

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.



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.

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 much will it cost?

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

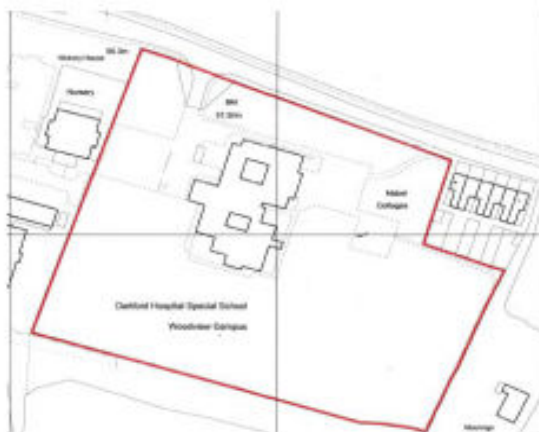
The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Capital Budget. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement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

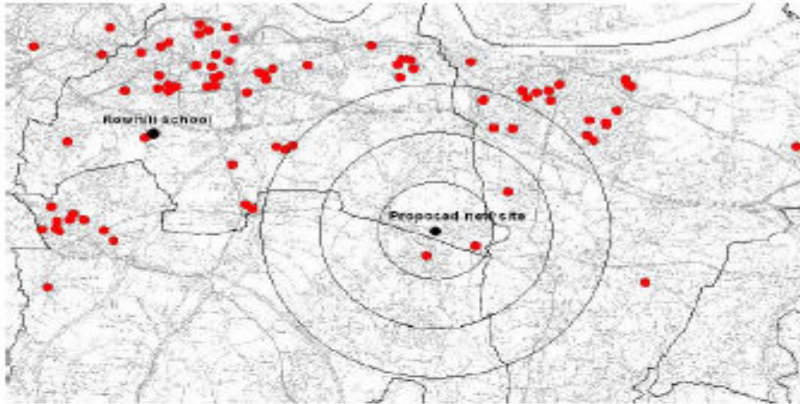
Due to the special nature of all three provisions, admission issues are not a factor within this proposal.

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.



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

Site Plan of Rowhill



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.



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 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



My comments are as follows

Please continue on another sheet if necessary