



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 4th November, 2009, at 10.30 am in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/
Karen Mannering**

Telephone **(01622)
694289/694367**

Tea/Coffee will be available from 10.15am in the meeting room

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 - 8 October 2009 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Proposal to Re-designate Foxwood School as a School for Profound and Severe Learning Needs and Highview School as a School for Complex Learning Needs; Relocate both Schools on to the site of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College; and remove the Boarding Provision at Foxwood School (Pages 5 - 20)
5. The Proposed Relocation of Laleham Gap (Community Special) School (Pages 21 - 28)
6. Proposed Change of Age Range for Aylesham (Community) Primary School (from 3 - 11 years to 4 - 11 years) and the Closure of the Maintained Nursery Unit (Pages 29 - 38)
7. Proposal to Expand the John Wesley School from 210 Places to 420 Places (Pages 39 - 50)

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)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 27 October 2009

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 Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 8 October 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr C J Capon, Ms S J Carey, Mr M C Dance, Mr P J Homewood, Mr S J G Koowaree (Substitute for Mr M J Vye) and Mr B J Sweetland (Substitute for Mr M J Northey).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Adams (Area Children's Services Officer, Ashford and Shepway), Mr C Jones (Area Children's Services Officer, Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling) and Mr M Doole (Area Children's Services Officer, Thanet and Dover) and Mr G Mills, Democratic Services.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**1. Minutes - 16 July 2009**

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2009 be agreed as a true record.

2. Proposed Closure of Astor of Hever (Community) School, Maidstone and its Replacement with a Government Funded Academy

(Item 4 – Report by Ms Rosalind Turner, Managing Director: Children, Families and Education)

(1) This report sought the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a public consultation on the closure of Astor of Hever (Community) School and its replacement with a Government funded Academy subject to Ministerial approval.

(2) Astor of Hever has been without a substantive Headteacher since April 2008. The County Council required the school to enter into a partnership with The Westlands School (a high performing high school in Kent) because of its challenging circumstances and lack of experienced senior leadership. Under this arrangement the Headteacher of Westlands School has acted as Executive Headteacher but from September 2009 a new collaboration had been established for 2009/10 with Mascalls School. In addition the existing school buildings are outdated, are a significant maintenance liability and some areas are not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. The proposal is therefore to develop the Astor of Hever into an Academy providing high performing comprehensive education for boys and girls of all abilities aged between 11 and 19 years located on the existing Oakwood Park campus. The intention is to develop the Academy in collaboration with neighbouring schools and developed by the sponsor Woodard Schools in consultation with the local community. If approved the Academy would be led by an Executive Principal and a Governing Body, whose membership would be appointed by Woodard

Schools, but would include additionally local authority representation and staff and parent governors. All pupils from Astor of Hever School would transfer to the new Academy which it was proposed would open in January 2011 in the existing buildings and then move into new buildings during the academic year 2013-2014. During the course of discussions Mr Dance said that he believed the high reputation of Woodard Schools would bring quality to this proposal and build on the positive benefits Astor of Hever had developed through its links with the Westland School. The Academy proposal would also result in the school being located in new buildings and it should be fully supported. Mr Koowaree said that he had spoken to both Mr Vye and to Mr Daley (as one of the local Members) who both said they supported the proposals.

(3) The Advisory Board agreed to support a public consultation being undertaken on the proposal for the closure of Astor of Hever (Community) School, Maidstone and its replacement with a government-funded Academy, subject to Ministerial approval.

3. Proposed Closure of Archers Court Maths and Computing College and its Replacement with a Government Funded Academy

(Item 5 – Report by Ms Rosalind Turner, Managing Director: Children, Families and Education)

(1) This report sought the views of the Advisory Board on the proposal to undertake a public consultation on the closure of Archers Court Maths and Computing College, Dover in order that it may be replaced with a government funded Academy.

(2) Mr Doole said that the establishment of an Academy would provide a radical solution to the school's existing problems and enable it to maximise flexibility in organising and tailoring its curriculum according to local needs and circumstances. An Academy would also deliver a substantial new build, providing first class learning facilities for all students and was an option which was strongly supported by the existing leadership and governing body of the school. The Academy would be sponsored by Canterbury Christ Church University, as lead sponsor, with Kent County Council together with Dover Grammar School for Boys and Dover Grammar School for Girls as co-sponsors. Collectively the sponsors and partners would therefore be able to draw on extensive skills and expertise in the fields of education, research, business and organisational leadership. Under the proposals the Academy would open in September 2010 in the existing buildings with a target occupation of new buildings being September 2013. The Academy would be focused on the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes for children and young people within the context of the Children's Trust arrangements in Kent.

(3) During the course of discussion Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of questions of detail to which Mr Doole responded accordingly. Following discussion the Advisory Board agreed to support the undertaking of a public consultation on a proposal to close Archers Court Maths and Computing College to be replaced with a government funded Academy.

4. The Future of High School Provision in Deal

(Item 6 – Report by Ms Rosalind Turner, Managing Director: Children, Families and Education)

(1) This report sought the views of the Advisory Board on the need for a public consultation on the future of high school provision in the Deal area. In presenting this report Mr Doole said that both the Walmer Science College and the Castle Community College were good schools which served their communities well. However, the challenge was to secure viable long term provision for the Deal area which would enable standards to be maintained and improved against a background of falling rolls with consequential reductions in student numbers, funding and staffing if action was not taken now. The proposal was to therefore undertake a public consultation on the future of high school provision in Deal leading to the amalgamation of the Castle Community College and the Walmer Science College by closing the existing two schools and establishing a new successor school, if possible by September 2010. Under the proposals all students who attending the two existing schools at the point at which the new school was established would be guaranteed a place at the new school should they need one. As the Castle Community College site was the larger of the two and already had significant community use the proposal was that the new successor school would be developed at this location which would be substantially redeveloped with a significant new build, through the Building Schools for the Future Programme. The Walmer Science College site did have some good quality new building stock as well as other less suitable accommodation and therefore subject to the outcome of the consultation, it was proposed that part of this site could be retained for development as a vocational centre for all schools in the Dover area whilst some of the site could be declared surplus.

(2) During the course of discussion Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of points of detail regarding the proposal to which Mr Doole responded accordingly. When reporting back on the outcome of the consultation it was agreed that there would also be a discussion around whether the new school should be taken forward on the basis of it being a Foundation Trust school or a Community school.

(3) The Advisory Board then agreed that a public consultation should be undertaken in order to seek views on the future of high school provision in the Deal area.

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By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 November 2009

Subject: PROPOSAL TO RE-DESIGNATE FOXWOOD SCHOOL AS A SCHOOL FOR PROFOUND AND SEVERE LEARNING NEEDS AND HIGHVIEW SCHOOL AS A SCHOOL FOR COMPLEX LEARNING NEEDS; RELOCATE BOTH SCHOOLS ON TO THE SITE OF BROCKHILL PARK PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE; AND REMOVE THE BOARDING PROVISION AT FOXWOOD SCHOOL.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on undertaking a public consultation to relocate and redesignate Foxwood and Highview schools and to remove the boarding provision from Foxwood School.

Introduction

1. (1) Foxwood School currently provides for pupils aged 3-19 years with a combination of Severe Learning Difficulties and/or Autism. The school has specialist status for Cognition and Learning. The current designated number is 122 (42 of which could have residential placements). There are currently 106 pupils with statements of SEN on roll, five of which are residential. The school provides support for seven children in the early years who are not on the roll of the school. Attached at appendix 1 is a dot map showing the home location of pupils.

(2) Highview School currently provides for pupils aged 5-16 years with Moderate Learning Difficulties. The current designated number is 141. The school currently has 117 pupils with Moderate and Complex Learning Needs. The school has Creative Partnership Change Schools Status and will submit a bid for specialist status for Cognition and Learning in January 2010 with a view to achieving status in September 2010. Attached at appendix 2 is a dot map showing the home location of pupils.

[3] The two schools federated on 1 November 2008. They have a joint governing body, joint leadership team meetings, are developing a shared vision for the future when the schools share a site, and are working towards a joint leadership team model. They also run a joint Outreach Service – Integrated Specialist Inclusion Services (ISIS).

Background

2. (1) The County Council has been moving forward with a planned programme of redesignation of its special schools in order that it has a pattern of provision which

can meet the future needs of pupils, and to ensure that appropriate provision is as local to the children's homes as possible. The principles upon which the County's Special School Plan is based were widely consulted upon at the time.

(2) The Plan identified the need to provide more places in the following categories of need: Autism; Behavioural Difficulties; Severe Behavioural, Emotional and Social Needs; and Complex Medical Needs.

(3) The Plan also provided for each District to have a "District Special School" with the intention that this school would provide for the full range of needs for primary aged pupils, with provision for secondary aged pupils becoming more specialised.

The Proposal

3. (1) In 2004 the Local Authority moved forward with an amalgamation proposal for Foxwood and Highview Schools. This was rejected by the Adjudicator. Since this time the Local Authority has worked with the two schools to develop an alternative approach which still delivers the District Special School concept but within a federated school model.

(2) The proposal is to re-locate Foxwood and Highview Schools to a shared building on the Brockhill Park School site. Foxwood School would be re-designated to provide for pupils with Profound and Severe Learning Needs. Highview School will re-designate to a school for pupils with Complex Needs. Therefore, between the two schools in the federation the full spectrum of Profound, Severe and Complex Needs will be delivered within the District. Between them the two schools will offer 282 places for pupils aged 3 to 19 years. The shared building will be designed to enable either school to admit a greater number of pupils if demand arises and the other school is not full. In addition to providing, on a district basis, for the needs of pupils with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs, together the schools will provide, on an area basis, for secondary aged pupils who have Severe Communication and/or Interaction Needs associated with a combination of Autism and learning difficulties, and pupils with specific language impairment and/or Autism. This provision will build on the specialist status of Cognition and Learning of both schools.

(3) Foxwood School currently has residential designation. The number of pupils accessing this provision has reduced over the last 5 years and the last five residential pupils leave in December 2009. It is proposed to remove the residential designation from Foxwood School in June 2010.

(4) The proposal involves the construction of a new building on the site of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College. Within the new building each school will retain its individuality, although there will be opportunities during the design process to include some shared accommodation and resources. There will also be opportunities to co-locate the delivery of health-based services and family support and a new purpose-built training and development centre. Site plans for all three schools are attached at Appendices 3,4 and 5.

(5) Co-location with Brockhill Park would offer access to a wider range of facilities, resources and experiences, whilst retaining specialist teaching and support. It will promote high levels of pupil integration, especially socially and in sport, music, drama, art and vocational courses.

(6) Pre-school pupils currently attending the Children's Centre at Foxwood School will continue to be supported within the school through appropriate transition arrangements. It is proposed that this Centre relocates with Foxwood School.

Site Issues

4. (1) Foxwood School currently has a large open site on a hillside with a range of buildings of moderate quality. The topography of the site is entirely inappropriate given the needs of its pupils. Highview School currently has a more restricted site but with many different levels due to the sloping nature of the site. Both schools would benefit from new buildings.

(2) Brockhill Park Schools site is expansive, and in comparison with the two existing school sites, is flat. It is not yet decided where on the Brockhill Park site the special schools will be located, and this will be subject to necessary planning consents.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) The new building would be provided as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

(2) Under the formula funding arrangements two schools in a federation delivering for Profound, Severe and Complex needs, receive more revenue funding than a single school delivering the same service, because some elements of schools' budgets are based on a per school allocation or minimum funding level. We propose to seek the agreement of the Schools Funding Forum to amend the funding scheme to counter the financial advantage that these 2 schools would otherwise enjoy over other Profound, Severe and Complex schools in Kent and moving ahead with this proposal would be contingent upon this approval.

Human

(3) Foxwood School is currently engaged in restructuring following the reduction in residential pupil numbers, and the planned transfer of its remaining residential pupils to other schools. The residential staff have received their redundancy notices. Correspondingly there has also been some reduction in the number of Teaching Assistants employed in the school to support these children during the school day. Further proposals for restructuring to bring about economies of scale across the federation will be brought forward by governors. These will occur during the period leading up to and following the relocation in to the new buildings. It is hoped that natural staff changes occurring in the federation will facilitate this process.

Views of the Local Members

6. Views of the following local members:

(1) Richard Pascoe (Highview) - Mr Pascoe is aware of the proposal and his views are being sought.

- (2) Christopher Capon (Foxwood) – supports a public consultation being taken.
- (3) Susan Carey (Brockhill) – supports the undertaking of a public consultation and will want to be assured that an appropriate solution will be found to any traffic issues.

Views of the Governing Body

7. The Governing Body is positive about the proposal, and has worked with the Local Authority to develop it. A new purpose-built building for both schools will better support the pupils' learning and the care that can be provided to children with increasingly complex medical needs. A shared building will provide the space to enable collaborative working practices to develop further and will improve the lives of pupils and staff.

Views of the Partnership Boards

8. View from the Partnership Boards will be sought during the consultation period.

School Improvement Implications

9. (1) The federation enhances the capacity of both schools to move students through their personalised learning and will mean that they can meet need effectively across a wide spectrum. By sharing a building best practice from both schools can be utilised with teachers acting flexibly across both settings as facilitators / coaches / mentors where appropriate. The new building will allow for more creative use of space to enhance the development of students' emotional intelligence. There will be significantly more sophisticated use of the new technologies available.

(2) The schools propose to utilise funding under the "Smile Centre" model to provide a new purpose built training and development centre on the new site.

(3) All opportunities will be taken to develop and co-locate children's and communities services on the new site, with integrated teams (where appropriate) to serve the communities of Marsh, Hythe and Folkestone.

Equality Issues

10. The new building will provide students with access to their full educational entitlement in purpose-built facilities.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

11. Transport arrangements for pupils will continue. It is possible, when the schools are in one building, that there will be opportunities for combining some services, which may realise savings.

Proposed Timetable

12.	Consultation Starts	7 December 2009
	Public Meeting	w/c 11 Jan 2010
	Consultation Closes	31 Jan 2010
	Report back to SOAB	17 March 2010
	Cabinet Member Decision	9 April 2010
	Public Notice published	15 April 2010
	Cabinet Member Decision	11 June 2010
	Implementation:	
	Removal of Residential	June 2010
	Redesignation	September 2010
	Relocation	September 2013

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to recommend that a public consultation be undertaken on the proposal to re-designate Foxwood School as a school for profound and severe learning needs and Highview School as a school for complex learning needs and to relocate both schools on to the site of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College; and remove the boarding provision at Foxwood school.

David Adams
Area Children's Services Officer
Ashford & Shepway
Tel: (01233) 898559

The Local Members are Richard Pascoe, Christopher Capon and Susan Carey.

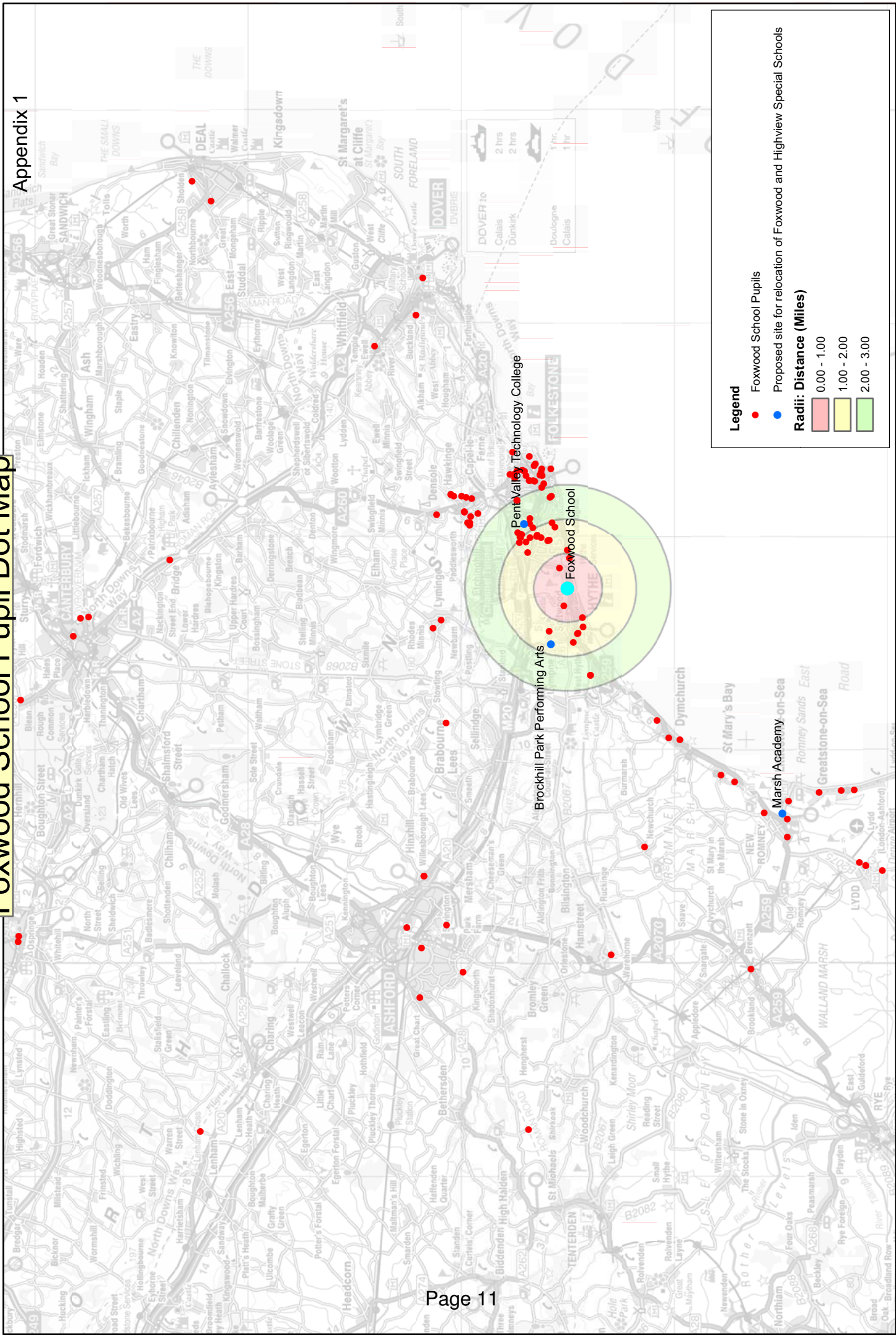
Background Documents:

None

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Foxwood School Pupil Dot Map

Appendix 1



Legend

- Foxwood School Pupils
- Proposed site for relocation of Foxwood and Highview Special Schools

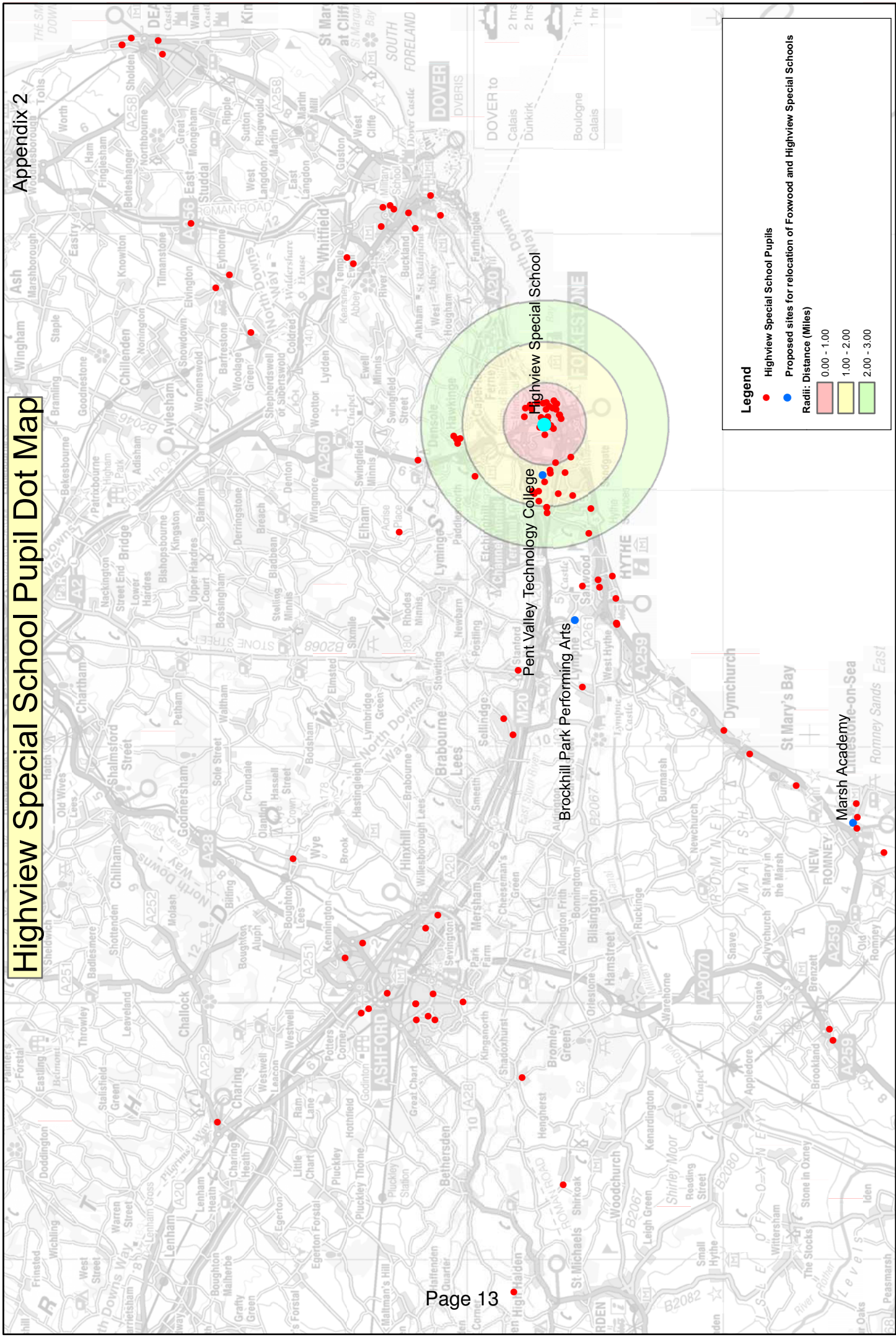
Radii: Distance (Miles)

- 0.00 - 1.00
- 1.00 - 2.00
- 2.00 - 3.00

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Highview Special School Pupil Dot Map

Appendix 2



Legend

- Highview Special School Pupils
- Proposed sites for relocation of Foxwood and Highview Special Schools

Radii: Distance (Miles)

- 0.00 - 1.00
- 1.00 - 2.00
- 2.00 - 3.00

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Drawing Title

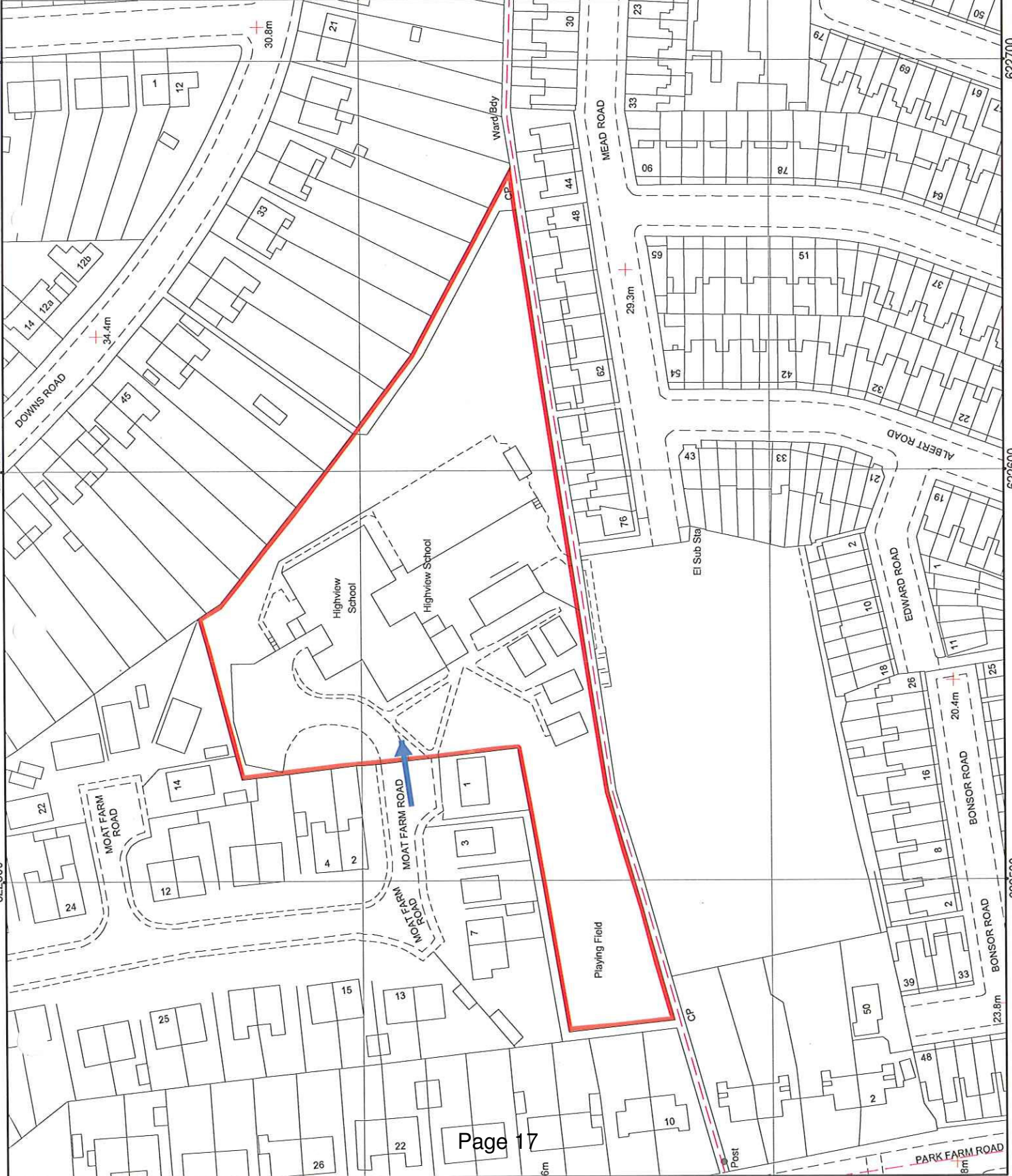
**HIGHVIEW SCHOOL
MOAT FARM ROAD
FOLKESTONE**

MasterMap	Date	FEB 2009
Drawn By	JTN	
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		1:1250 @ A4
Drawing No.		TR2236/37F

622700
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Tel: 08458 247247

Project

Drawing Title
**BROOKHILL PARK SCHOOL
HYTHE**

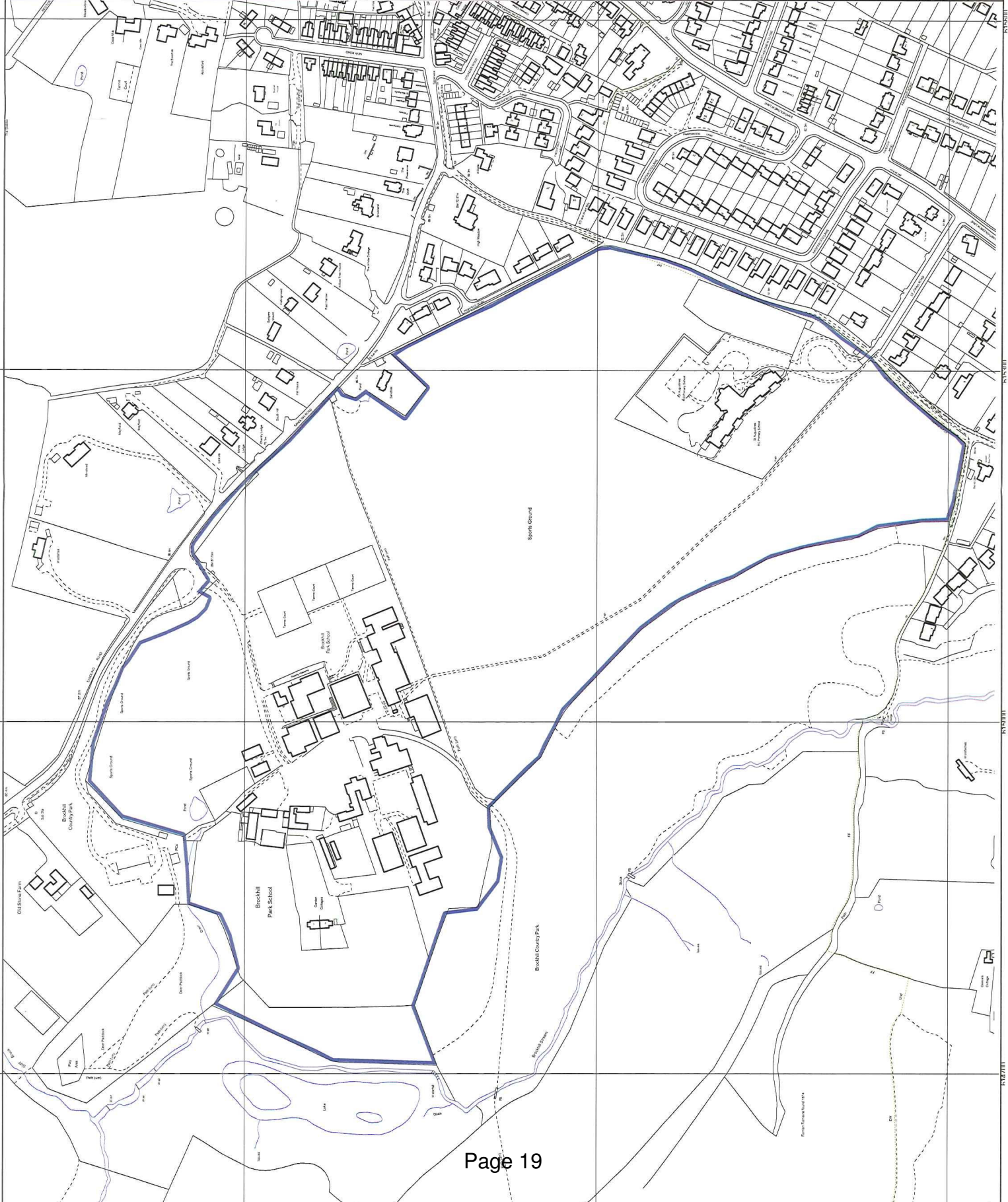
**AS TRANSFERRED TO
GOVERNING BODY
20TH JANUARY 1997**

Scale: 1:3000
0 40 80 120 160 Meters

Drawn by: JTN Date: APR 2007

Drawing No. TR1435/4E

135800



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By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 November 2009

Subject: THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF LALEHAM GAP (COMMUNITY SPECIAL) SCHOOL

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report proposes the relocation of Laleham Gap (Community Special) School, Margate to a site at Pysons Road, Broadstairs adjacent to the new Ellington and Hereson School, in a new building to be provided through BSF funding. The report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on undertaking a public consultation on the possible relocation of the school.

Introduction

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

(2) The relocation of Laleham Gap School to a site at Pysons Road, Broadstairs will enable the existing split site provision to be consolidated on a single site. The BSF team will work with the school on ‘visioning’ for their new school building to provide the best possible learning environment for students.

(2) The proposed location for the new build is more than 2 miles away from the existing sites and statutory public consultation is therefore required.

Background

2. (1) Laleham Gap School was established in April 2005 as the County’s specialist provision for high functioning pupils aged 3 to 16 years with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or Speech and Language disorders. The new school was established from the amalgamation of Laleham School in Margate and Gap House School in Broadstairs and since 2005 has continued to operate across both sites.

(2) Secondary age students are located in the former Laleham School site which is situated in a residential area in Margate with grounds, close to local amenities and within reach of the sea front. It is on this site that the school’s residential provision for pupils (across the age range) is located.

(3) Primary age students are currently located in the old Gap House buildings in Broadstairs which comprise an Edwardian House and buildings in close proximity to the sea.

(4) Currently there are 180 pupils on roll at the school. Eight pupils are Looked After Children, three of whom are in the care of other Local Authorities.

(5) Attached as appendix 1 is a map showing the two current sites of Laleham Gap School and the proposed new site. Attached as appendix 2 is a dot map showing the home location of pupils attending the school as at Spring 2009. Attached as appendix 3 is a plan of the Pysons Road site.

The Proposal

3. (1) The Building Schools for the Future programme will enable the complete rebuilding of the school to a design of the highest quality. It will mean that for the first time the school can be consolidated on a single site with enhanced opportunities for cross phase association, more efficient timetabling and access to state of the art facilities.

(2) The proposed location of the new school buildings is on greenfield space which currently forms part of the campus occupied by The Ellington and Hereson School.

Site Issues

4. (1) The existing split site accommodation poses significant challenges in terms of the efficient management of the two sites. The accommodation is limited and outdated. Consolidation will facilitate the more efficient deployment of staff and resources.

(2) The proposed site at Pysons Road is large and was always envisaged as being suitable for up to 3 schools. Ellington School for Girls merged with The Hereson School in September 2009. Under existing transition plans Hereson students will transfer to the site in phases between September 2009 and 2010/11. This will create a single school, ultimately of approximately 600 students age 11 to 16.

(3) The relocation of Laleham Gap School, adjacent to the new Ellington & Hereson School would realise the site's optimum potential. The two schools would occupy separate and distinct buildings and each would be self sufficient in terms of learning space and facilities. The possibility of deriving added value from sharing some sports facilities, etc, will be explored carefully.

(4) There is a public right of way running through the proposed location of the new building. Careful consideration will be given to this to ensure that the footprint of the new buildings makes optimum use of available space.

(5) There is a need to review access to the site to ensure that the particular transport needs of Laleham students can be accommodated satisfactorily while minimising any collateral traffic impact.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) The new school building will be funded through BSF. The intention is to sell the existing Laleham site and to use the capital receipt to support KCC's contribution to the broader BSF programme. The existing site at Gap House will be adapted for use by Stone Bay Special School as the centre for its residential provision.

(2) Maintenance and other premises related costs are likely to be reduced with consolidation and new build facilitating more efficient use of space with modern heating, lighting and utilities.

Human

There will be minimal human resource implications beyond some potential efficiencies arising from the use of a single site. Most staff will transfer to the new location.

Views of the Local Members

6. (1) The Local Members are Michael Jarvis and Chris Wells for the current Laleham Gap location and Elizabeth Green and John Kirby for the proposed Pysons Road site in Broadstairs.

(2) Mr Kirby supports the proposal to relocate Laleham Gap School to the Pysons Road site adjacent to the The Ellington & Hereson School, provided both schools retain their independence.

(3) The views of the remaining members are currently being sought and will be available at the meeting.

Views of the Governing Body

7. The governing body is resolved that the relocation represents the best available option for the school and that it will deliver enhanced facilities for students.

Views of the Partnership Board

8. At their meeting on 14 July the Thanet 1 and 2 Partnership Boards discussed the proposal and fully supported this opportunity for Laleham Gap School to be relocated to the Pysons Road site in purpose built accommodation.

School Improvement Implications

9. The new facilities available to Laleham Gap students will transform the learning environment for all. It is envisaged that in the future there would be the opportunity for Laleham Gap School and The Ellington and Hereson School to form a close working relationship enabling the Laleham Gap students to have access to a wider curriculum. There would also be the opportunity for Laleham Gap School to support the Dyslexic provision at The Ellington and Hereson School through pupil support and staff training.

Equality Issues

10. The very specific and individual needs of all students at Laleham Gap will be catered for within the context of this proposal.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

11. (1) A full traffic assessment will be carried out and appropriate access arrangements made. Health and safety issues will have the highest priority.

(2) The residential provision for up to 60 students at Laleham Gap School will have implications for the degree of community access to the school's facilities. However within that context consideration will be given as to how to optimise community use of the facilities on site.

Proposed Timetable

12. The following timetable would apply, subject to the proposal going forward to public consultation.

Report to SOAB	
Seeking views on public consultation	04 November 2009
Public consultation period	16 November 2009 to 11 January 2010
Public meeting	week commencing 30 November 2009
Report back to SOAB	25 February 2010
Public Notice issued	
(subject to Cabinet Member decision)	22 April 2010
Public Notice expires	03 June 2010
Determination by Local Authority	End June 2010
Adjudication (if required)	July/August 2010
Building work commences	Late 2010
Implementation	April/September 2012

Recommendations

13. Members re asked to express their views on whether there should be a public consultation on the possible relocation of Laleham Gap Special School from its existing split site locations in Margate and Broadstairs to the site in Pysons Road, Broadstairs adjacent to the new Ellington and Hereson School.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer
Dover & Thanet
01227 284407

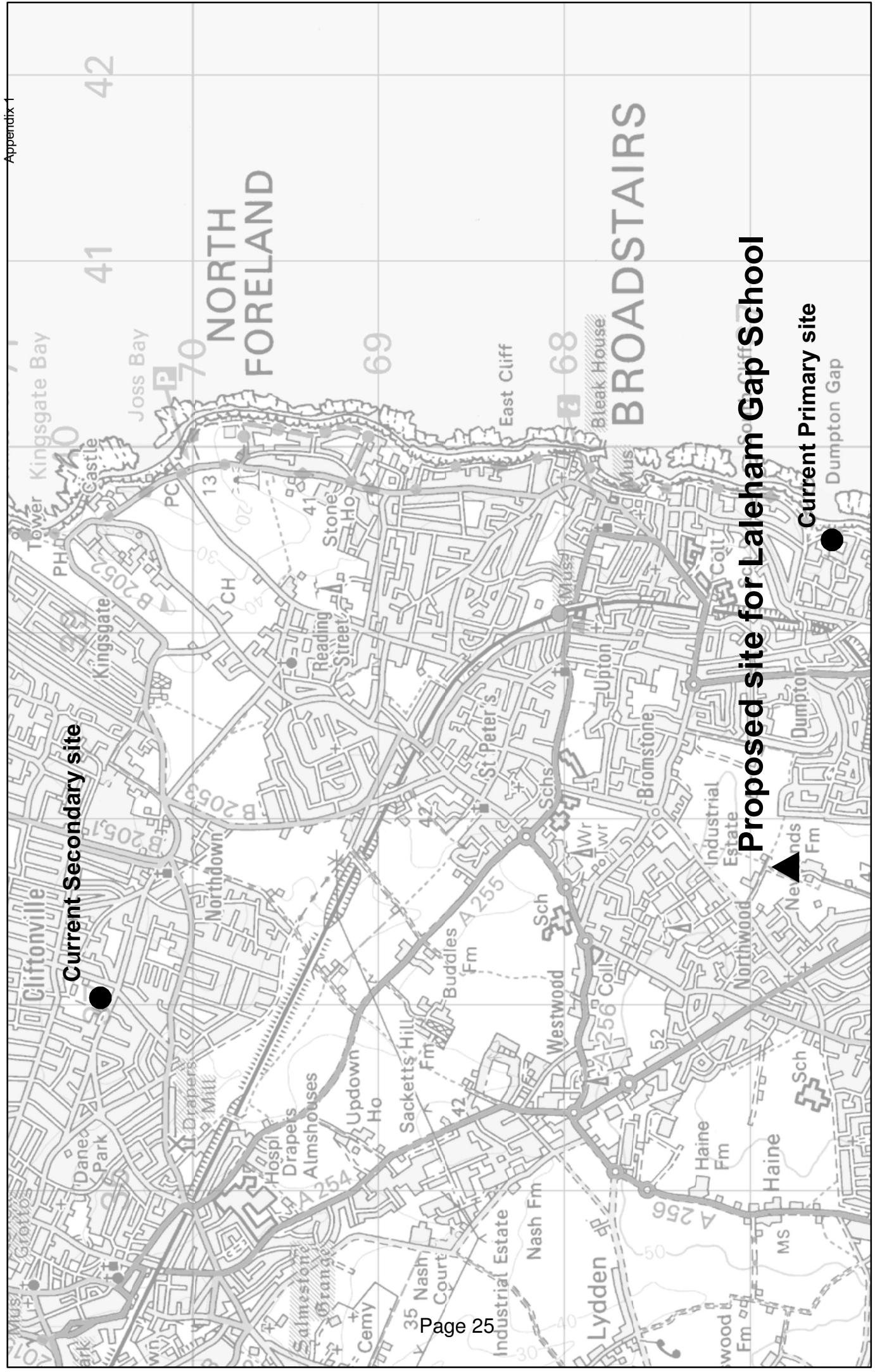
The Local Members are

Michael Jarvis, Chris Wells, Elizabeth Green and John Kirby

Background Documents:

None

Map showing the current sites and proposed future site for Laleham Gap School



Appendix 1

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By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 November 2009

Subject: PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE FOR AYLESHAM (COMMUNITY) PRIMARY SCHOOL (FROM 3 - 11 YEARS TO 4 - 11 YEARS) AND THE CLOSURE OF THE MAINTAINED NURSERY CLASS.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The report explains the need to consider a proposal to close the maintained nursery class at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age-ranged from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010. This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on whether to move to public consultation on this issue.

Introduction

1. (1) Aylesham Primary School serves the rural village of Aylesham, in the former East Kent Coalfield Area. Aylesham Ward is one of the 16% most deprived wards in England. The village was established in 1926 and was built to provide housing for the coal mine at nearby Snowdown Colliery. Following the closure of the pits in the 1980s, a wide range of community initiatives funded both locally and nationally, have been introduced to provide leisure facilities and alternative employment opportunities.

(2) There are two private Early Years providers, who, along with a number of childminders, meet the childcare needs for the Aylesham Community.

- i. The Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery is situated within the grounds of Aylesham Primary School and is registered for 56 children in the Early Years group of whom no more than 6 may be aged under 2 years old. The nursery is the only day care provider of places for children under 2 in the village. It is open five days a week all year round and offers before and after school provision.
- ii. Kaleidoscope Childcare Ltd operates from accommodation within St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and is registered for 30 children aged 2 years to under 8 years. It is open five days a week all year round and offers before and after school provision. It also runs a school holiday club.
- iii. Together, the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery and the Kaleidoscope provision at St. Joseph's are part of the local Children's Centre offer.
- iv. Attached as appendix 1 is a map showing schools within a three mile radius of Aylesham Primary School.

(3) The Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery is essentially a provision which incorporates both a private pre-school provision and a KCC maintained nursery class within the same accommodation and organisational structure, although each is funded separately. The provision is located on the site of Aylesham (Community) Primary School but the excellent facilities and buildings are not owned by the school.

(4) The financial viability of the existing arrangement can no longer be sustained. There is therefore a need to secure the long term viability of the Sunshine Corner Nursery. Closure of the maintained nursery would achieve this objective, while maintaining the range of pre-school services currently available on the site.

Background

2. (1) Aylesham maintained nursery class was established in 1997 by Kent County Council alongside an existing private pre-school provider which had been operating in a classroom since 1986 offering morning and afternoon sessions. The maintained nursery was established in a classroom next to this nursery. The private pre-school at this time extended its offer to include after school provision which was not available in the newly established maintained nursery class. In 2003 the maintained nursery and the private pre-school began to work closely together.

(2) In 2003 The Pre-School Learning Alliance were successful in obtaining funding from New Opportunities Fund (NOF), now known as the Big Lottery Fund. This funding enabled the purchase of a demountable building, which was sited on the primary school site in 2004. Attached as Appendix 2 is a site plan of Aylesham Primary School showing the location of the nursery accommodation. The private pre-school was dissolved at this time and its assets, including the staff, transferred to the Pre-School Learning Alliance. With the capital funding provided through NOF, the Pre-School Learning Alliance set up a nursery under the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative (NNI). The NNI was an initiative launched in 2000 by central government to expand childcare provision in the 20% most disadvantaged areas in England. The maintained nursery class and the private pre-school, which was now a Neighbourhood Nursery, worked closely together and so both moved into the new accommodation. The private provision was extended to provide full day-care including 6 places for children aged 0 to 2 years. The maintained nursery class continued to offer nursery education for 26 children aged 3 to 4 years.

(3) Children's attendance at the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery varies between one half-day session a week and full time. Currently there are 63 on roll at the nursery. Children move into the primary school's Reception class at age four. The school's maintained nursery class and the Neighbourhood Nursery run seamlessly as the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery. The financial viability of the joint venture was achieved through

- (a) Neighbourhood Nursery revenue funding and
- (b) implementation of an agreed formula for sharing the Nursery Education Funding between the School and the Pre-School Learning Alliance, and with the approval of Kent County Council.
- (c) the award of both revenue and capital grant monies from a number of bodies (including KCC) against successful funding bids.

Prudent management and an excellent working partnership between the School and the Pre-School Learning Alliance have ensured the nursery is well established and is a valuable asset to the community.

(4) The Neighbourhood Nursery revenue funding came to an end 3 years ago and as a result it has proved extremely difficult to cover the operational costs of the nursery. A number of management initiatives have been taken to both improve the fee income and keep costs under control while still ensuring a quality environment for young children. However, whilst these initiatives have realised some tangible benefits there still needs to be further action taken to achieve sustainability for the setting.

The Proposal

3. (1) The proposal is to merge the school's maintained nursery and the full day-care Neighbourhood Nursery. Both Aylesham Primary School and the Pre-School Learning Alliance support the proposal. This would be achieved by changing the age-range of Aylesham Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and effectively closing the maintained nursery class.

(2) Technically, the school would cease to offer nursery classes from 1 September 2010. However the actual places would still be available although technically under the aegis of the Pre-School Learning Alliance from that time. The provision would continue to be an integral part of the Aylesham Children's Centre. Funding is therefore available to employ a qualified nursery teacher who would lead on Early Years Foundation Stage practice within the nursery. The employment of a qualified nursery teacher by Kent County Council would ensure that the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery, as the designated nursery for the Aylesham Children's Centre, continued to have extensive support from a qualified nursery teacher. Part of the nursery teacher's role would be the development and management of the curriculum within the nursery setting to ensure that all children have access to the curriculum and make progress commensurate with their developing abilities irrespective of their gender, ethnic or social background, disability or other special needs. There would be no loss of childcare places as the school nursery classes are currently accommodated within the existing capacity. This proposal would give more flexibility to tailor services to meet the needs of parents/carers in the Aylesham community.

(3) If the maintained nursery closes, all the Nursery Education Funding payments would be made to the Neighbourhood Nursery and all the finances would be under the control of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. This would have a significant, beneficial impact on the Neighbourhood Nursery's long term sustainability and any additional initiatives, such as increasing the number of places available for children aged 0 to 2 years, would help towards achieving that goal.

(4) This proposal offers seamless continuity of services. The Pre-School Learning Alliance would continue its commitment to work in partnership with the school to help monitor quality and delivery of the Early Years Foundation curriculum. The Neighbourhood Nursery would also continue to be part of the Children's Centre core offer.

Site Issues

4. (1) There would be no site issues as a result of this proposal as the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery would continue to operate in the demountable accommodation owned by the Pre-School Learning Alliance on the school site. The current rent of £1,000 per annum would continue.

(2) The contract for the nursery demountable building awarded by NOF states that no action can be taken with regards to the asset without approval from NOF.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) Both the school and the private nursery are facing financial difficulties with the funding operating as it does currently. KCC awarded the Neighbourhood Nursery a sustainability grant of £70k at the end of 2008/9 to enable it to continue until a long term solution can be found. The long term solution would be to close the maintained nursery class and for the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery to receive the full Nursery Education Funding.

Human

(2) The primary school employs a full time nursery teacher who is currently on maternity leave. An agency teacher is employed on a temporary contract until 31.08.09 to cover the maternity leave. Half the nursery teacher's salary is funded by the school. The other half of the nursery teacher's salary is met from the Children's Centre funding. If the maintained nursery closes, the teacher on return from maternity leave would continue her employment with Aylesham Primary School as a class teacher.

(3) A nursery assistant is currently employed on a temporary term time only contract by the school. If the maintained nursery closes, the Pre-School Learning Alliance has indicated that they would be in a position to offer her a contract of employment, as the same number of children would continue to attend the nursery.

Views of the Local Members

6. The local member is Mr Steve Manion and his views are as follows.

“Due to the nature of the community, I would be concerned about any increases in costs to the families who use or may in the future use this service. I support the concept of a consultation process so long as the views expressed are taken heed of and used to construct an outcome which meets the needs of the wider community. The Aylesham community is going through a significant period of change and we need to be open to opportunities as they arise to bring sustainable improvements for service delivery”.

Views of the Governing Body

7. The governors have some concerns about the cost of childcare for families in Aylesham if the maintained nursery class ceases and the Pre-school Learning Alliance is the sole provider of childcare on the Aylesham Primary School site. The governors want the best outcome for Aylesham families, but are concerned about costs once the nursery is no longer under Kent County Council control.

Views of the Partnership Board

8. The Chair of the Dover LCSP Board has been consulted, as there is no formal meeting of the Board before the 4 November. The Chair supports the proposed closure of the maintained nursery class in line with the reasons given in the report and in this instance is providing a view on behalf of the Board.

School Improvement Implications

9. (1) Aylesham Primary School's maintained nursery class is inspected by Ofsted as part of the school's inspection. The school was inspected in November 2006 and at that time it was reported that the jointly funded and managed nursery was a good provision.

(2) The Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery was inspected at the same time as the primary school. Ofsted found the provision to be good in all aspects and stated that "the quality and standards of care are good and the quality and standards of the nursery education are good".

(3) Without these proposed changes the nursery would be unsustainable in its current guise and the Neighbourhood Nursery aspect would have to close. The school would continue to offer the nursery education places for 3 to 4 year olds but the full daycare facility would be lost. This would mean that the Children's Centre core offer could not be met and there would be insufficient childcare places to meet the needs of the Aylesham community.

(4) If the proposed changes take place, the Nursery Education funding would be transferred to the Neighbourhood Nursery securing its future and ensuring the continuation of high quality childcare that meets the needs of local families and children in Aylesham village.

Equality Issues

10. All pupils who access their free maintained nursery education entitlement through the school's maintained nursery part of the provision would continue to do so with the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery. This would ensure that the support already in place at the nursery for children with learning difficulties would also still be accessible.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

11. This proposal would help to ensure the continuation of the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery as a viable setting. It would continue to serve the community of Aylesham and continue as part of the core offer for the Children's Centre.

Proposed Timetable

12. SOAB 1 meeting	4 November 2009
Public Consultation Period	23 November 2009 to 15 January 2010
Public Meeting	week commencing 7 December 2009
SOAB 2 meeting	4 February 2010
Cabinet Member decision (to issue a public notice)	End of February 2010
Public Notice Period	5 March to 16 April 2010
Cabinet Member Decision	May 2010
Adjudication if required	June/July 2010
Implementation	September 2010

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to give their views on whether there should be a consultation on a change of age range for Aylesham Primary School by closing the maintained nursery class.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer
Thanet and Dover
01227 284407

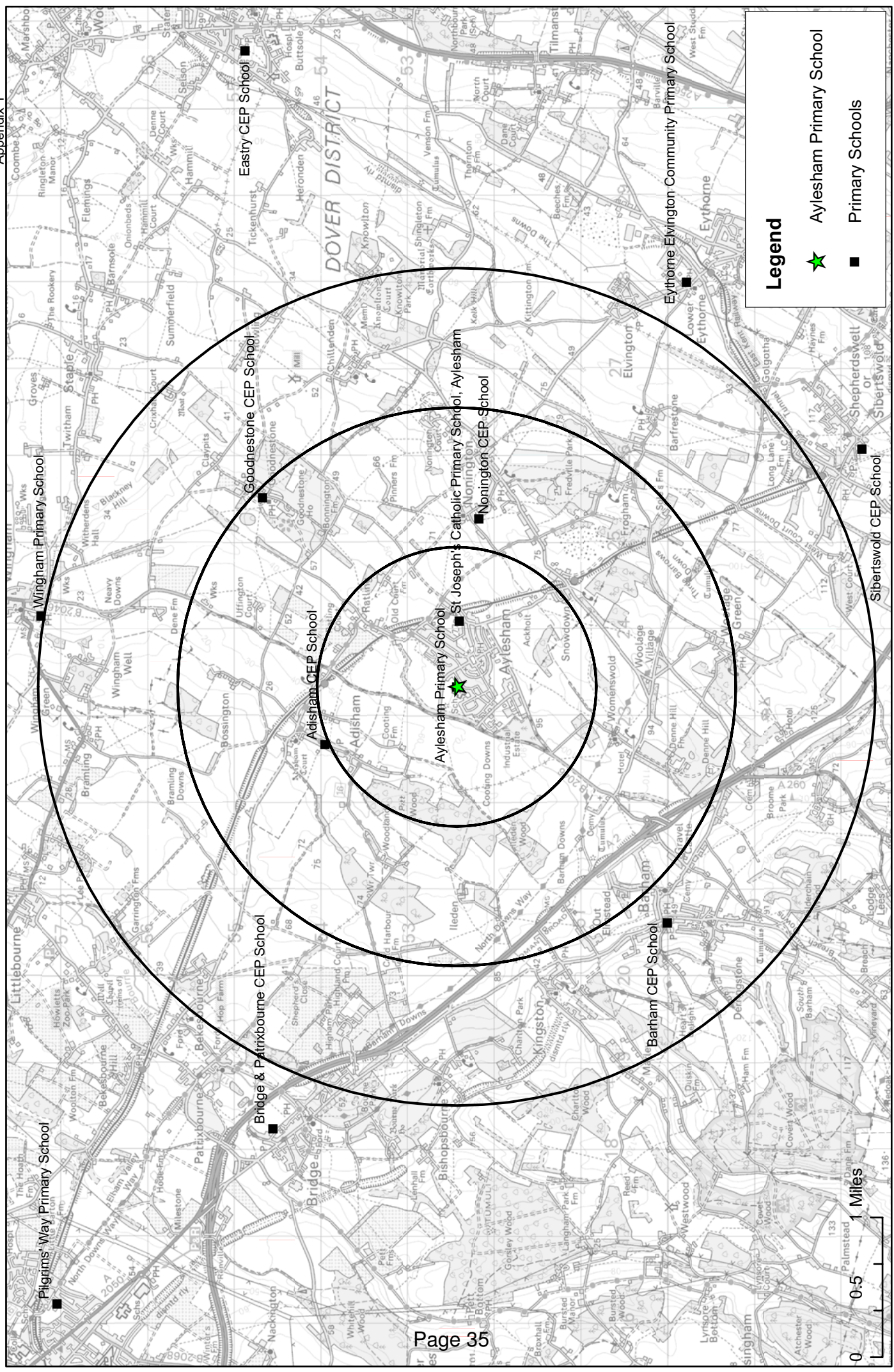
The Local Member is Mr Steve Manion

Background Documents:

None

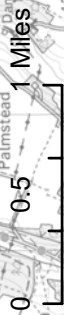
Aylesham Primary School

Appendix 1



Legend

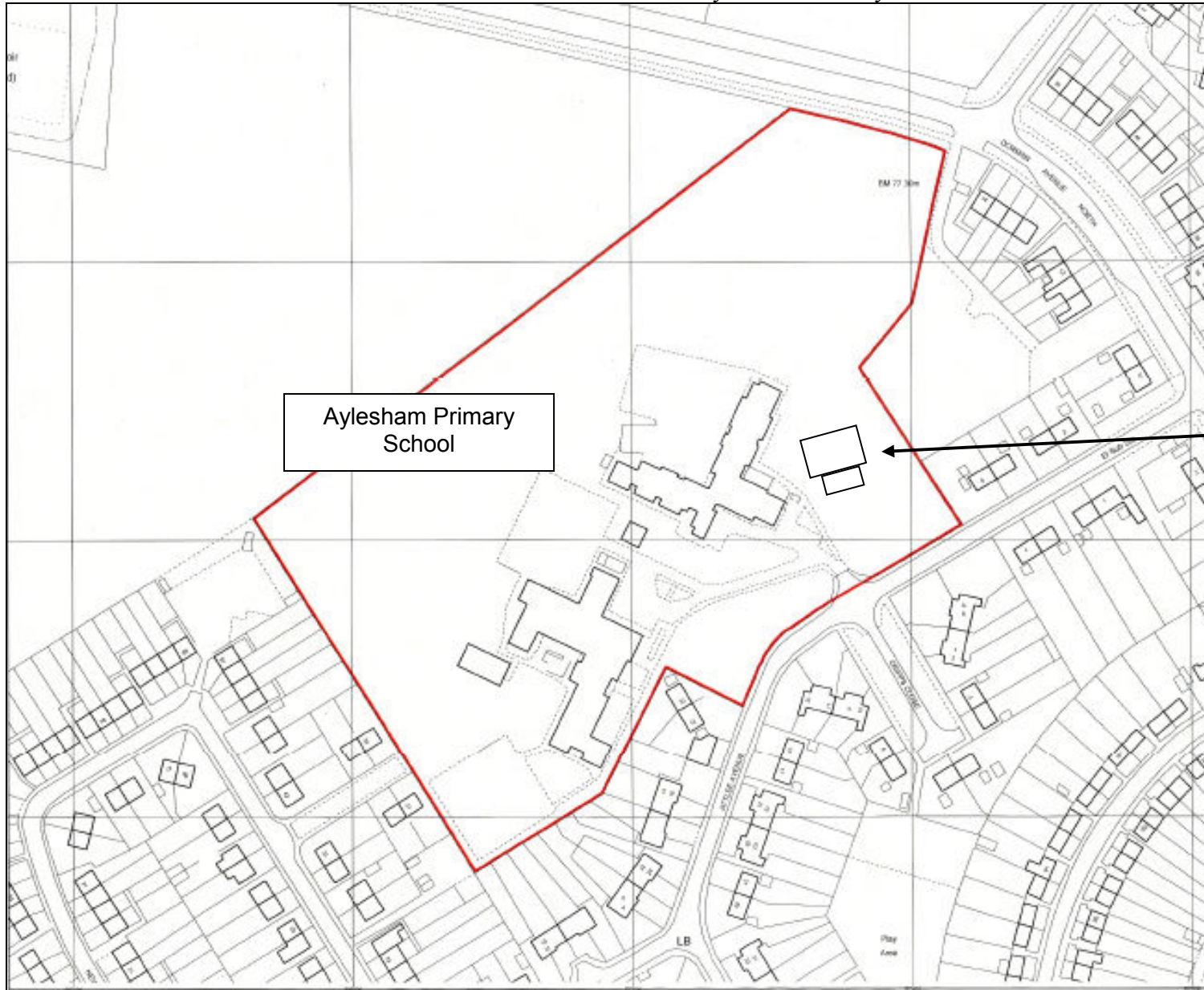
- ★ Aylesham Primary School
- Primary Schools



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Site Plan of Aylesham Primary School

Appendix 2



Aylesham Primary School

Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery demountable accommodation – not to scale

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By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 November 2009

Subject: PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE JOHN WESLEY SCHOOL FROM 210 PLACES TO 420 PLACES

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a consultation to expand The John Wesley Primary School from 210 places to 420 places.

Introduction

1. (1) The John Wesley School is a Voluntary Aided school, currently providing for pupils aged 4-11 years. The Published Admission Number is 30, giving a total capacity of 210 places.

(2) Ashford is identified as a growth area by the Government with 30,000 houses expected to be built in the period 2001 to 2031. Development continues in the Singleton area served by this school.

(3) Appendix 1 sets out the forecast school rolls within three miles of John Wesley School. These show a reduction in the availability of school places up to 2011-12. In September 2012 the new school Repton Park is due to open, providing a further 210 places. However, it is expected that these places will quickly fill during the years 2012 – 2015. Of greater significance is appendix 2 which sets out the forecast year R pupil numbers. The birth rate has increased in recent years resulting in a shortfall of places for four year old children from 2011-12. In 2010-11, it is expected that few reception class places will be vacant. It should be noted that when Repton Park School opens in September 2012 its reception class places will be full and a forecast shortfall of 52 places remains.

Background

2. The John Wesley School was newly built and opened in September 2007. It was constructed as a “hybrid school” meaning the central resources, such as the hall, were built at a size large enough to accommodate 420 children, but only seven classrooms were completed. Thus the disruption of expansion is minimal, with the comparatively straight forward task of adding a further seven classrooms being all that is required in respect of the school building. A site plan is attached as Appendix 3.

The Proposal

3. To expand The John Wesley School by one form of entry, bringing the total capacity to 420 places, with up to 60 places per year group. The expansion of the school will be gradual with the additional places being created annually to

accommodate reception aged pupils only, and therefore taking seven years for the school to grow to its full size. The first two form entry intake is proposed for September 2010. Appendix 4 provides a dot map of the home locations of pupils who currently attend the school.

Site Issues

4. The site is sufficiently large to accommodate a two form entry school (420 pupils) and, if required, extra staff parking spaces.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) Initially the school will require temporary accommodation to enable the intake of additional pupils, and until the permanent build is complete. The Canterbury Diocese have indicated that they will fund the temporary accommodation and the Local Authority will have to cover the 10% Governors liabilities (10%). This will be funded from an existing budget. The permanent expansion will be funded via developer contributions and is in the agreed capital programme.

Human

(2) Additional teaching and support staff will be required. The school's budget will increase annually as its pupil numbers increase, although there is a lag of seven months in receiving this funding. The school will also receive reorganisation funding, currently £7,041 based on a per class allocation for furnishing.

Views of the Local Members

6. The Local Member, Jim Wedgbury is aware of the proposal and supports a public consultation being undertaken.

Views of the Governing Body

7. The Governing Body has been consulted and has agreed to support the School's expansion. The Governors would wish to see permanent accommodation being provided as quickly as possible.

Views of the of the Diocese

8. John Wesley School is a joint Church of England and Methodist school. Both churches support the expansion of the school.

Views of the Partnership Board

9. The Board's view will be sought as part of the consultation process.

School Improvement Implications

10. John Wesley School is a popular, over-subscribed school, which is performing well. It has the leadership capacity to manage the school during the building works,

and to grow the school. The gradual growth of the school will help ensure it remains stable and is not in a position of admitting significant numbers of casual admissions throughout the year. Equally this approach will help minimise disruption to other schools in Ashford caused by children leaving mid-year.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

11. Any current transport arrangements for pupils will continue. The admission of additional reception aged pupils only should ensure that local children are admitted, thereby helping reduce the need for local families to travel to more distant schools. It is likely that additional staff parking will arise as a result of this proposal. However, this is unlikely to have any major environmental impact in the area.

Proposed Timetable

12. Public Consultation Period	10 Dec 2009 to 4 Feb 2010
Public Meeting	w/c 18 Jan 2010
Report back to SOAB	17 March 2010
Cabinet Member Decision	9 April 2010
Public Notice Issued	22 April 2010
Public Notice Expires	2 June 2010
Cabinet Member Decision	11 June 2010
Implementation	1 Sep 2010

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to recommend that a public consultation be conducted on the proposal to expand The John Wesley School from 210 to 420 places.

David Adams
Area Children's Services Officer
Ashford/Shepway
01233 898559

The Local Member is Jim Wedgbury.

Background Documents:

None

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Total primary projected pupil numbers in the area of John Wesley Primary School

School name	Status	Sub-type	PAN capacity 2009-10	Year groups	2008-09 (A)	2009-10 (F)	2010-11 (F)	2011-12 (F)	2012-13 (F)
John Wesley Primary School	Voluntary Aid	Primary	210	7	139	-	-	-	-
Great Chart Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	426	-	-	-	-
Linden Grove Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	372	-	-	-	-
St Simon of England RCP School, Ashford	Voluntary Aid	Primary	210	7	207	-	-	-	-
Beaver Green Community Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	479	-	-	-	-
Ashford Oaks Community Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	359	-	-	-	-
Total pupils within 1 mile	-	-	2100	-	1982	2012	2037	2082	2150
Surplus / deficit places within 1 mile	-	-	-	-	118	88	63	18	-50
East Stour Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	325	-	-	-	-
Victoria Road Primary School	Community	Primary	210	7	210	-	-	-	-
Godinton Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	418	-	-	-	-
Furley Park Primary School	Community	Primary	420	7	420	-	-	-	-
Kingsnorth CEP School	Voluntary Co	Primary	420	7	409	-	-	-	-
St Mary's CEP School, Ashford	Voluntary Aid	Primary	420	7	418	-	-	-	-
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	Voluntary Aid	Primary	210	7	210	-	-	-	-
Repton Park Primary School (determined for 2012-13)	Community	Primary	-	7	-	-	-	-	-
Total pupils within 2 miles	-	-	4620	-	4392	4449	4484	4576	4695
Surplus / deficit places within 2 miles	-	-	-	-	228	172	136	44	135
Willesborough Infant School	Community	Infant	360	3	345	-	-	-	-
Phoenix Community Primary School	Community	Primary	210	7	207	-	-	-	-
Willesborough Junior School	Foundation	Junior	480	4	482	-	-	-	-
Total pupils within 3 miles	-	-	5670	-	5426	5423	5436	5526	5660
Surplus / deficit places within 3 miles	-	-	-	-	244	247	234	144	220

Notes:

In addition to the data above It is estimated that there may be an additional 232 primary pupils by 2012-13 due to new housing development within this area

Forecast roll data based on projections made in Summer 2009

From 2012-13 there will be an additional 210 places available at Repton Park (this additional capacity is reflected in the surplus / deficit figure above)

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Year R primary projected pupil numbers in the area of John Wesley Primary School

School name	Status	Sub-type	Year R PAN 2009-10	Year groups	2008-09 (A)	2009-10 (F)	2010-11 (F)	2011-12 (F)	2012-13 (F)
John Wesley Primary School	Voluntary Aid	Primary	30	7	30	-	-	-	-
Great Chart Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	60	-	-	-	-
Linden Grove Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	48	-	-	-	-
St Simon of England RCP School, Ashford	Voluntary Aid	Primary	30	7	28	-	-	-	-
Beaver Green Community Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	58	-	-	-	-
Ashford Oaks Community Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	44	-	-	-	-
Total Year R pupils within 1 mile	-	-	300	-	268	295	304	317	336
Surplus / deficit Year R places within 1 mile	-	-	-	-	32	5	-4	-17	-36
East Stour Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	52	-	-	-	-
Victoria Road Primary School	Community	Primary	30	7	30	-	-	-	-
Godinton Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	57	-	-	-	-
Furley Park Primary School	Community	Primary	60	7	60	-	-	-	-
Kingsnorth CEP School	Voluntary Co	Primary	60	7	58	-	-	-	-
St Mary's CEP School, Ashford	Voluntary Aid	Primary	60	7	59	-	-	-	-
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	Voluntary Aid	Primary	30	7	30	-	-	-	-
Repton Park Primary School (determined for 2012-13)	Community	Primary	-	7	-	-	-	-	-
Total Year R pupils within 2 miles	-	-	660	-	614	659	658	691	740
Surplus / deficit Year R places within 2 miles	-	-	-	-	46	1	2	-31	-50
Willesborough Infant School	Community	Infant	120	3	114	-	-	-	-
Phoenix Community Primary School	Community	Primary	30	7	30	-	-	-	-
Total Year R pupils within 3 miles	-	-	810	-	758	794	799	834	892
Surplus / deficit Year R places within 3 miles	-	-	-	-	52	16	11	-24	-52

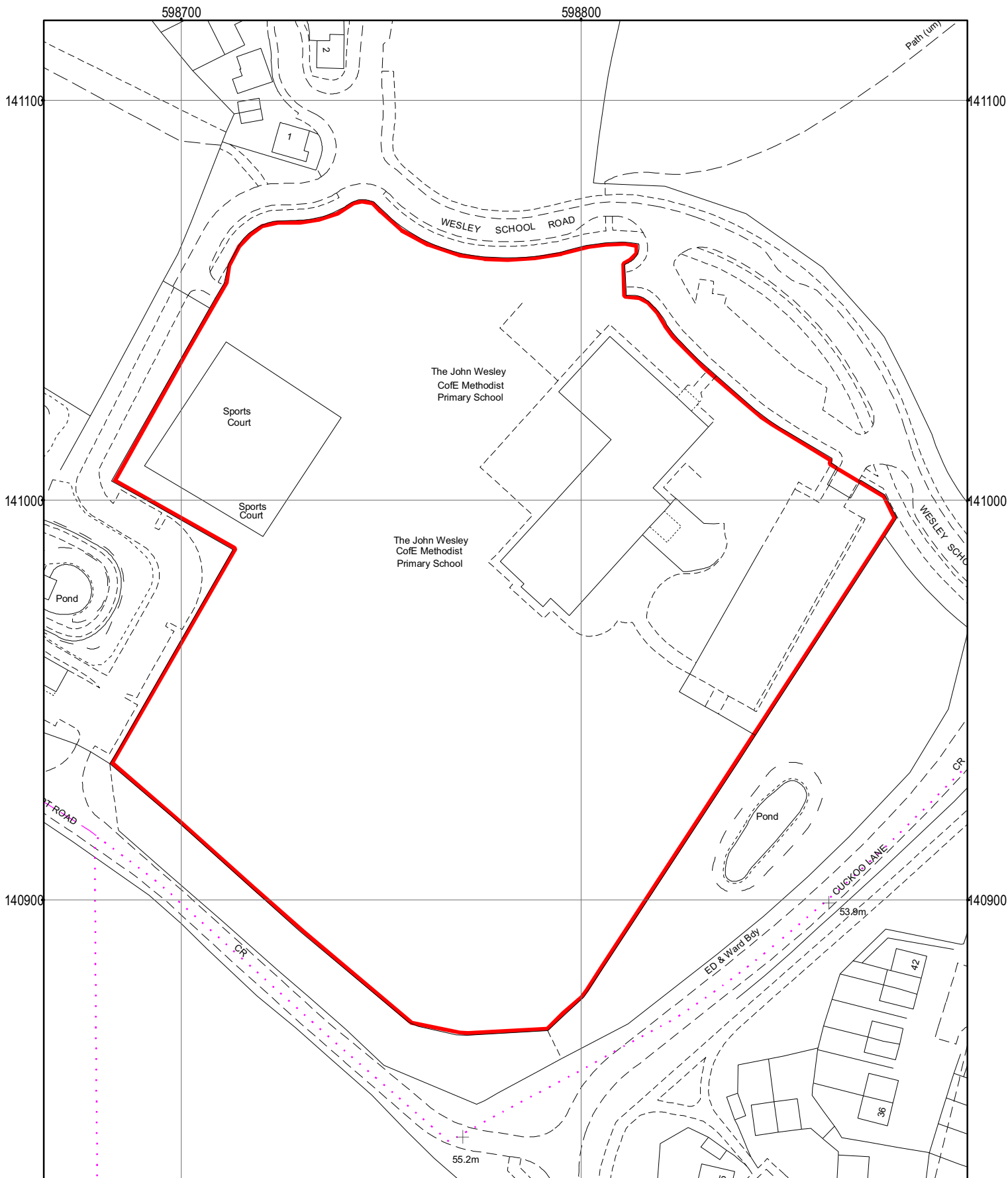
Notes:

In addition to the data above It is estimated that there may be an additional 33 Year R pupils by 2012-13 due to new housing development within this area

Forecast roll data based on projections made in Summer 2009

From 2012-13 there will be an additional 30 Year R places available at Repton Park (this additional capacity is reflected in the surplus / deficit figure above)

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MasterMap

**JOHN WESLEY SCHOOL
CUCKOO LANE
ASHFORD**



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

Drawn By
FJM

Date
APR 2008

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Appendix 3

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