of the consultation responses over the two days of public viewings. One focus of the scrutiny had been to identify those responses that agreed with the proposal, did not comment on the amalgamation, but simply expressed support for FBS. This paragraph captures the school's key concern:

"Despite the assertions by Fulham Boys' and Andrew Christie that this consultation was not about the Free school, these 970 responses solely in support of Fulham Boys' were included as support for the amalgamation proposal. However, two petitions in direct opposition to the amalgamation (including 970 residents from one petition and 686 residents in another) were acknowledged but intentionally disregarded by the council."

The title of the second section of the representation is '*Response to the statutory notice of the proposed closure of Sullivan Primary School*'. It leads with the school's statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposal will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area. It states that no evidence has been provided that the new school will give all pupils a better education and outlines the ways in which it sees Sullivan as a successful school.

This *response to the notice* section goes on to dispute the council's statement that it has adequately planned for the demand for primary places in Fulham. It also claims that the council has not provided satisfactory information regarding the provision for children with special needs, in particular children with mobility issues.

The school say that they have identified three viable sites nearby and urged the council to conduct feasibility studies.

Finally, the section addresses the impact on the local area and community, stating that local residents and the associations representing them are opposed to development of the site for FBS and that a feasibility study should be completed.

The third part of the representation is entitled '*The benefits of retaining Sullivan on its current site*'. In this, the governors provide details of their strategic development plan, 'Let it Grow: a Future for Sullivan School', and its objectives: to improve academic standards in primary education in London; to provide a safe and happy school for young children in London; to become a school of choice. Two strategic approaches to achieving these objectives are outlined:

1. Increase Nursery cohort capacity to meet existing demand and allow "feeder" process into Reception to Year 6 to occur organically.
2. Convert to an Academy community school with the sponsorship of the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) to create a unique educational offering in Fulham that meet the Schools of Choice agenda.

The governors feel that with LDBS support capacity can be increased to meet demand for the nursery and grow Sullivan to a 2-form entry school. The cost of providing classrooms for two-form entry scenario is outlined, (£780,410) with full details of the costing appended.

LDBS is described as the perfect Academy Trust partner, supporting the school while preserving its strengths, its community school ethos and 100% open places admissions policy reflecting the local community. An overview of the tactical plan is provided.

The representation ends with a '*Conclusion*' page. Finally it states that the council has not accepted the school's Academy proposal, endorsed by LDBS, and says that the best interests of the current pupils and future generations lie in Sullivan remaining open on its current site and continuing its journey.

The representation carries the school's original response to the public consultation and it should be noted that it was provided with the most recent 38 Degrees online petition "Stop the closure of Sullivan Primary" (with 969 signatures), as well as the two petitions from the first consultation phase, (Save our Sullivan and 38 Degrees, carrying a total of 3604 signatures) which the school requested also be considered.

Appendix B of the representation is a letter addressed to Councillor Cooney and other members of the LBHF Cabinet. As headteachers in the borough's primary schools, the ten signatories, five among them headteachers of faith schools, call upon the Cabinet "to stop the plans to close Sullivan Primary School, demolish the building and use the site for a new secondary school."

The headteachers state that they feel the damage this will do to the pupils and the community has not been fully appreciated. In a further extract, they say "We are deeply disturbed that a good school, with a substantial and rising roll and an increasingly high reputation among parents in the local community, should be singled out for closure. Apart from the effects on the children and staff of Sullivan School, this proposal undermines our confidence in the roll of the Local Authority in supporting its schools."

Appendices to the Sullivan representation:

Appendix A EJ Hawkins: The cost of providing classrooms for a two form entry scenario at Sullivan Primary School

Appendix B Headteachers' letter of support

Appendix C Research to show detrimental impact on children's education & welfare

Appendix D Sullivan Primary School response to the public consultation

See Appendix D1 of this report for a full copy of school's representation.

London Diocesan Board for Schools

A representation from the London Diocesan Board for Schools made a formal representation opposing the proposal:

Inigo Woolf, Chief Executive, states that LDBS did not make a representation during the consultation period as it felt that a conflict of interest arose when Sullivan Primary School approached the LDBS Academy Trust to sponsor the school as a converter academy. "Now that the LDBS Academies Trust has undertaken its due diligence and agreed to sponsor Sullivan Primary School we wish to make a formal representation against the closure of Sullivan Primary School."

Mr Woolf notes that when Sullivan held a public consultation meeting attended by over 150 parents, local residents, staff and pupils on 21 October, the vote on the proposal to become an academy and join the LDBS Academies Trust was agreed unanimously.

The representation sets out to answer why LDBS is supporting the continuance of Sullivan when the Church of England is also supporting the setting up of Fulham

Boys' School. It says that Sullivan is a good school with outstanding features and "LDBS has been impressed with the quality of teaching, the progress that the children are making and the benefits that the children are enjoying from the spacious site. As a child centric organisation, the LDBS would not want to see a successful school closed."

The LDBS position is that they are not afraid to close schools with falling rolls but feel it is unusual to close successful schools with growing rolls. The amalgamation proposals were drawn up on the basis that parental preferences have been historically low and there is spare capacity in both schools. LDBS, however, feels that information provided to them since the proposals were first published indicates that, as Sullivan's reputation as a successful school is becoming more widely known, demand for places is increasing – first preferences of the current reception class are 76%. As a member of the LDBS Academy Trust they would expect the school to become oversubscribed in a short time.

The representation highlights a specific concern about the amalgamation proposals: the larger school is being closed but the smaller school's management team will take over the unfamiliar Sullivan site. Integration risks and potential disruption to learning are concerns expressed.

Further points are made about considering the New King's site as an option for FBS and the expectation that building option appraisals should be forthcoming.

"In conclusion, we wish to re-iterate that in putting children first, the LDBS does not think it is right that a growing successful school should be deprived of its school site which is in a good location for the community it serves and that the likely disruption to the education of the pupils has not been adequately addressed."

See Appendix D3 of this report for a full copy of the representation.

The National Union of Teachers in Hammersmith & Fulham

The Hammersmith & Fulham Teachers' Association's representation asserts that the local authority must withdraw this proposal.

It opens by declaring that the Association is gravely concerned about the proposal to close Sullivan Primary School, transfer its pupils to New King's School and eventually redevelop the site as a Church of England secondary school for boys. "**We cannot agree to this proposal** which will undoubtedly undermine and damage the educational progress and emotional well being of hundreds of young children."

The representation further states that the proposal will destroy an effective team of professionals delivering an excellent, and continually improving, education to children from their community. Also that Sullivan is a viable school in terms of

standards, school rolls, finance, the site, health & safety, the environment and projected developments. These, it says, are facts that should be accepted by the LA and should lead its decision making.

It says that school closure can only be contemplated by an LA “when the overriding material facts leave them no choice or when the gains - including to the children most affected by the proposal - are so overwhelming that the only rational option is to go ahead with the proposed changes.” The LA’s proposal, in its view, fails these tests.

A serious concern for the NUT is that it sees the council as failing to recognise the data, facts, projections and impact assessments prepared by Sullivan School. Factors such as the school roll, buildings, achievements and community cohesion are highlighted, as well as claims that the consultation was flawed, with undue weighting given to one set of parents championing the interests of their children against the interests of Sullivan’s children. “It is reasonable for the Council to make the best use of opportunities which open up as a result of any reorganisation but the reorganisation has to go forward on its own merits. In this case the facts do not merit the proposed reorganisation of provision and closure of Sullivan School.”

The Association’s representation outlines the impact and ramifications it sees if closure goes ahead and seeks a review of the LA’s Schools of Choice policy. Should the council go ahead with the closure, it says, it will send a demoralising message that it does not want schools such as Sullivan regardless of how well they are doing or how high their standards are. It concludes with the statement that Sullivan is a school that cannot be closed for any rational, professional, educational, moral or ethical reason.

See Appendix D3 of this report for a full copy of the representation.

Hammersmith & Fulham Liberal Democrats

“Hammersmith & Fulham Liberal Democrats strongly oppose the Council’s proposal to discontinue Sullivan Primary School (Sullivan) with effect from 1 September 2014.”

Paul Kennedy, Chair, Hammersmith & Fulham Liberal Democrats, goes on to say: “We see no justification for closing a popular and successful primary school, recently recognised as one of the top-performing schools in London, and with a waiting list of 29 for its oversubscribed Nursery Class. The Council’s vague and vacuous ‘merger’ proposals with New King’s School have attracted virtually no support from parents at either school, and have been roundly condemned by the local community - with the exception of supporters of a free school which potentially stands to gain from vacation of the Sullivan site.”

The message the representation takes from the consultation responses is that just a handful of parents associated with the two schools agreed with the proposals while hundreds objected, and thousands objected from the wider community.

The representation states the case for the current proposals to be abandoned to allow time for:

- Consideration of Sullivan's (and New King's) academy application(s) by the Department for Education (DfE)
- The current round of primary school applications closing on 15 January 2014 to proceed in an orderly fashion
- An independent review of the Council's handling of its consultation on closing Sullivan

The fundamental objection outlined is the view that the Council has failed to put forward a proper justification for closing Sullivan. "Apart from the historic issue of empty places in older years (and publishing incorrect data suggesting there are unfilled places in the Reception Class), the only justification put forward by the Council is that Sullivan's closure might help two other schools, one of which is small and undersubscribed and the other is looking for a site."

Sullivan, it says, appears to be a thriving and increasingly popular school, with nearly 300 pupils, a full reception (76% put Sullivan as their first choice), and a waiting list of 29 children for its nursery class. Recognition of the school's progress and success is noted and the claim made that the main obstacle to further progress seems to be the council itself, saying that it "blocked Sullivan's request to expand its Nursery Class to provide a regular intake for its Reception Class" and failed "to engage properly with Sullivan or to offer it the same level of support it seems to be offering to the proposed amalgamated school or the free school. It seems to us that the Council is too heavily conflicted by its financial interest in Sullivan's land and its political commitment to the free school to be able to make objective decisions in the interests of the pupils of Sullivan school and the wider community."

The Liberal Democrats feel it is far from clear how the amalgamated school would build on any of the features of Sullivan which have made it such a success over the last five years, with its "award-winning head teacher and many of its senior staff sacked" and "pupils evicted from their beautiful school next to a park and placed in a high-rise building on a busy road." The view is also expressed that the council has dismissed concerns about the impact of closure and disruption on pupils and says "We are particularly concerned about the impact on disabled pupils for whom Sullivan is ideally suited."

The representation disputes the council's assertions that two schools are very

close together, and that there will be no impact on traffic and transport arrangements. Closure of Sullivan, it says, would create a large hole in primary school provision in South Fulham, leaving some pupils more than 25 minutes walk from the nearest English-speaking primary school, with no public transport options.

Detailed concerns are expressed about the council's motives for closing the school and freeing up the site, as well as "the Council's handling and presentation of the consultation and its results, which have undermined public confidence in the validity of its decision-making process."

The representation ends: "The question for this Council administration ahead of the forthcoming local elections is this. Does it really want to be remembered for bringing into disrepute both the Government's flagship academies and free schools programme and local government decision-making - by closing down a popular and successful primary school in order to grab its land for a free school?"

See Appendix D3 of this report for a full copy of the representation.

Peterborough Road and Area Residents' Association (PRARA)

The PRARA representation registers its strong opposition to the proposal:

"On behalf of our several hundred members whose interests we are here to represent and protect, this letter is to record, in the strongest possible terms, our opposition to this proposal to close Sullivan School."

The representation states the association's belief that the consultation was deeply flawed. Also that the way in which the largely negative response to the proposal was turned into a recommendation that the amalgamation should proceed was neither clear, convincing nor publicly transparent. The association asserts that the case for closure is therefore not proven and the decision erodes trust in both the democratic process and the Council's integrity.

The letter questions the way weighting was or was not applied to responses and says this indicates to the association that the process favoured the result that the Council wanted and is particularly unfair and unjust in respect of the pupils, parents and staff of Sullivan School. Examples were provided.

In PRARA's view:

- The consultation was hi-jacked by supporters of Fulham Boys School whose only objective was to secure the Sullivan site rather than to comment on Council proposals for primary education locally.
- The views of local associations, including PRARA and HDRA, were excluded from the consultation results.
- The Council heavily criticised the NHS for counting the 18 petitions against the

closure of Charing Cross Hospital, which contained 66,000 names, as 18 responses. It then ignored the petition numbers presented in the consultation and did not factor them in to the results.

The following additional statements were made for the attention of the Cabinet when they consider the amalgamation proposals:

“Given the Council's publicly stated desire to make the Sullivan site available for the Fulham Boys School, we must place on record the complete failure so far of the Council to provide an assessment of the potential impact that the use of this site for the Fulham Boys School would have on our area. We believe it can only be harmful to the local environment and have an adverse and unacceptable impact on the quality of life of residents. As such we consider it irresponsible of the Council to continue to promote the use of the Sullivan School site by the Fulham Boys School, and make a decision about it, in the way that it is doing without having fully considered all the implications and likely consequences of such use.

We have no objection to, and indeed sympathy for, the establishment of the Fulham Boys School and hope a suitable site can be found elsewhere.”

See Appendix D3 of this report for a full copy of the representation.

The Hurlingham and District Residents' Association (HDRA)

The HDRA representation also registers opposition to the proposal:

“We have already registered our concerns and opposition to the Council proposals regarding the above through Mr Michael DeLacey's recent email addressed to Councillor Cooney.

So there is no doubt in the interpretation of the objections being made, the Hurlingham District Residents' Association are opposed to the planned amalgamation on the grounds of the Council having undertaken a flawed 'consultation' skewing the outcome to match the Council arguments in favour of the amalgamation. The evidence is that Sullivan is a popular and academically effective school and there is no 'popular' wish by parents, most who live close by, or teaching staff for the proposed changes to be made.

In terms of the proposed Fulham Boys School we strongly believe the Council's plans have taken no account of the impact the schools' presence will have on the local community, increasing traffic, reducing car park spaces, leading to over utilisation of the local Parks especially Hurlingham Park, and creating added nuisance and stress. In terms of traffic alone, the neighbourhood is already excessively busy, a conduit for 'rat running' and its effects, together with the huge volume of traffic to the Hurlingham Club as well as traffic and Parking stress resulting from FFC and CFC matches.

It is obvious for all to see that the proposed amalgamation and effective closure of Sullivan is a convenient way of releasing a site for the FBS . Combined with a skewed consultation process the ‘arguments’ for releasing the site to FBS are presented as de facto: the local Community is not at all convinced and so, we oppose your proposition.”

See Appendix D3 of this report for a copy of this representation, including the email referred to, which seeks to have recorded that the council, in the previous consultation report, did not note the formal objection registered by HDRA in its formal response.

The formal response was appended to the consultation report and published in full. All relevant papers [are published on the council’s website here](#)» (Cabinet Members’ Decisions 18 October 2013, in the Council and Democracy section of the [lbhf.gov.uk](#) site).

City Events Ltd., Polo in the Park

A representation from Richard Kirtley, Operations Manager, City Events Ltd, Polo in the Park registered ‘a clear objection to the proposal’.

Mr Kirtley expressed frustration that his attempts to get feedback and specific information in order to make an accurate case for objection had been ignored. He said that instead of requesting again a response, he would instead like to have his “original email documented as a clear objection to the proposal of closing Sullivan school to develop the site a senior boys' school” and requested its inclusion in the second round of feedback.

The email outlines asks questions about FBS arrangements and expresses concerns about the impact of the new school on Hurlingham Park and the immediate area. It states that clear, unhindered access to Hurlingham Park and full usage of the park, both for preparation and throughout the rental period is vital to the events company. The email is appended in full for consideration, see *Appendix D3*.

Mathias Kulubya, a Sullivan parent, on behalf of Sullivan Court Residents’ Association

A representation strongly opposing the proposal was received from Mathias Kulubya.

Mr Kulubya states that the residents strongly oppose the council decision and publication of the statutory notice. The representation explains that Sullivan Court history is thoroughly intertwined with Sullivan Primary School, led by a passionate and inspirational head teacher, Wendy Aldridge.

The representation questions the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the consultation. It claims that 62% of respondents opposed closure of Sullivan and that only 2% of Sullivan and New King's parents supported the proposal to amalgamate the two schools and that: "The decision to close Sullivan Primary School is a political decision to find a free site for CE affiliated Free Boys Academy."

The potential impact of the proposal on the pupils of both schools is outlined and Mr Kulubya urges the council to listen to the voices of concerned parents and residents and find a way to resolve the matter. He quotes the advice contained in a consultation response from a local GP:

1. Allow New King's to proceed to become an academy with a likely increase in numbers
2. Keep Sullivan Primary School open
3. Find another site for the Free Boys' Academy

See Appendix D3 of this report for a copy of the representation.

Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust

The representation from Wasim Kempson, Imam of Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust, expressed "significant concerns regarding the closure of Sullivan Primary School".

The Imam says "If we were to lose a successful primary school that already provides excellent education for so many from the Muslim community, and gain a secondary school that will not offer the same inclusivity, I do not believe the Council will have served the 33% of children at Sullivan Primary School that are of the Muslim faith. Moreover, you will have ignored your residents' preferences and formed an exclusive system of education."

The letter asks how this will fulfil the council's commitment to providing excellent education for all the young people in the borough and ends by saying that the Imam awaits Councillor Cooney's reply.

See Appendix D3 of this report for a copy of the representation

[Councillor Cooney replied, assuring the Imam that should the proposal go ahead, every child at Sullivan would be guaranteed a place at the expanded school and that there were no proposed changes to admissions and would be no faith based places. The proposed two-form academy would be fully inclusive and there for all local pupils, no matter their gender, religion or socio-economic background. The reply noted that the governing body of Sullivan school had set out its own plans to convert to academy status by joining the Church of England LDBS Academy Trust. Also that if FBS does open in Hammersmith & Fulham, it has made clear that 50% of the places offered will be open places, providing ample opportunity for boys of all faiths to apply for places. There was no further correspondence between the Imam and Councillor Cooney.]

3b. Summarised representations supporting the proposal

The representation from West London Free School Academy Trust supporting the proposal is summarised here.

Toby Young, Chairman of the Trust, stated that he is fully supportive of Fulham Boys School and the Council's proposed merger of the two primary schools, saying: "I think Fulham Boys School will be a great addition to the borough's existing array of schools and, I'm sure, will be very popular with CofE parents who currently struggle to find places for their sons in local schools."

See Appendix D3 of this report for a full copy of the representation.

The representation from New King's School supporting the proposal is summarised here.

The New King's School representation "supports enthusiastically" the proposal.

The executive summary is reproduced here:

"This document has been produced as the single official representation to the Councillors of Hammersmith and Fulham Council from the Senior Leadership Team, staff and Governors of New King's Primary School (New King's) and the Principals of Thomas's London Day Schools (Thomas's) who support enthusiastically the amalgamation proposal for New King's and Sullivan Primary School (Sullivan).

It explains briefly the reasoning behind our support and outlines our vision for the amalgamated school.

It includes details of New King's today and our further plans to consult on turning the enlarged school into a converter academy.

We understand the concerns that have been expressed over the closure of Sullivan. However, we believe that the future for all the pupils of both New King's and Sullivan is far stronger, combined together, as part of a larger whole.

The amalgamation of both schools will bring huge improvements to the area's educational provision, as talents are combined and the strengths of both schools developed.

The closeness in proximity and practice between the two schools offers a genuine opportunity to bring both together; to create a new attractive choice for local parents; and to challenge the perceived community, church and independent school hierarchy.

The new combined school would enable:

- An increase in the number, diversity and quality of front-line staff
- An innovative, effective and significantly enriched curriculum
- Dramatically enhanced buildings and learning environment
- A leadership team able to deliver significant benefit for local children through partnership with the independent sector
- A wider impact on the educational landscape of South Fulham and on the Tri- Borough

The similarities between the two schools provide both the impetus for this amalgamation, and the ingredients for its success. Both schools are incredibly similar, in their intake, teaching approaches and academic achievements. Both serve the same community. Both are rated 'Good' by Ofsted. Both are, however, currently undersubscribed. This lack of demand is clear proof that too many local parents are currently looking for a different form of primary education.

We believe this amalgamation will provide them the opportunity of accessing the education of their choice. We also see opportunities for even further improvements and freedoms as a converter academy by entering into a formal partnership with Thomas's to establish the Parsons Green Academy."

The representation explains why the school supports the amalgamation by explaining that: "New King's, like Sullivan, wants nothing more than to become an outstanding school and a school of choice for its local community. The New King's community accepts the need for change in order to meet these ambitions which we wish to see achieved for the greatest possible numbers of pupils of the local community. We are happy therefore to combine with others to make it happen.

New King's has not sought the closure of Sullivan. We do however enthusiastically support the amalgamation proposal for New King's and Sullivan as we believe that, regardless of our current respective strengths, the merger can, should and will lead to significant further enhanced educational opportunities for pupils and staff at both schools and more widely within the borough."

It further states that the merger process will culminate in an innovative, effective and significantly enriched curriculum by combining together the best of both schools. Two good schools, it says, will combine together to make one outstanding school. It will sustain improvements by enabling costs savings to be invested to increase the number, diversity and quality of front-line teaching staff. It will facilitate significant capital investments which will dramatically enhance buildings and the learning environment for all children at the combined school.

As part of "*The Vision*" for the merged school, the representation says: "We see two school communities quickly coming together and overcoming any sense of unease or concern to create a school of choice; a fully staffed, refurbished, resourced,

appropriately sized primary school, offering outstanding levels of teaching and learning and of pastoral care to its local community.”

In a section on “*The Staff Team*”, the quality of teaching in both schools is celebrated, with universally good academic results and both schools ranked highly in terms of pupil progress. The representation reiterates the conviction that, with good will, the educational good practice in evidence at both schools is highly transferable. The amalgamation of the two teaching teams, it says, will allow for the extensive use of collaborative professional development to enable the new teaching team to perform even more effectively.

A proposed structure for the amalgamated school forms an appendix to the New King’s document. The document itself states that the proposed structure, which remains subject to a full consultation with existing staff, allows almost all teachers to continue to serve in the newly amalgamated school. The draft staffing structures have been costed, it says, proving that a far larger range of additional, full time, specialist teachers would become affordable within the enlarged school, allowing for significant curriculum enrichment and further supporting the drive to become “Outstanding”. The pupils at the new school would benefit from full time specialist teachers for Creative Arts, Physical Education, Music and Modern Foreign Languages. Three full-time specialist intervention teachers would also be appointed. Personnel reductions would primarily be in management and administration posts, with substantial savings made through economies of scale, freeing-up resources for front line delivery.

Plans for “*The Curriculum*” are detailed. In terms of the curriculum, the similarities between the two schools are described as far outweighing their differences. They share several key components of curriculum design and teaching approaches. Careful consideration and consultation will take place to ensure that the best of each is maintained within the amalgamated school.

New King’s intends to continue to reinforce its international approach, based on the very latest educational research, looking to build on its experience of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) whilst incorporating the strongest elements of the Sullivan approach. It would also, it says, build on its pioneering, innovative work with the Maths Mastery programme (a mathematics curriculum being developed in partnership with Ark Schools, based on the successful system used in Singapore, delivering exceptionally effective outcomes in New King’s trial classes).

The proposed two-form entry school would be well staffed and well-resourced. Pupils would benefit from an improved teacher:pupil ratio and would no longer have to contend with the difficulties of mixed-age classes.

Economies of scale would support a broadening of the curriculum, introducing a particular focus on Science and Music. The expanded subject-specialist teaching team would complement the existing class teacher model, bringing new opportunities

for pupils to learn languages, play a musical instrument, develop their artistic and creative skills, or take part in a wide range of sporting activities.

The school is equally positive about its plans for *“The Buildings and Learning Environment”*, stating that the amalgamation provides the opportunity for the children of both schools to enjoy a dramatically enhanced learning environment. New King’s say that the Council’s recent feasibility study illustrates how this building can provide fantastic opportunities for children to learn within purpose-built facilities which would be otherwise unavailable. This significant investment would prepare the building for the education of local children for many years to come.

The installation of two lifts would make the school fully accessible, allowing it to further support children with a variety of disabilities. The combination of specialist teachers and specialist teaching spaces would allow the new school to deliver to children from the whole community learning opportunities usually associated with only the best independent prep schools.

The outside spaces would receive a particular focus to ensure that pupils retain the opportunity to bring their learning outside.

A section of the New King’s representation entitled *“Leadership and Partnership with Thomas’s Day Schools”* starts with this statement of intent: “The Governance Teams and Leadership Teams of the enlarged New King’s will be reorganised on its merger to represent the interests of both schools. Thereafter, the leadership of the school will consult with its staff and parent body to continue further transformation of the enlarged New King’s into the Parsons Green Academy in partnership with Thomas’s. The intention is for this to take place at the earliest opportunity.”

The New King’s statement describes The Thomas’s Schools Foundation as striving to ensure that children, especially those with the fewest resources, have opportunities to succeed in school and life. New King’s has already been benefiting from informal links with Thomas’s for a number of years. The benefits Thomas’s can bring, educationally and administratively are explained, as is Thomas’s role.

A statement follows in which Principals Tobyn and Ben Thomas provide Thomas’s perspective on formalising the relationship between pupils, staffs and parents.

They say that Thomas’s shares the vision of and ambition for the school with the Governors of New King’s and wishes to be an effective partner to them into the future. Thomas’s supports the New King’s and Sullivan amalgamation because of the enhanced educational benefits, staffing and facilities that it will bring the pupils of both schools.

The statement concludes: “Thomas’s intends its role to be one of supportive partner and enabler, not leader. Thomas’s believes that the staff and management of the school already possess the initiative, flair and educational ambition to continue to succeed. They simply require support, guidance, assistance and structures to sustain their efforts. This will be a genuine partnership between independent and

state sectors which promises to deliver great opportunities for pupils and staff across the whole educational spectrum.”

In *“Our Academy Proposals”*, the representation makes clear that, subject to further consultation with stakeholders, New King’s would propose that the newly amalgamated school seeks Academy Status to become the Parsons Green Academy. As both New King’s and Sullivan are rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted the school would be seeking to become an academy in its own right. New King’s would therefore be a converter academy, not a sponsored academy; it would formalise its partnership with Thomas’s.

Governance arrangements and the admission procedure are spelled out, plus plans for a new uniform and the undertaking that in recognition of the financial pressures this will place on some families, the school will be seeking to provide important items of school uniform free of charge for all pupils if the proposal to amalgamate the two schools goes ahead.

The representation ends with *“Wider Impact and Summary”* in which it says:

“The plans for the amalgamated school go beyond ambitions to become “Outstanding” in the eyes of Ofsted. We feel that the bringing together of two good schools, with the support of the Council and the Local Authority, and the capabilities of the Thomas’s organisation has enormous additional potential.”

Release of the Sullivan site, it says, would also allow for the establishment of Fulham Boys School, which would significantly improve secondary provision in South Fulham for all boys - complimenting the existing girls’ provision at Lady Margaret School. The representation notes that discussions with Fulham Boys’ Head Teacher and Governing Body have begun about how the schools could work in partnership to raise ambitions for local children.

“By supporting the longer-term ambitions of New King’s and in turn those of Fulham Boys, the Council allows a shared vision to be strengthened, for the partnerships to be fully realised, and for the educational landscape of South Fulham to be transformed into a hotbed of innovation, cross-sector collaboration and academic excellence. In summary, the current proposal would enable a far greater number of local children to benefit from an enhanced primary provision. This proposal will not result in the loss of a “Good” school – it will join two “Good” schools together to form one which is truly Outstanding.”

The document has three appendices:

Appendix 1 Proposed Staffing Structure for the Amalgamated School

Appendix 2 Thomas’s Support Team Structure, Parsons Green Academy

Appendix 3 Indicative KS2 Timetable

See Appendix D2 of this report for a full copy of the school’s representation.

3c. Summarised neutral representation

The neutral representation from Fulham Boys' School is summarised here.

The Fulham Boys' School (FBS) submitted a representation declaring that "FBS maintains a strictly neutral stance on the proposed merger".

The representation, from Alexander Wade, Chairman of Governors, The Fulham Boys' School, sought to answer questions raised during the consultation about demand for the school and parental support, but more particularly about its motives

and conduct. It stated that the proposal was not predicated on finding a site for FBS, but the school was drawn into the consultation on the proposed merger of Sullivan and New Kings primary schools by being named as the potential occupants of the Sullivan school site. It said that the governors of FBS have no comment on how primary schools should best be organised in H&F. It stated that, despite maintaining a neutral stance on the Council's proposed merger of the two primaries, a number of issues concerning FBS had arisen.

The representation countered claims that FBS had played any part in forming the merger proposals or proposing the Sullivan site as its potential home: "At all times we sought to be extremely clear that we were seeking to mobilise support for FBS only". Also: "FBS has always been neutral on the merger but we were stung into action on the consultation following a campaign of anti-FBS invective during the summer."

Describing more recent events it said: "The continuing invective against FBS has prompted parents, local residents and businesses to ask what they can do to ensure their voice is heard in the debate about future educational choices in Fulham. We have encouraged supporters to write in during the representation period and attach at Appendix 1 some of the parent's letters copied to us." Other appendices to the representation in hard copy form carried letters of support from local educators, businesses and churches. These were addressed to the council and have been treated as having been passed on via the representation. Those not duplicating letters and emails directly received by the council have been included in the figure of 37 quoted.

A letter carried in the representation came from members of the congregation of All Saints Church Fulham stating that they wrote as individuals. It carried 68 signatures and has been noted separately in the headline figures quoted on page 4.

A copy of the representation, minus its own appendices, supplied to the council as hard copies, can be seen at Appendix D3

This report forms Appendix D of the Cabinet Decision Report for 6 January 2014 and carries the following appendices of its own:

- Appendix D1* Full copy of Sullivan Primary School representation
- Appendix D2* Copy of New King's Primary School representation
- Appendix D3* Full copies of other representations from organisations:
West London Free School Academy Trust
London Diocesan Board for Schools
The National Union of Teachers in Hammersmith & Fulham
Hammersmith & Fulham Liberal Democrats
Peterborough Road and Area Residents' Association (PRARA)
The Hurlingham and District Residents' Association (HDRA)
City Events Ltd., Polo in the Park
Mathias Kulubya, a Sullivan parent, on behalf of Sullivan Court Residents' Association
Wasim Kempson, Imam of Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust
The Fulham Boys' School
Additionally, a letter from:
Greg Hands M.P., Chelsea and Fulham