

## WAY AHEAD FOR CITY'S SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Final proposals to transform secondary and special education in Nottingham have been unveiled after a seven week consultation with parents, teachers and children.

The proposals are part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme that provides an exciting 'once in a generation' opportunity to transform secondary and special education in the city. They include the creation of three new academies and also tackle the problem of the falling birth rate, which, if not dealt with, would leave several secondary schools half empty.

They will go to councillors for their agreement on July 26. If the City's BSF bid is ratified by the Government, it will mean an extra £143 million to be invested in secondary and special schools in Nottingham. The first refurbished schools should be completed for September 2008 and fully rebuilt schools should open in September 2009.

They proposals are:

- To build a new special school (centre of excellence) to replace Aspley Wood and Shepherd Special Schools
- To create three city academies – one in Bulwell on the site of River Leen Comprehensive; one in Mapperley on the site of Elliott Durham Comprehensive; and one in Bilborough on the site of William Sharp Comprehensive. This is subject to further detailed planning and the validation of pupil numbers.
- To partly or totally rebuild and expand Big Wood School. Close Haywood School. Explore federation between Haywood School and schools in the geographical area. Actively explore the possibility of maintaining an educational presence on the Haywood site.
- To close Fairham Community College, expanding Farnborough School and Technology College. Explore federation opportunities to support existing pupils.
- To put plans to reorganise special schools into effect.
- To complete the refurbishment of Hadden Park High School.
- To defer the decision to close Manning School for consideration under the second phase of Building Schools for the Future, allowing more time to consult on reasonable expectations for single sex education in the context of the need to reduce surplus places.
- To rebuild the Bluecoat Wollaton school, negotiations to take place with the school, diocese and Department of Education and Skills regarding the funding package.
- To complete the rebuilding of Ellis Guilford School and Sports College

There has been broad support for the majority of the new proposals, with opposition revolving around the closure of Manning Girls School and Haywood Comprehensive.

Last November Nottingham was allocated approximately £75 million through the Government's BSF funding to rebuild and refurbish some of its most dilapidated secondary and special school buildings.

An additional £68 million has been made available for the three academies. More money for further schemes is expected in the future. These include the rebuilding of Greenwood Dale Technology College on a new site; refurbishing or rebuilding Top Valley Comprehensive; completing the refurbishment of Fernwood Comprehensive; locating Trinity RC comprehensive on a single site and refurbishing it; refurbishing our pupil referral units and completing the refurbishment of Nottingham Bluecoat and Technology College in Aspley..

Councillor Graham Chapman, Nottingham City Council's Executive Member for Education, said: "We have used the consultation responses to make amendments to the initial proposals and to help us to put together a final set of proposals to submit to the Government for their approval. If they are accepted it will mean an extra investment of around £143 million in Nottingham's secondary and special schools to provide schools fit for the 21st century.

"Some of our secondary schools are more than 40 years old and all of them need to be brought up to the best possible standard and equipped to the best possible specification to learn, teach and work in. But we have to face the fact the changes are necessary to achieve this.

"The birth rate has been falling over the past few years meaning we will need fewer secondary



schools, but ones that are equipped to the best possible specifications. We have to reduce the number of school places to the number of pupils so that we are no-longer paying to maintain half-empty buildings but can channel that money into learning and teaching resources. The choices parents make when deciding which secondary school their children will move on to also has an impact on planning for the future.

“However, we will work closely with schools to ensure all staff, governors, parents, community users and, most importantly, all of the students, have an opportunity to influence the final developments that are put in place to help us continue our drive to improve standards and to maintain our position as one of the most improved education authorities in the country.”

