

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

14/00037

For publication

**Subject: Amalgamation of Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School, Maidstone:
Proposal to discontinue Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School and establish
a single, three form of entry community primary school.**

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to:

- (i) Issue a public notice to discontinue Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School and establish a single, three form of entry community primary school by September 2014.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

- (ii) Make recommendation to the Schools Adjudicator for determination for implementation by September 2014.

Should objections, not already considered by the cabinet member when taking this decision, be received during the notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal and amalgamate the schools to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

Reason(s) for decision:

- 1.1 Kent County Council, with the support of the Loose Schools' Federation Governing Body, are proposing to amalgamate Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School to become a three form entry, single community primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years.
- 1.2 Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School are two separate schools serving the Loose Ward of Maidstone. Both schools are popular community schools. Currently Loose Infant School has 270 pupils on roll and the Loose Junior School has 368 pupils on roll.
- 1.3 Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School have been federated since 2011 and share a Governing Body and an Executive Headteacher. The schools occupy the same site with a single vehicular entrance point and both schools have pedestrian entrances.
- 1.4 Loose Junior School was judged as good by Ofsted on 9 June 2011.
- 1.5 Loose Infant School was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2013. The subsequent monitoring assessment conducted by Ofsted on 8 November 2013 confirmed that decisive action had been taken to ensure that the school will progress rapidly to an Ofsted judgment of good. However, the report recognised the need for a more effective model of leadership to underpin the necessary improvements at the school.
- 1.6 The Governing Body of The Loose Schools' Federation view this proposal as a natural progression, which will further secure benefits for staff and pupils. The Kent Commissioning Plan's recommendation for linked Junior and Infant schools is "when the opportunity arises the local authority will consider the possibility of either amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools into a single primary school or federation of the schools."

1.7 The Executive Headteacher notified the Governing Body of her intention to retire by the end of the academic year. Due to this change, the Governors believe that there is an opportunity to review the leadership and governance arrangements.

Financial Implications:

Capital

The proposals can be implemented without the need for significant capital expenditure as the new primary school could operate as an all-through school on the existing Infant and Junior school sites.

Revenue

As a result of an amalgamation the two predecessor schools will become one school and consequently this would result in the removal of one of the lump sum funding allocations (£120,000). The amalgamated school would continue to be funded at 100% of the two lump sums for the remainder of the 2014/15 financial year from September 2014 to March 2015. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013 provide funding protection for amalgamating schools for the first academic year. Therefore, it is proposed that protection will be provided on the lump sums at 85% from April 2015 to March 2016. ($2 \times £120,000 \times 85\% = £204,000$). From April 2016 the amalgamated primary school would receive one lump sum, currently £120,000.

Human

It is proposed that all teachers and support staff employed at Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) will transfer to the primary school.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

14 March 2014

The Cabinet Committee considered the proposed decision and discussed the concerns raised. All Members of the Committee voted in favour of the proposal and resolved to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform he agree to recommendations below to:

- (i) Issue a public notice to discontinue Loose Infant School and Loose Junior School and establish a single, three form of entry community primary school by September 2014.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

- (ii) Make recommendation to the Schools Adjudicator for determination for implementation by September 2014.

The Local Member:

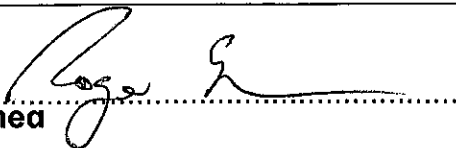
Eric Hotson the local member for Maidstone Rural South is fully supportive of the proposal.

Any alternatives considered:

The Governing Body of The Loose Schools' Federation view this proposal as a natural progression, which will further secure benefits for staff and pupils. The Kent Commissioning Plan's recommendation for linked Junior and Infant schools is "when the opportunity arises the local authority will consider the possibility of either amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools into a single primary school or federation of the schools."

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

Signed



Date

1 April 2014