



**Area Plan for Post-Primary Education**

**Review of Controlled Education Provision**

**in**

**Ashfield Boys' High School**

**Consultation Response**

**Closing Date: Wednesday 21 March 2018**

## Introduction

The Education Authority is seeking to engage in consultation with the Board of Governors, parents and staff of Ashfield Boys' High School. Before arriving at the final recommendation on the nature of future post-primary provision, the Education Authority is seeking the views of those most directly involved at a local level.

## Vision

The Education Authority is committed to excellence in the delivery of education so that every pupil can realise their potential and contribute to a caring, inclusive and progressive society.

In striving to realise this aspiration, the Education Authority aims to ensure that every pupil has:

- access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities to realise his or her potential;
- an education in which the learning outcomes are appropriate to their needs;
- access to quality teaching delivered in a caring and supportive environment; and
- education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the delivery of education in the twenty-first century.

## Education Authority Position

On 28 April 2017 the Education Authority published *Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 Annual Action Plan for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools, April 2017–March 2018*. Within the actions for the Belfast Local Government District the Authority included the following:

<b>Ashfield Boys' High School</b> Holywood Road Belfast BT4 2LY	Ensure school places are located as required	Managing authority to consult on increase to enrolment number in relation to post-16 by March 2018
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At the November 2017 meeting of the Education Authority's Education Committee, it was agreed to initiate consultation with the Board of Governors, staff and parents of Ashfield Boys' High School, and with the Trustees and Managers of other schools

likely to be affected by the proposal **to increase the enrolment number from 600 to 750.**

### **Nature of the Recommendation**

Ashfield Boys' High School is a controlled post-primary school for boys situated in Wilshere Drive in East Belfast. The school opened in September 1953, the first purpose built school of its type in Belfast, and was originally intended to meet the mainly vocational needs of those boys living within the immediate vicinity of the Hollywood Road, Sydenham, Dundela and the Lower Newtownards Road area of East Belfast. In the 1970s the school had grown to almost 900 boys, however, following a serious arson incident, which resulted in the school being burnt down, the enrolment steadily declined to an all-time low of just over 200 boys in the mid to late 1980s.

In the 1990s, the school Principal, Board of Governors, staff and the local community decided to work together towards re-establishing the school's reputation and to make sure that the boys of East Belfast were once again provided with a high quality, all-boys, non-grammar school within their community. It was from this date onwards that the school witnessed a steady growth with an increase in both numbers and in reputation. Today there are over 740 boys enrolled in the school with 90% plus living within 3.5 miles of the school gates.

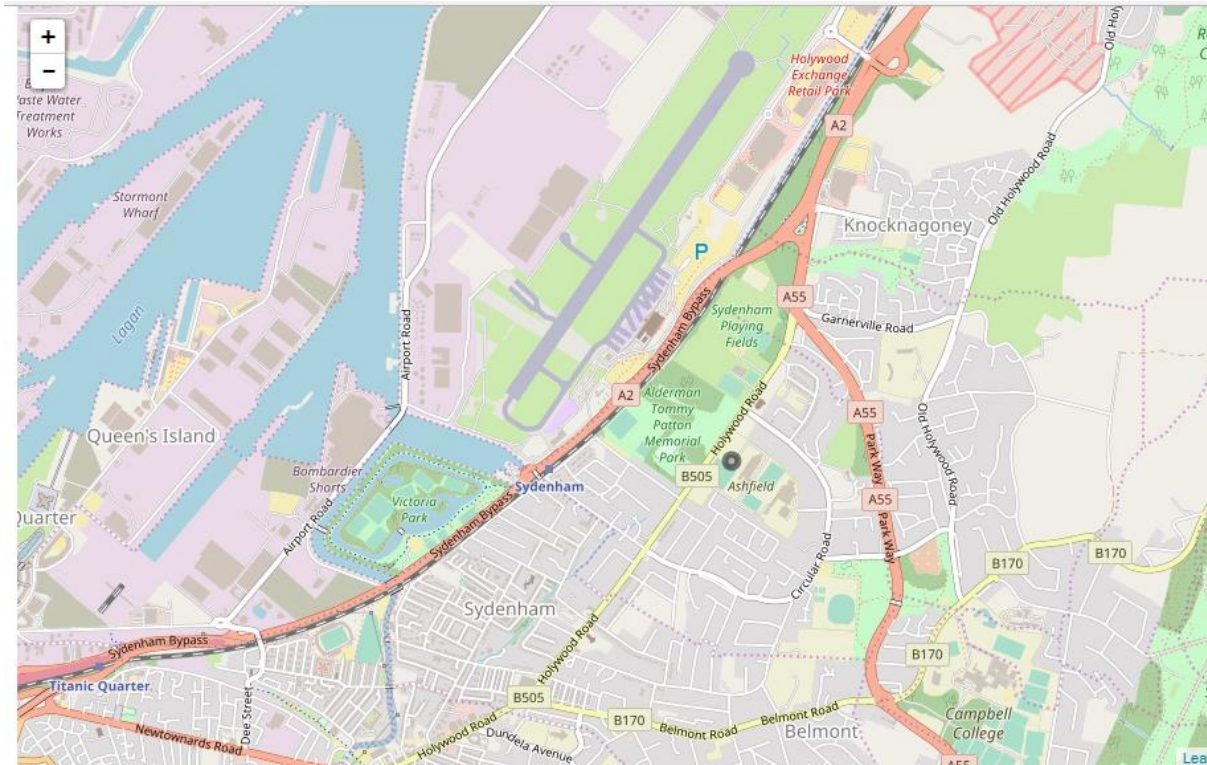
Ashfield Boys' High School is one of four controlled post-primary schools serving the city of Belfast, the others being Belfast Model School for Girls, Belfast Boys' Model School and Ashfield Girls' High School. The controlled post-primary schools serving Belfast are all single sex schools. This configuration of controlled schools in the city was the result of previous area planning work completed by the former Belfast Education and Library Board.

The enrolment number of the school is 600 pupils. Recent years have seen an increasing demand for post-16 places in the school with the number of pupils enrolled in 2016/17 being 728. This has resulted in the Board of Governors having to seek year on year temporary variation approval from the Department of Education.

Within the mainstream school in 2016/17 there were 260 pupils with identified Special Educational Needs.

The number of pupils taking Free School Meals in 2016/17 was 332.

The map below indicates the location of the school:



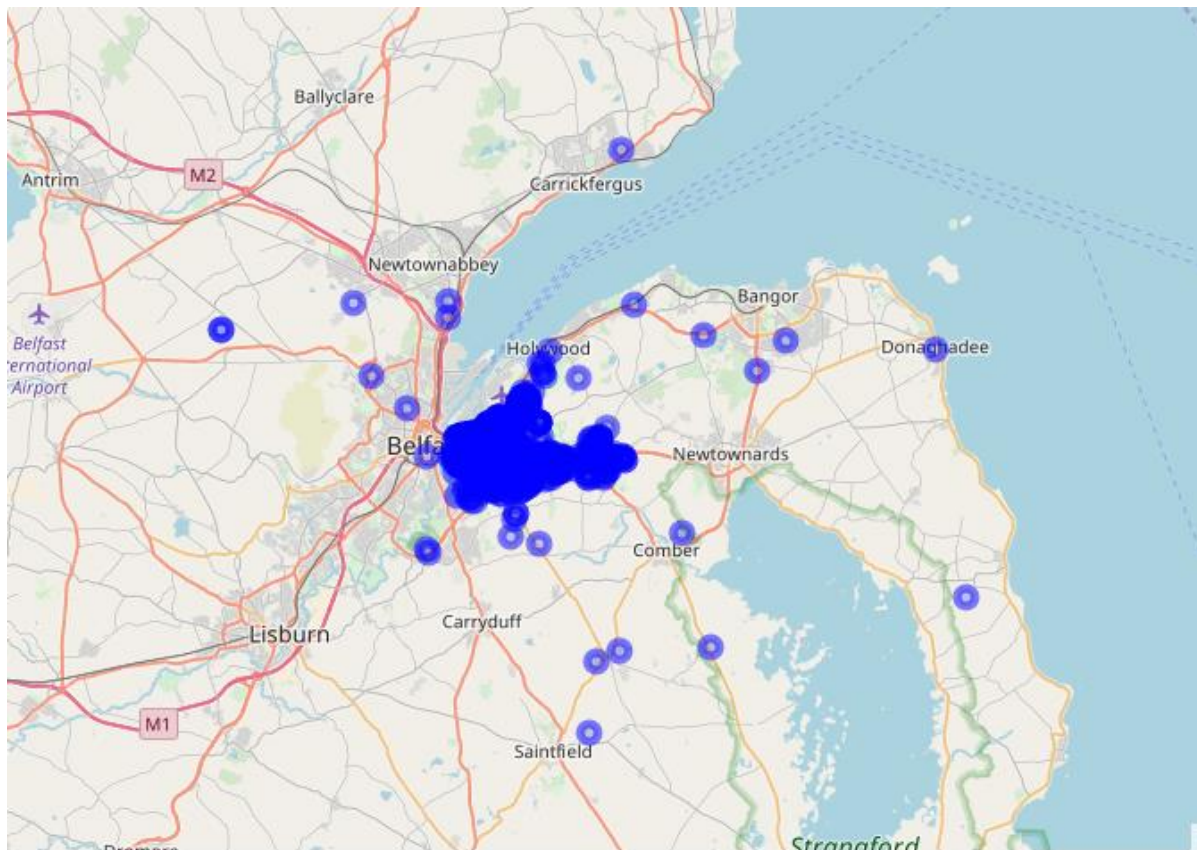
## Statistical Information

**School Enrolment 2012/13-2016/17 (includes pupils with SEN Statement)**

**Enrolment Number 600**

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
666	709	737	744	728

The map below indicates distribution of pupils at the school:



### Temporary Variations to Accommodate Sixth Form Pupils

Year	Approved Enrolment	Sixth Form Temporary Variation
2012/13	600	625
2013/14	600	670
2014/15	600	683
2015/16	600	690
2016/17	600	671

### Alternative School Data

School	Management Type	Type of Provision	Available Sixth Form Places	Distance from Ashfield Boys' HS
Breda Academy	Controlled	Co-Educational	Yes	6.7 miles
Dundonald HS	Controlled	Co-Educational	No Sixth Form Provision	4.9 miles
Priory College	Controlled Integrated	Co-Educational	Yes	2.8 miles

### Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Stage	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
SEN Stage 1-4	123	141	174	199	199
SEN Stage 5	40	45	53	55	61

### Number of Pupils in Years 13 and 14

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Year 13	59	75	88	86	76
Year 14	39	55	66	75	63

## Examination Performance

### Year 12 Pupils

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
5+ GCSE A*-G	99%	99%	99%	94%
5+ GCSE A*-C	69%	68%	68%	80%
5+ GCSE A*-C inc English and Maths	43%	46%	36%	50%
No Qualifications	0%	0%	0%	0%

### Year 13 and 14 Pupils

Year	2112/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
2+ A Levels A*-C	100%	96%	93%	94%
3+ A Levels A*-C	33%	47%	46%	46%

**The statistical information provided above reinforces the need for an increase to the Enrolment Numbers of the Ashfield Boys' High School for the reasons listed below:**

- An evidenced increased demand in recent years for year 13 and 14 places in the school.
- The annual granting of Temporary Variations to accommodate additional pupils.
- The need to meet the demand for boys' single sex post-16 provision in the area.
- The specific nature of the provision in the school to address a defined community with high levels of social deprivation and Special Educational Needs.

## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

The school is highly sustainable and is considered by the Education Authority to be a core school in the pattern of education provision in the city of Belfast.

### **School Performance**

The performance of the school in public examinations is outlined in the background section above.

The report of an inspection of the school by the Education and Training Inspectorate, which was conducted in September 2016, indicated that there were important areas for improvement in: Overall Effectiveness, Achievements and Standards, Provision for Learning and Leadership and Management. The school is currently addressing the areas for improvement through its Development Plan and Action Plans.

### **Enrolment**

The school enrolment has increased steadily year on year over the past 5 years (see table above) with a particular increase in the number of pupils in years 13 and 14.

### **Finance**

Over the past four years the school has been operating with a small budget deficit. In 2015/16 the school ended the year with a deficit of £39,501, -1.26% of available resources. The school budget deficit has been decreased in each of the past three years.

### **Leadership**

In the most recent Inspection Report of November 2015 the Education and Training Inspectorate concluded that leadership and management had important areas for improvement particularly around strategies for self-evaluation, actions to effect improvement and School Development Planning.



The leadership team is currently addressing the areas for improvement.

### **Accessibility**

The situation of the school in the urban setting of East Belfast means that it is very accessible to parents. Transport links are good.

### **Links with the Community**

Ashfield Boys' High School is a school at the heart of its community. The school has an excellent reputation with all its stakeholders and we continue to strive to provide a hub for our community partners.

The school works very closely with the 'East Belfast Learning Partnership', with a representative of the 'Partnership' on the Board of Governors and the Principal is a member of the 'Partnership's Steering Committee'. The school is also actively involved with the 'East Belfast Learning Community' and currently have shared collaborative classes with Ashfield Girls' High School, Strathearn School and Bloomfield Collegiate.

There is a wide-ranging 'Extended Schools Programme' with very close links with the local community and cluster primary school partners. Some of the programmes that have been developed include: 'Moving Image Arts Primary School Programme'; 'App Design for Primary School' pupils; 'Science for Primary Schools'; 'Cross Community Cup' sports programme. Other programmes have included: 'Health Eating' cookery courses for parents; PIPs mental health and suicide awareness programmes for parents; Keeping your son safe online.

Furthermore, over the last two years, the school has been developing and embedding 'Cross Phase Literacy and Numeracy' support/intervention programmes with Strandtown Primary School, Elmgrove Primary School and Knocknagoney Primary School. During the same timeframe, it has been actively involved with the 'Shared Education' initiative and are currently working with Mitchell House School, St Joseph's Primary School, Ballyhackamore and St Joseph's College, Belfast.

The school facilities are utilised by a vast array of local youth organisations, sports teams and clubs throughout the week.

## **AREA PLANNING IMPACT**

The proposal forms part of the actions set out in the Area Plan Action Plan 2017/18.

The Authority is taking forward two proposals to increase the approved enrolments at Priory Integrated College and Ashfield Boys' High School.

Priory Integrated College has been operating over its approved enrolment of 500 since it was approved in January 2014. The number of applications being received by the school has been consistently over the admission figure of 100 with the majority of these applications being first or second preference applications.

The school has a Year 8 to Year 12 enrolment of 522 which exceeds the 500 threshold. The sixth form portion of the school currently stands at 81, which is below the 100 threshold; however this is primarily due to the school's approved enrolment being set at 500 which has limited the school's ability to grow the sixth form.

Priory Integrated College's post-16 provision has been growing over the years and the Authority will bring forward a development proposal to formally recognise the demand for places at the school.

The annual action plan highlights the need to increase the enrolment number to accommodate the already existing expansion in the numbers in Years 13 and 14, in both schools.

There will be no detrimental impact on the enrolment of other schools as the development proposal for Ashfield Boys' High School seeks to regularise the position that has been covered by temporary variations in recent years.

While both Priory Integrated College and Ashfield Boys' High School attract pupils from a similar area – primarily the East Belfast area - any increase in the provision at

either school will not impact on the other as one is a controlled single sex school and the other is a co-educational integrated school therefore each school serves a very defined demographic.

### **Securing Parity of Access for All to Appropriate Pathways**

The regularisation of sixth form provision at the school will ensure that all boys in the non-selective sector in the East Belfast area will have full and equitable access to the Northern Ireland curriculum and the Entitlement Framework curriculum.

### **Enhancing Choice**

Boys will have sustainable access to a wide range of appropriate curricular choices at Key Stages 3 and 4 and through the Entitlement Framework at post-16.

### **Promoting Sharing/Collaboration**

Stable availability of places at the school will facilitate the further building of collaborative arrangements with other schools and the further education sector to the benefit of the boys.

### **Maximising Resources and Sustainability**

The proposal will further develop the sustainability of the Ashfield Boys' High School as a core controlled school in Belfast. It will meet the increasing demand for non-selective controlled education in the area through an existing and established school thereby maximising the investment and use of resources in an effective and efficient manner. The school has very strong links with Ashfield Girls' High School that enables the two schools to collaborate on curricular and other aspects, all of which contributes to the effective use of resources to the benefit of the young people.

## **Informing Strategic Infrastructure Planning**

The proposal will ensure that the existing facilities and those required at the school building will be used to maximum effect.

The proposal also addresses the key areas in “providing pathways” as it will:

- configure school provision to provide equitable access for students to the Entitlement Framework pathways;
- match provision to population trends; and
- potentially, further improve the quality of provision.

The plan highlights the issue of ensuring that school places are located as required.

There will be no detrimental impact on the enrolment of other schools due to the existing demand from local boys for places at the school.

There will be no detrimental impact on the enrolment of other schools due to the single sex nature of the school and local community focus of this proposal.

Proposals are currently being developed to establish a Learning Support Centre and Autism Centre at the school and it is intended that these will be considered by the Education Authority within the 2017/18 year.

## **RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL**

The rationale for the proposal to increase the enrolment number is to regularise an already existing pressure on post-16 places in the school.

Parents are opting for boys to continue their post-16 education in the single sex environment of this school and any other schools in the wider area offering post-16 places are doing so in a co-educational context which would not meet the needs of the boys wishing to remain in a boys' school. The extension of the enrolment

number would accommodate boys who have completed their year 8-12 studies in the school and wish to continue their post-16 studies in the same school.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPACT**

Approval of the proposal would enable the school to meet the existing demand for places from pupils in the local community. The school has a high reputation in the community of East Belfast and serves a strategic need for controlled education in that part of the city.

Approval of this proposal would regularise the currently existing position and address future needs for post-16 education in East Belfast.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (IF THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED)**

If the Development Proposal is approved the school would be in a position to implement the increased admissions number for the 2019 admission cohort. This would result in a regularisation of the admission position meaning that no further temporary variations would be required to be approved by the Department of Education.

The enrolment number of the school will increase on a phased basis, agreed by the Department of Education until the newly approved enrolment number is achieved.

### **Timescale**

The Education Authority will consider the results of local consultation at the earliest opportunity. A deputation from the Board of Governors may also choose to attend the Education Committee or the Board meeting.

### **Publication of a Development Proposal**

Should the Education Authority make a recommendation to change the nature of existing educational provision in the area, it is required to publish a Development Proposal outlining any proposed changes. All those affected by the proposal will be

notified and will have the opportunity to make representations expressing their views directly to the Department of Education during the 2 month objection period. The following timeline is an indication of the timings and the stages involved in the process:

- Formal Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents, Pupils: 16 January 2018–21 March 2018
- Consultation with other affected schools: 13 February 2018–21 March 2018
- Publish a Development Proposal (May 2018)
- DE Period of Objections (8 weeks)
- Ministerial decision (summer 2018)
- Interim Arrangements and Transition
- Increase in enrolment number implemented in September 2019.

### **Implications**

In the event of the Education Authority publishing a Development Proposal, Ashfield Boys' High School will increase its enrolment number from 600 to 750 with an annual phased increase with effect from 1 September 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.



**Alternative Option: (Please give details)**



## Equality Consideration

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all public bodies are obliged to consider the implications of any decisions on nine different groupings before decisions are implemented. The two duties within this Equality legislation include promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all communities. The equality of opportunity duty requires that the Authority shall, in carrying out all their functions, powers and duties, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

1. Between persons of different religious belief.
2. Between persons of different political opinion.
3. Between persons of different racial groups.
4. Between persons of different age.
5. Between persons of different marital status.
6. Between persons of different sexual orientation.
7. Between men and women generally.
8. Between persons with a disability and persons without.
9. Between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Good Relations Duty requires that the Authority shall, without prejudice to their equality obligations, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations:

1. Between persons of different religious belief.
2. Between persons of different political opinions.
3. Between persons of different racial groups.

The Education Authority has carried out an equality screening exercise and screened out this proposal, however, in light of the obligations noted above do you consider that the proposal for Ashfield Boys' High School to increase its enrolment number from 600 to 750 with an annual phased increase with effect from 1 September 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter, will impact positively or negatively on either Equality of Opportunity or the Promotion of Good Relations in any way?

Section 75 Category	Positive	Negative	Don't Know
Religious Belief			
Political Opinion			
Racial Group			
Age			
Marital Status			
Sexual Orientation			
Gender			
Disability			
Dependants			

If you ticked any of the above boxes please clarify your reason:

**Arrangements for returning your completed questionnaire**

Please return the completed questionnaire by **21 March 2018** to:

**Email:** [areaplanning3@eani.org.uk](mailto:areaplanning3@eani.org.uk)

**Or by post to**

Carol Hall  
Education Authority  
40 Academy Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2NQ

**Source of Response**

Governor

Parent

Teaching Staff

Non-Teaching Staff

Union

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_