

Public Consultation Document
PORTAL HOUSE SCHOOL



Public Meetings

Portal House School

Monday 31 March 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

Newington Community Primary School & Nursery

Thursday 3 April 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

Kent County Council would like to hear your views on a proposal to relocate Portal House Special School in Dover to the site of the former Newington Infant School in Thanet.



1. INTRODUCTION

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 Development Needs.

The school is 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. Portal House School has enjoyed a harmonious and constructive relationship with the neighbouring primary school over many years. However, the existing accommodation at Portal House is unsuitable for its new secondary age designation and the anticipated increase in the overall size of the school from 45 to 60 students.

Portal House is an excellent school which serves its students well. In order to continue to meet the needs of its changing pupil population the school needs new purpose-built facilities which can only be provided on a new site. The relocation of Portal House to the Newington site would enable the development of superb accommodation and facilities, meeting the specific needs of Portal House students.

2. BACKGROUND

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, including difficulties associated with location, access, geographical issues, acquisition of land and potential planning difficulties.

The site of the former Newington Infant School became vacant when the Infant and Junior schools merged with effect from 1 September 2007 and were consolidated on the former Newington Junior School site from that time.

Funding is available through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme to provide new purpose-built accommodation for Portal House. However, the existing site at St Margaret's-at-Cliffe is unsuitable for development.

The former Newington Infant School site provides 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.

A display will be available for viewing at each of the public meetings, showing where the new school would be located on the former Newington Infant School site.

The design of the new school building has already been drawn up. A planning application for the development of the new buildings on the Newington site has been submitted. Implementation of the proposal is subject to the outcome of this consultation process and the decision making process and timescale outlined on page 10.

3. WHAT FACILITIES COULD THE NEW SCHOOL OFFER?

The existing site cannot provide adequate specialist facilities needed for KS3 and KS4 students. The Newington site with new purpose-built accommodation would provide; a science laboratory; a music room; Arts and Crafts facilities; provision for technology and food technology and significantly enhanced ICT provision. There would also be a new sports hall meeting Sport England requirements. Overall the new accommodation would be more spacious and provide first class learning facilities, tailored to the needs of the student population.

An artist's impression of what the new school might look like



4. WHERE DO THE STUDENTS COME FROM?

There are currently 41 students on roll at Portal House. Of these, 14 come from Thanet, including the Newington Estate. The residential profile of the existing pupils by district is set out below.

District	Pupils
Dover	7
Shepway	3
Ashford	3
Maidstone	2
Thanet	14
Canterbury	9
Swale	3
Total	41

In future, Portal House will serve principally Dover, Thanet and Canterbury areas. The wider spread of pupils in the grid above reflects the existing pupil profile which includes students, including primary age children, who enrolled at Portal House under its previous EBD designation.

5. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE EXISTING STAFF?

All existing staff would have the opportunity to transfer to the new location. There would be no compulsory redundancies. It is recognised however, that some staff may be unwilling or unable to relocate. Personnel advice and support will be available to staff to ensure that they are aware of their options and entitlements subject to the outcome of this consultation process.

6. STANDARDS

In order to meet the needs of secondary age pupils, specialist facilities are required which will enable Portal House to deliver the full range of curriculum opportunities at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students of all ages will benefit from new purpose-built facilities without which the high standards currently achieved by students at Portal House would be at risk over the medium-long term.

7. TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS

The future pupil population will be made up of students coming from Dover, Thanet and Canterbury rather than the wider area which is reflected in the current pupil profile. Secondary age children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development (BESD) needs living in Ashford, Shepway, Maidstone or Swale will be met by Goldwyn School in Ashford. Of the three districts which will be covered by Portal House (Dover, Thanet and Canterbury), Thanet has historically contributed the largest group of students. Relocation to Newington is therefore compatible with the desire and intention to reduce travelling times and make provision available as close as possible to students homes.

The new buildings which would be established to accommodate Portal House would be built on the site of an existing school building which would be demolished. The new build would be developed in a way which is compatible with the surrounding area and which takes advantage of modern design and technology in terms of reducing any adverse impact on the environment.

Portal House is an excellent school which would make a valuable contribution to the local learning community working in constructive partnership with other school and agencies to meet students needs.

Locating the school in Thanet would also provide ease of access for Thanet parents and students who form the largest single group in the school.

8. HOW TO GIVE 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:**
Martyn Doole, Area Education Officer (Dover & Thanet)
East Kent Education Office, Clover House
John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ
(Forms must reach us by 6 May 2008)

- **Come to a public meeting at:**
Portal House School, Sea Street
St Margaret's at Cliffe, Dover, Kent CT15 6SS
on Monday 31 March 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

OR

- **Come to a public meeting at:**
Newington Community Primary School & Nursery
Princess Margaret Avenue, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6HX
on Thursday 3 April at 7.00 p.m.
 - An elected member of Kent County Council will chair these meetings, 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 details.

- **Email your views to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk**

Directions to Portal House, St Margaret's at Cliffe:

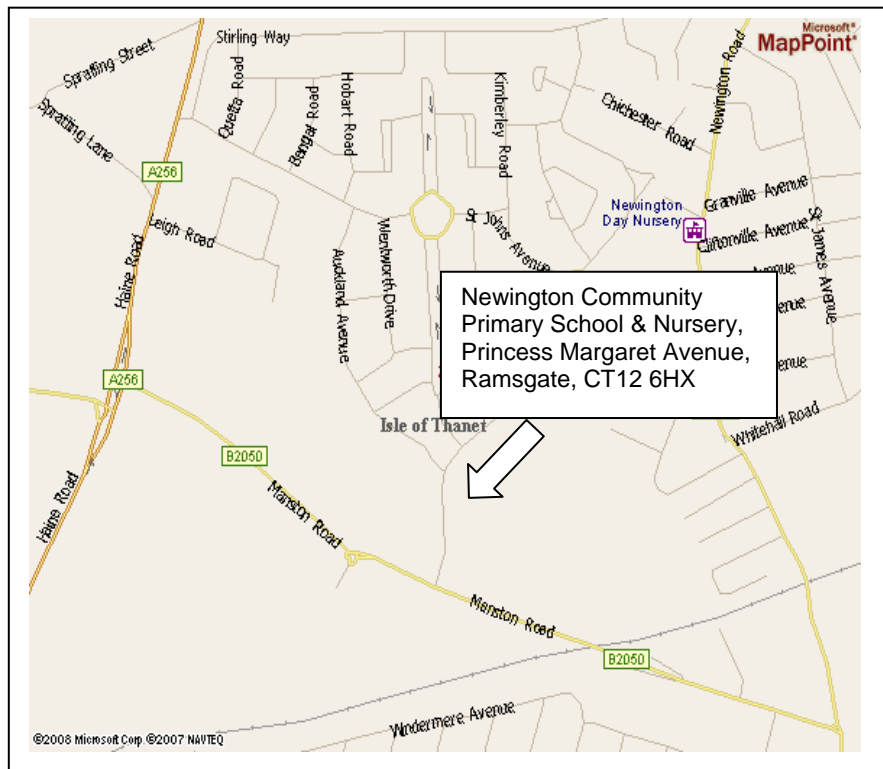
From the A258 Dover to Sandwich road, take the Dover Road to St Margaret's at Cliffe. At the T-junction turn right and proceed straight to Sea Street.

Note; At the time of going to print the Gas Board is undertaking major work in Sea Street. Parking may be difficult in the immediate vicinity of the school.



Directions to Newington Community Primary School & Nursery:

From the A256 take the B2050 Manston Road towards Ramsgate. Take the first turning on the left after the Tesco roundabout into Princess Margaret Avenue. The school is on the right hand side.



9. 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, when 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.

10. CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING TIMETABLE

Consultation period begins	12 March 2008
Public meeting at Portal House School	31 March, 7.00 pm
Public meeting at Newington Community Primary School & Nursery	3 April, 7.00pm
Final date for written comments	6 May 2008
School Organisation Advisory Board	7 May 2008
Cabinet Member decision to issue a Public Notice	End of May 2008
Approximate dates of Public Notice period	13 June to 25 July
Determination by Local Authority	End July 2008
Adjudication (if required)	September 2008
Building work would commence following final approval	
Implementation (From the start of Term 4)	February 2010

Public Consultation Response Form

Proposal to relocate Portal House School, Dover to the site of the former Newington Infant School, Thanet

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 6 MAY 2008

To: Martyn Doole, Area Education Officer
Clover House, John Wilson Business Park,
Thanet Way, Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ
Fax: 01227 772290

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

Do you agree with the proposal?

Yes

No

The parent/carer of a pupil at
Portal House School

A member of staff at Portal
House School

A governor of Portal House
School

A pupil at Portal House
School

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

My comments are as follows

This document is available on:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations/>

If you require this document in another format, please contact your local school.