

AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, 7th February, 2008, at 10.30 am Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen Mannering**

Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

Telephone **(01622)
694289/694367**

Refreshments will be available from 10.15 am outside the Chamber

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2008 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Proposal to Relocate and Enlarge Rowhill Special School and to Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre Pupil Referral Unit (Pages 9 - 52)
5. Proposed Closure of Axton Chase School and its Replacement with a Government Funded Academy, subject to Ministerial Approval (Pages 53 - 60)
6. Proposed Change of Age Range for Green Park Community Primary School, Dover (Pages 61 - 66)
7. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status (Pages 67 - 68)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Geoff Mills
Democratic Services
(01622) 694287
30 January 2008

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 10 January 2008.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr R B Burgess (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Angell, Mr C J Capon, Mr M J Northey, Mr A R Poole and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance and Mr C T Wells

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr I Craig (Director Strategy Policy & Performance), Mr M Doole (Area Education Officer Thanet & Dover) and Ms C Lay (Area Education Officer Sevenoaks, Swanley, Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Paddock Wood)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**1. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2007**
(Item. 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Tunbridge Wells Community High School - Proposed Change at Age Range to Remove the Sixth Form from the School's Formal Designation
(Item. 4)

(1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 17 October 2007, supported a proposal to undertake public consultation on changing the designated age range of Tunbridge Wells Community High School, from the current 11-19, to 11-16 years of age. Tunbridge Wells Community High School was currently designated as a school for students aged 11-19 years, but the school's Sixth Form was suspended from September 2005 on grounds of viability. School Organisation Regulations did not, however, provide for temporary changes to the age range of a school. The proposal had, therefore, been brought forward to regularise the position and to bring it into line with legislative requirements.

(2) Members agreed to a more limited public consultation exercise than was normal practice within the county when the outcome of a proposal would normally lead to a change in provision for pupils. In this case, the change would be in formal designation only. Appendix 1 of the report comprised the consultation letter distributed to all key stakeholders on 2 November 2007. The report summarised the outcome of the consultation process.

(3) Tunbridge Wells Community High School was a small non-selective secondary school located to the east of Tunbridge Wells. The roll was 436 (January 2007 pupil census) and was forecast to remain relatively constant over the

next few years. It did not have sixth form students currently on roll, and had not done so since the sixth form arrangements were suspended from September 2005. Post 16 students from Tunbridge Wells High had been successfully transferring to alternative courses.

(4) By 2003/04 the number of students in the Sixth Form had fallen to 30. The only way sixth form provision could continue would have been by using a cross-subsidy using formula funding intended for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. This was not considered justifiable. In order to secure the school's budget, governors were obliged to suspend the operation of the Sixth Form with effect from September 2005.

(5) The school believed it had benefited from the suspension of the Sixth Form in as much as skilled teachers, who previously taught at 16+, had been re-deployed to Key Stage 3 and 4 classes. This had contributed to an upward trajectory in results at the end of Key Stage 4 and to an outstanding performance as indicated by Contextual Value Added, validated by Ofsted in February 2005 and again in a 'themed inspection' of science provision, in December 2006. Suspension of the school sixth form was necessary and there had been real and significant ways in which the school had made a virtue of that necessity.

(6) The proposal would consolidate the already established partnership for post 16 progression routes with West Kent College and other local sixth forms. A closer working relationship with nearby West Kent College had been developed, so that all Tunbridge Wells High students had ready access to the vast range of post-16 opportunities at the College.

(7) Data from Connexions showed that a higher than ever percentage of Tunbridge Wells High students were progressing at 16+ into education or employment with training. As collaboration continued to develop between partner institutions in the area, this trend of developing the right pathways for students would continue.

(8) There was no prescribed consultation process that must be followed in order to secure a change of age status for a school. However, guidance from the DCSF suggested that it was good practice to seek the views of all stakeholders likely to be affected by the proposal. Accordingly, the school wrote to all appropriate stakeholders on 2 November 2007. 57 responses were received, of which 52 were in favour, and 5 were against the proposal.

(9) The Governing Body of the school, having taken the decision to suspend the Sixth Form arrangements in 2005, was fully supportive of the proposal to formally re-designate the age range of students at the school. The Local Member, Mr K Lynes, and the Tunbridge Wells Cluster Board fully supported the proposal.

(10) The Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway had been fully involved in developing partnership arrangements to secure progression routes for post-16 students from Tunbridge Wells High, and so fully supported the proposal; as did the Area Education Officer.

(11) There were no capital resource implications, and as the school currently did not make use of its designation to educate sixth form students there were no revenue implications. No staff were currently employed in connection with the

school's designation to educate sixth form students. Therefore, no changes to staffing arrangements were envisaged by the proposal.

(12) The Advisory Board agreed to the issuing of a public notice to change the designated age range of Tunbridge Wells High School from 11-19, to 11-16 years only, in accordance with the timescale set out in the report.

3. The Hereson (Community) School and Ellington (Community) School for Girls - Proposed Amalgamation - Outcome of Public Consultation (Item. 5)

(1) The report set out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate The Hereson School and Ellington School for Girls. It sought the views of the Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to close both schools and establish a new school on the Ellington site.

(2) The Hereson School had a published admission number of 120 and a net capacity of 688. In September 2007 there were 506 pupils on roll giving a surplus capacity of 26%. Ellington School for Girls had a published admission number of 120 and a net capacity of 642. In September 2007 there were 390 pupils on roll giving a surplus capacity of 39%.

(3) Both Ellington and The Hereson were good schools with considerable strengths and strong community links. Merging the two schools would sustain good quality high school provision within Ramsgate over the long term, retaining the strengths of each within a viable 4FE school, providing excellent facilities for all. The new site of Ellington School for Girls suitably adapted, offered the opportunity to realise this goal. It was located closer to the greatest concentration of existing Hereson student's homes than the current site of The Hereson School. The map at Appendix 2 of the report showed the location of the new Ellington site and the existing Hereson site in relation to the home locations of the students currently on roll at The Hereson School.

(4) The amalgamation would create a new 4FE school with a PAN of 120 serving both boys and girls age 11-16. At the point of amalgamation in September 2009, there would be an estimated 692 pupils on the combined roll of both schools. The roll would reduce as the larger year groups at the top end of the school were replaced by smaller year groups coming in at Year 7. It was proposed to phase the amalgamation by adopting a one-year transition period from 2009-10. The new Year 7 together with Years 8, 9 and 10 would move onto the Ellington site in September 2009. The Hereson Year 11 would remain on the existing Hereson site to complete their final GCSE year. With effect from 2010 all pupils would be on the Ellington site. This would mean that the total pupil numbers on the new Ellington site would remain within the physical capacity of the accommodation (c.600).

(5) The proposal included the establishment of what would be a new school and was therefore potentially subject to competition regulations under the Education and Inspection Act 2006. The Local Authority applied to the Secretary of State for an exemption from external competition and permission to publish a proposal to establish a new school, subject to the outcome of the public consultation process.

The Secretary of State had decided not to grant an exemption from the competition regulations in relation to this proposal.

(6) The implication of this decision was that the Local Authority could only publish its own proposal to establish a new school if the proposal was published as part of a competition process. Other proposers now had the opportunity to submit a proposal to run the new school, as part of a competition process run by the Local Authority and on the basis of a specification for the new school which was drawn up by the Local Authority and published as part of the first competition notice, which was referred to in the published timetable for competition as set out in the original public consultation document.

(7) The views of the local members Mrs E Green, Mr A Poole, Mr W Hayton and Mr J Fullarton were set out in the report, together with those of the Local MP; Governing Bodies; pupils; Thanet 2 Cluster Board; and Area Education Officer.

(8) Adaptations to the new buildings would be needed to cater for a mixed intake and a feasibility study was being undertaken. The initial assessment was that approximately £200K would be needed to support adaptations to the site from 2009 so that it could cater for boys and girls. Further technical work was necessary to firm up the figure.

(9) As part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, a submission was being made to secure significant additional funding which would be used to further enhance the excellent facilities already available on the Ellington site. Allocation of this funding was subject to ongoing discussion and negotiation and approval by Partnership for Schools and the DCSF.

(10) Following discussion the Advisory Board supported the amalgamation of The Hereson School and Ellington School for Girls, and, if agreed, supported the issuing of a competition notice to initiate a competition to establish a new 4FE high school on the site of Ellington School for Girls.

4. The Proposed Relocation of Portal House School, Dover to the Site of the former Newington Infant School, Thanet *(Item. 6)*

(1) As part of the review and reorganisation of special schools in Kent, Portal House School in Dover was re-designated from a 9-13 residential school catering for 45 children with emotional and behavioural difficulties to an 11-16 school making day provision for 60 pupils with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Developments Needs. The report proposed the relocation of Portal House Special school to the site of the former Newington Infants School in Thanet with effect from 1 September 2009.

(2) The school was currently located on a compact site in the village of St Margaret's-at-Cliffe near Dover, very close to St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School. The existing accommodation at Portal House was unsuitable for its secondary age designation and the increase in the overall size of the school from 45 – 60 students. Funding was available through the Building Schools for the

Future (BSF) programme to provide new purpose built accommodation. However, the existing site was unsuitable for development and a new site must be secured.

(3) A number of alternative sites within the Dover district and one in Thanet were explored as possibilities for relocation but these all proved to be unsuitable for a variety of reasons. The former Newington Infants School site provided the potential for development as a suitable site for Portal House. Development would require major new build on the footprint of the existing school building. It would also be necessary to use a small portion of the adjacent playing field site which currently belonged to Clarendon House.

(4) The Newington site had a number of significant advantages which commended its suitability for the relocation of Portal House:-

- It was available and already owned by KCC.
- It was sufficient in terms of space and provided a pleasing environment for students. The site could accommodate state of the art new buildings, as envisaged under the BSF scheme.
- A significant number of pupils (14) came from the Thanet area and approximately half of these came from Ramsgate. Travelling distances would therefore be reduced and parental contact with the school potentially eased by closer proximity to home.
- Use of the Newington site would allow Portal House to benefit from participation in Wave 4 of the BSF programme generating major capital investment by 2009.

(5) Major investment of c. £7.7m was planned to provide state of the art facilities through the BSF programme. The site was already owned by KCC and there would be no costs in relation to site acquisition.

(6) Views of the local Members, Mrs E Green and Mr A Poole were set out in the report.

(7) Relocation to the Newington site would provide the opportunity to develop superb facilities within a vibrant educational community combined with a reduction in travelling distances for many students, the move would have a beneficial impact on standards by allowing students to be educated and supported in a first class learning environment with strong community connections.

(8) The largest number of students currently at Portal House School, came from Thanet. Given the residential profile of existing students, the overall impact of relocation was likely to be that travelling times would be reduced. Even with Portal House full at 60 pupils, the overall number of pupils was small and many lived in the locality. It was not anticipated that the relocation would generate significant problems with traffic or congestion locally. Certainly, the situation in St Margaret's-at-Cliffe would be improved significantly, given the narrow road and difficult access to the existing school site.

(9) The Board supported the proposal that there should be a public consultation on the possible relocation of Portal House School from its existing site at St

Margaret's-at-Cliffe to the former Newington Infants School in Thanet, in accordance with the timetable set out in the report.

5. New School Competitions

(Item. 7)

(1) At its meeting on 14 November 2007, the Board considered a proposed procedure for opening new schools via a competition process. Members' comments had been incorporated into the revised procedure that was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(2) The Board noted the revised process and thanked Mr D Adams, Area Education Officer – Ashford and Shepway for circulating to Members.

6. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status

(Item. 8)

(1) A paper was presented to the Advisory Board on 17 October 2007 informing Members of the Government's encouragement of all schools to consider Foundation/Trust status, and of the 'fast track' procedures to achieve it. The procedures required a governing body to consult 'interested parties' (including the LA) over a minimum of a four week period, before determining themselves. Unless there were very good reasons not to do so, the change of status would be approved.

(2) At SOAB it was agreed that, as the consultation period would not normally allow the LA time to prepare paperwork for SOAB to comment:-

- (a) unless there were very good reasons to the contrary the presumption would be that the LA would not oppose any governing body wishing to move to Foundation or Trust status;
- (b) the Director (Operations) would consult with the Cabinet Member and local Member(s) before responding to a consultation on Foundation or Trust status; and
- (c) responses would be reported to the next available SOAB.

(3) The LA was informed on 15 November 2007 that Broomhill Bank Special School, Tunbridge Wells, had assumed Foundation status, with effect from 13 November 2007. Cabinet Members and the local Member, Mr J Davies, had been informed.

(4) There were now 58 Foundation schools in Kent (13 Primary, 44 Secondary and 1 Special) and 91 Aided schools (78 Primary and 13 Secondary) – a total of 149, and in addition, 7 Academies = 156. For the sake of simplicity, Aided schools should be considered as having the same status as Foundation/Trust schools.

(5) The LA was informed on 19 December 2007 that Borden Grammar School, Sittingbourne had begun a consultation on Foundation status, running from 14 January 2008 to 10 February 2008. The Cabinet Member, Mr Dance, and the local Members Mrs B Simpson and Mr R Truelove had been informed (19 December) with a view that it should not be opposed.

(6) The Board noted the report.

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By: Director – Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 7 February 2008

Subject: PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE AND ENLARGE ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL AND TO RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents the results of a public consultation on the proposal to relocate Rowhill Special School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site on Main Road in Longfield, enlarge Rowhill Special School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site at Stock Lane in Wilmington.

It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to relocate and enlarge Rowhill Special School.

Introduction

1. (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 14 November 2007, supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to relocate Rowhill School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site, enlarge Rowhill School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site at Stock Lane, Wilmington. The report is attached as Appendix 1.

(2) This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which was taken in December 2007 and January 2008.

Background and Accommodation Issues

2. Rowhill School

(1) Rowhill School is a school for boys and girls aged five to sixteen years who have Behaviour and Learning (B & L) Difficulties.

(2) Rowhill is currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ and is a member of the Dartford West Cluster. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site.

(3) The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to extend the Rowhill Special School footprint. However due to the restrictions placed on the school site by its Green Belt status, this has not proved possible. The local authority has therefore been active in seeking an alternative site appropriate to the needs of the school.

(4) The current designated pupil number is 96 and they have 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls.

Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.

(5) Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School Review to provide for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties from across the whole of West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's pupil numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008.

(6) There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that the pressure will increase and therefore seeks this opportunity to increase the provision from 96 to 120 by relocating Rowhill School onto a larger site.

(7) Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".

West Kent Health Needs Education Service

3. (1) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service (formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service at one time occupied the site of the old Woodview School site at Main Road in Longfield, adjacent to the Phoenix Centre. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was moved in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham. The Phoenix Centre is still housed on the Longfield site.

(3) The current capacity is 40 on site. The service also caters for an additional number of children on home tuition. Currently they have 19 children on the roll, although due to the nature of the service they provide, this number fluctuates.

(4) The provision may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.

(5) The building at Main Road has now been rebuilt. The rebuild was funded by the insurance settlement.

(6) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service received its last Ofsted inspection on 11th December 2007. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with nine "Outstandings".

The Phoenix Centre

4. (1) The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14 – 16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling. The Centre will provide the education service for any exclusions that continue for more than the 6th day.

(2) The Phoenix Centre PRU currently occupies the Woodview Site, Main Road Longfield. The Centre is currently using some of the newly rebuilt facilities.

(3) The Centre has a capacity of 32 and also caters for a number of children on home tuition. Currently they have 22 children on the roll with 8 being tutored at home.

(4) The Phoenix Centre received its last Ofsted inspection on 17 October 2006. The report was very positive and awarded the school the overall status of "Good".

Milestone Special School Nursery

5. The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is to remain on site and is unaffected by this proposal.

The Proposal

6. (1) The proposal is to relocate Rowhill Special School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford.

(2) Enlarge the school buildings and to increase its capacity from 96 places to 120 places.

(3) The proposal is also to relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington, and to

(4) relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.

The Consultation

7. (1) The consultation process began on the 3 December 2007 and finished on the 14 January 2008.

(2) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2, was circulated according to the County Procedures for Review. This circulation included Local Members, Dartford Borough Council, local libraries, the Member of Parliament and Dartford head teachers. Rowhill Special School, West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre were sent enough copies for all staff, governors, parents and carers to receive one. Attached to the consultation document was a Reply Form for respondents to express their views. Approximately 800 copies of the document were circulated and the document can be viewed on the KCC website.

(3) A public meeting was held at Rowhill School on 18 December 2007. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Mr Simon Webb, Area Education Officer for Dartford & Gravesham, Mr Colin Feltham, Head of Additional Educational Needs & Resources and other KCC Officers. About 20 people attended.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

8. (1) 46 responses have been received, of which 34 are in favour, and 12 are opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 3.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) Summaries of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting are attached at Appendix 4.

Views of Local Members

9. (1) The Local Member of the ward where Rowhill Special School is currently sited is Mrs Ann Allen. Cllr Allen supports the proposal but asks the local authority to take into account the close proximity of other schools in the area. She also asks that cognisance is taken of the other PRU in the area. Barn End Centre is very close to the Rowhill School Site. Finally she asks that all appropriate Travel Plans are in place.

(2) The Local Member of the ward where it is proposed to re-site Rowhill Special School is Mr Bertie Bassam. Cllr Bassam has been informed and is very happy with the proposal. "I look forward to welcoming Rowhill Special School into Longfield."

Views of Local Member of Parliament

10. The Local Member of Parliament is Dr Howard Stoate. Dr Stoate commented that:

"I have no objection to this proposal. It will provide Rowhill School with the opportunity to finally acquire a site that is appropriate to the growing needs of the school. My only concern is the disruption the move will cause to existing students at the school. Although Rowhill serves the whole of the West Kent area a substantial proportion of the students live in central Dartford within a few miles of the existing site. Moving the school to Longfield will add considerably to their journey time to school each day. Careful consideration will need to be given therefore as to how the impact of this move on existing students can be kept to a minimum."

Views of Dartford Borough Council

11. Dartford Borough Council ward members for Wilmington stated they were pleased that there were no plans to re-develop the Rowhill site for housing.

Views of the Governing Body

12. (1) The Governing Body of Rowhill is supportive of the proposal and has approved the plans for the enlarged building in Longfield.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre are KCC PRUs and do not have governing bodies.

(3) The Governing Body of Raynehurst Primary School is supportive of the proposal.

Views of the Pupils

13. The headteacher of Rowhill Special School has kept the pupils and their parents informed through the school newsletter. The pupils are all looking forward to the relocation into new, more suitable accommodation.

Views of the Cluster Board

14. The Cluster board has been informed of the proposal and is fully supportive.

Views of the Area Education Officer

15. (1) Rowhill School will need to move site in order to accommodate the increase in the number of places for pupils with behaviour and learning difficulties, the Longfield site meets these criteria.

(2) There have been no objections raised in relation to Rowhill Special School, both moving site and enlarging the school from 96 to 120.

(3) Concerns have been raised in respect of placing both the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service on the same site, however, both units co-existed on the same site at Main Road, Longfield for 10 years, with minimal concerns from students, parents and carers.

(4) The most recent Ofsted Inspection of West Kent Health Needs Education Service criticised the accommodation, however, given its temporary nature, is not surprising. There is, therefore, increasing pressure on the Local Authority to provide suitable accommodation. I firmly believe this proposal meets those needs.

(5) I would propose that both headteachers, in conjunction with senior officers, begin to work together on a revised site plan to ensure the accommodation for both West Kent Health Needs Education Service and Phoenix Centre are distinct. In this way all of the concerns raised, would be allayed.

Transport, Admissions and Community Impact

16. (1) Rowhill Special School has the largest roll and is therefore the school that is most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is impossible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done. The majority of Rowhill pupils come from the North West Kent area, specifically the Dartford and Gravesham areas. The pupils that travel from further afield (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge, Maidstone or Rochester) might have slightly reduced transport costs. Overall, it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service is in a similar transport situation to Rowhill in that they take in pupils from all over West Kent, therefore the transportation issues and cost expectations are likely to be comparable.

(3) The Phoenix Centre has less reliance on local authority funded transport. Moving the centre to Dartford might make it considerably easier for pupils from Dartford.

(4) All three provisions will receive advice and support from the local authority to produce a new travel plan prior to the relocation.

(5) The distance between the two sites is five miles. Due to the special nature of all three provisions, admission issues are not a factor.

(6) On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired local authority transport. The residents of Stock

Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during school peak hours.

Resource Implications

Capital

17. (1) The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Fund. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5,455k.

(2) The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, the local authority will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come out of the Special School Review Fund.

(3) There are no capital receipts, as both sites will remain local authority use.

Revenue

(4) There are no anticipated immediate increases in revenue costs.

Human

(5) There are no anticipated immediate increases in staffing costs, however once the Rowhill School has been enlarged, there will be an increase in staffing. This will be met through the schools delegated budget.

Equality Issues

18. (1) Rowhill Special School, West Kent Health Needs Education and the Phoenix Centre provide an education service for pupils who cannot easily enter mainstream schooling.

(2) PLASC 2006 for Rowhill Special School records a low percentage of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(3) The Phoenix Centre has a low amount of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(4) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service has a fluctuating roll and ethnicity is primarily White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

School Improvement Implications

19. The schools have very specialised roles with a very small tranche of special needs children. Significant improvements to performance are difficult to quantify, although it is hoped that with purpose built facilities, the performance of all three provisions will show some improvement.

Proposed Timetable

20. It is proposed that building work will commence after a decision has been reached.

14 Nov 2007	SOAB
4 Dec 2007	Start of Consultation
18 Dec 2007	Public Meeting
14 Jan 2008	Close of Consultation
7 Feb 2008	SOAB
Feb 2008	Cabinet Member Decision
Feb 2008	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
Apr 2008	End of Statutory Representation Period
	Enlargement work begins at Longfield site
Sep 2009	Rowhill opens on Longfield site
	The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane
	West Kent Health Needs Education Service moves from Raynehurst to Stock Lane

Recommendation

21. The views of the Schools Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:
- (a)
 - (i) relocating and enlarging Rowhill Special School
 - (ii) relocating the West Kent Health Needs Education Service
 - (iii) relocating the Phoenix Centre PRU
 - (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice for (i), above, and
 - (c) subject to approval of the proposal following the end of the objection period, the resources necessary to implement the scheme being provided on the basis identified in this report.

Simon Webb
 Area Education Officer
 Dartford & Gravesham
 Resources
 Tel: 01732 525110

Colin Feltham
 Head of AEN & Resources
 Additional Educational Needs &
 01622 605729

The Local Members are Ann Allen and Bertie Bassam

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board 14 November
2007

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 November 2007

Subject: ROWHILL SCHOOL, WILMINGTON – PROPOSAL TO ENLARGE AND RELOCATE TO THE OLD WEST KENT HOSPITAL SCHOOL SITE AND RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE ONTO THE ROWHILL SITE.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to relocate Rowhill School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site, enlarge Rowhill School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site.

This report also asks for SOAB approval to initiate a Public Consultation on the proposal.

Introduction

1. (1) Rowhill School is a school for boys and girls aged five to sixteen years who have Behaviour and Learning (B & L) Difficulties. Attached as Appendix 1 is a map showing the current pupil distribution.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service (Formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

(3) The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14–16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling.

(4) The current site at Main Road, Longfield which currently holds the Phoenix centre, and prior to the fire, the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, was the site of the old Woodview School.

(5) The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is to remain on site.

The Proposal

2. (1) To relocate Rowhill School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford (site plan attached as Appendix 2).

(2) To enlarge the school buildings to increase capacity from 96 places to 120 places.

(3) Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington (site plan attached as Appendix 3).

(4) Relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington (appendix 3).

Background and Accommodation Issues

3. (1) (a) Rowhill is a Special School, currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ and is a member of the Dartford West Cluster. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site.
- (b) The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to extend the Rowhill Special School footprint. However due to the restrictions placed on the school site by its Green Belt status, this has not proved possible. The local authority has therefore been active in seeking an alternative site appropriate to the needs of the school.
- (c) The current designated pupil number is 96 and they have 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls, and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.
- (d) Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School review to provide for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties from across the whole of West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's pupil numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008.
- (e) There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that the pressure will increase from its current designation and therefore seek this opportunity to increase the provision from 96 to 120 by relocating Rowhill School.
- (f) Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".
- (2) (a) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service at one time occupied a site adjacent to the Phoenix centre on Main Road, Longfield. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was decamped in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham.
- (b) The provision may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.
- (c) The current capacity is 40 on site and an undefined amount on home tuition. Currently they have 19 children on the roll, although due to the nature of the service they provide, this number fluctuates.

- (d) The building at Main Road has now been rebuilt. The rebuild was funded by the insurance settlement.
- (3) (a) The Phoenix Centre PRU currently occupies the Woodview Site, Main Road, Longfield. The Centre is currently using some of the newly rebuilt facilities.
- (b) The Centre has a capacity of 32 and also caters for a number of children on home tuition. Currently they have 22 children on the roll with 8 being tutored at home.
- (c) The Centre provides an education for children who have been excluded from mainstream education. The Centre will provide the education service for any exclusions that continue for more than the 6th day.
- (d) The Phoenix Centre received its last Ofsted inspection on 17 October 2006. The report was very positive and awarded the school the overall status of "Good".

Resource Implications

4. Capital

(1) The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Fund. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5,455k.

(2) The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, we will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come out of the Special School Review Fund.

(3) There are no capital receipts, as both sites will remain in Children, Families and Education use.

Revenue

(4) There are no anticipated immediate increases in revenue costs.

Human

(5) There are no anticipated immediate increases in staffing costs, however once the Rowhill School has been enlarged, there will be an increase in staffing. This will be met through the schools delegated budget.

Views of the Governing Body

5. (1) The Governing Body of Rowhill is supportive of the proposal and has approved the plans for the enlarged building in Longfield.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre are KCC PRUs and do not have governing bodies.

(3) The Governing Body of Raynehurst Primary School is supportive of the proposal.

Views of Local Member(s)

6. (1) The Local Member of the ward where the school is currently sited is Mrs Ann Allen. Cllr Allen has been informed of the proposal. No response has yet been received.

(2) The Local Member of the ward where it is proposed to re-site the school is Mr Bertie Bassam. Cllr Bassam has been informed of the proposal. No response has yet been received.

Views of the Health Authority

7. The Health Authority has not yet been consulted. There will of course be extensive dialogue during the consultation period to ensure that the level of provision at the school and PRUs is sufficient.

Equality Issues

8. (1) Rowhill and West Kent Health Needs Education Service are special schools that provide a service for pupils who cannot easily enter mainstream education.

(2) PLASC 2006 for Rowhill records a low percentage of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(3) The Phoenix Centre has a low amount of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(4) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service has a fluctuating roll and ethnicity is primarily White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

Views of Cluster Board

9. The Cluster board has been informed of the proposal and are supportive.

Views of District Council

10. Dartford Borough Council has not yet been informed of the proposal, but will be fully informed if the proposal does go out to public consultation.

Views of the Area Education Officer

11. I fully support this proposal. It provides a robust and cost effective solution to some of the location and capacity issues facing two schools and two PRUs.

School Improvement Implications

12. The schools have very specialised roles with a very small tranche of special needs children. Significant improvements to performance are difficult to quantify, although it is hoped that with purpose built facilities, the performance of all three provisions will show some improvement.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

13. (1) (a) Rowhill has the largest roll and is therefore the school that is most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is impossible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done.
- (b) The breakdown of location at Appendix 4, shows that the majority of pupils come from the North West Kent area, specifically the Dartford and Gravesham areas. The pupils that travel from further afield (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge, Maidstone or Rochester) might have slightly reduced transport costs.
- (c) Overall, it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.
- (2) (a) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service is in a similar transport situation to Rowhill in that they take in pupils from all over West Kent.
- (b) Therefore the transportation issues and cost expectations are likely to be similar.
- (3) The Phoenix Centre has less reliance on KCC funded transport. Moving the centre to Dartford might make it considerably easier for pupils from Dartford.
- (4) All three provisions will receive advice and support from KCC to produce a new travel plan prior to the relocation.
- (5) The distance between the two sites is five miles. Due to the special nature of all three provisions admission issues are not a factor.
- (6) On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired KCC transport. The residents of Stock Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during schools peak hours.

Links to the School Organisation Plan

14. This proposal is consistent with the aims, principles, policies and priorities within the School Organisation Plan.

Proposed Timetable

15. It is proposed that building work will commence after a decision has been reached.

Nov 2007	SOAB
Dec 2007	Start of Consultation
Dec 2007	Public Meeting
Jan 2008	Close of Consultation
Feb 2008	SOAB
Feb 2008	Cabinet Member Decision
Feb 2008	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
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	Enlargement work begins at Longfield site
Sep 2009	Rowhill opens on Longfield site
	The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane
	West Kent Health Needs Education Service decamps from Raynehurst and moves to Stock Lane

Recommendation

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on going out to public consultation:

- (a) to approve in principle the enlargement of Rowhill Special School to its pre-2004 size;
- (b) to approve in principle the relocation of Rowhill Special School to the West Kent Hospital Site on Main Road Longfield;
- (c) to approve in principle the relocation of The Phoenix Centre to the Stock Lane site; and
- (d) to approve in principle the relocation of The West Kent Health Needs Education Service to the Stock Lane site.

Simon Webb
Area Education Officer
Dartford & Gravesham
Tel: 01732 525110

Colin Feltham
Head of AEN & Resources
Additional Educational Needs &
Resources
Tel: 01622 605729

The Local Members are Ann Allen and Bertie Bassam

Background documents:

None

Appendix 4

Table showing the home locations of Rowhill School Pupils

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Dartford	27
Gravesend	23
Swanley	10
Swanscombe	9
Tunbridge Wells	8
Tonbridge	7
Greenhithe	4
Longfield	2
Sevenoaks	2
Snodland	1
Rochester	1
Maidstone	1
Edenbridge	1
Cranbrook	1

PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE AND ENLARGE ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL AND TO RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents distributed: 800
 Responses received: 46

	Support	Against	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Rowhill Special School	15	1	12
Members of staff at Rowhill Special School	10		10
Governors of at Rowhill Special School	3		3
Parents/Carers of pupils at WKHNES			
Members of staff at WKHNES		4	4
Parents/Carers of pupils at the Phoenix Centre			
Members of staff at the Phoenix Centre			
Local members	2		2
Members of staff at other schools	4	2	6
Interested parties		3	3
Local resident		2	2
Total	34	12	46

In support of the proposal

- This is another piece of the Special School Review.
- This will address the increasing demand for specialist places.
- Schools pressured to keep pupils in because of the need to reduce exclusions. If there were more places available, it would reduce exclusions even further.
- The sooner the better for Dartford and Gravesham districts.
- This is a sensible use of resources and a good idea for all concerned.
- It will result in easier access to facilities.
- Existing premises at Rowhill not adequate and we need to be able to offer more space.
- Moving will have no effect on the Longfield community.
- The governing body considers the proposal to be the best option for all the staff and pupils at Rowhill and the two PRUs.
- A welcome proposal as long as the long term provision of the services provided by the WKHNES and Phoenix can be assured on the Wilmington site.
- The proposed relocation will continue the welcome presence of education facilities in the area and retain an important link with the community.

Against the proposal

- WKHNES needs separate base with no shared facilities.
- Severe social vulnerability could jeopardise the recovery and attendance of WKHNES pupils.
- Very vulnerable pupils and could not cope with being on the same site as EBD and excluded pupils.
- Rowhill and Phoenix students appear to be rather boisterous, and on many occasions, physical and loud.
- Attempting to integrate WKHNES pupils with others with severe behavioural problems can only have a detrimental effect on success rate.

- Increased volume of traffic at Woodview site.
- The relocation of WKHNES is taking too long.
- Accommodation is entirely unsuitable. Ofsted stated that the WKHNES needed suitable accommodation now.
- Stock Lane residents might benefit, but what about the residents of New Barn and Longfield? Have local residents been consulted?
- Why unsettle everyone so soon after the fire?
- Very short notice for the public consultation.
- No car parking for visitors and not enough for staff.
- Have alternatives been considered? Suggest splitting Rowhill into two local schools, saving time and money. Re-invest £5.5m money on new facility in SW Kent.
- Consider using part of the redundant Birchwood site in Swanley as a site for an enlarged Rowhill.
- Behavioural and Medical PRUs should not be sharing the same site according to the "Access to Education" document.
- £8000 nowhere near enough for refurbishment.

**PROPOSED RELOCATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL
AND RELOCATION OF THE WKHNES AND PHOENIX CENTRE**

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 18 December 2007 at Rowhill School

Approximately 20 people attended the public meeting including the headteachers, staff and governors of Rowhill School and the West Kent Hospital Needs Education Service.

The major points raised and responses given were as follows: -

- The Area Education Officer set out the case for the relocation of Rowhill School to the site of the former WKHNES site in Longfield. This would enable the school to be expanded from 96 to 120 places and allow the WKHNES and Phoenix Centre to move into the Rowhill site which would be adapted to suit the needs of such pupils.
- The Headteacher of Rowhill explained that he and the governing body fully supported the proposal which would provide an excellent fully purpose built and expanded school for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties in the area.
- Dartford Borough Council ward members for Wilmington stated they were pleased that there were no plans to re-develop the Rowhill site for housing. They sought assurances that there were no plans to close the Barn Centre and move pupils to the Rowhill site and also sought clarification on traffic related issues. The Area Education Officer assured them that there were no current plans to close Barn End. It is also believed there is a retainer on that site preventing its sale and use for housing development.
- Clarification was sought as to the number of pupils who would be educated on the Rowhill site and whether this would result in surplus capacity. It was explained that whilst Rowhill had a current capacity for 96 pupils, this did not mean that it would have such a capacity for pupils from the Phoenix Centre and WKHNES. In fact there would undoubtedly be less pupils educated on the site due to the nature of their needs.
- A member of staff of the WKHNES highlighted her concerns about the service being co-located with the Phoenix Centre again, highlighting that this had not been appropriate previously with some incidents of bullying taking place. In addition, the move to Rowhill would result in longer journeys for pupils from South West Kent. The AEO responded that ideally the two education provisions would not be co-located but KCC is constrained by capital costs and more effective management of the site will be explored to minimise incidents in the future.
- How would the change of use affect traffic movements in Wilmington? Will there be a need to stagger times of the WKHNES and Phoenix Centre? The AEO responded that staggering should not be necessary and that before they open, both provisions will have to have completed a School Travel Plan which will explore traffic management issues in detail. Overall the changes at the Rowhill site are likely to result in less vehicle movements.
- There were concerns about lack of publicity of the proposal and the local councillors agreed to take away proposal documents away and assist to increase local knowledge of the plans for Rowhill School.

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 November 2007

Subject: ROWHILL SCHOOL, WILMINGTON – PROPOSAL TO ENLARGE AND RELOCATE TO THE OLD WEST KENT HOSPITAL SCHOOL SITE AND RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE ONTO THE ROWHILL SITE.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to relocate Rowhill School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site, enlarge Rowhill School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site.

This report also asks for SOAB approval to initiate a Public Consultation on the proposal.

Introduction

1. (1) Rowhill School is a school for boys and girls aged five to sixteen years who have Behaviour and Learning (B & L) Difficulties. Attached as Appendix 1 is a map showing the current pupil distribution.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service (Formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

(3) The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14–16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling.

(4) The current site at Main Road, Longfield which currently holds the Phoenix centre, and prior to the fire, the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, was the site of the old Woodview School.

(5) The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is to remain on site.

The Proposal

2. (1) To relocate Rowhill School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford (site plan attached as Appendix 2).

(2) To enlarge the school buildings to increase capacity from 96 places to 120 places.

(3) Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington (site plan attached as Appendix 3).

(4) Relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington (appendix 3).

Background and Accommodation Issues

3. (1) (a) Rowhill is a Special School, currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ and is a member of the Dartford West Cluster. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site.
- (b) The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to extend the Rowhill Special School footprint. However due to the restrictions placed on the school site by its Green Belt status, this has not proved possible. The local authority has therefore been active in seeking an alternative site appropriate to the needs of the school.
- (c) The current designated pupil number is 96 and they have 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls, and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.
- (d) Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School review to provide for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties from across the whole of West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's pupil numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008.
- (e) There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that the pressure will increase from its current designation and therefore seek this opportunity to increase the provision from 96 to 120 by relocating Rowhill School.
- (f) Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".
- (2) (a) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service at one time occupied a site adjacent to the Phoenix centre on Main Road, Longfield. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was decamped in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham.
- (b) The provision may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.
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Resource Implications

4. Capital

(1) The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Fund. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5,455k.

(2) The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, we will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come out of the Special School Review Fund.

(3) There are no capital receipts, as both sites will remain in Children, Families and Education use.

Revenue

(4) There are no anticipated immediate increases in revenue costs.

Human

(5) There are no anticipated immediate increases in staffing costs, however once the Rowhill School has been enlarged, there will be an increase in staffing. This will be met through the schools delegated budget.

Views of the Governing Body

5. (1) The Governing Body of Rowhill is supportive of the proposal and has approved the plans for the enlarged building in Longfield.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre are KCC PRUs and do not have governing bodies.

(3) The Governing Body of Raynehurst Primary School is supportive of the proposal.

Views of Local Member(s)

6. (1) The Local Member of the ward where the school is currently sited is Mrs Ann Allen. Cllr Allen has been informed of the proposal. No response has yet been received.

(2) The Local Member of the ward where it is proposed to re-site the school is Mr Bertie Bassam. Cllr Bassam has been informed of the proposal. No response has yet been received.

Views of the Health Authority

7. The Health Authority has not yet been consulted. There will of course be extensive dialogue during the consultation period to ensure that the level of provision at the school and PRUs is sufficient.

Equality Issues

8. (1) Rowhill and West Kent Health Needs Education Service are special schools that provide a service for pupils who cannot easily enter mainstream education.

(2) PLASC 2006 for Rowhill records a low percentage of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

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Views of Cluster Board

9. The Cluster board has been informed of the proposal and are supportive.

Views of District Council

10. Dartford Borough Council has not yet been informed of the proposal, but will be fully informed if the proposal does go out to public consultation.

Views of the Area Education Officer

11. I fully support this proposal. It provides a robust and cost effective solution to some of the location and capacity issues facing two schools and two PRUs.

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12. The schools have very specialised roles with a very small tranche of special needs children. Significant improvements to performance are difficult to quantify, although it is hoped that with purpose built facilities, the performance of all three provisions will show some improvement.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

13. (1) (a) Rowhill has the largest roll and is therefore the school that is most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is impossible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done.
- (b) The breakdown of location at Appendix 4, shows that the majority of pupils come from the North West Kent area, specifically the Dartford and Gravesham areas. The pupils that travel from further afield (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge, Maidstone or Rochester) might have slightly reduced transport costs.
- (c) Overall, it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.
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- (3) The Phoenix Centre has less reliance on KCC funded transport. Moving the centre to Dartford might make it considerably easier for pupils from Dartford.
- (4) All three provisions will receive advice and support from KCC to produce a new travel plan prior to the relocation.
- (5) The distance between the two sites is five miles. Due to the special nature of all three provisions admission issues are not a factor.
- (6) On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired KCC transport. The residents of Stock Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during schools peak hours.

Links to the School Organisation Plan

14. This proposal is consistent with the aims, principles, policies and priorities within the School Organisation Plan.

Proposed Timetable

15. It is proposed that building work will commence after a decision has been reached.

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Sep 2009	Rowhill opens on Longfield site
	The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane
	West Kent Health Needs Education Service decamps from Raynehurst and moves to Stock Lane

Recommendation

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on going out to public consultation:

- (a) to approve in principle the enlargement of Rowhill Special School to it's pre-2004 size;
- (b) to approve in principle the relocation of Rowhill Special School to the West Kent Hospital Site on Main Road Longfield;
- (c) to approve in principle the relocation of The Phoenix Centre to the Stock Lane site; and
- (d) to approve in principle the relocation of The West Kent Health Needs Education Service to the Stock Lane site.

Simon Webb
Area Education Officer
Dartford & Gravesham
Tel: 01732 525110

Colin Feltham
Head of AEN & Resources
Additional Educational Needs &
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Tel: 01622 605729

The Local Members are Ann Allen and Bertie Bassam

Background documents:

None

Appendix 4

Table showing the home locations of Rowhill School Pupils

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Tonbridge	7
Greenhithe	4
Longfield	2
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Rochester	1
Maidstone	1
Edenbridge	1
Cranbrook	1

Public Consultation

Relocation and Enlargement of Rowhill Special School and Relocation of West Kent Health Needs Service and the Phoenix Centre



Kent County Council would like to hear your views on the proposal.



Children, Families & Education Directorate



Kent County Council is considering a proposal to relocate and enlarge Rowhill School and relocate two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and we would like to hear your opinions.

Please take time to read this important document and let us know what you think of this proposal. The proposal has four parts.

1. Relocate Rowhill School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford.
2. Enlarge the current school buildings at Longfield to increase the Rowhill School capacity from 96 places to 120 places.
3. Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service from Raynehurst Primary School, Gravesend, onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.
4. Relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.

Your views are important and will help shape the future. On page 9 you will see how you can let us know what you think. I can assure you that all comments received will be carefully considered and will be used to develop detailed proposals for each school. We will then consult you again with these proposals.

*Dr Ian Craig
Director (Operations)
Children Families and Education
Kent County Council*

Why is KCC proposing these relocations?

The primary reason is that we need to provide more Behaviour and Learning school places in West Kent.

This proposal addresses this issue and would do so in a cost-effective way.

Background Information

Rowhill Special School

Rowhill is a Special School, currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ. It is within the Dartford West Cluster of schools.

Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School review to provide for pupils with behaviour and learning difficulties from across West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site. The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to acquire extensions to the Rowhill Special School site. However due to Green Belt building restrictions, this has not proved possible.

Currently there are 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.

There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that this pressure will increase.

Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".

The West Kent Health Needs Education Service

The WKHNES (Formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

The WKHNES at one time occupied a site adjacent to the Phoenix centre on Main Road, Longfield. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was relocated in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham. The site in Longfield has now been rebuilt through the insurance settlement.

The provision offered may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.

The current capacity is 40 on site with some students receiving home tuition. Currently they have 19 children on the roll, although due to the nature of the service they provide, this number fluctuates.

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The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14 – 16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling. The Centre will provide the education service for any exclusions that continue for more than the 6th day.

The Phoenix Centre PRU currently occupies the Woodview Site, Main Road Longfield. The Centre has a capacity of 32 and also caters for a number of students on home tuition. Currently they have 22 students on the roll with 8 being tutored at home.

The Phoenix Centre received its last Ofsted inspection on 17 October 2006. The report was very positive and awarded the school the overall status of "Good".

Milestone Nursery

The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is unaffected by this proposal.

How much will it cost?

This proposal does not rely on funding from the Education Capital budget.

The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Capital Budget. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5.455m.

The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, we will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come from the Special School Review Capital Budget.

What about Staffing? Will there be cuts?

As the Rowhill School is being enlarged, there may well be an increase in staffing. The cost of this would be met through the schools delegated budget.



Site plan of Longfield site

What about transport?

Rowhill has the largest roll and is therefore the school whose pupils may well be most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is not possible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done. However, overall it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.

Geographical Area	Number Of Pupils
Dartford	27
Gravesend	23
Swanley	10
Swanscombe	9
Tunbridge Wells	8
Tonbridge	7
Greenhithe	4
Longfield	2
Sevenoaks	2
Snodland	1
Rochester	1
Maidstone	1
Edenbridge	1
Cranbrook	1

The breakdown of location, shows that the majority of pupils come from the North West Kent area, specifically Dartford and Gravesend. The pupils that travel from further afield (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge, Maidstone or Rochester) might have slightly reduced transport costs.

The distance between the two sites is five miles.

Due to the special nature of all three provisions, admission issues are not a factor within this proposal.

The West Kent Health Needs Education Service has a similar transport situation to Rowhill in that they take in pupils from all over West Kent. Therefore the transportation issues and cost expectations are likely to be broadly neutral.

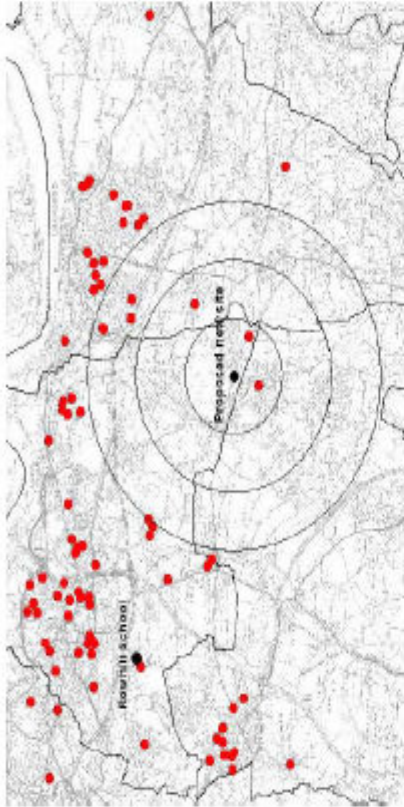
The Phoenix Centre has less reliance on KCC funded transport. Moving the centre to Dartford might make it considerably easier for pupils from Dartford.

All three provisions will receive advice and support from KCC to produce a new travel plan prior to the relocation.

On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired KCC transport. The residents of Stock Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during schools peak hours.

What Happens Next?

- Following this consultation, the outcomes will be reported to the School Organisation Advisory Board of Kent County Council.
- A decision will be made on whether to take the proposal forward.
- If so, a Public Notice will be published for six weeks.
- Representations about the proposal can be made.
- A determination will then be reached on whether the proposal is to be implemented.
- In certain circumstances this could include referral to the statutory Schools Adjudicator.
- All views will be considered before a decision is made.



Map showing the location of Rowhill pupils in relation to the two sites



Site Plan of Rowhill

HOW TO TELL US YOUR VIEWS

If you would like to comment on the proposal there are several opportunities available to you.

▲ **Complete and return the response form to:**

Simon Webb,
Area Education Officer (Dartford & Gravesham)
17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill, West Malling
Kent, ME19 4UL
Fax: 01732 525223
(forms must reach us by 14 January 2008)

▲ **Come to a public meeting, 7.00 p.m. 18 December 2007, to be held at:**

Rowhill School
Stock Lane
Wilmington
Kent, DA2 7BZ

An elected member of Kent County Council will chair this meeting, at which all interested parties will have an opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Local Authority will also be present to clarify points of detail.

▲ **Email: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk**

CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

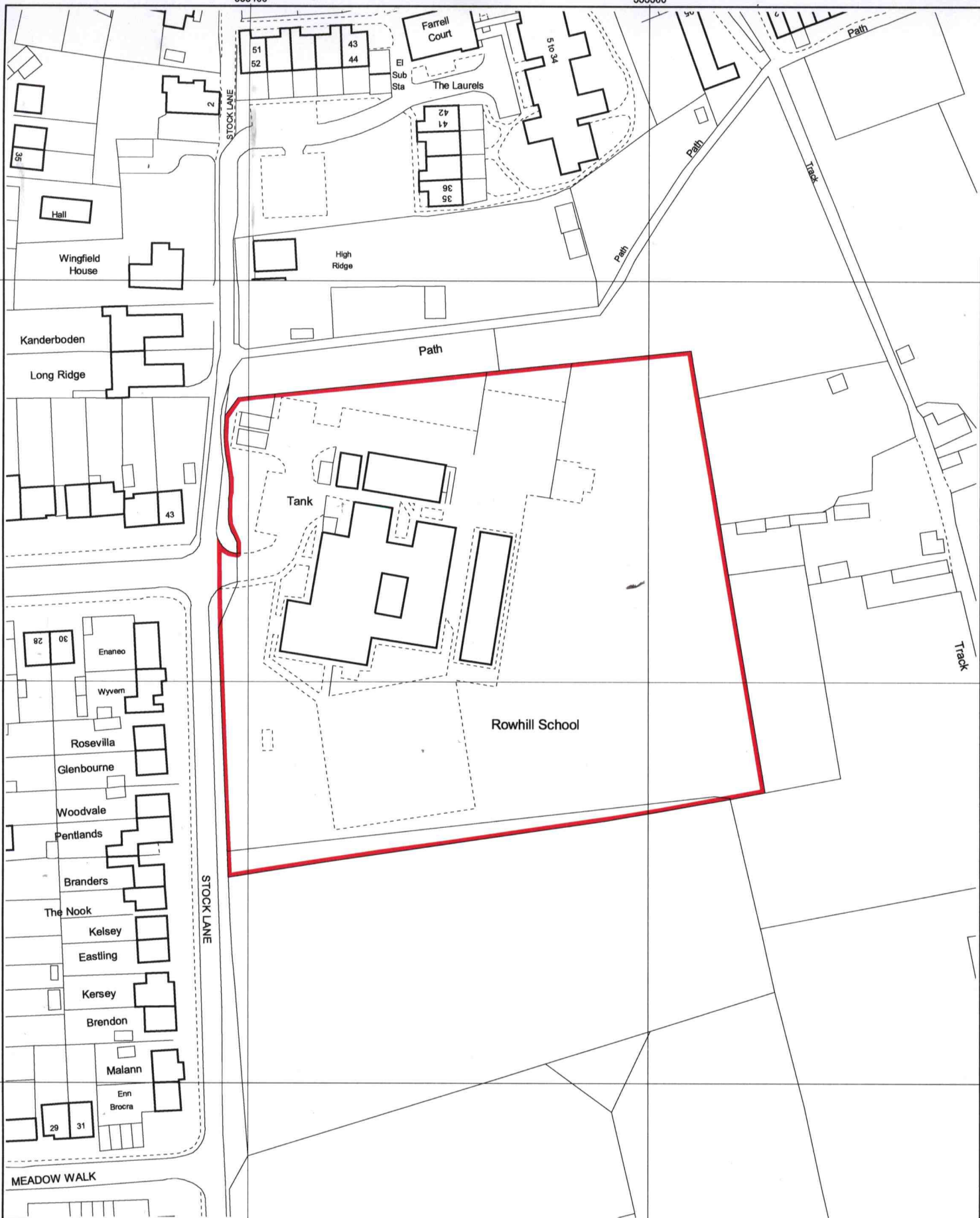
Nov 2007	SOAB
Dec 2007	Start of Consultation
Dec 2007	Public Meeting
Jan 2008	Close of Consultation
Feb 2008	SOAB
Feb 2008	Report to Cabinet Member
Feb 2008	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
Apr 2008	End of Statutory Representation Period
Sep 2009	Enlargement work begins at Longfield site
	Rowhill opens on Longfield site.
	The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane.
	West Kent Health Needs Education Service decamps from Raynehurst and moves to Stock Lane



My comments are as follows



Please continue on another sheet if necessary



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Drawn By
SP

Date
NOV 2007

553400 553500

**ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL
STOCK LANE
WILMINGTON
DARTFORD**

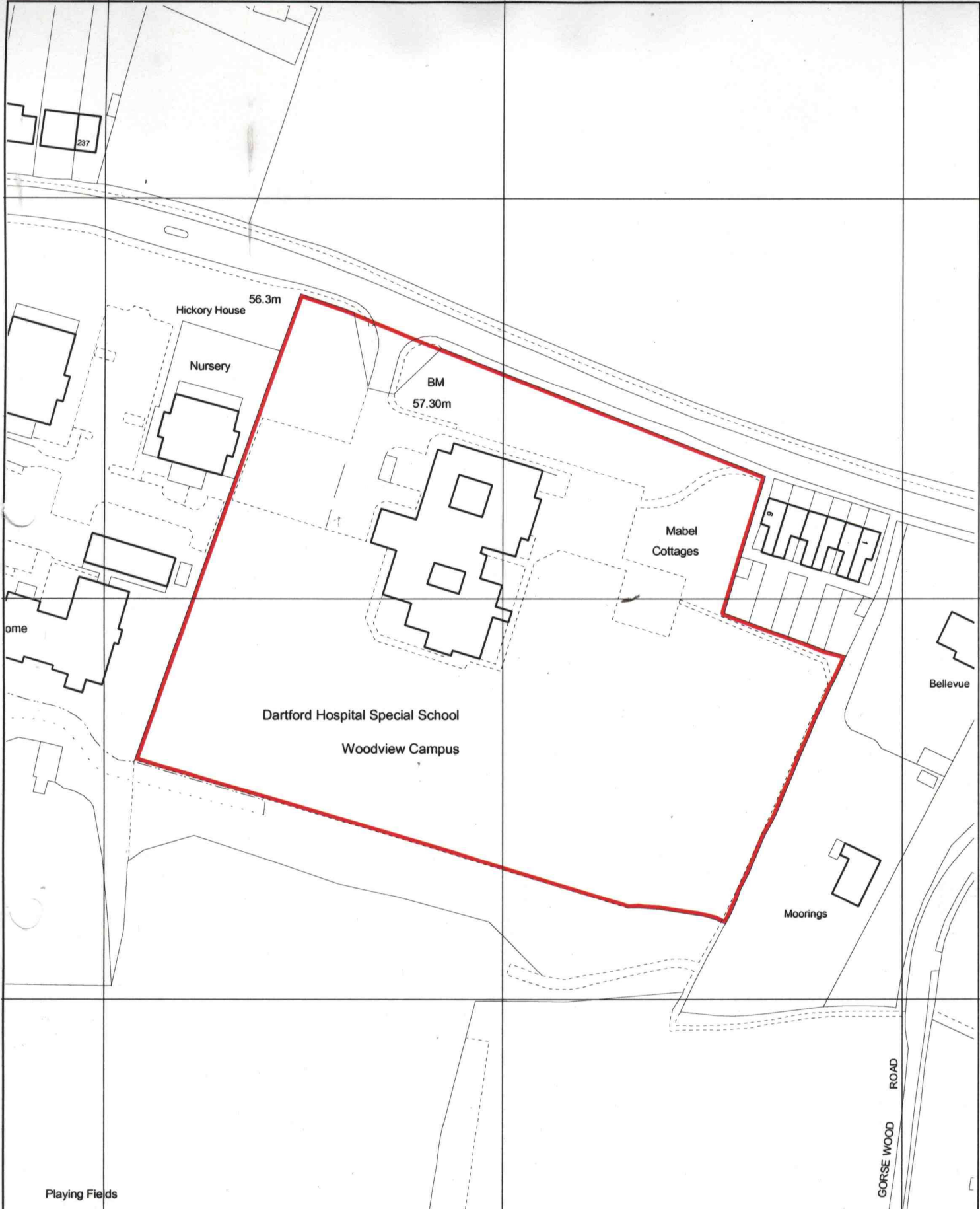
Page 45

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Drawing No.
TQ5371/2e



PROPERTY GROUP
County Hall, Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ
Tel: 08458 247247



Playing Fields

561100

561200

Drawing prepared by



WEST KENT HOSPITAL SCHOOL
 AND PHOENIX CENTRE
 MAIN ROAD
 LONGFIELD
 DARTFORD

AREA 17,156.23 sq.m

mouchelparkman

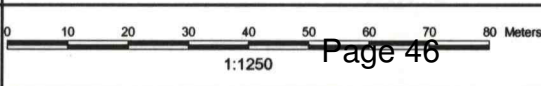
on behalf of



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CMR

Date
APR 2006



Drawing No.
TQ6168/5c

PROPERTY GROUP
 County Hall, Maidstone
 Kent ME14 1XQ
 Tel: (01622) 671411

My comments are as follows

Please continue on another sheet if necessary

Public Consultation

Relocation and Enlargement of Rowhill Special School and Relocation of West Kent Health Needs Service and the Phoenix Centre



Kent County Council would like to hear your views on the proposal.



Children, Families & Education Directorate



Public Consultation Response Form

Proposal to

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 14 JANUARY 2008

To: Simon Webb, Area Education Officer, Dartford & Gravesham
 17 Kings Hill Avenue
 Kings Hill, West Malling
 Kent, ME19 4UL
 Fax: 01732 525223

You can also email your views to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

Do you agree with the proposal?

Yes No Undecided

The parent/carer of a pupil at Rowhill, WKHNES or Phoenix A member of staff at Rowhill, WKHNES or Phoenix
Please indicate which school/PRU
 A governor of Rowhill, WKHNES or Phoenix A pupil at Rowhill, WKHNES or Phoenix
Please indicate which school/PRU
 Other interested party Name of other interested party:

Name:
Address:	
Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.	

PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS OVERLEAF

Kent County Council is considering a proposal to relocate and enlarge Rowhill School and relocate two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and we would like to hear your opinions.

Please take time to read this important document and let us know what you think of this proposal. The proposal has four parts.

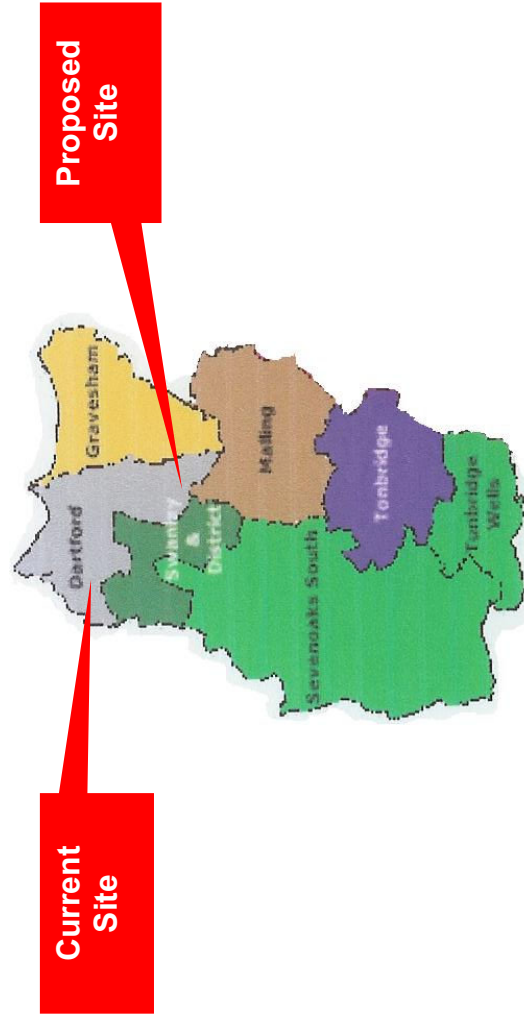
1. Relocate Rowhill School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford.
2. Enlarge the current school buildings at Longfield to increase the Rowhill School capacity from 96 places to 120 places.
3. Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service from Raynehurst Primary School, Gravesend, onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.
4. Relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.

Your views are important and will help shape the future. On page 9 you will see how you can let us know what you think. I can assure you that all comments received will be carefully considered and will be used to develop detailed proposals for each school. We will then consult you again with these proposals.

*Dr Ian Craig
 Director (Operations)
 Children Families and Education
 Kent County Council*

CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

Nov 2007	SOAB
Dec 2007	Start of Consultation
Dec 2007	Public Meeting
Jan 2008	Close of Consultation
Feb 2008	SOAB
Feb 2008	Report to Cabinet Member
Feb 2008	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
Apr 2008	End of Statutory Representation Period
Sep 2009	Enlargement work begins at Longfield site Rowhill opens on Longfield site. The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane. West Kent Health Needs Education Service decamps from Raynehurst and moves to Stock Lane



Why is KCC proposing these relocations?

The primary reason is that we need to provide more Behaviour and Learning school places in West Kent.

This proposal addresses this issue and would do so in a cost-effective way.

Background Information

Rowhill Special School

Rowhill is a Special School, currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ. It is within the Dartford West Cluster of schools.

Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School review to provide for pupils with behaviour and learning difficulties from across West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site. The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to acquire extensions to the Rowhill Special School site. However due to Green Belt building restrictions, this has not proved possible.

Currently there are 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.

There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that this pressure will increase.

Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".

The West Kent Health Needs Education Service

The WKHNES (Formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

The WKHNES at one time occupied a site adjacent to the Phoenix centre on Main Road, Longfield. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was relocated in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham. The site in Longfield has now been rebuilt through the insurance settlement.

The provision offered may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.

The current capacity is 40 on site with some students receiving home tuition. Currently they have 19 children on the roll, although due to the nature of the service they provide, this number fluctuates.

The Phoenix Centre

The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14 – 16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling. The Centre will provide the education service for any exclusions that continue for more than the 6th day.

The Phoenix Centre PRU currently occupies the Woodview Site, Main Road Longfield. The Centre has a capacity of 32 and also caters for a number of students on home tuition. Currently they have 22 students on the roll with 8 being tutored at home.

The Phoenix Centre received its last Ofsted inspection on 17 October 2006. The report was very positive and awarded the school the overall status of "Good".

Milestone Nursery

The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is unaffected by this proposal.

HOW TO TELL US YOUR VIEWS

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Area Education Officer (Dartford & Gravesham)
17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill, West Malling
Kent, ME19 4UL
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An elected member of Kent County Council will chair this meeting, at which all interested parties will have an opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Local Authority will also be present to clarify points of detail.

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What Happens Next?

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- All views will be considered before a decision is made.



How much will it cost?

This proposal does not rely on funding from the Education Capital budget.

The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Capital Budget. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5.455m.

The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, we will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come from the Special School Review Capital Budget.

What about Staffing? Will there be cuts?

As the Rowhill School is being enlarged, there may well be an increase in staffing. The cost of this would be met through the schools delegated budget.



Site plan of Longfield site

What about transport?

Rowhill has the largest roll and is therefore the school whose pupils may well be most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is not possible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done. However, overall it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.

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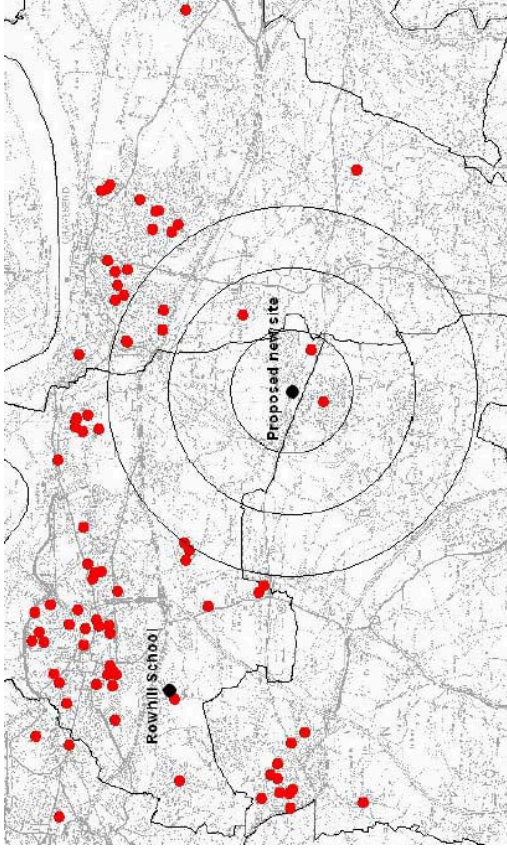
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On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired KCC transport. The residents of Stock Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during schools peak hours.



Map showing the location of Rowhill pupils in relation to the two sites



Site Plan of Rowhill

By: Director – Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 07 February 2008

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF AXTON CHASE SCHOOL AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a public consultation, in conjunction with the governing body, on the closure of Axton Chase School and its replacement with a government-funded Academy.

Introduction

1. (1) Axton Chase school is an 11-19 mixed (non-selective foundation) high school with a roll of 935 for Years 7 to 11 and 105 post 16 students. Attached as Appendix 1 is a map showing the location of the school.

(2) The school serves both rural and urban communities located in the Dartford district (see Appendix 2 for pupil distribution). The school draws from an area which includes three of the most deprived wards in Dartford, pupils attend from two of them, Temple Hill and Swanscombe.

(3) In Axton Chase school, the socio-economic profile of the student intake is below national and Kent average overall. The proportion of students with a statement of Special Educational Needs is 6%, above the Kent (2.8%) and National average (2.2%). The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is 10%, which is below the National average 13.6%, yet below the Kent average 7.9%.

(4) The vision for the Axtane Academy is that it will develop new first class approaches to education. The Academy will instil a pride in and love of learning, motivating students to aim high, become skilled and flexible learners and develop into socially, emotionally and behaviourally confident citizens, employees and employers. The Academy will have a particular focus on vocational education, creating a mix of academic and vocational experiences.

(5) The Axtane Academy will specialise in Science and the Creative and Expressive Arts, with a bias to technology based programmes. It will also have a specialist centre for students in the autistic spectrum.

(6) Axtane Academy will be part of a hard federation with the Leigh Technology Academy. The Leigh Technology Academy will be the sole legal body responsible for both Leigh and Axtane Academies.

Academy Proposal

2. (1) It is proposed that the Axtane Academy will replace Axton Chase School. The Axtane Academy will be federated with the Leigh Technology Academy, which is the lead sponsor with co-sponsors Kent County Council (KCC) and the University of Kent.

(2) It is proposed that the Axtane Academy will open in September 2008 on the existing site and premises with a Published Admission Number of 180, and a capacity of 900, plus up to 200 post 16 places. The new buildings are expected to be completed in September 2010 on the same site, adjacent to the current premises.

(3) The Academy will be at the core of the community and will be characterised by:

- (a) creating an environment that has high expectations for all
- (b) having the highest standards of behaviour and commitment
- (c) developing an enthusiasm for learning by creating a curriculum that incorporates the Sciences and the Creative and Expressive Arts as a rich stand running throughout all aspects of education.
- (d) creating a culture of continuous improvement
- (e) developing its distinctive approach to creating excellence in education by working in close partnership with the Leigh Technology Academy
- (f) enabling a greater proportion of young people to achieve the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for our knowledge society.

Resource Implications

Capital

3. (1) KCCs contribution is £1 million to the Academy Endowment Fund. This will supplement the funding received from the DCSF.

Revenue

(2) The Academy will receive its revenue funding directly from the DCSF each year. It will be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent specialist schools.

Human

(3) Consultation will take place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE. Costs of new staffing (TUPE applies to current staff) and costs associated with TUPE, including any valid redundancies of staff who cannot transfer or be deployed elsewhere in Kent schools, are borne by the DCSF.

Transport and Road Safety Implications

4. Early discussions will take place with Dartford Borough Council and Kent Highways. They will be fully consulted as part of the design and development phase of the new Academy and a travel plan will be produced prior to the opening in 2008.

School Improvement Implications

5. (1) The closure of the current school and the setting up of the Academy would allow for new facilities, flexibility of curriculum and recruitment of high quality staff. It is intended that the investment in facilities, curriculum and funding flexibility that the Academy would bring, would have the positive impact on standards that are required for the students of Dartford and for improved life opportunities in the local communities.

(2) Axton Chase school was last inspected in November 2007 when it was found that *'the education provided was satisfactory overall, with particular strengths. The sixth form were found to be confident, purposeful and ready to take on responsibilities both within the school and beyond. The curriculum needs greater breadth and cohesion in order to serve all students well.'*

Views of the Governing Body

6. The governing body of Axton Chase School and the Leigh Technology Academy Board are in full support of this proposal.

Views of the Area Education Officer

7. The Area Education Officer considers that this is an innovative proposal, designed to enhance the life opportunities of young people in the Dartford district. It is, therefore, appropriate to conduct a public consultation for the closure of Axton Chase School.

Proposed Timetable

8. Should public consultation be agreed, the following timetable is proposed:

School Organisation Advisory Board	07 February 2008
Publication of consultation document	12 February 2008
Public meeting	w.c. 25 February 2008
Closing date for responses	24 March 2008
Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	April 2008
Cabinet Member decision	April 2008
Issue public notice	May 2008
End of public notice period	June 2008
Implementation	1 September 2008

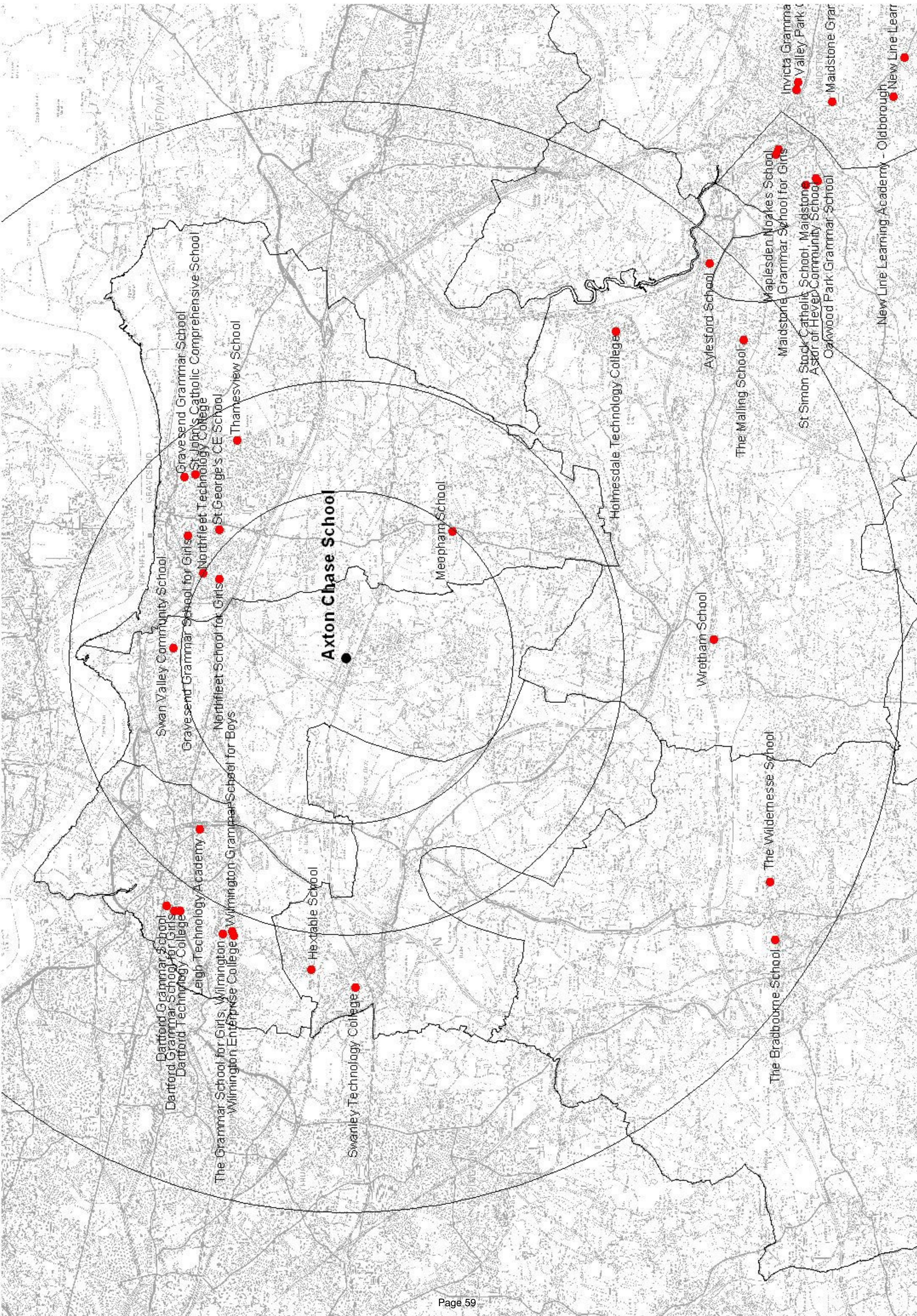
9. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on the proposal for a public consultation to be undertaken in conjunction with the governing body on the proposal for the closure of The Axton Chase School and its replacement with a government funded academy.

Simon Webb
Area Education Officer
Dartford and Gravesham
Tel: (01732) 525110

Background Papers:

None.

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Axton Chase School

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
 KENT 2008/DOT MAPS SEC .APR.

**LOCATION OF AXTON CHASE SCHOOL
 WITH 3, 5 AND 10 MILE RADI AND ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE AREA**

CCROWN COPYRIGHT KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
 LICENCE NO LA076708 31.01.2008

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 7 February 2008

Subject: PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE FOR GREEN PARK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, DOVER

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report explains the need to bring forward a proposal to change the age range of Green Park Community School, Dover and to close the maintained nursery unit with effect from 19 October 2008.

Introduction

1. (1) On 14 March 2007 the Schools Adjudicator approved the proposal to close Melbourne Community Primary School and The Powell School with effect from 31 August 2007 and to establish a newly amalgamated school from 1 September 2007.

(2) The original proposal was that both schools should be consolidated onto the site of The Powell School with effect from 1 September 2007 and that the school would have an age range of 4-11. The proposal therefore encompassed the closure of the existing nursery unit on the Melbourne site.

(3) The Adjudicator modified the proposal published by the Local Authority. The proposal to amalgamate the two schools with effect from 1 September 2007 was approved. However, the Adjudicator determined that the newly amalgamated school should initially operate on split site locations. This was intended to allow time for adaptations to The Powell site to be properly planned and implemented and for the needs of the children with physical disability, including those in the Physical Disability Unit at the Melbourne School to be taken into account.

(4) In consultation between the Local Authority, the headteachers of the two existing schools and the Adjudicator it was agreed that the consolidation onto a single site would be deferred until September 2008. Following discussion with the Local Authority, the Adjudicator therefore made a further modification to the originally published proposal by determining that the age range of the new school should be 3-11 and not 4-11, effectively allowing the nursery unit to continue until the Melbourne site was closed and mainstream provision consolidated on the site of the former Powell School.

(5) Plans are now in place to make appropriate improvements and adaptations to the former Powell site to enable consolidation to take place from September 2008. It is therefore necessary to bring forward a proposal to change the age range of the newly established Green Park Community Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11, thereby closing the maintained nursery on the former Melbourne site.

Background

2. (1) The maintained nursery unit was opened in September 2005. Since that time it has always been significantly under-subscribed. There are currently 14 children occupying part time places out of a potential capacity for the nursery of 52.

(2) With mainstream provision consolidated on the Powell site, it would become difficult to maintain a nursery unit, managed by the school, on the Melbourne site over the long term.

(3) The nursery unit is accommodated in excellent facilities in a detached building on the Melbourne site. The intention has always been that these facilities should remain available as a valuable community resource with considerable amenity value. Over the past few months, consideration has therefore been given to the potential for retaining pre-school provision on the former Melbourne site while addressing the practical implications arising from the relocation of the mainstream school provision onto the former Powell site some 0.7 miles away.

(4) Pre-school provision, including both nursery and full day care provision is already available locally through the provision made by the Umbrella private nursery, which is part of the offer available through the Buckland Children's Centre. The Umbrella provision currently offers morning and full day care provision for up to 45 children. The private provision is currently delivered in St Nicholas Church Hall on the Buckland Estate. The quality of the accommodation and facilities available are inferior to those available within the existing maintained nursery unit. Umbrella have been looking for alternative accommodation. Use of the facilities on the former Melbourne site would meet a pressing community need and enhance the facilities available to local pre-school children.

(5) Preliminary discussions have taken place with Umbrella about the possibility in principle of relocating to the former Melbourne site. These can now be taken further into more substantive and detailed discussions, subject to the potential availability of the nursery building in the light of decisions to be taken by Members. Umbrella has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with KCC to deliver their part of the Children's Centre offer. This would need to be renegotiated to take account of any relocation.

(6) As part of the discussions to be had with the current Children's Centre provider the Local Authority would secure a guarantee that all pre-school children currently attending the Green Park nursery unit are guaranteed a place if and when the provision comes under the management of a private provider.

The Proposal

3. (1) The proposal is to change the age range of Green Park Community Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 and to close the maintained nursery unit currently operating on the site of the former Melbourne Community Primary School.

(2) The implementation date for the proposal would be 19 October 2008, which is the end of Term 1 in the next academic year. This would allow statutory procedures to be completed and relocation of Umbrella managed effectively.

(3) The relocation of the Umbrella pre-school provision would not technically form part of the statutory proposal. However, subject to the consultation proceeding, discussions would be developed with this alternative provider to ensure continuing use of the excellent facilities available for the benefit of the local community.

Site Issues

4. (1) The mainstream provision will be consolidated onto the site of the former Powell School with effect from 1 September 2008. Plans have been drawn up to adapt and enhance the site accordingly.

(2) From that time, the existing site of the former Melbourne School will be surplus to requirements and potentially available for alternative community use or for disposal depending on decisions to be made by elected Members. The nursery building is detached from the mainstream school site and continuing use of the nursery facility should not in anyway impede alternative use/development of the school site.

(3) There is insufficient space and accommodation on the former Powell site to house a maintained nursery unit. There is also a private provider (Kidease) with 40 places located next to the former Powell site.

(4) The current minimum age for admission to the maintained nursery unit is 3 years old. Umbrella need to offer provisions for babies and younger children, if they are to fulfil the requirement as the Children's Centre provider. Currently, they cannot offer places to this very young age group, given the restrictions imposed by their existing accommodation. Relocation to the maintained nursery unit site would provide them with suitable accommodation. Modest adaptations to accommodate baby changing facilities etc. would be required. The costs would be met from the Sure Start Sustainability Funds.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) Retention of the physical infrastructure of the nursery unit within Local Authority ownership has ongoing implications for maintenance of the building. However, it is proposed that any agreement entered into with an alternative provider would generate a regular income sufficient to offset these costs.

Human

(2) Green Park School is currently working with Schools Personnel Service (SPS) to address the staffing issues at the school which will need to include the implications of a future closure of the nursery unit.

School Improvement Implications

6. Maintaining continuity of provision through an alternative provider should ensure that there are no adverse implications for school improvement.

Equality Issues

7. Continuing access to high quality provision on the former Melbourne site should avoid any detrimental impact.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

8. Continuing access to on-site provision should avoid adverse impact on the environment, the community and any adverse transport implications.

Proposed Timetable

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 9. | SOAB 1 Seeking permission to consult | 7 February 2008 |
| | Public Consultation Period | 25 February to 7 April 2008 |
| | Public Meeting | w/c 10 March |
| | SOAB 2 Report back on consultation | 7 May 2008 |
| | Cabinet Member decision | End of May 2008 |

If not called into Scrutiny

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Public Notice issued | 6 June 2008 |
| | End of Public Notice period | 18 July 2008 |
| | Determination by Local Authority | 25 July 2008 |
| | End of four week period for appeals | 22 August 2008 |
| | Implementation from | 19 October 2008 |

If called into Scrutiny

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Public Notice issued | 4 July 2008 |
| | End of Public Notice period | 15 August 2008 |
| | Determination by Local Authority | 22 August 2008 |
| | End of four week period for appeals | 19 September 2008 |
| | Implementation from | 19 October 2008 |

Views of the Local Members

Mr Newman's Views

10. (1) Mr Newman has been consulted over the proposal and has agreed to forward his views to the Area Education Officer who will table these at the meeting on 7 February.

Mr Cowan's Views

- (2) Mr Cowan has been consulted over the proposal and has agreed to forward his views to the Area Education Officer who will table these at the meeting on 7 February.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to give their views on whether there should be a consultation on the possible change of age range of Green Park Community School, Dover and the closure of the existing maintained nursery unit on the former Melbourne site with effect from 19 October 2008.

Martyn Doole
Area Education Officer
Thanet and Dover
Tel: 01227 284407

The Local Members are Mr Bill Newman and Mr Gordon Cowan.

Background Documents:

None

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 7 February 2008

Subject: SCHOOLS APPLYING FOR FOUNDATION/TRUST STATUS

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To inform Members of SOAB of the current situation regarding Foundation/Trust proposals

FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. (1) A paper was presented to SOAB on 17 October 2007 informing Members of the Government's encouragement of all schools to consider Foundation/Trust status, and of the 'fast track' procedures to achieve it. These procedures require a governing body to consult 'interested parties' (including the LA) over a minimum of a four week period, before determining themselves.

(2) Unless there are very good reasons not to do so, the change of status will be approved.

(3) At SOAB, it was agreed that as the consultation period will not normally allow the LA time to prepare paperwork for SOAB for a view, that:

(a) Unless there are very good reasons to the contrary the presumption will be that the LA will not oppose any governing body wishing to move to Foundation or Trust status;

(b) The Director (Operations) will consult with the Cabinet Member and local Member(s) before responding to a consultation on Foundation or Trust status;

(c) Responses will be reported to the next available SOAB.

Determinations

2. (1) Since the last report to the Board there have been no determinations reported to the LA.

(2) There are now 58 Foundation schools in Kent (13 Primary, 44 Secondary and 1 Special) and 91 Aided schools (78 Primary and 13 Secondary) – a total of 149, and in addition, 7 Academies = 156.

(3) For the sake of simplicity, Aided schools should be considered as having the same status as Foundation/Trust schools.

Consultations

3. (1) Since the last report two schools have begun formal consultations to change to Foundation Status. They are **Borden Grammar School** and **Highsted Grammar School, Sittingbourne**.

(2) The consultation for Borden finishes on 15 February, and for Highsted on 27 February 2008.

(3) The Cabinet Member, Mr Dance, and the local Members Mrs Simpson and Mr Truelove were informed (on 18 January 2008) with a view that we should not oppose.

Recommendations

4. Members are asked to note the report.

Ian Craig
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Background Documents:

- School Standards and Framework Act; DFES 1998
- Education and Inspection Act; DFES 2006
- Changing Category to Foundation; DCSF 2007
- School Organisation; Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools in England Regulations; DCSF 2007
- Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status;
SOAB - 17 October 2007/14 November 2007/10 January 2008