

By: Grahame Ward, Children, Families and education Director - Resources

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 16 July 2009

Subject: THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE FORELAND (COMMUNITY SPECIAL) SCHOOL TO THE HARTSDOWN TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE SITE

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to relocate Foreland School. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to relocate the school to purpose built accommodation on the site of Hartsdown Technology College.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 12 March 2009.

Introduction

1. (1) Thanet is an early beneficiary of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Under Wave 4 of the programme, secondary and special schools in Thanet will benefit from substantial capital investment, with the potential to deliver exciting and innovative design solutions to meet current and future learning needs.

(2) The Foreland School already has well established thriving links with Hartsdown Technology College. Both schools are in need of improved facilities and accommodation. Co-location of the schools on the existing Hartsdown campus would deliver a cost effective solution with substantial learning benefits for all students.

(3) A proposal to transfer The Foreland School to the Hartsdown Technology College site requires the publication of statutory proposals as the school is more than two miles (3.20 miles) 'as the crow flies' from Hartsdown Technology College.

The Proposal

2. (1) The Building Schools for the Future programme will enable the complete rebuilding of both establishments to a design of the highest quality that will provide outstanding facilities for all the pupils. It is proposed that the two schools should share the same single building, creating a fully inclusive learning community for pupils aged 2 to 19 years with all the necessary safeguards built in. Evidence suggests that campus arrangements where pupils and staff have to travel some distance between the schools makes inclusion and the sharing of facilities and expertise much more difficult.

(2) Although collaborative working between The Foreland School and Hartsdown Technology College is well established and successful at present, the benefits are available only to a minority of students. This proposal is based on the desire of the schools to make

available to all their pupils the widest possible range of educational opportunities and create a fully inclusive learning community.

(3) The co-location will make available to all students a range of specialist facilities and equipment to which they would not otherwise have access. For instance, theatre, internet café, dance studios, gymnasium, hydrotherapy pool as well as specialist facilities for art, music, science and food technology will be available for all. It is hoped there will be areas designed and managed specifically in order for pupils from the schools to share time and space for socialisation and learning.

(4) In addition, the arrangement will provide outstanding opportunities for collaborative working and professional development between the staff of both schools. Collaborative planning is already taking place between senior staff and governors of the schools to ensure that the individual character and priorities of each is retained and that the opportunities for sharing are maximised.

(5) Discussions are at an early stage with the East Kent PCT and others about locating health and other agency services within the complex, thereby making available specialist facilities to pupils and their families.

The Consultation

3. (1) A consultation document was distributed to staff, governors and parents at the schools, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Parish Council, the Diocesan Authorities, local libraries, the District Council and others in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website.

(2) Approximately 2200 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. A copy is attached as Appendix 1.

(3) A public meeting was held at Foreland School on 31 March 2009. Mr Godfrey Horne chaired the meeting. In attendance were Martyn Doole, Area Children Services Officer, Bernard Clarke from the Secondary Transformation Team and other KCC officers. 20 people attended. A second public meeting was held at Hartsdown Technology College on 2 April 2009. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Martyn Doole, Area Childrens Services Officer, Bernard Clarke from the Secondary Transformation Team and other KCC officers. 19 people attended.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) 52 responses have been received, of which 23 are in favour, and 29 are opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 1.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meetings is attached as Appendix 2.

Views of Local Members

5. (1) Mr. W. Hayton wishes to declare a personal interest, and therefore will make no further comment on the proposal.

(2) Mr. J. Fullarton is fully supportive of the proposal.

(3) Mr. R. Burgess is in favour of the proposed co-location of the schools, which he sees as building on the existing close working relationships between Foreland and Hartsdown. He believes it important that both schools retain their independence and that an appropriate travel plan be in place to ensure a smooth transition.

[4] At the local council elections in June 2009, Mr R Bayford was elected to represent the division previously represented by Mr Fullarton. Mr Bayford was consulted about his views but declined to comment on the proposal

Views of Local Member of Parliament

6. The following comments have been received from Mr. Roger Gale MP on 15 July 2009:

"I have been well briefed on the proposals by officers, to whom I am most grateful, have studied the implications with care and observe as follows.

- (a) Foreland School is, as it stands, no longer fit for purpose and to do nothing is not an option.
- (b) I saw great merit in the original proposition to merge the Foreland Senior Form with a mainstream secondary school and to re-build and accommodate more junior forms on the Foreland site. That would still be my preferred option.
- (c) The removal of the Garlinge schools from the equation may facilitate the merger of Foreland and Hartsdown on the Hartsdown site but it leaves the Garlinge requirements for structural improvement unresolved. That is an issue that must be addressed.
- (d) It is important that Hartsdown retains sufficient playing field and playground space to meet the needs of a large and important College. Turning green fields into school buildings without compensatory provision is not acceptable.
- (e) If the project is to proceed then an appropriate degree of educational separation must be maintained between the special needs element of the school and the mainstream secondary school.
- (f) Attention might usefully be given to creating a new entrance to the school off Hartsdown Road (below the housing) to relieve the pressure on the existing frontage and to re-align the schools so that the new "front" overlooks the valley. This would possibly also allow good access for the emergency vehicles that from time to time are needed to attend on Foreland School pupils.
- (g) If the latter proves to be impracticable then serious attention must be given to the traffic issues that will arise in George V Avenue as a result

of an increased use of larger vehicles of the kind needed to transport mobility aids. Without this the proposals should be rejected on Highways grounds alone.”.

Views of Thanet District Council

7. No response has been received from Thanet District Council.

Views of the Governing Bodies

8. (1) The Governors of The Foreland School believe this is a once in a life time opportunity to make a real difference for their pupils.

(2) The Hartsdown governing body supports the initiative and wants to involve the community. Parents in partnership with the school can contribute to the success of the project. Collaboration with Foreland is already strong with all having the interests of the students at heart.

Views of the Pupils

9. The Foreland staff sought the views of their students. Some children wished to remain on the site that they know but many said they looked forward to a new and better school.

Views of the Partnership Board

10. Members of both Thanet 1 and 2 Partnership Boards have indicated their support for the proposal in principle and see it as a great opportunity for both schools.

Views of Highways

11. Highways will be involved with the planning of the project in conjunction with the Building Schools for the Future team, and scope the needs for any change of access to the site. The increase in the number of students from Foreland will be offset by the planned reduction in the roll of Hartsdown as the number of secondary age pupils declines over the next few years. The particular transport needs of Foreland’s pupils and any increased traffic ensuing from the development of the multi-agency centre will be structured particularly carefully.

Views of the Area Children’s Services Officer

12. (1) Implementation of this proposal would realise the shared vision of the headteachers and governing bodies of the two schools and establish an inclusive learning community.

(2) The proposal retains the integrity and identity of the two schools while maximising opportunities for all students to benefit from greatly improved facilities incorporating shared resources and expertise. The proposal builds on the established and successful links between the two schools and would enable more students to benefit from

those links than is currently the case. Both schools are badly in need of new facilities and accommodation and this is a cost efficient solution which has both economic and educational merit.

Development of a Multi Agency Assessment and Resource Centre

13. (1) Following the end of the public consultation period it was announced that Kent has been successful in securing funding through the Cross Government Co-location Grant, to develop multi agency facilities on the Hartsdown site.

(2) The funding will facilitate the development of a 0 – 19 multi-agency assessment and resource centre, enabling staff working with vulnerable children to be co-located on the same site, with space for primary care services.

(3) This multi-agency development will significantly enhance the provision for vulnerable children locally and enable children and the local community to benefit from the co-location of mainstream, special school and multi-agency facilities.

(4) The establishment of the multi-agency provision does not technically form part of the proposal to relocate the Foreland School to the Hartsdown site but there will be natural synergies between the two developments which will benefit local children and their families.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

14. (1) Both the schools are within Wave 4 of Kent's Building Schools for the Future Programme and are expected to be provided by way of a PFI agreement.

(2) The new building would be a PFI project with a lifespan of 25 years. Trillium would be the Local Education Partnership (LEP) partner with Kent County Council leading on the PFI project. MITIE would be the PFI partner providing managed services.

(3) The anticipated funding available from Government for the two schools is in excess of £25m.

(4) Any affordability gap on the PFI scheme would be funded by way of a top-slice off the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Human

(5) As the Foreland School would be located relatively close to its existing site and the new building would meet the requirements for the school's designated number, there would be minimal implications for teaching staff. There may be some implications for non-teaching posts that are specifically premises related. Non teaching facilities staff transferring to the new site would be employed by the new Facilities Management contractor for LEP1 of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Proposed Timetable

15. (1) The following timetable would apply, subject to the proposal being agreed by the Cabinet member.

Public Notice Issued (subject to Cabinet Member decision)	3 September 2009
Public Notice Expires	15 October 2009
Determination by Local Authority	November 2009
Adjudication (if required)	January 2010
Building work commences (earliest)	September 2010
Implementation (earliest)	September 2012

Recommendation

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:

- (a) issuing a public notice to relocate The Foreland School from its existing site to the proposed site at Hartsdown.

Name Martyn Doole
Title Area Children's Services Officer
Area Dover & Thanet
Tel: (01227) 284407

At the time of the public consultation the Local Members were: Mr. W. Hayton, Mr. J. Fullarton and Mr R. Burgess. At the County Council elections on 4 June, Mr Fullarton stood down and was replaced by Mr R Bayford.

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board – 5 November 2008

PROPOSED RE-LOCATION OF THE FORELAND SCHOOL TO THE HARTSDOWN SITE**Summary of written responses**

Consultation documents distributed: 2200

Responses received: 48

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Foreland School	3	5	0	8
Members of staff at Foreland School	12	16	0	28
Governors of Foreland	1	0	0	1
Parents/Carers of pupils at Hartsdown	2	1	0	3
Members of staff at Hartsdown	0	0	0	0
Governors of Hartsdown	0	0	0	0
Interested party	5	7	0	12
Total	23	29	0	52

In support of the proposal

- The co-location will help integrate Foreland pupils.
- This is an amazing vision and opportunity that needs to be incredibly thought out, planned and managed.
- A new school build would enable Foreland children to access every part of the curriculum with all the necessary equipment in place, fully working and with the appropriate amount of space.
- A great idea and much better facilities.
- Fully inclusive community style schools are the way forward.
- The proposal is a logical extension of the inclusion programme already in existence.
- The current site is not meeting the needs of the Foreland pupils.
- A youth club should be considered as part of the new school.

Against the proposal

- The increase in traffic would cause chaos.
- Placing infant and junior children near to teenagers will cause exposure to behaviour and language which may not be appropriate.
- Foreland would lose its identity.
- Foreland children need a small Special School. The number of Foreland children who would benefit from this proposal is limited.
- The present site could be upgraded for less cost.
- PFI is a waste of taxpayers' money.
- A new school should be built just for the Foreland school, rather than with Hartsdown.
- The Foreland children will disrupt the mainstream children by claiming the attention of the teachers and leaving other pupils to get on by themselves.
- Concerns about any buildings on Garlinge Recreation ground.
- Mainstream pupils can be very intimidating for special needs pupils.
- Does not want the pupils riding their bicycles over the football pitches.
- Foreland children cannot cope in a mainstream environment.

- Opposed to the loss of school playing fields.
- It will have a detrimental effect on the value of property in the area.
- Traffic is already an issue in the area and this will increase the amount of traffic, raising the risk of more accidents.

PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE FORELAND SCHOOL TO HARTSDOWN

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 31st March 2009 at The Foreland School

The headteacher of The Foreland School outlined the reasons why the school would find it very difficult to continue in its current accommodation, including the lack of space and the site not having the scope and requirements for rebuilding the school. She felt that it would be a fantastic opportunity for the schools to work with architects and to put the school's ideas into a design for the new accommodation on the Hartsdown site. Both schools have seen the advantages of the secondary aged pupils working alongside each other and much more could be done if the schools were co-located. There would be a separate area for primary aged pupils and areas that would be special to The Foreland School, places where are pupils could feel safe and secure. The Foreland School co-occupies the current site with Therapy colleagues from Health and would work on ways to continue this on the Hartsdown site.

The headteacher of Hartsdown Technology College agreed that this would be a fantastic opportunity for both schools and said that the Hartsdown site had plenty of room to co-locate both schools. The links between the schools forged over the last 10 years have been a huge success.

The chair of the Garlinge Residents Association questioned whether the new complex would encroach on Garlinge recreation ground and if it was planned that Caxton Road would be widened. He was also concerned to hear that a footpath around the outside of the recreation ground was being considered so that students could have pedestrian access to the school.

Reassurance was given that there was no possibility of the recreation ground being built on. There would be a separate planning process for addressing such issues as access to the site and residents would be invited to take part in the discussions.

A Foreland parent raised concerns about transport to the Hartsdown site and wanted clarification on the inclusion of Foreland students with the Hartsdown students. Other parents also expressed their concerns and wanted confirmation that their views would be taken into consideration regarding integration with the Hartsdown students.

The headteacher said that transport was a huge issue and the possibility of staggered hours would be considered so that all the children would not be arriving or leaving at the same time. It was intended that a purpose built drop of area should be included and turn around space adjacent to the building close to the primary part of the school.

Regarding inclusion, a significant number of Foreland pupils would rarely meet with the mainstream students but it was hoped that there would be opportunities for meeting on a social basis. Any inclusion would be fully supervised and would be agreed with parents/carers. It was envisaged that there would be areas within the new building just for Foreland pupils and zoning of playgrounds so that pupils remain safe. The more opportunities the children have to grow together, when they meet outside they understand the differences.

One parent had hoped that the school could be increased in size when it was rebuilt.

The headteacher said that the designated number had been agreed during the Special School Review in 2005. The numbers would be kept under review and flexibility built in. Pupil numbers in the area are decreasing generally and the headteacher believed that the size of the school would meet the needs of the locality.

A parent asked if 90% objected to the proposal, would it still go ahead.

In response it was explained that members would make their decision on the quality of responses and not the quantity. Members will be interested in specific points and what represents the best interests of the pupils.

An interested party questioned whether or not the expansion at Westwood Cross had been taken into consideration when planning the size of the school and asked what contingency plans there were should the proposal not go ahead. Whether the option of splitting the school had been considered? This would mean that the more disabled pupils could remain on the current Foreland site and have access to the Health services located there.

In response it was confirmed that new houses in the area had been taken into consideration but primary roll numbers continue to fall. The school would not close if the proposal did not go ahead but it would miss out on the opportunity of providing a school fit for the 21st century that was purpose built to meet the needs of the pupils. To split the school would only create staffing and transport problems. The Primary Care Trust has expressed an interest in being part of the project and there was the possibility of not just Therapy Services being included but also a Health Centre.

The Chair of Governors of The Foreland School said that he hoped everyone had been reassured by what they had heard at the meeting and that they would go away having shared the vision of this once in a life time opportunity.

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 2nd April 2009 at Hartsdown Technology College

Mr Doole outlined the proposal for the relocation of the Foreland School to new accommodation co-located with Hartsdown Technology College. He indicated the benefits the proposal would bring to the children and staff of both schools and how the proposal is envisaged to transform the educational experience of all the children in the community. He emphasised that the proposal was at the consultation stage and Kent County Council would consider the views of the public before any decision is made.

The Vice Principle of Hartsdown Technology College welcomed the proposal to aid in preparing children for a global future. Both schools will gain from the collaboration with shared resources and state of the art facilities. While both schools will work together in a shared drive for excellence, they will retain their own independence.

The Head of Foreland School outlined the history of co-operation with Hartsdown. They have now outgrown their current site and are physically not able to stay because of where they are. This proposal is a huge opportunity and is not just tagged on to a secondary school. Specialist facilities with Health on site will be great for both schools.

Mr Robert Burgess, the local member, stressed the importance of both schools retaining their independence. The provision of purpose built facilities will impact favourably upon all the children. He hopes the funding will remain in place and transport arrangements built into the plan. He believes it makes great sense to do – it is the right thing to do.

Bernard Clarke explained about the Building Schools for the Future programme and the aim of transforming secondary education through the country. It is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity and we are assured the money is guaranteed.

Thanet District Councillor: Expressed concern about the land in the Recreation ground being taken. Will numbers increase? Residents were concerned about the Special Needs of the children. Would the community gain something from the proposal?

In response, it was stated that there were no longer plans to use the recreation ground, that overall numbers were set to decline, and that the facilities would be available to the community.

Resident: There has been little thought put into the process. He did not know Foreland was going to be relocated. The traffic has increased enormously over the years with the police and ambulances racing around the local roads. There has been little consultation with residents.

In response it was stated that Foreland children arrive by mini busses rather than individual cars; that the emergency services were not the responsibility of the education service, and with staggered entry times and decline in numbers the issue of travel will be part of the overall plan.

Parent and resident; Worried about the noise during construction and how this might impact on pupils doing examinations. Also concerned that Caxton Road is already overcrowded.

In response it was stated that there were strict conditions on the contractors to minimise disruption during the transition period. With a new build there is less disruption than with refurbishment. Tight conditions and penalties will be built into the contract.

Chair of Governors Hartsdown: The governing body supports the initiative and want to involve the community. Parents will be in partnership with the school than can contribute to the success of the project. Collaboration with Foreland is already strong with all having the interests of the students at heart.