

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL-RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,  
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

14/00158

For publication

**Subject: Amalgamation of Murston Infant School and Murston Junior School, Sittingbourne by closing the current Infant and Junior Schools and establishing a 1.5FE, single community primary school, including maintained nursery unit, for children aged 3 to 11 years.**

Decision:

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

- (i) Issue a public notice to discontinue Murston Infant School and Murston Junior School and establish a single, 1.5FE community primary school and maintained nursery unit on 1 September 2016.

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

- (ii) Make recommendation to the Schools Adjudicator for determination for implementation on 1 September 2016.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

- 1.1 Murston Infant School and Murston Junior School are two separate community schools serving the Murston Ward of Sittingbourne. The infant school is currently without a substantive headteacher.
- 1.2 The Governing Bodies of both schools have met with the Local Authority and agreed that amalgamation of the two schools to create an all-through primary school would be the natural progression for the schools, which will secure benefits for staff and pupils.
- 1.3 At an extraordinary meeting of the full governing bodies from both schools held on Wednesday 20 May, having considered the benefits of amalgamation, both governing bodies unanimously agreed that the Local Authority should carry out a consultation on the proposal.
- 1.4 The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 states: "*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.*"

In reaching this decision I have taken into account:

1. the views expressed by those attending the consultation meeting on 2 July 2015, and those put in writing in response to the consultation;
2. the views of the local County Councillor; Governing Bodies of the schools and Staff;
3. the Equalities Impact Assessment and any comments received regarding this; and
4. the views of the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee 8 July 2015.

## 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. Feasibility is currently being carried out on ways of providing a link between the two sites, to enable easier access for the pupils and staff.

### 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 2016/17 financial year from September 2016 to March 2017. 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 2017 to March 2018. ( $2 \times £120,000 \times 85\% = £204,000$ ). From April 2018 the amalgamated primary school would receive one lump sum, currently £120,000.

### Human

The staff consultation process will be carried out in parallel with the public consultation.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

### 8 July 2015

Members recommended that following consideration of the responses to the consultation, a public notice should be issued.

On 24 September 2014 Cabinet Committee endorsed the Kent Commissioning Plan.

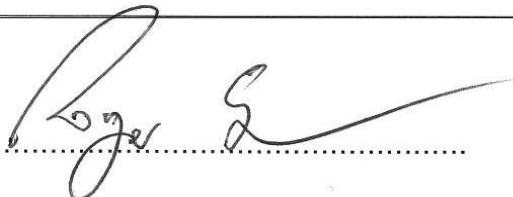
Any alternatives considered:

The Governing Bodies of Murston Infant School and Murston Junior School recommended to the Local Authority that the most appropriate solution to securing and maintaining outstanding education provision for both infant and junior age ranges at Murston is to have a single all-through primary school.

The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-19 states: *"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:

Date 22 July 2015



Signed