

From: Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young Peoples

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

Subject: Decision number: 14/000012(b) Proposal to merge and relocate Foxwood and Highview Schools

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Divisions: Hythe (Foxwood) and Folkestone North East (Highview)

Summary: Following the expiration of the Public Notice Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to take the decision to merge Foxwood and Highview Schools, by closing Foxwood school and relocating Highview School to form a “new” school, in addition to increasing the designated number of Highview School to 336 from 282 the close Foxwood School and allocate funding from the Education and Young Peoples Skills Capital Budget.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is requested to take the decision to:

- (i) close Foxwood School
- (ii) relocate Highview School and increase the designated number from 282 to 336 for September 2015.
- (iii) Allocate £16.8m from the Education, Learning and Skills Capital Budget in order that the proposal may go ahead.
- (iv) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (iv) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

This decision is conditional upon the grant of planning permission under part 3 of the town and country planning act 1990 by 30 May 2014.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This proposal forms part of the Special School Review whereby the Local Authority is seeking to deliver on its commitment to rebuild or refurbish all of its special school buildings.
- 1.2 It is proposed to merge the two schools to form a “new” school with a designated number of 336 (an increase of 54 places) for September 2015. The “new” school will relocate to a new, purpose-built building in Park Farm Road, Folkestone in January 2016.
- 1.3 The public notice was published on 2 March 2014 and closed on 30 March 2014.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 a. Capital: The proposal requires the provision of a new purpose built building on KCC owned land at Park Farm Road, Folkestone. A feasibility study has been completed. The total cost is estimated to be in the region of £16.8m. Appropriate funding has been identified as part of the Medium Term Capital Programme, which includes funding from the Targeted Basic Need allocation from the DfE made in August 2013. The costs of the project are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.
- b. Revenue: The schools delegated budget will be allocated on the combined numbers of the two predecessor schools. The Place Plus funding rate will include an element to reflect a lump sum. The Place Plus funding rate for the amalgamated school will only include one lump sum element and will result in a reduction of £360,148 over time when compared to the total of the two predecessor school budgets. Full protection will be provided on the lump sum elements for the period from the point of amalgamation to the end of the financial year and at 85% of the combined lump sums for the full financial year following the year in which the schools amalgamated.
- c. Human: The school will appoint additional teachers and support staff as required.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

- 3.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places” as set out in ‘Bold Steps for Kent’.
- 3.2 The ‘Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and who are Disabled’ (SEND Strategy) “has a priority to create at least 275 additional places for ASD and BESN” and aims to “increase the number of places in special schools from 3,491 to 3,700” (209 places).

4. Public Notice Outcomes

- 4.1 No responses were received to the Public Notice.

5. Views

- 5.1 The views of the Local Members: Both local Members, Mr Martin Whybrow (Foxwood School) and Mr Frank McKenna (Highview School) attended the public meeting.

Mr Whybrow was reassured to hear the positive comments and the enthusiasm staff showed for the project. This, coupled with the knowledge that the facilities proposed for the “new” school being considerably better than the current schools confirms Mr Whybrow’s support for the proposal.

Mr McKenna had a tour of Foxwood School before the public meeting and could see that it was not fit for the needs of its pupils. It is great news to hear that KCC and the governing body are proposing to merge the schools and build a new school in Park Farm. Mr McKenna believes that the teaching staff will have an input to the design of the new school which will be specifically designed to meet

the needs of the pupils and he will be looking forward to seeing the plans and design of the new school.

- 5.2. The view of the Headteacher and Governing Body:
The Executive Headteacher and the Federation Governing Body are in full support of the proposal.

The Federation Governing Body have been working alongside the Local Authority for many years to develop a building scheme that allows our students to benefit from the high quality education both schools provide, but within new, purpose built accommodation. This scheme represents the culmination of that work and as such, the Governing Body are fully in support of the proposal. The development of a single school for PSCN youngsters allows not only the economies of scale present in a single building but also provides the best platform to develop cohesive education and effective teaching, learning, curriculum and behaviour strategies.

In addition it allows us to develop the current high quality outreach, guidance and support we offer to the schools and young people of Shepway as, by working in partnership with health and social care colleagues, we will be able to develop the services currently housed in the 'Children's Centre'. This will create a Multi-Agency Service Hub approach that is co-located with the Federation Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, giving a truly integrated model of support for the young people of Shepway. This is an exciting and innovative new development of which Shepway can be proud

We look forward to working with the Local Authority on this exciting project.

- 5.3. The view of the Area Education Officer:
The Area Education Officer for South Kent fully supports this proposal and believes that this is by far the best option for the children. The staff work closely together now and share good practice, but being located in one school will further improve their skills.

Currently, Foxwood School is sited on a hillside with a range of buildings of varying quality. The site is not appropriate given the needs of the pupils. Highview School's site has many different levels due to the sloping nature of the site. Both sites are no longer able to meet the numbers or needs of their respective pupil cohorts.

Merging the two schools into one "new" school in a purpose built building specifically designed for the needs of the pupils will ensure that the pupils will have the best start to their educational journey.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

7. Delegation to Officers

- 7.1 The Officer Scheme of Delegation (under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution) provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. It is envisaged, if the proposal goes ahead, that

the Director of Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 This proposal will not only provide excellent accommodation for pupils at both schools but will also assist in providing some 25% of the additional numbers needed in Kent's special schools as set out in the SEND Strategy.

9. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to agree to:

- (i) close Foxwood School
- (ii) relocate Highview School and increase the designated number from 282 to 336 for September 2015.
- (iii) Allocate £16.8m from the Education, Learning and Skills Capital Budget in order that the proposal may go ahead.
- (iv) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (iv) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

This decision is conditional upon the grant of planning permission under part 3 of the town and country planning act 1990.

10. Background Documents

10.1 Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/old_steps_for_kent.aspx

10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013-18

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s43253/ItemD3KentEducationCommissioningPlan20132018final.pdf>

10.3 Draft SEND Strategy dated April 2013 -

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/SENstrategy/consultationHome>

10.5 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/FoxwoodandHighview/consultationHome>

11. Contact details

Report Author:

- David Adams
- Area Education Officer – South Kent
- 01233 898559
- david.adams@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Kevin Shovelton
- Director of Education Planning and Access

- 01622 694174
- Kevin.shovelton@kent.gov.uk