

By: Ian Craig Director - Operations

To: Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills, CFE

Subject: THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF GRANGE PARK SCHOOL,
LEYBOURNE, WEST MALLING TO THE WROTHAM SCHOOL SITE.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents the results of a public consultation on the proposal to relocate Grange Park School to a site within the grounds of Wrotham School.

Introduction

1. (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 12 June 2008, supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to relocate Grange Park School to a site within the grounds of Wrotham School. Results of this consultation were reported back to the board on 11 September, this report is set out as appendix 1.

The Proposal

2. (1) The proposal is to relocate Grange Park School from its existing site in Leybourne, West Malling, into a new 2,000sqm school building on the Wrotham School site during the 2009/10 school year. The new school would be built to accommodate 55 boys and girls from the ages 11-16 and would be designed to meet the requirements of the curriculum now and in the future.

(2) There are three potential locations for the new school on the Wrotham school site. Jacobs Babbie was commissioned to carry out the feasibility studies on all the three locations. At a meeting in May, both Headteachers and Chairs of Governors met with architects to consider the feasibility studies. They identified the site, which lies north of Wrotham school (option 1), as the preferred location as it could be self-contained and would have the ability to expand if necessary in the future. A site map showing the location of Grange Park School is attached in Appendix 3. A site map for the proposed new location of the school is also attached in Appendix 4.

(3) All Grange Park pupils and staff would transfer to the new building.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

3. The consultation process began on 20 June 2008 and ended on the 1 August 2008. 75 responses were received, of which 72 were in favour, 1 was undecided and 2 were opposed to the proposal.

Views of Local Members

4. (1) The Local Member for Grange Park School, Sarah Hohler, fully supports the proposal. She has been most impressed with the education and support offered by Grange Park School to its students especially since it has been operating for some time on a challenging site. She is therefore delighted that these plans will provide facilities more suited to the quality of education the school provides. Wrotham School is in need of improvements to many of its buildings and facilities and she is pleased that this proposal goes some way to delivering these improvements as well as securing the future of this important and successful local secondary school

(2) The Local Member for Wrotham School, Valerie Dagger, fully supports the proposal and believes that it offers positive benefits for both schools.

Views of the Governing Bodies

5. (1) The governing body and staff of Grange Park School are fully supportive of the proposed move.

(2) Wrotham governing body is delighted at the degree of public support for Grange Park moving to the Wrotham School site. They welcome the opportunity to help pupils learn in both schools by sharing good practice. The Governors see this move as one piece in the jigsaw of improving the buildings on the Wrotham School site and are grateful for the community support for this principle and welcome the backing of the Local Authority in bringing site development to fruition in creating our aim of a 'learning village'.

Views of the Cluster Board

6. The Malling Cluster Board notes the proposal to relocate Grange Park School on the site of Wrotham School. It is a move supported by the Headteachers and governing bodies of both schools. The Board welcomes the opportunity which this will present for Grange Park to establish itself in a settled base and welcomes the opportunity which will occur for the exchange of good inclusive practice between the co-located schools. This indication of the Local Authority's support for education in the Cluster will be welcomed by local schools.

Resource Implications

Capital

7. (1) The capital costs of building the new school will be in the region of £5m. It is expected that the funding to facilitate the new build would come from the Special School Review budget. There will not be any costs involved in acquiring land from the Governing Body of Wrotham School. Discussions are taking place about future improvements to the Wrotham School buildings in recognition of the provision of land for Grange Park School.

Revenue

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

Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board

8. (1) At its meeting on 11 September 2008 the School Organisation Advisory Board unanimously supported the proposal to issue a public notice for the relocation of Grange Park School to a site within the grounds of Wrotham School.

(2) In reaching this decision Mr Burgess, Mr Northey and Mr Crowther wished it to be recorded that they expressed a preference for the relocation to be in accordance with option 1.

Recommendations

9. The CABINET MEMBER is requested to AGREE

(1) to the issuing of a public notice for the relocation of Grange Park School from its existing location at Leybourne, West Malling to the site of Wrotham School.

(2) 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.

Chris Jones
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The Local Member are Mrs V Dagger and Sarah Hohler