

**Report to:** Children Young People and Families Scrutiny Committee  
Cabinet

**Date:** 12 November 2009  
19 November 2009

**Subject:** Outcome of Stage 2 and 3 Consultation on the Proposed  
Closure of Montrose School

**Report of:** Nick Hudson – Executive Director of Children and Young  
People's Services

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**Purpose / summary:** The purpose of this report is to:

- inform Cabinet of the outcome of Stage 2 and 3 of the consultation on the proposal to close Montrose School;
- request that Cabinet make the final decision on the proposal.

**Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:** Contained at paragraph 3.1.9 of the report.

**Recommendation / decision:** Members are recommended to endorse the proposal to close Montrose School with effect from 31 August 2010.

**Key Decision:** This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, ie, before 01 December 2009.

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

**Risks / Implications:**

Financial: The closure of Montrose will result in improved value for money. Whilst individual pupil funding will be transferred and used to support pupils in the receiving schools, revenue savings will be re-invested to further develop

provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN).

Staffing: Permanent staff that may be at risk of redundancy, if the school were to close, will be supported in finding alternative employment.

Policy: Wigan Strategy for School Places and Buildings. LA Inclusion Strategy.

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted? Yes

Wards affected: All

**Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?**

In the event that the decision is made to implement the proposal for closure, the building/site will revert back to CYPS to decide its future use or declare it as surplus to requirements.

**If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?**

Yes

**Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?**

A full diversity impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached as an appendix to this report.

**Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?**

A full diversity impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached as an appendix to this report.

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Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

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**For Cabinet reports only :**

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision	<b>X</b>	Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

**Tracking/Process:**

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
12 Nov 2009		19 Nov 2009	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Outcome of Stage 1 Consultation on the Proposal to Close Montrose School	Cabinet	13 August 2009	CYPS Progress House Westwood Park Drive Wigan WN3 4HH
Proposed Closure of Montrose School	Cabinet	14 May 2009	
Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings			
LA Inclusion Strategy			
The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Maintained Schools) England Regulations 2007 (as Amended)			
Planning and Developing Special Educational Provision: DCSF Guide for Local Authorities and Other Proposers (Publication date: 25.05.07)			

Proper Officer



Date

24 October 2009

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 In a report to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009, the Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services outlined the borough's specialist provision for children with SEN. The report explained the reason for proposing the closure of Montrose School, with effect from 31 August 2010.

The school is established to cater for 70 pupils but, in September 2009, there were only 26 pupils on roll. By September 2010, there will be only 19. This decline in pupil numbers calls into question the school's long-term viability. To maintain the school would not provide value for money.

- 1.2 Cabinet considered the content of the report and authorised a public consultation (Stage 1), on the understanding that the following conditions would be met:

- a special school place would be made available for all pupils currently at Montrose if this was the parents' wish;
- CYPS would take into account the sensitivities around this type of closure consultation;
- a carefully managed communication strategy would be put into place;
- options for the future use of the site would be explored.

- 1.3 Stage 1 consultation on the proposal began on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009. On 13 August 2009, a report to Cabinet gave details of the consultation and addressed the main issues raised.

The report also highlighted the issues that the decision maker is statutorily required by DCSF to take into account when determining proposals, together with how the proposal would meet the necessary requirements.

Cabinet considered the content of the report and requested the EDCYPS to:

- publish statutory notices on the proposal;
- consider the use of savings and the future use of the school building should the proposal be adopted.

## **2 Consultation Stages 2 and 3: Publication and Representation**

- 2.1 On 10 September 2009, the statutory notice proposing the closure of Montrose School was published. The notice, at Appendix A, invited comments and/or objections to be received within the 6 week statutory representation period, (Stage 3) ie, by 22 October 2009. The complete proposal and appendices, Appendix B, were circulated as directed, and made available on request.

- 2.2 Communications received during the representation period is summarised below and detailed at Appendix C.

- A total of 52 written responses were received, which included the response of the school's Governing Body. Of those, 50 made objection to the proposal; 2 made comment but no objection.
- Two separate petitions were received as evidence that 2955 people had lodged their support to keep Montrose School open.

All responses have been made available for public inspection at CYPS, Progress House, and will be made available to CYPF Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet at their meetings on 12 and 19 November 2009 respectively.

### **3 Response to issues raised**

3.1 The issues raised have been categorised under the range of DCSF key factors to be considered by decision makers, as detailed in the report to Cabinet on 13 August 2009, and have been addressed below:

#### **3.1.1 The effect on educational standards and school improvement**

- The proposal does not call into question the skill, expertise and dedication of the staff at Montrose School. As a valuable resource, those who may be facing redundancy, if the school were to close, will be supported in finding suitable alternative employment.
- The LA maintains a number of special schools, including 3 others like Montrose, where children with complex needs achieve in small class sizes, ie, Hope School in the west of the borough, Oakfield in the centre and New Greenhall in the east.
- Montrose School was placed in special measures following an Ofsted inspection in January 2008. However, a re-inspection in June 2009 confirmed that the school had improved and that provision for pupils is now good.

The provision at the other named special schools is also deemed to be good to outstanding, and there will be no reduction in the level of education or care afforded to any pupil who transfers as a result of the closure of Montrose.

- Specialist teachers from five special schools provide outreach support to assist mainstream settings in meeting the needs of children and young people with complex needs. CYPS will continue to commission outreach support from the remaining four schools in the event that Montrose School should close.

#### **3.1.2 How the proposal will impact on local diversity**

- Where the number of schools is to be decreased this will inevitably impact on diversity and parental choice. However, as discussed in 3.1 above, the LA still maintains a number of special schools, including 3 others of the same designation as Montrose, one of which lies within the same geographical area of the borough.

The development of resourced mainstream provision, along with outreach services from special schools and access initiatives to make mainstream settings more accessible, has increased diversity and choice for parents of children with SEN over recent years.

### **3.1.3 How the proposal will help every young person to achieve their potential within the Every Child Matters principles**

- There are a range of partner agencies working within special schools, including Montrose, to support the Every Child Matters agenda. As the proposal does not require children from Montrose to transfer outside of the special school sector, there should be no dilution of support from these agencies.

### **3.1.4 Provision for displaced pupils**

- Montrose School caters for children and young people with complex needs from the age of 4-14 years. At the age of 14, children leave to complete their education elsewhere. If the proposal is implemented, children will still have only one move, but this will happen earlier than it would otherwise have done.
- If the decision is that the school should close, the 19 pupils who would be on the roll of Montrose in September 2010, if it were to remain open, will have the option of a place in an alternative special school. The likelihood is that, in the majority of cases, pupils will transfer to the same school as their classmates.
- A strategic group, made up of CYPs officers, governors and senior managers from Montrose and the receiving schools, has been set up to consider the practicalities of transition for pupils at Montrose, should the school close in August 2010.

Through effective communication, this Transition Group will seek to ensure that pupils at Montrose School continue to receive a high quality education, and that disruption to their learning and care is managed and minimised during the transition to their new school.

### **3.1.5 Parental preferences, the sufficient supply of school places and the removal of surplus places**

- It is important that services are provided cost-effectively. The proposal to close Montrose School is based on the reduction in the number of children on roll at the school. When the school opened in 2006, that number was 57. There are now 26 children on roll which will reduce to 19 in September 2010.
- When the school was placed in special measures, the LA acceded to a request by the management of the school not to refer new pupils. In the event, only one pupil was identified as possibly requiring a place there.
- The LA supports parents' legal rights to request mainstream education for their children, if this is their preference. However, these proposals do not necessitate a move to mainstream schools for any of the pupils currently attending Montrose.
- Consultation has taken place with the senior management of the receiving special schools concerned to ensure that the number of pupils who will be requiring places can be accommodated, giving parents the assurance that a

### **3.1.6 Impact on the community / travel and accessibility for all**

- Pupils or families currently accessing services via Montrose School will be provided with the opportunity to access similar services elsewhere.
- Many of the children attending special schools are eligible for home to school transport, due to the nature of their SEN and the distance they have to travel to school. These arrangements will continue in line with the LA's Transport Policy.

However, Hope and Oakfield Schools employ independent travel trainers to support some older students in developing their skills in this area through transition and into adulthood.

### **3.1.7 Funding to deliver the proposals**

Whilst the proposal may be seen to be a money-making exercise, options for the future use of the site are still being explored. Assurance can be given that funding will be redirected to support displaced pupils and enhance and develop SEN provision across a range of sectors.

### **3.1.8 The consultation process including views of interested parties**

- The number of pupils with SEN, and the types of difficulties they experience, is the subject of ongoing monitoring. This is to allow the LA to meet its obligations in planning and reorganising specialist provision to best meet the needs of those who require it.
- Consultation has been conducted in line with all statutory requirements and, as such, the concerns of interested parties have been summarised at Appendix C and addressed at paragraph 3.

All views received have been made available for inspection at Progress House, and will be made available to CYPF Scrutiny Committee on 12 November and Cabinet on 19 November 2009.

### **3.1.9 Alternative options that have emerged**

- The alternative option of maintaining Montrose as a smaller specialist setting was previously considered by Cabinet, on 13 August 2009, whilst bearing in mind the government's expectation that decision makers must be satisfied that requirements are met in relation to standards, surplus places and funding.

The number of places currently funded is 55. If the school were to remain open with a reduced capacity, the funding would also reduce to reflect this. At present, the school caters for ages 4-14 years, spanning 10 year groups. Providing an appropriate education across this age range with a reduction in budget would prove very challenging.

## 3.2 SEN Improvement Test

When reviewing SEN provision, planning or commissioning alternative types of SEN provision, or considering proposals for change, LA's should aim for a flexible range of provision and support that can respond to the SEN of individual pupils and parental preferences rather than necessarily establishing broad categories of provision according to SEN or disability. In doing so, LA's must consider the SEN Improvement Test which decision makers should take into account.

The Governing Body of Montrose School, in their response, have expressed concern that the LA has failed to meet some aspects of the Test.

When considering any reorganisation of SEN provision, including that which might lead to some children being misplaced through closures or alterations, LA's and all other proposers for new schools, or new provision, will need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEN.

### 3.2.1 Specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposal in terms of:

- **Improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment with reference to the LA's accessibility strategy**

The number of pupils with SEN, and the types of difficulties they experience, are regularly monitored and reviewed. As a result, improvements and developments in the SEN sector are ongoing. The LA currently maintains the following range of specialist provision:

<b>Specialist Provision wef September 2009</b>	
<b>Special School</b>	<b>Designation</b>
New Greenhall	Complex Needs 2-14
Montrose	Complex Needs 4-14
Oakfield	Complex Needs 11-19
Hope	Complex Needs (inc PMLD) 2-19
Willow Grove	EBSD 4-11
Newbridge Learning Community	EBSD 11-16
Landgate	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 4-19 yrs
<b>Resourced Mainstream Schools</b>	<b>Designation – resourced to provide for:</b>
Hindley Sure Start Nursery	Physical/Medical Difficulties N
Platt Bridge Community	Observation & Assessment / Speech Lang & Comm / ASD 3-11
Westfield Community	Observation & Assessment / Speech Lang & Comm / ASD 3-11
Hindley J & I	Physical/Medical Difficulties 4-11
Hindley Community High	Physical/Medical Difficulties 11-16

Decision makers can be satisfied that such a flexible range of provision, along with the development of outreach services to assist mainstream settings in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN, is more than adequate to cater for that cohort. There will be no reduced access to suitable specialist provision for current and future pupils with complex SEN.

In addition, the LA fully utilises the School Access Initiative Grant, of almost £400,000 per year, to improve access to mainstream schools attended by children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Funding for pupils with Statements of SEN has been substantially increased over recent years to ensure appropriate levels of support can be provided.

Montrose School caters for children from 4-14 years and does not provide a curriculum for Key Stages 4 and 5. Children who attend the school transfer to other provision to complete their education at the end of Key Stage 3. Hope and Oakfield Schools, however, have the additional facility of Key Stage 4 and 5 provision, catering for young people up until the age of 19 years.

- **Improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services**

There are a range of partner agencies working within special schools, including Montrose, to support the Every Child Matters agenda. As the proposal does not require children from Montrose to transfer outside of the special school sector, there should be no dilution of support from these agencies.

If the decision is that Montrose School should close, revenue savings will be redirected to enhance and develop SEN provision across a range of sectors. The funding for outreach services from Montrose, which is currently held by the school, will be redistributed to the other schools providing outreach, so that there will be no reduction in the number of mainstream schools and settings which can be supported.

A range of support services also enhance provision for children and young people with SEN. These include the Educational Psychology Service, the Sensory Support Service, the Behaviour Support Team and the Learning Support Service, which all schools have access to.

- **Improved access to suitable accommodation and improved supply of suitable places**

Although Hope School is listed as having an approved number of 120, this figure reflects the capacity of the school buildings as they were in 2001. Since this time, a range of building and adaptation work has been undertaken to significantly improve the size and quality of accommodation on the site.

A recent review of the room legend has established that, in accordance with Building Bulletin 102 regulations, the school has the capacity to accommodate over 200 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex learning difficulties.

In addition to teaching spaces, medical, therapy and specialist rooms, Hope

School offers other facilities and equipment including a hydrotherapy pool, large multi-sensory studio, drama studio, community library and parents' room. The capacity required for the early years mainstream baby, toddler and pre-school has been calculated separately and is in addition to that available for the children with SEN as referred to above.

Future projections indicate that, at its peak, and if Montrose School were to close, Hope School would have a maximum of 190 SEN pupils on roll. Due to the school's ethos of promoting mainstream experience for many of its pupils, between 17 and 34 Hope School pupils are off site at any one time. Overcrowding, therefore, will not be an issue.

Ofsted's inspection of Hope School in 2009 deemed the school to be outstanding for the third consecutive time. Hope is also the only special school in the borough to have achieved "specialist" special school status, enabling it to share its expertise with a range of other settings.

The new Oakfield School building opened in February 2009. The students there also benefit from the use of modern facilities, such as media and drama studios, large sensory room and a sensory garden. Key Stage 5 students are accommodated on the original school site, which operates as the post-16 Oakfield College. Oakfield School and College are deemed by Ofsted to provide a good quality of education.

#### **4 Decision Making Powers**

4.1 Cabinet takes the final decision, at Stage 4, on proposals for school closures, providing that it does so within 2 months of the end of the Stage 3 representation period. A report to Cabinet on 6 March 2008 detailed the procedures and information that Cabinet must consider prior to making its decision.

4.2 If Cabinet does not make a decision within 2 months of the end of the representation period, that is by 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009, in this case, the Schools' Adjudicator will decide the proposal.

#### **5 Further Consideration of the Proposals**

##### **5.1 DCSF guidance specifies four additional key issues that must be considered before a decision is made:**

5.1.1 Has all the necessary information been provided?

Copies of the following have been provided:

- the statutory notice and the complete proposal (which contains details of Stage 1 consultation) as described at paragraph 2 above;
- comments received and officers responses to these as described at paragraph 2 and 3 above.

5.1.2 Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements?

Officers in Wigan Council's Business Support Services Legal and Property Division were consulted prior to publication to ensure that the notice complied with statutory requirements.

5.1.3 Has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the notice?

The report to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009 and the complete proposal (Appendix B – section 3 and 4) cover the Stage 1 consultation in detail.

5.1.4 Is the proposal related to any other published proposal?

The proposal is not linked to any other published proposal.

## **6 Conclusion**

There are 3 other schools for children with complex needs across the borough providing sufficient capacity to cater for all the children who would be displaced from Montrose School in the event that the school should close.

Montrose is established to cater for 70 pupils and is funded at 55 planned places. The total school budget for 2009/2010 is £892,532.

If the school were to remain open with a reduced capacity, the funding would also reduce to reflect this. At present, the school caters for ages 4-14 years, spanning 10 year groups. Providing an appropriate education across this age range with a reduction in budget would prove very challenging.

## **7 Recommendation**

Members are recommended to approve the proposal to close Montrose School with effect from 31 August 2010.

## Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: Children and Young People's Services

Policy/Service Area: Strategy and Commissioning

Person Completing Form: Elaine Baulcombe      Date: 22.10.09

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race		x	Disability		x
Ethnicity		x	Gender		x
Age		x	Religion		x
Class		x	Sexual Orientation		x

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?  
 There is sufficient capacity within existing provision to meet the current level of need.  
 Parental preference will be considered and continuity of quality education and care will be maintained.  
 Surplus funding will be re-directed to provide support in other areas of SEN.

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?  
 Wide ranging consultation has taken place in line with statutory guidance, to include:  
 – families of pupils at Montrose school and other schools directly affected;  
 – governors, teachers and other staff at Montrose School and other schools directly affected;  
 – headteacher and chair of governors at all other Wigan schools;  
 – Primary Care Trust;  
 – NHS Foundation Trust;  
 – neighbouring authorities;  
 – trade unions representing staff at any of the schools directly affected;  
 – Elected Members.  
 Consultation with a wider audience was achieved through the publication of a statutory notice followed by a 6-week representation period.

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?  
 Equality legislation has been taken into consideration and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.  
 The proposal supports SEN policies and is in line with the SEN Code of Practice.  
 Timescale

Responsibility	
Comments	

**Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?**

Departmental Service Plan	
Section/Team Plan	
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review



## Proposal to Discontinue Montrose School

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Wigan Council, Children and Young People's Services, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH, intends to discontinue Montrose School, Montrose Avenue, Pemberton, Wigan WN5 9XN on 31 August 2010.

The school is a community special school which is established to cater for 70 pupils with complex learning difficulties aged 4-14 years. There are currently 26 pupils on roll.

Children of primary school age attending the school at the time of closure will be offered a place at Hope School, which is the alternative special school in the west of the borough, to complete their education; pupils of secondary school age will be offered a place at Oakfield High School, which is the secondary special school in the centre of the borough; unless assessed needs indicate that alternative specialist placement would be more beneficial. There is sufficient capacity at the named schools for the number of pupils who will be requiring places. It is not envisaged that places will be required in schools maintained by other local authorities.

The distance between Montrose and Hope Schools is approximately 2.6 miles. The distance between Montrose and Oakfield High School is approximately 6 miles. Transport arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs will continue in line with the local authority Home to School Transport Policy.

The local authority believes that the proposal will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of education for pupils with special educational needs because, according to the most recent Ofsted reports, the quality and standard of education provided at the receiving schools is equal to or better than that at Montrose, and revenue savings made as a result of the proposal will be re-invested to further develop provision for children with special educational needs.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Wigan Council, Children and Young People's Services, Access and Inclusion Team, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH (Tel: 01942-486142), or from the Wigan Council website: [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, that is by 22 October 2009, any person may comment on, or object to, the proposal by sending their comments or objections to: Wigan Council, Children and Young People's Services, Access and Inclusion Team, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH, or by email to: [education@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:education@wigan.gov.uk)

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to this proposal have been complied with. This proposal is not related to any other proposals which have been, or are about to be, published.

Signed: Nick Hudson  
Executive Director Children and Young People's Services  
Publication date: 10 September 2009



## MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

### Contact details

1. The name of the local education authority or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

#### Local authority publishing the proposal:

Wigan Council

#### Local authority contact address:

Wigan Council, Children and Young People's Services, Progress House  
Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH

#### School it is proposed should be discontinued:

Montrose School, Montrose Avenue, Pemberton, Wigan WN5 9XN

### Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

Proposed implementation date: 31 August 2010

### Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to this proposal were complied with as follows:

- all parties specified in school organisation guidance were consulted, including pupils;
- adequate time was allowed: 22 June to 20 July 2009, outside school holidays;
- sufficient information was provided: in the consultation document, in telephone conversations and at drop-in sessions with parents and at meetings with staff and governors of the school;
- it was made clear in the consultation document, on the Council website, in conversation with parents and at meetings, how consultees could express their views, ie, in writing, by completing the response form in the consultation booklet, or by making comments at meetings;
- all views expressed were represented in a report to Elected Members at the Cabinet meeting on 13 August 2009, at which the decision to publish the proposal was made.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published, including:
- a) a list of persons and /or parties who were consulted;
  - b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
  - c) the views of the persons consulted; and
  - d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

- A list of persons/parties consulted and how consultation documents were made available is attached at Appendix 1.
- Notes from meetings with staff, governors and pupils of Montrose School are attached at Appendix 2.
- Views of persons consulted is attached at Appendix 3.
- The consultation booklet is attached at Appendix 4. (How this was made available is included in Appendix 1.)

### **Objectives**

5. The objectives of the proposal.

The proposal addresses the issue of the school's long term viability which is called into question as a result of the decline in the number of pupils accessing the school.

A reduction in pupil numbers has been identified over recent years. This is particularly significant at Montrose School, where numbers are low and will continue to fall over the next two years.

The school is established to cater for 70 pupils but, by September 2009, only 26 pupils will remain on roll; by September 2010, there will be 19.

As pupil numbers continue to fall the school will not provide value for money.

### **Standards and Diversity**

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

The local authority believes that the proposal will have a positive impact on standards and lead to improvements in the quality of education in the area.

Wigan maintains a number of special schools, including 3 others across the borough with the same designation as Montrose. Provision at these schools is deemed by Ofsted to be as good as, or better, than that at Montrose.

Individual pupil funding will be transferred and used to support pupils in their new schools and the local authority, in partnership with the management at Montrose and the receiving schools, will seek to ensure that pupils being displaced will continue to receive a high level of education, and that disruption to their learning and care is managed and minimised during transition.

Revenue savings made as a result of the proposal will be re-invested to further develop provision for children with special educational needs. The development of resourced mainstream provision, along with outreach services from special schools and access initiatives to make mainstream settings more accessible, has increased diversity and choice for parents of children with special educational needs.

### **Provision for 16-19 year olds**

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable.

### **Need for places**

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

Montrose School caters for children and young people with complex learning difficulties from 4-14 years, ie, until the end of Year 9.

There are 3 other special schools for children and young people with complex learning difficulties located in the west, centre and east of the borough. The majority of primary age children at Montrose will transfer to the alternative special school in the same geographical area, ie, the west, where they will complete their education.

The majority of pupils of secondary age, who will transfer early at the end of Year 7 and Year 8, will transfer to Oakfield High School, in the centre of the borough. This is the school they would have ordinarily transferred to at the end of Year 9. A small number with the most complex physical, medical and learning needs will transfer to Hope School.

There will be 19 pupils on roll at Montrose School in July 2010. Consultation has taken place with the senior management of Montrose and the receiving schools to ensure that there will be sufficient capacity for those requiring places from September 2010.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Not applicable.

## **Current school information**

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Attached at Appendix 5.

## **Displaced pupils**

11. Details of the schools or further education colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by local education authorities other than the authority which maintains the school.

The local authority maintains a number of special schools including 3 others for children and young people with complex learning difficulties. It is not envisaged that places will be required in schools maintained by other local authorities.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

The local authority has sufficient capacity in its special schools to meet the needs of pupils displaced from Montrose. Individual pupil funding will be transferred and used to support pupils in the receiving schools.

## **Impact on the community**

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

If the proposal to discontinue Montrose School is agreed, the future use of the school building within the education sector will be explored. No adverse impact on the community is foreseen.

14. Details of extended services in the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

Not applicable.

## Travel

15. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

All primary age pupils attending Montrose School live in the west of the borough and will be offered places at Hope School, also in the west of the borough, unless their assessed needs indicate that an alternative specialist placement would be more beneficial. Hope School is located approximately 2.6 miles from Montrose.

Oakfield High school lies in the centre of the borough, approximately 6 miles from Montrose. Irrespective of Montrose School closing, pupils of secondary age will transfer to Oakfield to complete their education, unless their assessed needs indicate that an alternative specialist placement would be more beneficial.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

Many children and young people attending special schools receive home to school transport, due to the nature of their special educational needs and the distance they have to travel to school. The proposal will not impact on these arrangements, which will continue in line with the local authority Home to School Transport Policy.

## Related proposals

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the local education authority or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

This proposal is not related to any other proposals which have been or are about to be published.

## Rural primary schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designed as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the local education authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effects of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- b) the availability, and likely cost to the local education authority, of transport to other schools;
- c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4) of the EIA 2006.

Not applicable.

## Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the local education authority's assessment of the quality and quantity of the alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable.

## Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local education authority or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Improvements and developments in the special needs sector are ongoing, largely informed by the forecasted number of pupils who would access specialist provision in the future.

The continuing decline in pupil numbers at Montrose School calls into question its viability, and forms the basis for the proposal which the local authority believes will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of education for pupils with special educational needs. This is because:

- as pupil numbers continue to fall, the school will not provide value for money, and to discontinue the school will allow revenue savings made to be re-invested to further develop special educational provision in other areas;
- according to the most recent Ofsted reports, the quality and standard of educational provision at the receiving schools is equal to or better than that at Montrose;
- individual pupil funding will be transferred and used to support pupils in their new schools and the local authority will work with the management of Montrose and the receiving schools to ensure that the high quality of education afforded to displaced pupils continues throughout their transition and beyond.

The development of resourced mainstream provision, along with outreach services from special schools and access initiatives to make mainstream settings more accessible, increases diversity and choice for parents of children with special educational needs generally.

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MONTROSE SCHOOL

Stage 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009

### EVIDENCE OF CONSULTATION BEFORE PROPOSALS WERE PUBLISHED

#### Consultation documents were made available as follows:

Montrose School	Parents/Governors	Mail
	All Staff	via school
Any other schools <b>directly</b> affected		
Hope	Parents/Headteacher/Chair of Govs.	via school
Oakfield	Parents/Headteacher/Chair of Govs.	via school
Other Special Schools	Headteachers/Chair of Govs.	Email
Mainstream Schools (inc Resourced)	Headteachers/Chair of Govs.	Internal Mail
EYCDP (if proposal is re EY)		Email
Neighbouring LEAs	All	Mail
Diocesan Reps	All	Mail
Teaching Associations	All	Mail
JCC Level 3	All	Mail
WWL NHS Trust	Consultant Paediatrician	Mail
WL Primary Care Trust	Managing Director/Medical Director	Mail
Learning and Skills Council	Area Director	Mail
Connexions	Development Manager	Email
Local MP		Mail
Chief Executive		Internal Mail
Embrace		Mail
Parent Partnership Manager		Email
Choice Adviser		Email
CYPS Extended Management Team		Email
Elected Members		Email
Nominated solicitor		Email
CYPS Headquarters	For display	
Within the local area of school(s):	For display at:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hindley Library</li> <li>• Hope Community Library</li> <li>• Pemberton Area Housing Office</li> <li>• Pemberton Post Office</li> </ul>	
Available publicly on line		<a href="http://www.wigan.gov.uk">www.wigan.gov.uk</a>

#### Meetings were held with:

Montrose School	Staff	25.06.09 – 3.30 pm
	Governors	25.06.09 – 7.00 pm
	School Council (Pupils)	07.07.09 – 10.00 am
... and offered to parents on an individual basis		as requested 22.06.09 – 20.07.09

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MONTROSE SCHOOL

### Notes from the Meeting with Staff held in School on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> June at 3.30 pm

Panel:	Jill Clarke (Chair)	Head of Service – Learning
	Elaine Baulcombe	Manager – SEN Commissioning
	Shirley Gornall	School Development Adviser
	Elaine Wilson	HR Business Partner – People Services
	Vivien Arpino	Clerk to the Meeting

Approximately 27 staff members were present. Union representatives were also present, and available to speak to staff privately following the meeting.

Mrs Packwood, Acting Headteacher at Montrose, opened the meeting and introductions took place.

When asked what staff were expecting from the meeting, Mrs Packwood said that they expected officers to go through the consultation process, and have conversations with union representatives.

The consultation document had been previously circulated. Jill Clarke invited questions and comments which are represented below, with officer responses.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Comment  | The new Montrose School came about as a result of a political decision, following the previous special school review, to address a falling demand for special school places. Will the politicians making the decision listen to us this time?            |
| Response | In these cases, the final decision does rest with Members, but we are giving you the opportunity to make your views known. These will be represented to Cabinet to help them reach a decision.   |
| Comment  | Why are there falling numbers in special schools?  |
| Response | Numbers in special schools are falling nationally. Local Authorities (LAs) have a duty to promote mainstream inclusion, but where parents express a preference for special school placement this will be made available if the child meets the criteria. |
| Comment  | Numbers have fallen here because parents have not been offered Montrose as an option.  |
| Response | When Montrose went into special measures, the LA was asked not to make any referrals. During that time, there was only one child for whom Montrose would have been identified as being an appropriate placement.   |

- Comment As part of the previous review, Montrose and New Greenhall Schools were established to provide for children with complex needs at both ends of the Borough. What's changed to suggest that children should go back to having to travel across the Borough? What's the alternative special school in the west of the Borough?
- Response Hope is the alternative special school and, if Montrose closes in 2010, there will be room at Hope for those children from Montrose who will need it. Children in Y7 and Y8 will go to Oakfield, as they would have done at the end of Year 9.
- Parents will be able to look at New Greenhall if they wish, but having to travel across the borough would not be ideal.
- Comment What if Hope or Oakfield isn't suitable for those children? Hope doesn't have the same designation as Montrose. Some children won't fit the Hope model.
- Response Hope does have the same designation, but children will be looked at individually, and parents will be supported in looking at other options if they wish.
- Comment For pupils living at this end of the Borough, would they be looking at New Greenhall, or would out-of-borough placements be available?
- Response It would depend on the needs of the individual child. We would want to look locally first, but out-of-borough may be a possibility if the needs of the child meant that they couldn't be met within Wigan.
- Comment What is the LA's priority, closing the school or the needs of the children?
- Comment The staff are to be congratulated for bringing the school out of special measures. Most parents will recommend that the school stays open and their children stay here.
- Comment What data do we have that mainstream education has failed, and how has this been taken into account when drawing up proposals?
- Response In the majority of mainstream schools, children with special needs are very well provided for, and parents are often happy with the education their children receive. On occasions, however, changes are requested. This generally happens at the end of Key Stages. We have the data.

- Comment You say that children with special needs do well in mainstream schools. I know someone who's been treated appallingly in mainstream.
- Response Some schools do need extra support.
- Comment Eighty per cent of the children at Montrose have come from mainstream schools. The majority of mainstream staff are of the opinion that children with special needs should be in special schools, where they can achieve more. If Montrose closes, parental choice will be reduced.
- Response We are required, by law, to provide mainstream education if parents request it.
- Comment Mainstream placement for children with special needs is a challenge. Mainstream staff find it a challenge. Montrose is a good school with excellent staff. Why not offer Montrose as a viable option for parents?
- Comment The LA has not been recommending that children come to Montrose, because of it being placed in special measures. Admissions were ceased.
- Response The quality of staff is not called into question. Admissions were ceased at the request of school management.
- Comment Advice was given by the Consultant Headteacher that Montrose should not take any new admissions at that time in case the children were particularly challenging, as this would not help to get the school out of special measures.
- Comment Have the reasons for parents moving children from mainstream schools been considered?
- Response Parents often want children to have the opportunity to try mainstream education, and it may work for a while but then, sometimes, the gap widens – for a variety of reasons.
- Comment Is it difficult for a child to get a Statement?
- Response Wigan has more children with Statements and more special schools than many other LA's. Wigan issued 140 Statements last year.
- Comment If the LA was aware of projected numbers at the time of the last review, why are we in this position now – with one school in the west which is surplus to requirements? Would this be suggested as bad planning?

- Response It was recognised that numbers were falling, but we had to make sure that there was sufficient provision at that time. The Council had made a pledge to parents that there would be.
- Comment Money was spent on adapting the Montrose building. Will there need to be more expenditure to accommodate the extra children at Hope?
- Response Hope are having some building work done which has been arranged by the school.
- Comment The building work will need to be completed before the children move in, to avoid a repeat of what happened at Oakfield, under the special school review, when the building wasn't ready in time.
- Comment The consultation document says there is capacity at Hope school. Would this be possible if there was no additional building work?
- Response We have the commitment from Hope that they will take a number of identified children. The answer to that question would need verification by the Headteacher.
- Comment Is the LA prepared to split up friends, and cause upheaval and stress?
- Response We are here to make sure that the children get the best education they can.
- Comment Is there not another way to make the school viable – and avoid losing the resource?
- Comment You are obliged to look at all the alternatives to increase the numbers at the school. Children can't travel to the other side of the Authority. We need to look at what is being proposed here. Unison will do all it can to support, and will be asking every difficult question under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Comment There are feelings of despair amongst staff. They have no faith in the consultation process. Will objections have any influence on Cabinet's decision?
- Response The final decision will be made by Elected Members. We can't predict what that will be.
- Comment Are the falling numbers in special schools as a result of an increase in outreach support?

- Response They are as a result of the falling birth rate – and parental choice.
- Comment This is a staff meeting, but the main emphasis of discussion has been about concern for the pupils. This must be noted.
- Response The depth of concern the staff have shown for the well being of the children has been acknowledge.
- Comment People find themselves in a difficult position. The closure of Montrose school in 2010 would coincide with the beginning of BSF Stage 1. This will be a massive programme, and staff from the schools concerned are also going to be in the melting pot for jobs. Is this not the wrong time to be doing this exercise? How will the staffing issue for staff from Montrose be handled?
- Response If it is decided that the school should close, at that point staff would go on the 'at risk' redeployment register and policies would come into place. All permanent employees – and temporary staff with a series of successive renewals – would get support in finding alternative employment. The BSF programme is on a different timescale.
- Comment BSF Phase 1 is due in January 2011 – which is only a matter of months later than the proposed closure. The number of staff seeking alternative employment will be swollen greatly.
- Response It will be a massive challenge, but the people here will be able to get 'at risk' help from the moment the decision is made. A support team will be available and there will be the opportunity for individual meetings. Tried and tested procedures will be used in an attempt to find people alternative work.
- Comment What will happen if staff jump ship once the decision is made?
- Comment There is a similar situation in another school, where if staff stay on they're likely to have no job at the end. There will be surplus staff across the Authority. The Council needs to make savings of 20-30 per cent and this can only mean job cuts. Nothing will convince me that these people have a future.
- Response We can't promise jobs for everyone, but we'll try our best.
- Comment Could there be some kind of 'guaranteed redeployment' to encourage staff to stay on until the end – to guarantee protection for the children.
- Response We can look at any suggestions, and different ways in which we might encourage people to stay on. We need to be creative.

- Comment The LA can't guarantee jobs for staff who stay on until the school closes. Staff need to look after themselves.
- Comment Will staff be forced to take jobs which are unsuitable, to avoid the Council having to pay redundancy?
- Response That would depend on the circumstances – but there is a risk that there might not be a redundancy payment.
- Comment Would pay grades have to be the same for alternative jobs to be considered suitable?
- Response There will be limited protection arrangements.
- Comment But that works both ways – whether the alternative post is at a higher grade or a lower grade.
- Comment If a job at a lower grade was refused, would that mean that a redundancy payment would not be made?
- Response We would have to look at what's reasonable.
- Comment Who say's what's reasonable?
- Response Employee tribunals.
- Comment Staff at Montrose are paid additional SEN points. What would happen to these if we were to transfer to a mainstream school?
- Response These would be taken into account under the pay protection, which is different for teaching staff (2 years) and non-teaching staff (3 years).
- Ken Baxter has had to send his apologies today but will meet separately with any Metrofresh employees. The same principles of redeployment will apply, but with a little more flexibility.
- Comment If we applied for a job on the bulletin, would we be guaranteed to get an interview?
- Response Staff will have prior knowledge of vacancies coming up, and there will be a 'sifting' process. This is not ring-fencing, which is different.
- Comment Is it true that if someone volunteered for redundancy, they wouldn't be able to work for the LA again? Would this be the case if the redundancy was forced?
- Response In either case, they wouldn't be able to come back for at least a month. It's employment law.

- Comment The staff from Mere Oaks came here because the children from Mere Oaks came here. Is that right?
- Response No, a new school was started on this site – New Montrose.
- Comment Children will be packed into Hope – the school’s going bigger and bigger and the school’s outdated.
- Comment There is a question of capacity at Hope.
- Comment The more children there are in a class, the less chance they have – and some children are being asked to move twice.
- Response Hope is an outstanding school - and, yes, there is a possibility that some children may move twice.
- Comment If Montrose stayed open – it would take the pressure off Hope.
- Comment Will all these comments be taken on board before the school closes?
- Response This is all part of the consultation process. Your concerns will be represented to Cabinet.
- Comment You could end up with no staff left at Montrose. It’s happening already – staff are moving on. These children are very vulnerable, and this would make their last month’s here very difficult.
- Comment Staff have the choice whether to stay or go. If they stay till the bitter end they can’t be guaranteed a job. It’s their decision.
- Response It’s about trying to make the best of a difficult situation.
- Comment The Aftercare Team provide continuity of care for children in care. This is obviously not happening here.

The meeting came to a close. Mrs Packwood thanked the staff for attending, and for their professionalism.

Jill Clarke also offered her thanks at what is a difficult time.



- Officer The LA will consider that request although, it is thought, that many parents would prefer to meet individually rather than in a group.
- Governor I have grave concerns around transition and would like to know what plans are in place.
- Officer The school has a plan for staffing arrangements from September.
- Acting H/T The situation is shifting, but a staffing model has been drawn up to ensure stability until Christmas for two classes, and for the remainder of the year for the other classes. We still need to confirm, however, that the model can be resourced.
- Governor You say all classes are safe until Christmas. What about curriculum expertise?
- Acting H/T We're fine until Christmas.
- Governor Children who receive personal care are being put in a very vulnerable position. Could they not be given security by holding back jobs, as was the case last time?
- Officer We're not in the same position as last time – schools were, in effect, being merged – so there was a pool of jobs. We are constrained by employment law.
- Governor Some staff want to stay on until the end, and see the school out – but who'll be protecting the children if they leave? We will not be able to give them the continuity of care they deserve. Some of these children have already been disrupted once.
- Officer Only a small number of children were affected by the previous review.
- Acting H/T Many of our children come here from mainstream schools. It would still mean them having an additional move – whether they were in the special school review or not.
- Governor We are heading down the same road as before. Parents are angry and we will take this as far as we have to. Mrs Packwood is doing her best.
- Officer A Transition Group has been set up that will make arrangements as the situation emerges. Officers will work in partnership with the school. No school can guarantee that children will have the same teachers all the way through school.

- Governor We're talking about children who receive personal care – this is very different.
- Governor What choice of special schools do parents have in the west of the Borough?
- Officer Hope is in the west, Oakfield is in the Centre and New Greenhall is in the east.
- Governor If the younger children don't meet the criteria for Hope, they will have to go to the east.
- Officer Hope and Montrose schools have the same admissions criteria. It's not intended that anyone should have to travel to New Greenhall.
- Governor If we have a falling number of staff – needs will not be met. What will be in place?
- Officer The Transition Group will make arrangements as the need arises.
- H/T – Hope We at Hope School will do our best to help – but there hasn't yet been the discussion.
- Officer We will need to confirm how many children receive personal care and make sure their needs are met. What you're saying will be taken on board.
- Governor Who oversees what information is presented to Cabinet to help them reach a decision? There were omissions last time. We will log all responses to make sure they're fairly represented. We are in the hands of politicians again, and we may need to take legal action. The children are being let down.
- Governor Children are suffering and staff, have to deal with that.
- Acting H/T This is an unfortunate position to be in, made doubly unfortunate since the LA said that they had learned from the previous process, and that it wouldn't happen again. But here we are in the same situation.
- Governor It is horrendous. The answer is to leave them be. They've had enough. We've all worked so hard and it's very sad that achievements have been discounted.
- Governor How can a child with special needs be taught in a class of 30? It can't.
- Officer It's government policy.

- Governor Parental options are so small and are being reduced even further. The Council is being very short sighted in closing particular schools. All children learn differently.
- Acting H/T I'd like to ask Mr Dahlstrom, if Hope School could take the children without going to the expense of undergoing building work?
- H/T – Hope We were having an additional class built anyway. We'll just need extra toilet facilities. We will be full, but we can accommodate them.
- Governor Does the school have the capacity to accommodate them – and all that comes with them?
- Acting H/T I'm curious about the potential intake at Hope and the school's capacity, and am concerned as to whether needs can be met.
- Officer Let me give you an example. A parent may look at all the special schools and want Landgate for their child but, if this is not appropriate, discussions would be held and options explored.
- H/T – Hope Hope School doesn't have the capacity to take all the children from Montrose but it does have the capacity to take those it needs to take.
- Governor What if you live in the west?
- Officer The older children will go to Oakfield, as they would if Montrose was staying open.
- Acting H/T The likelihood is that the younger ones will move onto Hope.
- Chair The core of the school has complex needs.
- Officer To clarify: The majority of children of secondary age in 2010 will go to Oakfield, but those with the most severe physical/medical needs will be offered Hope.
- Children who are below Y7 in 2010 will be offered Hope, if Hope is appropriate for them.
- Acting H/T New Greenhall, Montrose, Oakfield and Hope are all complex needs schools. So there isn't a choice.
- Officer Hope is designated complex needs with PMLD – and has criteria for both.

Children transferring at the end of Year 7 and Year 8, will still go to the school they would have gone to at the end of Year 9. In most cases, this will be Oakfield.

The younger children will transfer to Hope School, which is the alternative special school in the west of the Borough, unless their assessed needs indicate that an alternative specialist placement would be more beneficial.

Some parents may well choose a mainstream place for their child and will be supported in their choice, if this is appropriate.

- Governor Will a secondary-age child be able to go to Hope?
- Officer That is not the proposal at this time.
- Chair To clarify: Parents can express a preference but the choice cannot be guaranteed, and I assume that Hindley J & I would be an option?
- Officer That's correct. Parents can be reassured that a special school place, in an appropriate setting, will be available for all pupils
- Acting H/T Which school will the new children go to – the unknown intake?
- Officer We can't make a prediction about an unknown intake.
- Chair Given the increasing survival rate of children with special educational needs, there will be a number.
- Acting H/T Where will the children from mainstream schools go when Montrose is not here? Previously, they've been referred here. Children come in at Year 2, Year 5, Year 7 – where will they be able to receive a special school education in the future?
- Officer Overall numbers are dropping. I expect we'll have the capacity.
- H/T – Hope We will be able to accommodate those with complex physical/medical needs.
- Acting H/T Those with communication and behaviour difficulties are the clientele of this school. I'm concerned that the numbers are not right.
- Governor Is there nothing we can do about this? Once the facility has gone it will be difficult to replace.
- Officer We have more special schools in Wigan than most other LAs.

- Governor We have a very good school. We chose not to admit, and now it's seen as not viable or cost effective. We'll be losing a resource, and if the only option for parents is mainstream and one other choice – then there's no choice!
- Acting H/T I'd like to ask Sue if, at any of the individual meetings, any parents have said that they don't want their children to stay here.
- Parent Champion Every parent has praised the school.
- Acting H/T Did any express the difficulties they have experienced in mainstream?
- Parent Champion Yes – and their concern was that they don't go back into mainstream.
- Governor The proposal wasn't discussed at my daughter's review meeting. It was only discussed at a small proportion of reviews.
- Parent Champion At the reviews I attended, the consultation was discussed. Parents didn't want Montrose to close and didn't want their children to go to mainstream.
- Governor To send one of your children to a special school is a nightmare decision to make. Now parents are being given heartache again. Why didn't the LA get it right last time?
- Chair One of the reasons we had the meeting tonight was so that we could discuss which schools were preferred.
- Acting H/T This has been discussed between myself and Shirley, and we have a strong indication, but I think it would be unfair to discuss it at this meeting.
- Officer We have the feedback from the Annual Review meetings. Twenty four parents attended. Some of them don't have a view. They want to look at different options.
- Chair If the school closes, Hope and Oakfield will receive pupils.
- Officer At this stage, most parents have discussed their options, and most have decided, but a couple are looking at different options.
- Chair To clarify: Hope will not be deluged with pupils and the situation of travelling should not arise.
- Next school year, we will be doing our level best to protect all children. Which brings us back to the issue of what exactly are we going to do to achieve this.

- Officer We can start to integrate transition support into the child's everyday support. We will need to ensure that the same arrangements are in place for the youngsters going to Oakfield.
- Chair Close collaboration will be very important.
- Governor This still doesn't get away from the fact that people are angry, and I'm sorry if I come across as angry – but parents are angry.
- Officer We understand the anger.
- Chair To recap: We are anxious to have something practical in place to support children through transition. When will this be?
- Officer A Transition Group has been set up, and individual plans will be drawn up for every youngster, once we know where each one is going. Annual Review information has been received and this can be used as a starting point. Hopefully, in the first term, we can start setting up transition support.
- Governor What happens if the proposal gets rejected by Cabinet? How would the school be stabilised?
- Officer We need to plan for this too. The situation won't be ideal but we will need to start regenerating. We need to have a safety net but, at the same time, the closure has to be planned for. We can't afford to waste that time.
- Governor We've all been convinced that the school is going to close but we should have been discussing both options.
- Acting H/T That is a very valid point.
- Governor There is very little democracy in Wigan. That's why it's discussed as a foregone conclusion.
- What's the plan of action if Cabinet turns the proposal down?
- Officer If it's turned down, the transition strategy can be turned into a revitalisation strategy!
- Parent Champion During the recent Ofsted, I had contact at least with all but one parent. The most important thing is for us to hear what parents want to say.
- Governor It might be an idea to arrange a coffee morning – for parents to drop in and be able to speak with officers rather than just have individual meetings.
- Officer We will look at offering the option.

- Officer I am aware that there have been no staffing issues raised at this meeting – but a meeting has been held separately.
- Chair I would like to make the LA aware that the Governors have approved the Pay and Reward Restricted Recruitment Scheme.
- HR Partner This is in relation to the Job Evaluation exercise which is ongoing across the Council. There will be winners and losers and this is in respect of those people who stand to lose a considerable amount.
- Acting H/T We have been advised that this wouldn't benefit the staff in relation to the school proposal.
- Chair I understand that this is a different issue, but I'm just advising that this has been accepted by the Governors.
- H/T – Hope The BSF protocol has also been circulated to schools for acceptance. Can this be clarified?
- HR Partner There are three different protection strands, ie, Job Evaluation, BSF and the re-deployment protocol – which is the most pertinent here.
- Chair The Governors have signed up to them all.
- Conscious that the end of term is nearly upon us, can we set dates for the Transition Group meeting and the parents' meeting?
- Officer Individual parents meetings have been offered for 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July. We will come back to you early next week with the other dates you are requesting.

## **CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MONTROSE SCHOOL**

### **Notes from the Meeting with the School Council held in School on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

#### **Background and Purpose of the Meeting**

Statutory Guidance advises that Local Authorities are under a duty to consult pupils on any proposed changes to school organisation that may affect them. It was with this in mind, and in an attempt to make the consultation as inclusive as possible, that the LA invited the school's Student Council to meet with officers, to represent the pupil population of the school in expressing their views on the proposal.

#### **Introduction**

Mrs Sue McKellen, previously Headteacher of Tanfield School and Head of Education, Child Development Centre, opened the meeting and thanked the students for agreeing to take part. Mrs McKellen had been the school's Parent Champion during its period in special measures, and was supporting parents through the consultation process.

The eight pupils introduced themselves. There were also two staff members present.

Mr Eric Silk, the school's link Educational Psychologist, asked a series of questions, which had been sensitively designed, to encourage the pupils to openly participate. He began by explaining the importance of the LA hearing their views.

Pupil responses are represented below. Mrs McKellen and Mr Silk tried to allay any worries as they were raised.

#### **Q1 Tell us the things you like about coming to Montrose School?**

- I like everything.
- I like ICT and computers – some have special guards.
- I like joining in with PE.
- I like cookery – with the special tools.
- I like it because there's no uniform.
- Everything's better here than at my other school. I got picked on there.
- I like having someone who knows me well.

#### **Q2 Is there anything that you would like to change, or would want to be different?**

- We could learn more about maths.
- The PCs could be changed to Apple Macs.

- There could be more after school clubs.
- There could be a football team.
- We could play more games in the hall.
- We could learn more about volcanoes and earthquakes.

**Q3 You know that the Year 9 children will be leaving in a few weeks and will go to new schools in September. What do you think about this?**

- If children leave they might miss their friends and their teachers.
- They'll miss everything they get here.
- Maybe class 9 could stay.
- It'll be good fun - they have Apple Macs at Oakfield.
- When I visited Oakfield I did media. I can't wait to move there.

**Q4 One day, you too will be going to another school. Have you thought about this? If so, what are you looking forward to? Is there anything that worries you about this?**

- I don't want to leave this school.
- This school is my life.
- We could miss all of our friends.
- What will they do about the people in wheelchairs?
- If we leave and the school closes we won't be able to come back and visit our friends.
- I want to stay with Mrs Bibby.
- I'll miss Miss Moran and all the staff.
- I'll be happy to leave. Oakfield has better equipment – all up to date. They do experiments at Oakfield – we don't. And you can stay until your 16.
- I can't wait. They have a football team at Oakfield – and play stations.

**Q5 As you know, there is a suggestion that Montrose School might close and the children who are here will have to go to other schools sooner than they would have done. What do you think about this suggestion? How does it make you feel?**

In answer to this, all of the pupils indicated that the prospect of the school closing made them feel unhappy, and said that they didn't want to leave.

**Q6 Is there anything else you want to tell us today?**

- I don't want to go back to my old school. People would pick on me.
- I would be worried about being picked on.
- If I leave I'll cry for 20 years!
- If Montrose School closes, could it be made into a doctors surgery?  
I've drawn a plan.
- A doctors surgery would be a good idea. It would be quicker to get to.
- I can't wait to leave school anyway, because I'm going into the army.

Mrs McKellen and Mr Silk thanked the pupils for their contribution, and commended them for their honesty in answering the questions presented to them.

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MONTROSE SCHOOL

### VIEWS OF PERSONS CONSULTED

#### 1. Written Responses

Stage 1 consultation ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009. The LA received 48 written responses during that time; 41 were made via the response form provided with the consultation document, and 7 were via letter/email.

The main issues raised were addressed in the report to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009. All written responses were made available for inspection at Progress House and at the Cabinet meeting.

#### a. Summary of Response Forms

The response form asked “Do you think that Montrose School should close?” It also provided the opportunity to make comment.

**Of the 41 forms received, 35 expressed the opinion that the school should not close.**

The breakdown of responses is shown below. (Respondents may have fallen into more than one category.)

Preference	Montrose Parent	Montrose Staff	Montrose Governor	Other Parent	Other Staff	Other Governor	Community/ Other	Total
Remain open	12	15	3	2	1		2	35
Close						1	4	5
None				1				1

#### b. Summary of Communication by Letter or Email

Communications opposing the proposal were received from:

- a parent of a pupil at Montrose School;
- 2 x teacher at Montrose School;
- the Wigan NUT Divisional Secretary.

Communications commenting on the proposal were received from:

- Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Community Healthcare;
- the Headteacher and Chair of Governors at Hope School;
- the Headteacher and Chair of Governors at New Greenhall School.

### c. Summary of Main Issues Raised

<b>Capacity / Suitability of Alternative Provision</b>
The consultation booklet is inaccurate and misleading, as neither Hope nor Oakfield Schools have the capacity to take pupils from Montrose.
Montrose School is very good, if not excellent, value for money and there are no other schools left in Wigan that can accommodate the needs of some of the children at Montrose. The other schools are either too big or overcrowded.
Hope, Oakfield and Hindley J & I are not suitable for all pupils and would involve significant transport issues for parents and children.
There are children at Montrose whose needs cannot be met by any other special schools. Therefore, their education will not be suitable to their needs.
It would not be in the best interest to close Montrose because if children move their classes will be bigger and I'm not sure that they'll get the 1:1 help they should have.
There is insufficient provision for children with special needs in the centre and east of the borough, especially for KS1 and KS2 pupils.
How can the LA be sure there will be places available at Hope and Oakfield when they have been full in the past?
<b>Parental Choice</b>
Oakfield, Hope and mainstream are the only choices.
If Montrose were to remain open, and offered to parents as a choice, it could continue to be an asset to Wigan.
Parents are supposed to have a choice of schools for their child. Closing the school will reduce parental choice. If this proposal goes ahead choice will be very limited in the west of the borough.
Montrose School should be developed in line with the White Paper to provide parental choice within the borough. There is no other alternative special school in the west. A large population of Montrose School have already tried the mainstream path. It would be unfair to close this provision as there is still a need in our society for this type of school.
In line with the White Paper Guarantee, where parents are unhappy with the choice of schools on offer to them ... LAs will have to listen and respond to their concerns. The extra cost of meeting the Guarantee, ie, to provide extra help for all pupils with additional needs, and 1:1 tuition in some cases, will need to be considered. Also, whether closing Montrose School, at a time when pressures will be mounting in mainstream schools to meet the Guarantee, is a sensible and prudent decision. Montrose has the staff and resources to provide everything outlined in the White Paper.
The consultation figures are based on pupil numbers at Reception age who require special school provision. These figures are not an accurate reflection of the pupils for whom placement at Montrose is usually requested. The majority of pupils come from mainstream schools in later years when their special educational needs are deemed such as to require special school intervention. At this stage, all too often, their behaviour has become an additional issue. For such pupils Hope School has not been thought to be an appropriate placement. If Montrose closes where will these children go in the future?

**Disruption and Pupil Well-being**

Some children may have to change schools more than once more, which is not a good idea for any pupil let alone those with learning difficulties or complex needs.

To close the school would be detrimental to the children's education and emotional well-being, which are not being considered.

Montrose school is value for money. The other schools that could accommodate our children have high numbers. Children are settled at Montrose and do really well.

To move them would be very disruptive, as they would be leaving their classmates and teaching staff they are familiar with.

Many children have special needs and it isn't fair to keep sending them to different schools.

The last re-organisation was devastating for children, staff and parents.

The closure of Montrose School would cause yet more disruption. They are now settled in a school with staff they trust, they are safe and happy with their peers. Montrose provides for all their social, emotional and educational needs and allows them to achieve their full potential, providing them with the tools to grow, develop and learn.

It would be totally unreasonable to expect these children to move again.

The LA obviously doesn't have any idea how having to move schools again will impact on the most vulnerable children in our society. Montrose was deemed to be a good school only a few weeks ago but this is being ignored because of falling rolls and the fact that it is not good value for money. I thought lessons might have been learned after the last re-organisation but, yet again, money is more important. Montrose was the only option for my child three years ago when she was deemed not to fit the criteria for Hope School. She is still the same child with the same disabilities but, amazingly, she now fits the criteria for Hope. It seems unthinkable that the LA could even consider this to be proper.

Money has been put into Montrose for adaptations, etc. Is this considered to be good value for money.

As a governor I find it very hard to come to terms with closure and further disruption. The school has falling numbers because Wigan Council will not let parents apply there. The LA would think twice if they had the slightest idea how this will affect these vulnerable children.

**Quality of Provision at Montrose**

Montrose has been recognised by Ofsted as a good school. It provides excellent education and support for children with a wide range of needs. The staff are experienced, and children thrive there. The facilities at Montrose and the wealth of experience at the school could be utilised effectively to the Authority's advantage. It should be a resource centre for SEN excellence – not closed down.

Many pupils in mainstream schools would benefit from the resources and expertise of the staff at Montrose.

Montrose has helped my son with his writing and numbers but, especially, his behaviour. It would be hell if Montrose wasn't here for us or other parents in the future. My son is upset about the school closing. We are, and so are our family and friends. None of us think the school should close.

Montrose is a very good and understanding school. It should remain open because it is well equipped. The staff are lovely and great with the children.
The school has improved over the years. So many special schools have already closed and we need them to stay open to help other children in the future. There is a need for this purpose-built school to provide support, resources and specialist provision. An example of this is New Greenhall where children thrive and work together to meet their full potential.
The LA does not realise the potential of Montrose school. The school is ground-breaking in communication, no-one can underestimate the importance of this. Montrose brings the nearest thing I have seen to inclusive education, due to the vast difference between the children's abilities.
Montrose is a good school and should stay open. The LA is messing around with children's lives and ruining their education. Montrose should be left open so that others can benefit. It's not right to close all special schools.
<b>Concern re Mainstream Placement</b>
Services will be diluted for children and young people who are placed in mainstream schools.
Children will not cope in mainstream schools. This will be detrimental to their education and well-being.
Many pupils at Montrose do not have a physical disability. Many children with disabilities will struggle in mainstream.
<b>Sustainability of the School</b>
Montrose School could remain open to become federated with another special school in Wigan. The staff at the Montrose site should be skilled in dealing with challenging behaviour and should be able to provide a flexible curriculum that children and young people with challenging behaviour often require.
Montrose School could remain open to be developed as an example of a smaller specialist setting.

## 2. Verbal Responses

### a. Meetings with Staff, Governors and Pupils

Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils where issues were raised and addressed. Notes are attached at Appendix 2 to the Complete Proposal.

### b. Meetings with Parents

Parents were invited by letter to meet with the Parent Partnership Manager and Parent Champion to give them the opportunity to express their views and discuss options. The limited response prompted an effort to contact all parents by telephone. A summary of parental contact was included in the report to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009. The main issues raised are included in the summary above.

All views received as part of the consultation were represented and addressed in the report to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009. The report is available to download at [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk).

Children and Young People's Services



# Consultation on the closure of Montrose School

22<sup>nd</sup> June – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009



## Foreword

This consultation document tells you about our proposal to close Montrose School, and what it will mean for the children and young people who attend the school. I would like to emphasise to you that we want to make the right decision for all young people throughout the Borough, and that your opinion, on this very important issue, is essential.

It may be useful for you to understand why we need to consult you on this change to provision for the students at Montrose School, and that is included early in this document, on page 3.

I totally understand that change within the life of any student is difficult but, for these particular young people, it can be very disquieting. I want to ensure you that any changes that may take place, are done sensitively and sympathetically. I would value your opinion on how to achieve the very best education and future opportunities for the children at Montrose School.

I hope that you will let us know your views during the consultation period. We want to hear from you and we will not make a decision until we have carefully considered all responses to this consultation.



Councillor Susan Loudon  
Cabinet Champion for Children and Young People

## **Background**

Following the Local Education Authority's Ofsted inspection in 2001, an Inclusion Strategy was drawn up to address the issues Ofsted had raised. The issues were that Wigan had:

- a higher than average number of pupils with statements
- below average performance in the timescale for issuing statements
- higher than average numbers of pupils placed in special schools
- higher than average numbers of pupils placed in independent schools
- higher than average numbers of maintained special schools
- surplus capacity within special schools resulting in poor value for money

The Strategy aimed to improve inclusive education for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and included a review of maintained special schools. This resulted in the re-organisation of specialist provision across the Borough.

At that time, a reduction in the number of pupils who would access special schools was forecast, and ongoing review has confirmed this. Whilst improvements and developments in the SEN sector are ongoing, this predicted reduction in numbers must be taken into consideration when making decisions for the future.

## **Current position**

Montrose School is approved to cater for 70 pupils, but by September 2009 there will be only 30 children on roll. By September 2010, this number will have reduced to 20.

Because of this, the school is not providing value for money, which calls into question its viability. This, and the fact that there is capacity within other special schools to accommodate the number and needs of pupils at Montrose, has prompted the proposal.

## **The proposal**

In view of the above, the proposal is that Montrose School should close with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

### **How it will affect the pupils currently at Montrose**

Montrose School caters for children and young people from Reception age until they reach the end of Year 9, when they leave to continue their education elsewhere.

If the proposal is agreed, 20 children will need to transfer earlier than this.

Children who are currently in Year 9 will not be affected by the proposal. They will transfer schools in September 2009, as planned.

Children who are currently in Year 8 will also transfer at the normal time, ie, September 2010.

Children transferring early, at the end of Year 7 and Year 8, will still go to the school they would have gone to at the end of Year 9. In most cases, this will be Oakfield High School, in Hindley Green, which is the secondary special school in the centre of the Borough.

Primary-age children, Reception – Year 6, will transfer to Hope School, which is the alternative special school in the west of the Borough, unless their assessed needs indicate that an alternative specialist placement would be more beneficial.

Of course, some parents may choose a mainstream place for their child and will be supported in their choice, if this is appropriate. However, all parents can be reassured that a special school place, in an appropriate setting, will be available for all pupils. Whichever school children will be transferring to, Wigan Council will commit to ensuring continuity of quality education. Parents can be assured that there will be much preparation and liaison between all those concerned to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth transfer.

### **How it will affect the staff**

Staff facing displacement will be fully supported in finding suitable alternative employment, through established systems which have been agreed with Trade Unions and other professional associations.

## **Financial implications**

Individual pupil funding will be transferred and used to support pupils in the receiving schools.

Any revenue savings will be reinvested to further develop SEN provision. The building/site will revert back to CYPS to decide its future use, or declare it as surplus to requirements.

## **How to make your views known**

During the four week consultation period, parents will be given the opportunity to meet individually with the Parent Partnership Manager, or the Parent Champion, to discuss any issues, ask any questions, and make their views known. All parents have been provided with contact details.

Meetings with governors and staff will also be arranged.

All views will be noted and taken into account as part of the consultation.

You can also make your views known by letter or email, or by completing and returning the form at the end of the booklet. You should send your views to the address on page 9 no later than **Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009**.

## **Next steps**

Strict legal procedures must be followed when proposing to close schools.

A timetable of events is shown on page 7. This shows periods of consultation and dates when decisions are expected to be made. If you make your views known outside of these periods, or in any way other than those described, they cannot be taken into account.

## Timetable

Event	Dates
<p><b>Consultation</b> – during this time you can make your views known by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaking with the Parent Partnership Manager or Parent Champion (notes will be taken)</li> <li>• writing to or emailing the Council, or</li> <li>• completing the response form at the end of this booklet.</li> </ul> <p>The address to write or e-mail to is provided on page 9.</p>	22 <sup>nd</sup> June to 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2009
Results of the consultation will go to the Cabinet of the Council who will decide whether it wishes to proceed with the proposals.	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2009
<p><b>Representation period</b> – Statutory notices are published. These are public notices that appear in the local newspaper, at the entrances to the schools and in another public place in the area, such as a community centre or library. You can make your views known at this stage by writing to the Local Authority at the address on page 9. The address and date by which written comments must be received will also be given in the public notice.</p>	10 <sup>th</sup> September – 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2009
The Local Authority makes the decision on the proposals	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2009
The school closes	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2010

Certain parties can appeal against the Local Authority's decision within 4 weeks of the decision being made.

Please note that the timetable may alter. The Local Authority, or the staff at Montrose School, will be able to tell you if this happens, and let you know of any new dates we are working towards.

**This consultation is wide ranging and includes:**

Parents of pupils at Montrose, Oakfield and Hope Schools;

Pupils at Montrose School;

Staff and Governors of Montrose, Oakfield and Hope Schools;

Headteacher and Chair of Governors of all other special schools in Wigan;

Headteacher and Chair of Governors of all mainstream schools in Wigan;

Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership;

Learning and Skills Council;

Neighbouring Local Authorities;

Elected Members (Councillors);

The local Member of Parliament;

Trade Unions and Professional Associations;

Primary Care Trust;

NHS Foundation Trust;

Pemberton, Marus Bridge and Hindley Green Communities.

**Address for correspondence**

Wigan Council  
Children and Young People's Services  
Access and Inclusion Team  
Progress House  
Westwood Park Drive  
Wigan  
WN3 4HH  
[www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)

Email: [education@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:education@wigan.gov.uk)

Telephone : 01942 486142

We can make this consultation document available in other formats and languages on request.



5. Are you:

A parent or carer of a child at Montrose, Oakfield or Hope School?

Please state which school

\_\_\_\_\_

A member of staff at Montrose, Oakfield or Hope School?

Please state which school

\_\_\_\_\_

A governor at Montrose, Oakfield or Hope School?

Please state which school

\_\_\_\_\_

A member of the community

Any other

Please state your interest

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed form by no later than Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009 to:

Wigan Council  
Children and Young People's Services  
Access and Inclusion Team  
Progress House  
Westwood Park Drive  
Wigan  
WN3 4HH

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MONTROSE SCHOOL

### CURRENT SCHOOL INFORMATION

Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils for whom provision is made at the school

<b>NUMBER OF PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES ON ROLL AT MONTROSE SCHOOL BY YEAR GROUP/GENDER</b> (All pupils are day pupils)																					
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8		Year 9		Total		Overall
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Total
<b>Sept 09</b>	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	6	1	0	1	4	1	4	3	18	8	<b>26</b>
<b>Sept 10</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	6	1	0	1	4	1	14	5	<b>19</b>

Children and young people with complex learning difficulties are defined as those who show evidence of one or more of the following, which have a profound and long term impact on the development of academic and social skills:

- Significant, persistent and long term difficulties in attainment in core and foundation subjects, requiring extensive adaptation of the curriculum model for progress to be made.
- Difficulty in acquiring key skills and moving through developmental milestones, in language acquisition and progress, literacy acquisition and progress and numeracy acquisition and progress, all of which require detailed Individual Education Plans to be in place.
- A range of associated difficulties often in speech and language development, on task behaviour, and social and emotional development in relation to their peers.
- Persistent difficulty in understanding, acquiring and applying basic concepts, particularly if work is presented in a different way, or changed teaching context.
- Inability to retain key skills which often have to be learnt in a variety of situations in an attempt to consolidate them.

## **STAGE 2 AND 3 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF MONTROSE SCHOOL: 10 September – 22 October 2009**

Stage 2: Publication of statutory notice and circulation of complete proposal as statutorily directed.

Stage 3: Representation period.

### **OBJECTIONS**

#### **Letters/Emails**

There were 49 individual objections received by letter or email:

- 3 parents of pupils attending Montrose
- 6 other relatives of pupils attending Montrose
- 8 employees of Montrose
- 8 parents of other pupils
- 3 Councillors
- 18 others
- 1 NHS Foundation Trust
- 1 Vicar of the Parish Church of St Andrew, Wigan
- 1 Parent Governor Representative – Overview and CYPF Scrutiny Committees

#### **Governors' Response**

The Governing Body submitted a document outlining their objections to the proposal.

#### **Petitions**

1. A total of 946 people had signed a petition in support of the statement: "We the undersigned would like to make known our objection to the closure of Montrose School. We feel the needs and wishes of the pupils are being neglected in favour of financial consideration and urge the local authority to reconsider their plans for closure."
2. A total of 2009 members of a social networking site 'joined the cause' to 'Save Montrose Special Needs School Pemberton'.

### **OTHER RESPONSES**

Two letters commented on the proposal but made no objection:

- 1 Planning and Reorganisation Manager – Lancashire County Council
- 1 Headteacher – Hope School

All responses have been made available for public inspection at CYPS, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH, and will be made available to CYPF Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet at their meetings on 12 and 19 November 2009 respectively.

## Summary of Issues Raised

A summary of issues, and the number of times these have been raised by respondents, are reported below.

Issues have been categorised under the range of DCSF key factors to be considered by decision makers. These have been addressed in paragraph 3 of the report to CYPF Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to which this appendix is attached.

<b>Comment</b>	
<b>The effect on educational standards and school improvement 3.1.1</b>	
The highly skilled and dedicated staff at Montrose school provide children with a high standard of education and care in a familiar environment. The school has small class sizes, and children achieve there.	28
Receiving schools are too big and overcrowded.	5
The school provides a good standard of education as measured by Ofsted inspection in June 2009.	8
The Montrose School building has been refurbished to a quality standard and the facilities and resources there are outstanding.	11
The dilution of outreach services would be a consequence of the closure of Montrose.	1
<b>How the proposal will impact on local diversity 3.1.2</b>	
There would be a reduction in parental choice if the school were to close.	14
<b>How the proposal will help every young person to achieve their potential within the Every Child Matters principles 3.1.3</b>	
The proposal does not meet the principles of 'Every Child Matters'.	3
<b>Provision for displaced pupils 3.1.4</b>	
The school's closure would cause further disruption and be detrimental to children's progress and welfare. Transition would need to be carefully managed.	27
Children will lose their friends if they leave Montrose School.	2
<b>Parental preferences, the sufficient supply of school places and the removal of surplus places 3.1.5</b>	
There is an increasing number of children requiring special school places and a decreasing number of special school places available.	7
The local authority has made no referrals to the school since it was placed in special measures.	11
There are concerns about children being forced into mainstream schools.	9
The provision at Oakfield School would not be appropriate for some of the children from Montrose.	1

<b>Impact on the community / travel and accessibility for all 3.1.6</b>	
Montrose School is a valuable community resource.	6
If the proposal goes ahead some children will have to travel further to school.	2
<b>Whether funding is in place to deliver the proposals 3.1.7</b>	
The purpose of the proposal is to make money for the Council through the re-sale of land.	12
<b>The consultation process including views of interested parties 3.1.8</b>	
This is too soon after the last special school reorganisation. The local authority has let children and families down.	17
The consultation process has been misleading and the views of interested parties have not been considered.	5
<b>Alternative options that have emerged 3.1.9</b>	
Montrose School should be maintained and developed.	4
<b>The SEN Improvement Test 3.2</b>	
The SEN Improvement Test has not been fully met.	1