



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, 10th January, 2008, at 10.30 am Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen Mannering**

**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

Telephone **(01622)
694289/694367**

Refreshments will be available from 10.15 am in the meeting room

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2007 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Tunbridge Wells Community High School - Proposed Change at Age Range to Remove the Sixth Form from the School's Formal Designation (Pages 7 - 12)
5. The Hereson (Community) School and Ellington (Community) School for Girls - Proposed Amalgamation - Outcome of Public Consultation (Pages 13 - 48)
6. The Proposed Relocation of Portal House School, Dover to the Site of the former Newington Infant School, Thanet (Pages 49 - 56)
7. New School Competitions (Pages 57 - 60)
8. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status (Pages 61 - 66)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Geoff Mills
Democratic Services
(01622) 694287
2 January 2008

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held on Wednesday, 14 November 2007 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr R B Burgess (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Angell, Mr C J Capon, Mrs E Green (substitute for Mr A Poole) and Mr M J Northey.

Mr R Bristow, Director of Education, Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education was also present.

OFFICERS: Dr I Craig (Director – Operations), Children, Families and Education Directorate; Mrs A Osborne, Area Education Officer, Canterbury and Swale; Mr David Adams, Area Education Officer, Ashford and Shepway, Mr S Webb, Area Education Officer, Dartford and Gravesham and Mr G Mills (Legal and Democratic Services).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education – Operations, Resources and Skills.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2007
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2007 be agreed as a true record.

2. Ethelbert Road (Community) Infants School, Faversham – Proposed Change to an All-through Primary School – Outcome of Public Consultation
(Item 4 – report by Director - Operations)
(Mr T Gates was present for this item)

(1) This report set out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to change Ethelbert Road Infant School, Faversham to an all-through primary school. The report also sought the views of the Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to change the age range of the school.

(2) Mrs Osborne said that the consultation exercise which had been undertaken demonstrated that there was strong support within the local community for the proposal to extend the age range taught at Ethelbert Road from Year R to Year 6 with the result the school would become an all through primary. The proposal would mean that from September 2008 and in successive years, Year 2 children would stay on at the school instead of having to find alternative places elsewhere. All children currently attending Ethelbert Road would be guaranteed places from Year 3 through to Year 6 and the new PAN of 15 would apply to entry to Year R from September 2008. Currently, approximately 30 children enter at Year R and leave at the end of Year 2 and therefore the new arrangement would offer 15 pupils education across all primary key stages, Year R to Year 6.

(3) Mr Gates, as the local Member said the public meeting which took place at the school showed through the quality of discussion and debate that there was strong support within the community for these proposals which he very much welcomed. Providing an all through primary school solved the problem of transfer to another school at the end of Year 2 and was a common sense approach to addressing this issue.

(4) In response to Members questions, Dr Craig said that the proposal was consistent with everything which the County Council had done in relation to the development and implementation of the Primary School Strategy. In looking at small schools, one of the guidelines which was used was to ask could a school justify four classes and did it have a hundred plus pupils. If the proposal to make Ethelbert Road an all through primary school was approved, then those guidelines would clearly be met and the school would be able to support four classes. Officers also responded to questions regarding travel to school patterns and the resource implications should for example Ethelbert School be closed and provision made for its pupils through expanding one of the other nearby primary schools. Mrs Osborne said that as detailed in the report, these issues had been considered very carefully and the firm belief was that the retention of the school as a primary school would best serve local needs.

(5) Mrs Osborne also confirmed that Ethelbert Road would continue to use the playing fields at the Abbey School which was situated some 500 yards away. The two schools were divided by a main road but that was crossed by way of a footbridge. Mrs Osborne said she was also completely satisfied with the plans which had been made by the Headteacher and staff to deliver the wider curriculum which would come in as a result of having pupils at the school through to Year 6. In addition, the Swale Cluster was very supportive of the proposals and could if needed, give any further curriculum and development support which may be required. Also, the proposal would be phased and take four years to fully implement so there would be of more than sufficient time for the teaching staff to be fully prepared for teaching pupils through from Year R to Year 6.

(6) Following discussion, the Advisory Board agreed unanimously to the proposal to change Ethelbert Road (Community) Infants School, Faversham to an all through primary school and to the issuing of a public notice to change the age range. The Advisory Board also agreed that subject to approval of the proposal following the end of the objection period, the resources necessary to implement the scheme be provided on the basis identified in the report.

3. The Proposed Closure of Danley Middle School as an Addition to the Previously Notified Proposed Closures of Minster College and Cheyne Middle School, to be replaced with an Academy Conditional Upon a Funding Agreement Forthcoming from the Department for Children, Schools and Families
(Item 5 – report by Director – Operations)

(1) This report informed the Advisory Board of a revision to the steps necessary to achieve the secondary phase of education within the two-tier system on the Isle of Sheppey.

(2) Members of the Advisory Board noted that as a result of these revisions when the Public Notice in respect of this matter was issued, it would need to propose the closure of Danley Middle School in addition to Minster College and Cheyne Middle

School with their replacement by an Academy on the Minster College and Cheyne Middle School sites, subject to the Funding Agreement.

3. New School Competitions

(Item 6 – report by Director - Operations)

(1) Mr Adams said that the Education Act 2004 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake a competition to seek a promoter when it considers there is a need for a new secondary school. This requirement was extended to cover all primary schools under the Education Inspection Act 2006. This report explained the implications of the legislation and put forward a proposed process and indicative competition timeline for consideration by the Advisory Board.

(2) During the course of discussion, it was said that the consultation process and the competition timeline as detailed in the report, should make it clear that as a matter of course local members be included in the consultation process. This was agreed. It was also said and agreed that in the competition timeline the initials LEA would be replaced by the initials “LA”.

(3) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board agreed to the proposed procedure for operating a New school Competition subject to the views expressed during the course of the discussion. On that basis, Dr Craig said he would submit to the next meeting of the Advisory Board a revised competition timeline which took account of the views expressed by Members.

4. Templar Barracks, Ashford – Proposed New Primary School Provision

(Item 7 – report by Director - Operations)

(Mrs Elizabeth Tweed was present for this item as the Local Member)

(1) To take account of significant increases in the provision new housing, this report set out the case for a new school to be built on the site of the former Templar Barracks, Ashford.

(2) Mrs Tweed spoke about the dilemma between the phasing of the housing construction and the point at which construction of the new primary school should commence. The new school would be an integral part of the new community that was being created and therefore she questioned whether its construction should not commence sooner so the school could open before the proposed date of September 2010. Mrs Tweed also spoke about the future of the Victoria Road School which she believed was on land which had been identified for a future road widening scheme. Dr Craig said that planning for the opening of a new school was important because not opening it at the right time could lead to pupils being drawn away from other local schools which then in turn could find themselves under pressure to maintain pupil numbers on roll. Therefore whilst a 2009 opening of the new primary school may be possible, opening it in 2010 was in all the circumstances the preferred option. As to the Victoria Road School, Mr Adams said discussions were ongoing but should it prove necessary at some in the future stage to relocate the school, then that would be done on a cost neutral basis. A suitable site on which the school could be relocated had already been identified and that would allow for the construction of new buildings and provide more playing fields than was currently available.

(3) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board endorsed the undertaking of a public consultation on the need for a new school on the Templar Barracks site in Ashford.

5. Rowhill School, Wilmington – Proposal to Enlarge and Relocate to the Old West Kent Hospital School Site and Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre onto the Rowhill Site
(Item 8 – report by Director - Operations)
(Mrs A Allen and Mr R Bassam were present for this item as local Members)

(1) This proposal seeks to relocate the Rowhill School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford and to enlarge the school buildings in order to increase capacity from 96 places to 120 places. The proposal also seeks to relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington and to relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.

(2) Mrs Allen said that she supported the proposal but there needed to be a good travel plan put in place to meet the different needs of the pupils. Mr Bassam said that he was delighted that Rowhill was being relocated into Longfield but hoped that construction could start as soon as possible rather than having to wait until 2009.

(3) Mr Webb said that travel arrangements would be put in place to meet the various needs of the pupils and its effectiveness reviewed on an annual basis. With regard to timing, Dr Craig said that taking into account the requirements to go through a formal statutory consultation process, and to undertake the contractual and tendering procedures, would in his judgement mean that the earliest that these proposals could be introduced would be 2010. Mr Webb said that everything possible would be done to maintain the ethos and character of Rowhill School and he was confident that that could be successfully achieved. Mr Webb also said that the needs of all of those subject to the proposal would be taken very carefully into account and he felt the needs of all pupils would be better met by the proposals now being put forward. Dr Craig said that the proposal was entirely in accordance with the principal of supporting the inclusion agenda but also at the same time it would provide special needs facilities where parents want them for their child.

(4) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board unanimously approved the principle to enlarge the Rowhill Special School to its pre-2004 size and gave approval in principle to the relocation of the Rowhill Special School to the West Kent Hospital site on Main Road, Longfield. The Advisory Board also approved in principle the relocation of the Phoenix Centre to the Stock Lane site and gave approval in principle to the relocation of the West Kent Health Needs Education Service to the Stock Lane site.

6. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status
(Item 9 – report by Director - Operations)

(1) A report was presented to the Advisory Board at its meeting on 17 October 2007 advising Members of the Government's encouragement of all schools to consider Foundation/Trust Status and of the "Fast Track" procedures to achieve that.

(2) As part of that report it was agreed that responses to these proposals would be reported to the Advisory Board and these were detailed in the report.

(3) Following discussion, the Advisory Board noted the contents of the report.

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 January 2008

Subject: TUNBRIDGE WELLS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL – PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE TO REMOVE THE SIXTH FORM FROM THE SCHOOL'S FORMAL DESIGNATION

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents the results of a public consultation exercise undertaken on a proposal to regularise the position regarding the suspension of sixth form provision at Tunbridge Wells Community High School, by changing the designated age range from 11 to 19, to 11 to 16 years only.

Introduction

1. (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 17 October 2007, supported a proposal to undertake public consultation on changing the designated age range of Tunbridge Wells Community High School, from the current 11-19, to 11-16 years of age.

(2) Members noted that the School Organisation Regulations 1999 define 'the upper age limit' for individual schools as being 'the highest age of pupils for whom education is normally provided at the school'.

(3) Tunbridge Wells Community High School is currently designated as a school for students aged 11-19 years, but the school's Sixth Form was suspended from September 2005 on grounds of viability. School Organisation Regulations do not, however, provide for temporary changes to the age range of a school. This proposal has, therefore, been brought forward to regularise the position and to bring it into line with legislative requirements.

(4) In these circumstances, Members agreed to a more limited public consultation exercise than is normal practice within the county when the outcome of a proposal would normally lead to a change in provision for pupils. In this case, the change would be in formal designation only.

(5) Appendix 1 comprises the consultation letter distributed to all key stakeholders on 2 November 2007. This report summarises the outcome of the consultation process.

Background

2. (1) Tunbridge Wells Community High School is a small non-selective secondary school located to the east of Tunbridge Wells. A location map and a site plan are attached as Appendices 2 and 3.

(2) The roll was 436 (January 2007 pupil census) and is forecast to remain relatively constant over the next few years. It does not have sixth form students currently on roll, and has not done so since the sixth form arrangements were suspended from September 2005. Post 16 students from Tunbridge Wells High have

been successfully transferring to alternative courses, sometimes at other local sixth forms but, mostly, to West Kent College which works in close partnership with the school.

(3) Numbers in the Sixth Form at Tunbridge Wells High had always been quite small and, in latter years, very small. Table 1 below details historic roll figures for main school and Sixth Form numbers from 2000 to 2005.

Table 1

Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total 11-16	12	13	14	Total 16+	Total
2000	85	88	86	107	99	465	29	17	7	53	518
2001	108	92	93	89	107	489	36	15	5	56	545
2002	106	111	94	100	86	497	29	25	4	58	555
2003	97	102	112	88	86	485	20	15	3	38	523
2004	105	91	103	101	81	481	19	10	1	30	511
2005	91	105	94	109	89	488	2	0	0	2	490

(4) The school's post-16 focus, since 1998, had been on vocational courses at 16+, offering a limited range of options, covering Performing Arts, Art and Design, Travel and Tourism and Business Studies.

(5) Over a number of years, as Table 1 demonstrates, the school's post-16 roll gradually fell, reflecting the challenges faced by a high school in an area surrounded by popular and successful selective and church schools, offering a wide range of post-16 options. The addition of single sex secondary school options, in nearby Tonbridge, and of comprehensive schools, less than ten miles away in East Sussex, meant that maintaining a Sixth Form was no longer viable.

(6) By 2003/04 the numbers of students in the Sixth Form had fallen to 30. The only way sixth form provision could continue would have been by using a cross-subsidy using formula funding intended for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. This was not considered justifiable. In order to secure the school's budget, governors were obliged to suspend the operation of the Sixth Form with effect from September 2005.

(7) The school believes it has benefited from the suspension of the Sixth Form in as much as skilled teachers, who previously taught at 16+, have been re-deployed to Key Stage 3 and 4 classes. This has contributed to an upward trajectory in results at the end of Key Stage 4 and to an outstanding performance as indicated by Contextual Value Added, validated by Ofsted in February 2005 and again in a 'themed inspection' of science provision, in December 2006.

(8) In summary, suspension of the school sixth form was necessary and there have been real and significant ways in which the school has made a virtue of that necessity.

The Proposal

3. (1) The proposal is to change the designated age range of Tunbridge Wells Community High School, from co-educational provision for students aged 11 to 19 years, to co-educational provision for students aged 11 to 16 years.

(2) This will consolidate the already established partnership for post 16 progression routes with West Kent College and other local sixth forms. A closer working

relationship with nearby West Kent College has been developed, so that all Tunbridge Wells High students have ready access to the vast range of post-16 opportunities at the College. These are jointly promoted by school and by college staff.

(3) Data from Connexions show that a higher than ever percentage of Tunbridge Wells High students are progressing at 16+ into education or employment with training. As collaboration continues to develop between partner institutions in the area, this trend of developing the right pathways for students will continue.

Consultation

4. (1) There is no prescribed consultation process that must be followed in order to secure a change of age status for a school. However, guidance from the DCSF suggests that it is good practice to seek the views of all stakeholders likely to be affected by the proposal.

(2) Accordingly, the school wrote to all appropriate stakeholders on 2 November 2007. Appendix 1 comprises the consultation letter that informs them about this proposal. It was sent to all parents/carers of current students and to the governors and staff of Tunbridge Wells Community High School. Also included in the circulation were the Tunbridge Wells Cluster of Schools, the West Kent Learning Federation and the Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council.

(3) Attached to the consultation letter was a Reply Form for respondents to express their views before the closing date of 14 December 2007.

Responses to the Public Consultation

5. (1) 57 responses were received, of which 52 were in favour, and 5 were against the proposal.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 4.

(3) In the circumstances, a Public Meeting was not deemed necessary.

Views of the Governing Body

6. The Governing Body of the school, having taken the decision to suspend the Sixth Form arrangements in 2005, is fully supportive of the proposal to formally re-designate the age range of students at the school.

Views of the Local Member

7. Mr Kevin Lynes, the Local Member, fully supports this proposal.

Views of the Cluster Board

8. The Tunbridge Wells Cluster Board fully supports the proposal to regularise the position at the school.

Views of the Learning and Skills Council

9. The Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway has been fully involved in developing partnership arrangements to secure progression routes for post-16 students from Tunbridge Wells High, and so fully supports this proposal.

Views of the Area Education Officer

10. The Area Education Officer fully supports this proposal.

Resource Implications

Capital

11. (1) There are no capital resource implications.

Revenue

(2) As the school currently does not make use of its designation to educate sixth form students there are no revenue implications.

Human

(3) No staff are currently employed in connection with the school's designation to educate sixth form students. Therefore, no changes to staffing arrangements are envisaged by the proposal.

Equality Issues

12. There are no equality issues particular to this proposal.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

13. There are no transport, environmental or community implications now arising from this proposal. The school has a Transport Plan in place. Post 16 students from Tunbridge Wells High will continue to transfer to a range of post-16 education, training and employment pathways, as they have been since September 2005.

School Improvement Implications

14. The proposal provides for more effective and efficient progression routes at post 16.

Links to the School Organisation Plan

15. This proposal is consistent with the aims, principles, policies and priorities within the School Organisation Plan, with specific reference to Section 4 and Section 5 (5.1-5.3.1 and 5.3.4) and Section 6 (6.1-6.3, 6.14, 6.20).

Proposed Timetable

16. If it is decided that a Public Notice should be issued in respect of this proposal, the following could apply as follows:

Cabinet Member Decision	February 2008
Issue of Public Notice	February 2008
End of Statutory Objection Period	April 2008
Cabinet Member Decision	June 2008
Adjudication (if necessary)	July/August 2008
Implementation, if agreed	September 2008

Recommendation:

17. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought:
- (a) on the issuing of a public notice to change the designated age range of Tunbridge Wells High School from 11-19, to 11-16 years only.

Chris Lay
Area Education Officer
(Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells)
Tel: (01732) 525107

The Local Member is Mr Kevin Lynes.

Background Documents:

None

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 January 2008

Subject: THE HERESON (COMMUNITY) SCHOOL AND ELLINGTON
(COMMUNITY) SCHOOL FOR GIRLS - PROPOSED
AMALGAMATION – OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate The Hereson School and Ellington School for Girls. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to close both schools and establish a new school on the Ellington site.

Introduction

1. (1) Pupil numbers in the secondary sector in Thanet are set to decline in the next few years as the lower numbers in the primary schools feed through into the secondary phase. Both The Hereson School and Ellington School for Girls have experienced a significant drop in numbers in the last two years. Over the medium to long term neither school is viable unless there is a significant and sustained increase in pupil numbers which is extremely unlikely against a backdrop of falling rolls in the area.

(2) At its meeting on 14 June 2007 the School Organisation Advisory Board considered a proposal to undertake a public consultation to amalgamate The Hereson School and Ellington School for Girls. The School Organisation Advisory Board supported the proposal to consult on a possible amalgamation. Subsequently the decision was taken in consultation with the Cabinet Member to go to public consultation on this issue. This report sets out the results of the public consultation which was undertaken in November and December 2007.

(3) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1 was distributed to all interested parties. This document contains background information and roll data to inform the consultation process.

Background

2. (1) The Hereson School has a published admission number of 120 and a net capacity of 688. In September 2007 there were 506 pupils on roll giving a surplus capacity of 26%.

(2) Ellington School for Girls has a published admission number of 120 and a net capacity of 642. In September 2007 there were 390 pupils on roll giving a surplus capacity of 39%.

(3) Roll projections based on historic patterns of pupil distribution and taking account of demographic factors and local development suggest a long-term need for a 4FE high school, that is an annual intake of 120 pupils between Hereson and Ellington.

(4) Ellington School for Girls has been relocated onto a new purpose built site at Pysons Road. This has been delivered as part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The new Ellington buildings provide first-class accommodation for up to 600 pupils (11-16) which would enable the school to admit an annual intake of 120 pupils (4FE). This is in line with the long-term projected need for high school places in the area.

(5) Secondary schools of less than 4FE encounter significant challenges in organising and delivering the National Curriculum. Combined, Ellington and The Hereson schools would have the critical mass of pupils to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum with a diverse range of options to meet local need.

(6) Both Ellington and The Hereson are good schools with considerable strengths and strong community links. Merging the two schools would sustain good quality high school provision within Ramsgate over the long term, retaining the strengths of each within a viable 4FE school, providing excellent facilities for all. The new site of Ellington School for Girls suitably adapted, offers the opportunity to realise this goal. It is located closer to the greatest concentration of existing Hereson student's homes than the current site of The Hereson School. The map at Appendix 2 shows the location of the new Ellington site and the existing Hereson site in relation to the home locations of the students currently on roll at The Hereson School.

The Proposal

3. (1) The proposal is to amalgamate Ellington School for Girls and the Hereson School by closing both schools and immediately opening a newly amalgamated school on the Ellington site with effect from 1 September 2009. This would create a new 4FE school with a PAN of 120 serving both boys and girls age 11-16.

(2) At the point of amalgamation in September 2009, there would be an estimated 692 pupils on the combined roll of both schools. The roll will reduce as the larger year groups at the top end of the school are replaced by smaller year groups coming in at Year 7.

(3) It is proposed to phase the amalgamation by adopting a one-year transition period from 2009-10. The new Year 7 together with Years 8, 9 and 10 would move onto the Ellington site in September 2009. The Hereson Year 11 would remain on the existing Hereson site to complete their final GCSE year. With effect from 2010 all pupils would be on the Ellington site. This would mean that the total pupil numbers on the new Ellington site would remain within the physical capacity of the accommodation (c.600).

(4) All children currently attending Hereson and Ellington would be guaranteed places in the newly amalgamated school.

(5) Although the new school would have an 11 – 16 designation, all students would potentially benefit from Post 16 learning opportunities which now form part of the common offer to Thanet students, arising from collaboration between all Thanet secondary schools.

(6) It is intended that the organisation of the new school would reflect the desire to retain strong elements of single-sex provision especially in the core subjects at KS3. There would be designated leadership responsibility at Assistant Headteacher level for the development and well-being of boys and girls respectively.

Consultation Process

4. (1) The consultation document was distributed to staff, governors and parents at the schools, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local libraries, the Borough Council and others in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website.

(2) Approximately 1250 copies of the document were circulated, which included a form for written responses.

(3) A public meeting was held at the Thanet Skills Centre on 20 November 2007. Mr Robert Burgess, Vice Chairman of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Dr Ian Craig, Director – Operations, Martyn Doole, Area Education Officer and other KCC officers. 62 people attended. A second public meeting was held at Clarendon House on 27 November 2007. Mr Robert Burgess chaired the meeting. In attendance were Dr Ian Craig, Martyn Doole, and other KCC officers. 61 people attended.

Competition Regulations

5. (1) The proposal includes the establishment of what would be a new school and is therefore potentially subject to competition regulations under the Education and Inspection Act 2006. The Local Authority applied to the Secretary of State for an exemption from external competition and permission to publish a proposal to establish a new school, subject to the outcome of the public consultation process.

(2) The Secretary of State has decided not to grant an exemption from the competition regulations in relation to this proposal. A copy of the decision letter is attached at Appendix 3.

(3) The implication of this decision is that the Local Authority can only publish its own proposal to establish a new school if the proposal is published as part of a competition process, the timetable for which is set out in S.15 of this report and in the public consultation document included at Appendix 1.

(4) Other proposers now have the opportunity to submit a proposal to run the new school, as part of a competition process run by the Local Authority and on the basis of a specification for the new school which is drawn up by the Local Authority and published as part of the first competition notice, which is referred to in the published timetable for competition as set out in the original public consultation document.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

6. (1) A total of 48 written responses were received of which 14 were in favour and 34 opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 5.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) Summaries of points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meetings are attached as Appendix 6.

Views of the Local Members

7. (1) The local members are Mrs E Green, Mr A Poole, Mr W Hayton and Mr J Fullarton.

Comments from Mr Fullarton

(2) Mr Fullarton is aware that parents feel that their children benefit from a single sex education and would be distracted by attending a mixed sex school. Mr Fullarton is therefore in principle against the amalgamation. He does however understand that the roll numbers are falling at both schools and that the proposal from the Local Authority's view would make economic sense. It would also give Hereson the opportunity of up to date facilities.

Comments from Mr Hayton

(3) In principle, Mr Hayton is in support of the proposal. As a governor of Hereson, Mr Hayton is fully aware of the issue of falling numbers and the financial consequences of this continuing decline in the next few years. For this reason he believes it necessary to secure the future of the school through amalgamation. He recognises the contribution of both schools to the education of Thanet children, but he fears that if action is not taken parents will continue to choose other schools. Mr Hayton would prefer some form of single sex provision built into the arrangements to help retain the traditions of both schools.

Comments from Mr Poole

(4) "I attended both consultation meetings and the main concern expressed by parents was the potential loss of the current 'single-sex provision'. I appreciate that research into the impact of single-sex education on educational standards is inconclusive but the fact remains that a significant number of parents support the concept of single-sex provision.

Currently the Local Authority are only saying they would like to see single-sex provision retained for Maths, English and Science classes and what is provided will be up to the new Governors and the new Headteacher. The Local Authority says they cannot order the Governors to retain single-sex provision.

As a Member of the School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB) I will insist that the retention of single-sex provision, where appropriate, is guaranteed as part of this proposal (not just vague promises).

One common reason for amalgamation is that one or both schools are 'failing' but this is not the case here as both schools have excellent records.

The main 'driver' for this amalgamation is the dwindling number of pupils which has already reduced the annual intake to below 60 for each school (should be 120). It is recognised that this will eventually lead to significant budgetary problems for the schools as school budgets are determined by pupil numbers.

Numbers currently in the Primary School system indicate that this is not likely to be a short term problem and will lead to a significant surplus of school places in Thanet (KCC figures). These figures are at best guesses and should be treated with caution as it was only a very short while ago that I was fighting 'school placement appeals' trying to get pupils placed at these schools! Thanet has been designated as an area for significant housing growth with possibly 7000 new homes being built in the next 25 years.

The amalgamation will inevitably lead to significant staff reductions and these should, where possible, be carried out on a voluntary basis.

When the new Ellington School was going through the Planning Process it was agreed that the footpath, which runs from West Dumpton Lane to the Ellington School, would be upgraded to allow greater access for pupils walking to school. This promise seems to have been lost in the paperwork, though some work is now taking place to tidy up the footpath. I am very concerned that the work does not include lighting.

Another area of concern is that the opportunity appears to have been missed to use Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding to provide new buildings for Chatham House and Clarendon House Grammar Schools and to create a federation of the four schools on a single campus. This would surely have provided significant educational advantages for the children of Thanet.”

Comments from Mrs Green

(5) “I am concerned that the proposal to merge Hereson and Ellington schools gives no other option to parents and will destroy the parental preference of single sex schooling. I believe the plans are shortsighted and a great opportunity, is being missed.

BSF funding is now available for Clarendon House and Chatham House and I believe Kent County Council should be looking at the best options for all four schools.

Clarendon Girls School was initially the school designated to join Ellington Girls School on the Pysons Road site in a separate school building. This option would retain single sex schooling independently, and would also provide the necessary sixth form facilities. This option has not been offered and I think this would be much more acceptable to many parents than the mixed schooling toward which KCC are heading with much unhappiness from parents, a number of staff and very importantly, the girls themselves. I am concerned that this option has not been put forward.

As BSF funding is now available for both Chatham and Clarendon I believe another solution is for all four schools to be sited together in a loose Federation on one site, they would remain independent, retain their own identity and ethos and there would be vastly improved facilities for all our children.

I am concerned that the proposal to rebuild Clarendon and Chatham on their current sites has gone forward to Government for decision without any consultation. I am concerned that it is known that Clarendon House cannot be rebuilt on its current site. In fact the school is actually so desperately in need of space that it is based on four sites. The playing fields are about a 20/25 minute walk away across main roads and this is completely unacceptable. I am concerned it may be expected the Government will turn down the rebuild on the Clarendon House site which will then lead to its eventual merger with Chatham House Boys School. This would allow KCC to merge the two schools with the blame placed firmly on the Government. This will anger many parents and upset many children who, having had the option, and for a variety of reasons, chose single sex schooling at these well established schools. Indeed a number of children travel some considerable distance to attend these two schools.

Staggered school hours and the Freedom Pass, which is provided in other parts of Kent, would resolve any transport and traffic problems. I am very concerned that without a 6th Form Kent Council are condemning Hereson and Ellington, currently two excellent and successful schools as it will be unable to compete with similar schools in the locality which are receiving a lot of investment and funding.

I was stunned to discover that when the BSF bid went in about 4 years ago Hereson was omitted from the application list. Instead schools in Herne Bay and one in Whitstable were added into the Thanet bid - neither actually in Thanet! The explanation was there weren't enough schools in Thanet where the criteria would be met - I find it difficult to accept that Hereson would not have met that criteria - far more so than some of those

actually added into the bid where the catchment areas are far more affluent and not so deprived.

I am objecting to this proposed merger on behalf of the many residents who have contacted me. It will destroy parental preference for single sex education. The school has no sixth form provision and the school was designed for girls with funding not in place for the extra facilities needed for the boys. I am concerned this proposal may well be purely politically motivated and not in the best interests of children attending Ramsgate Secondary Schools now and in the future.”

Views of the Local Member of Parliament

8. Dr S Ladyman, the local Member of Parliament is opposed to the proposal. A copy of his response is attached as Appendix 4.

Views of Thanet District Council

9. *(no written comments have been received)*

Views of the Governing Bodies

10. (1) The governing body of Ellington School for Girls recognises the need for action and having examined the options is fully supportive of the proposal to merge Ellington School for Girls with The Hereson School.

(2) The governing body of The Hereson School realises the financial impact of lower numbers and has taken steps to adjust the budget accordingly. Both schools have started to work together for their mutual benefit. There is an acceptance that action has to be taken to deal with the situation and amalgamation offers a solution which would preserve the traditions of both schools.

Views of pupils

11. (1) The Student Voice (School Council) of Hereson has listed their concerns and feelings and how they perceive the effects of the proposed merger. These items are in no particular order:

Transport to and from school; Uniform, which type?; The name of the new school; Loss of History, both schools (Hereson 100 years next year); Concerned about being taught in mixed classes; Teachers losing their jobs!; Facilities at the school i.e. toilets, changing rooms for PE; Bullying: girls causing problems between boys; Showing we are a modern school moving forward; Facilities for sport:- Football, Rugby, Cricket Pitches, Athletics, Running Track, Tennis Courts; Class sizes, both numbers and actual size of rooms; Will we all be able to fit on the new site?; Schools should stay separate; Courses available, DT workshop; Good, will we have new equipment; Good idea, bigger school; Year 7 are excited by the move; Concern over canteen, time to eat, more pupils around; Chance for a 6th form; Existing pupils finding it hard to adapt to a new school; What will happen to the present site if sold, will the money be used for /at new site.

(2) The Student Voice of Ellington has made the following points:

There will be no single sex schools other than Grammar Schools. Some people work better in smaller schools that are not mixed. If the boys join it will take longer to queue

for the lunches. The school is barely big enough for us so what will we do when the boys join. Learn how to work well with the opposite sex.

At the moment we haven't got the facilities for boys. We will need more teachers to teach the boys. Good idea but it should be the whole school that joins. Disruptive to have many new teachers all at the same time.

There maybe more poor behaviour when the schools mix. Not fair as many of our parents wanted us to come to Ellington because it is single sex. Worried that the boys will show off and vandalise the school. Less arguments when boys join. Girls starting to misbehave when boys join. Worried that some girls will see it as a 'dating place'. Good – some girls get along with boys better. Good as it will mean the school will have more people in it.

Views of the Thanet 2 Cluster Board

12. Thanet 2 Cluster Board supports this proposal on the basis that due to falling pupil numbers there is no alternative than to amalgamate the two schools. However, there is strong support for the retention of aspects of single sex teaching within the proposed mixed school and for ensuring that any building adaptations are made to the highest quality as part of the amalgamation process.

Views of the Area Education Officer

13. (1) Over the medium to long term the two existing high schools are not viable educationally, organisationally or financially.

(2) There is clearly a sustainable demand for good quality high school provision to serve the Ramsgate area but existing capacity must be reduced and existing provision reorganised to secure sustainability.

(3) Combined the two schools would have the critical mass of students, staff and resources to enable them to offer high quality, flexible and diverse provision, while making cost effective use of resources and securing value for money.

(4) Both schools are already working together to ensure that students benefit from collaboration and partnership.

(5) Within a single school it is entirely possible to maintain strong elements of single-sex provision according to the professional judgements of the Headteacher based on curriculum and community need.

(6) Merger will secure the legacy of these two schools and ensure that the community continues to be well served over the long term.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

14. (1) The amalgamated school will continue to serve the population of Ramsgate and the surrounding area. The Pysons Road site is approximately 1.3 miles from The Hereson site and 1.5 miles from the former Ellington site.

(2) The overall number of pupils who would be located on the new Pysons Road site would be no more than was originally envisaged for Ellington School for Girls, that is 4FE, approximately 600 pupils.

(3) Consultations with the Highways and Transport Integration Unit suggest that there would be minimal implications for non-public service transport. Over the transition period it may be necessary to consider the rescheduling of existing bus services to accommodate the phased migration away from The Hereson School to the Pysons Road site. Given the close proximity and modest number of pupils it is anticipated that these arrangements would be both manageable and unproblematic.

Resource Implications

15. (1) In the SOAB paper of 14 June it was reported that adaptations to the new buildings would be needed to cater for a mixed intake and that a feasibility study was being undertaken. The initial assessment is that approximately £200K would be needed to support adaptations to the site from 2009 so that it can cater for boys and girls. Further technical work is necessary to firm up this figure.

(2) As part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, a submission is being made to secure significant additional funding which would be used to further enhance the excellent facilities already available on the Ellington site. Allocation of this funding is subject to ongoing discussion and negotiation and approval by Partnership for Schools and the DCSF.

Proposed Timetable

16.	Cabinet Member Decision to Proceed to Competition	12 Feb 2008
	First Competition Notice Published (subject to Cabinet Members agreement)	28 Feb 2008
	Competition Notice Expires	28 June 2008
	Second competition notice published (including all proposals submitted in response to the first notice and any KCC proposal – subject to KCC Members agreement)	5 Sep 2008
	Expiry of Public Notice	17 Oct 08
	Referral to Adjudicator	31 Oct 2008
	Outcome of adjudication	Dec 2008
	Implementation	1 September 2009

17. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:

- (a) the amalgamation of The Hereson School and Ellington School for Girls, and;
- (b) if agreed, the issuing of a competition notice to initiate a competition to establish a new 4FE high school on the site of Ellington School for Girls



Martyn Doole
Area Education Officer
(Thanet & Dover)
Tel: (01227) 284461

The Local Members are Mrs E Green, Mr A Poole, Mr W Hayton and Mr J Fullarton.

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board 14 June 2007

**Amalgamation of
Ellington School for Girls and
The Hereson School**



Date of Public Meeting: Tuesday 20 November 2007, 7.00 p.m.

Venue for Public Meeting: Thanet Skills Studio (Details on Page 14)

**Kent County Council would like to hear your views on
a proposal to amalgamate Ellington School for Girls
and The Hereson School, with effect from 1st
September 2009**

1. BACKGROUND

Secondary school rolls in Thanet are falling. Over the next 7-8 years the number of students of secondary school age across the district will reduce significantly. At the same time secondary schools are seeking to develop a broader range of curriculum opportunities based around personalised learning and vocational provision. This will better equip young people for the world of work and enable them to realise their own potential. In addition, Thanet has been identified as an early beneficiary from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme which will enable major capital investment in secondary school infrastructure over the next few years. It is within this context that discussions are taking place between Kent County Council and local schools about the sort of secondary schools which are needed to serve the long term needs of local learners and their communities.

Ellington School for Girls and The Hereson School are two good high schools serving girls and boys respectively. The majority of pupils come from the Ramsgate area and live within two miles of the schools. In recent years the number of students entering Year 7 in both schools has declined significantly. Each school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 120. This means that it could and should be admitting up to that number of pupils (4 forms of entry) on an annual basis. The intake in September 2007 in each case was substantially below that number, continuing a decline in annual admissions in recent years (see section 2).

BACKGROUND continued

As the number of pupils of secondary age continues to fall it is unrealistic to expect either Ellington or The Hereson schools to achieve and sustain an annual intake of 120 by themselves. Secondary schools of significantly less than 4 Forms of Entry (4FE) face a number of challenges in delivering a broad range of high quality learning opportunities. Neither Ellington nor The Hereson would remain viable as stand alone secondary schools without a significant increase in pupil numbers. This is not a realistic proposition within the context of falling rolls across the area.

A continuing decline in pupil numbers and a consequential reduction in funding, would inevitably require reductions in staffing, restrict curriculum opportunities and ultimately impact adversely on standards.



Outdoor Performance Area - Ellington

4. SCHOOL ROLLS

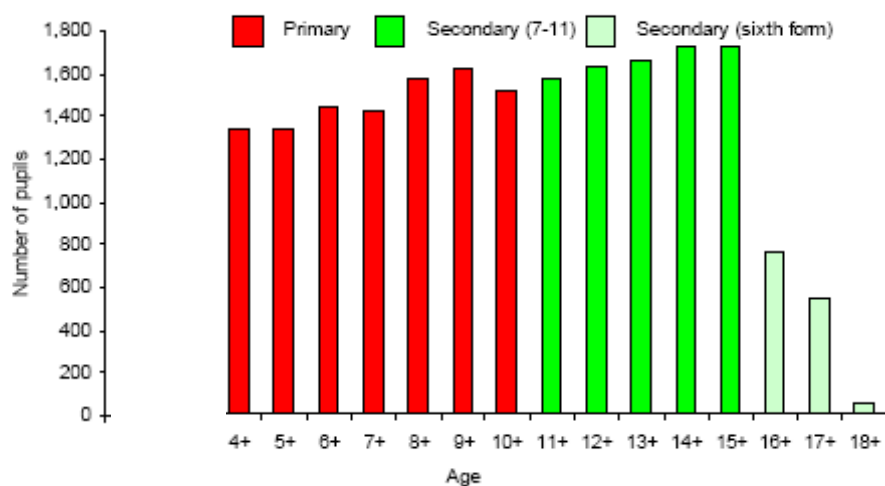
Year 7 numbers were very low this year and both schools are recruiting at levels significantly below their Published Admission Number.

The table below shows the current (September 07) pupil numbers at both schools for Years 7 to 11.

School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Hereson	57	88	121	122	118
Ellington	47	63	83	94	103

The graph below shows the number of pupils currently in the primary and secondary phases in Thanet schools. The lower numbers in the primary schools will feed through into the secondary schools over the coming years.

Thanet year groups (4-18 year olds) 2007



In summer 2007 there were 867 surplus places in Thanet secondary schools. On the basis of current forecasts this figure will rise to 1,427 by 2017

3. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to amalgamate Ellington School for Girls and The Hereson School by closing both schools and immediately opening a newly amalgamated school with effect from 1 September 2009. This would create a new 4FE school with a PAN of 120 serving both boys and girls age 11-16. The school would serve the same catchment as the two existing schools, principally the Ramsgate area.

At the point of amalgamation in September 2009, there would be an estimated 692 pupils on the combined roll of both schools. This will decline to an estimated 603 by September 2010 and 557 by 2011.

It is therefore proposed to phase the amalgamation by adopting a one-year transition period from 2009-2010. The new Year 7 plus years 8, 9 and 10 at The Hereson School would move onto the Ellington site in September 2009. The Hereson Year 11 would stay on the existing Hereson site, thereby providing stability in the critical final GCSE year. This would mean that the combined numbers on the new Ellington site would remain well within the physical capacity of the new accommodation.

Although the proposal is for an 11-16 school, Thanet secondary schools are working in an increasingly collaborative way to develop and enhance learning opportunities for all. There is already a common curriculum offer at 16+ for all local learners. Students attending the newly amalgamated school who wish to continue their education beyond statutory school age would be encouraged to do so and would be actively guided and supported in accessing the diverse range of learning opportunities available locally.

A new staffing structure would be required for the new school and a single headteacher would need to be appointed with designated and discrete responsibilities at senior management level for the pastoral care and educational development of boys and girls respectively.

An interim governing body would be established to oversee the transition to the new school. The interim governing body would determine the detailed staffing structure and the precise procedures by which staff would be appointed to the new school.

4. SITE AND ACCOMMODATION ISSUES

In June 2007 Ellington School for Girls relocated to a new purpose-built site located at Pysons Road. The new school buildings provide first class accommodation for up to 600 pupils (4FE). There are currently 390 pupils at the school. By 2016/17 it is estimated that there would be 255 in the school based on current projections.

The Hereson School site is at Ramsgate Road. The building stock of the school would need major refurbishment and substantial capital investment to make the accommodation suitable for the long-term needs of 21st Century learners.

Rolls at both schools will reduce significantly over the next few years as larger year groups at the upper end of the schools are replaced by smaller year groups coming in at Year 7. By 2010 the combined roll of both schools could be accommodated on the new Ellington site. All students would therefore have access to the improved facilities which the new school buildings have to offer.

The new Ellington building has been delivered as part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and not through the BSF programme. The PFI contract has a 28 year life-span and runs up to 2032.

There would be a need to make modest adaptations to the existing Ellington buildings to accommodate boys as well as girls. The estimated cost of these adaptations would be c.£200k. The overall capacity of the new school is sufficient to accommodate the combined roll given the proposed phasing of the amalgamation. However, it would be the Local Authority's intention to seek additional funding through BSF to further enhance the facilities at the new school in order to maximise organisational options. Potentially, this would yield significant enhancements to the existing site by 2009/10, beyond the adaptations which are referred to above.

5. SINGLE-SEX PROVISION AND DIVERSITY

The proposal would bring together two single-sex schools into a combined establishment for boys and girls on a single site. In terms of the impact of single-sex provision on educational standards, research findings are both variable and inconclusive. There is no definitive evidence that single-sex schools achieve better results than schools catering for both boys and girls. There is, however, some evidence that some pupils may benefit from single-sex teaching in certain subject areas. It is also recognised that some parents support the concept of single-sex provision. There is a need to retain and celebrate diversity and choice.

The newly amalgamated school would have the critical mass of pupils which would enable diverse and flexible provision according to the strategic direction determined by the governing body and the professional judgements of the headteacher.

The intention is to encourage the development of single-sex learning opportunities where appropriate, for example in the core subjects—English, Maths and Science at key Stage 3. In addition, we would expect the management structure to reflect separate responsibilities at senior leadership team level for the development of boys and girls respectively. In this way, the new school would offer a diverse range of curriculum and development opportunities adapted to meet the specific needs and wishes of the community, but within a viable and sustainable organisational framework. Final decisions on organisational structure and staffing would be taken by the headteacher and interim governing body of the new school. However, the Local Authority is working closely with the existing schools to develop organisational models which will inform future decisions and build on the strengths and tradition of the two existing schools.

6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Both schools have had positive Ofsted inspections within the last twelve months and both schools perform well above the national average in value added terms. This takes account of pupils' progress through the secondary phase of education.

Bringing the two schools together would create a school which is viable and sustainable in educational terms. The risk to standards is in not proceeding and allowing the two schools to wither on the vine as numbers and funding reduce, leading to consequential cuts in staffing, reduced organisational flexibility and ultimately severe restrictions on curriculum delivery and the quality of education.

Ellington School for Girls has recently secured accreditation as a specialist school in the Humanities. This accreditation took effect in September 2007. The accreditation is transferable to the new school which would therefore be well placed to build on and develop existing strengths, enriching diversity and choice at a local level.

The consolidation of high school provision in Ramsgate within a viable 4FE school would, over the medium-long term, improve the potential for recruitment and retention of staff. Staffing structures could be planned on the basis of relatively stable pupil numbers rather than the management of decline on a year by year basis.

Securing the viability of local high school provision for the long-term also supports the notion of developing community schools serving local people and being responsive to local need.

7. EXTENDED SCHOOL PROVISION

The Local Authority and the existing schools would be keen for the newly amalgamated school to develop and maintain a range of extended services to meet the specific needs of the local community and make full use of existing facilities. Both schools are currently engaged in discussions about the ways in which the new school could potentially deliver the Extended Schools Core Offer which includes:

1. Quality childcare (on-site or through local providers)
2. A varied menu of activities including out of hours clubs, study support etc.
3. Parenting support (including family learning)
4. Swift and easy referral to specialist support services
5. Community access (including adult learning)

Subject to the proposal being taken forward, the intention would be to arrange a separate consultation with parents on the range of extended services which they would wish to see developed. The proposals emerging from this consultation would then form the basis of an implementation plan for the new school.

8. DESIGNATED SPECIALIST PROVISION

The Hereson School has a special unit currently catering for 9 pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLD). The new school emerging from the amalgamation would extend the opportunities for specialist support to girls as well as boys.

It is intended that the new school would be the lead school within the locality for pupils with Speech and Language and Communication Needs (SLCN); Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) providing a range of on-site and outreach support in mainstream settings.

9. TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS

The Ramsgate area is well served by public transport. There are bus services from Ramsgate and elsewhere in Thanet, to either end of Pysons Road. Many pupils live within walking distance of the new Ellington site and others would have access to good transport links. There is also access to the new school from a pedestrian footpath leading onto the school site from Margate Road which gives easy access for many pupils. The new school would be well placed to serve the local community and to build on the strong community roots of the two existing schools. The Pysons Road site is already operational and the amalgamated school would serve the same area as the two existing schools. Overall it is not anticipated that there would be additional traffic or congestion. The new school would need to establish a Travel Plan which encourages and facilitates healthy and safe travelling arrangements for pupils.

10. KENT SECONDARY STRATEGY

Kent County Council has published a strategy to guide the development of secondary schools across the County. The strategy acknowledges the need to place schools at the heart of their communities and to provide diverse curriculum opportunities supported by an ICT rich learning environment. The objective is that no child or school will fail and all students will be encouraged, nurtured and supported in realising their full potential and individual aspirations. This proposal is entirely compatible with the main tenets of the Kent Secondary Strategy. Implementation would sustain viable high school provision within the community for the benefit of local learners; enable curriculum flexibility and diversity by maintaining a critical mass of students and staff; provide specialist support for pupils with a range of Additional Educational Needs; facilitate a broader range of subject choice including vocational options which would otherwise be restricted within the context of two significantly smaller schools.

11. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The purpose of this consultation process is to seek your views on whether a new school should be established by amalgamating Ellington School for Girls and The Hereson School.

New regulations were published earlier this year which introduce new requirements when a Local Authority is seeking to establish a new school. These requirements affect both the procedures and the possible timetable which have to be followed. An explanation of these arrangements and their implications is set out below.

Competition Arrangements

All proposals to establish a new school (including a school which emerges from amalgamation of two existing schools) are now subject to the requirement for external competition. This means that once a need for a new school has been identified by Kent County Council we are required to publish a competition notice which specifies the detailed requirement for the school and allows other interested parties to submit a proposal to run the school. There are then further procedural requirements to publish and evaluate proposals against the published specification. The details of these arrangements will be explained at the public meeting.

The competition requirement extends the decision making process and delays the point at which a final decision can be made. The competition timetable is set out in this section. If this proposal is subject to the competition process it is possible that it may be early in 2009 before a final decision is made. Kent County Council has therefore applied to the Secretary of State for an exemption to the competition process so that if, following the consultation, the decision is taken to publish a formal proposal, it would be possible to secure a decision before the end of the current academic year.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT continued

The Secretary of State will decide whether to allow an exemption before the outcome of the consultation process is reported back to SOAB on 10 January 2008. **The fact that we have applied for an exemption to the competition requirement does not mean that any decision has already been taken in advance of the consultation.**

Two timescales are set out in section 12 depending on whether a competition exemption is granted by the Secretary of State.

12. HOW TO GIVE 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:**
Martyn Doole, Area Education Officer,
East Kent Education Office, Clover House,
John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ.
(forms must reach us by 19 December 2007)
- **Come to a public meeting at The Thanet Skills Studio on Tuesday 20 November 2007, 7.00 p.m.**
 - 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**

***Dr Ian Craig
Director (Operations)
Children Families and Education
Kent County Council***

5 November 2007

13. CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

Public Consultation begins	5 November 2007
Application for Exemption from Competition Regulations submitted to Secretary of State	5 November 2007
Public Meeting at Thanet Skills Studio	20 November 2007, 7.00 pm
Public Consultation ends	19 December 2007
Decision by Secretary of State on Exemption from Competition	By end of December 2007
School Organisation Advisory Board	10 January 2008

If exemption from competition is granted the following timetable would apply

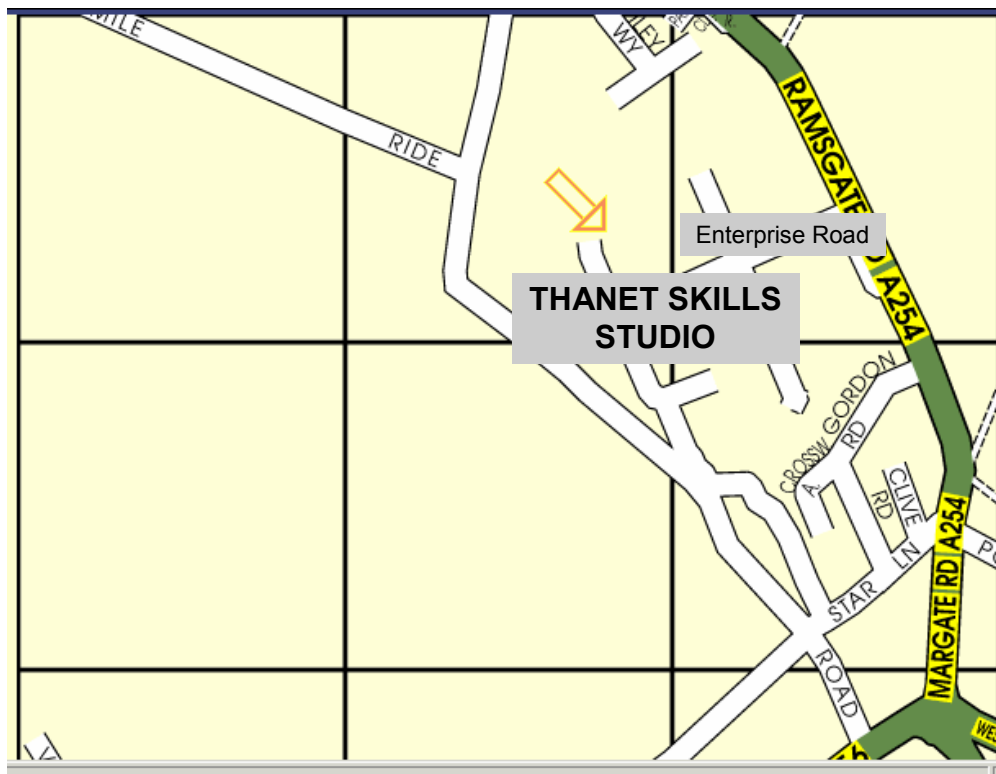
Cabinet Member Decision to issue Public Notice	12 February 2008
Public Notice Issued	22 February 2008
Public Notice Expires	4 April 2008
Referral to Adjudicator	By 18 April 2008
Adjudicator Determines Proposal	May 2008

If exemption from competition is NOT granted then the following timetable would apply:

Cabinet Member decision to proceed to Competition	12 February 2008
First Competition Notice Published During this period the DCSF will market the competition to potential proposers and hold a local seminar within first 5 weeks of competition notice	28 February 2008
Competition Notice Expires	28 June 2008
Second public notice—summary of competition proposals received in response to first notice and any KCC proposal, subject to KCC Member agreement. Publication of linked closure notices for existing schools. KCC to hold public meeting within first two weeks of representation period.	5 September to 17 October 2008
Referral to adjudicator	31 October 2008
Decision by schools Adjudicator	December 2008

PUBLIC MEETING VENUE

Thanet Skills Studio
Westwood Industrial Estate
Enterprise Road
Margate
Kent CT9 4JQ



Directions by car

From the Westwood Shopping Centre Roundabout (Debenhams and Homebase), drive along the A254 in the direction of Margate. At the first set of traffic lights (Hornby model factory on the left hand side) turn left into Enterprise Road. Drive 200 meters past the first turning on the left (Channel Road) you will be at the Thanet Skills Studio. Parking is available on the Road outside the offices.

Public Consultation Response Form

Proposal to amalgamate Ellington School for Girls and The Hereson School, Ramsgate with effect from 1 September 2009.

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 19 DECEMBER 2007

To: Martyn Doole, Area Education Officer (Dover & Thanet)
 East Kent Area Education Office, Clover House,
 John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way, Whitstable, Kent
 CT5 3QZ
 Fax: (01227) 772290

Yes/No to the proposal to amalgamate

YES

NO

I am:-

The parent/carer of a pupil at Ellington School for Girls

The parent/carer of a pupil at The Hereson School

A pupil at Ellington School for Girls

A pupil at The Hereson School

A member of staff at Ellington School for Girls

A member of staff at The Hereson School

A governor of Ellington School for Girls

A governor of The Hereson School

Other interested party

Name of other interested party

.....

Name:

Address:

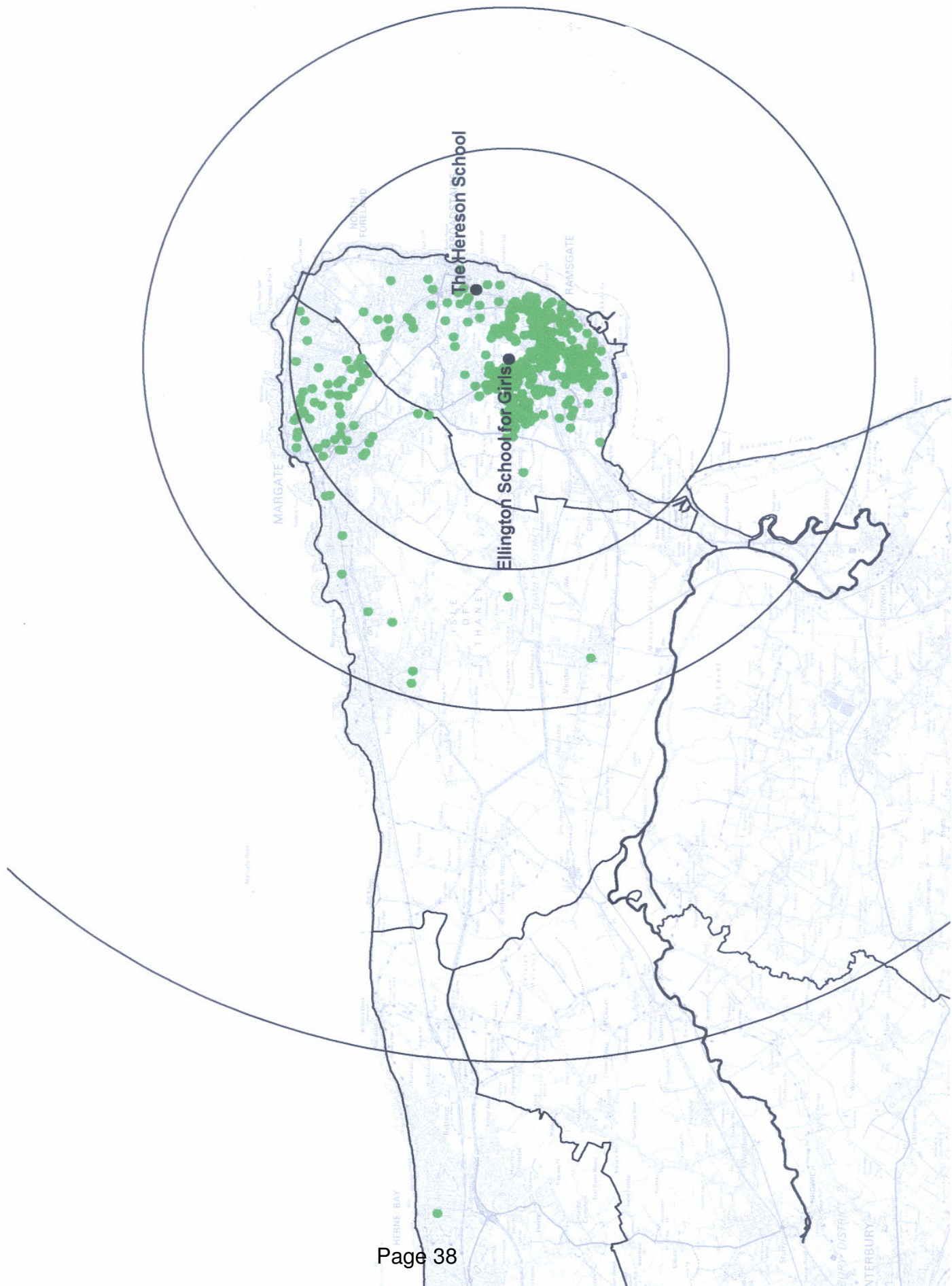
Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS OVERLEAF

My comments are as follows:

This document is available on:
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations/>
Responses can be emailed to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

If you have difficulty reading this document and require it in another format please contact your school.



department for
children, schools and families

Mowden Hall
Staindrop Road
Darlington, DL3 9BG

Tel: 0870 0012345
Fax:
info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
www.dcsf.gov.uk

110 DEC 2007

Sent by e-mail:

martyn.doole@kent.gov.uk

Direct line: 01325 391275

Email:

chris.crathorne@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

5 December 2007

Dear Mr Doole

Thank you for your application, received on 2 November, for consent to publish proposals under section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 for a new mixed community secondary school in Ramsgate to replace Ellington Girls' School and Hereson Boys School.

The Secretary of State has considered the Local Authority's (LA's) application very carefully and in the exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 10 of the EIA 2006 has decided not to grant consent to publish the proposals.

Section 10 does not constrain the exercise of the Secretary of State's discretion when determining applications for consent to publish proposals for new schools without holding a competition. This is subject, of course, to the usual public law principles of reasonableness, rationality and procedural fairness.

Part B of the Department's guide – "Establishing a New Maintained School" - states that a competition, as provided for by section 7 of the EIA 2006 and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, is expected to be the usual route by which most new schools will be established.

The Secretary of State has looked carefully at your application, and, in determining whether there is good reason to depart from the principle that a competition should normally be held, has considered the criteria set out in paragraphs 9-10 of Part B of the guide. His conclusions are as follows:

1. The contribution the school would make to levels of school diversity including the range of categories, specialisms, size etc

The Secretary of State recognises that there is a good level of diversity in secondary school provision within Kent. However, he is not convinced that there is a compelling argument for this school to be established as a community school, given the Government's commitment to promote self government for schools in order to spread innovation and diversity. A competition would provide an opportunity for a range of other potential proposers to bring forward proposals



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

which could be considered together with the LA's proposals.

2. Views of interested parties

The Secretary of State notes that the LA has consulted local diocesan authorities and is currently consulting parents.

3. The prospect of other promoter interest if a competition were run

The LA have confirmed that the local RC and Church of England diocesan authorities would not be interested in establishing a school in the area. However the LA have not provided evidence of any other research they have carried out to establish interest from other potential proposers. The Secretary of State has noted the LA's comments about the establishment of the school in PFI provided premises, and the need to sign up to the existing PFI contract and buy-back agreement with the LA, but he does not believe this will be a disincentive to potential proposers.

4. Local standards

The Secretary of State notes the LA's positive comments about the performance of Ellington and Hereson, and the factors which they suggest would contribute to raising standards, but these focus mainly on the importance of securing the consolidation of high school provision. He is not persuaded that the application provides strong evidence that the proposed new community school would have a significant impact on standards in the long term.

5. Urgency

The Secretary of State recognises the LA's desire to settle the long term future of the two schools, reduce local uncertainty and proceed with their reorganisation plans from September 2009. However, a competition will not significantly extend the period for determining the new school.

In conclusion, the Secretary of State is not satisfied that the proposed community school would contribute to raising local standards, increased diversity and greater parental choice. The Government has made it clear that it wants all new schools to be self-governing, preferably working with outside proposers acting as a charitable trust. Whilst he recognises that a competition could inject a degree of uncertainty into the process in the short term, he considers that it will benefit the community in the longer term by testing the market for other potential proposers who may help raise standards further. He is also not satisfied that holding a competition would be fatal to the delivery of the new school particularly given that the school will be established in the premises of Ellington Girls' school.

If you wish to discuss this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Chris Crathorne (Mrs)

Team Leader - School Organisation Unit



Dr. Stephen J Ladyman
Member of Parliament for South Thanet
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

30 NOV 2007

Martyn Doole,
Area Education Officer,
East Kent Education Office,
Clover House,
John Wilson Business Park,
Thanet Way,
Whitstable,
Kent CT5 3QZ.

29 November 2007

Our Ref: j/LADY01001/01071440
(Please quote our ref on all correspondence)

Dear Ladyman

I am writing in response to the Consultation on the proposed merger of Hereson School and Ellington School. This is formal notification of my objection to the merger, which has already been expressed on numerous occasions informally including directly to the Leader of KCC.

There is no educational justification for the proposed merger. The Building Schools for the Future programme gives the Council a unique opportunity to rebuild Hereson School either on its current site or another site without the need for it to merge with any other school.

The proposal will end single sex provision for none Grammar School secondary education in the area. It will, at a stroke, remove all diversity from this sector of the secondary system. I also find the Consultation document and KCCs proposal in this regard profoundly dishonest since the announced decision early this year not to consider merging Clarendon House and Chatham House Grammar Schools was taken on the basis of 'the need to maintain' single sex secondary education whereas the Hereson/Ellington merger document states:

"In terms of the impact of single-sex provision on educational standards, research findings are both variable and inconclusive. There is no definitive evidence that single-sex schools achieve better results than schools catering for both boys and girls."

Clearly KCC cannot have it both ways! Moving Hereson to Pysons Rd., but building a new and separate school which shared some facilities with Ellington, would meet KCCs need to provide new facilities for Hereson and reduce costs whilst maintaining diversity and single sex education.



I also profoundly object to this consultation being carried out in isolation. The demographic factors used to justify this proposal are equally applicable to the Grammar Schools. Clearly, therefore, a consultation on the future of Clarendon and Chatham House Grammar Schools should be taking place at the same time. If such a consultation was taking place at this time then alternative scenarios would emerge:

All four schools could move to Pysons Rd. and share facilities and some parts of the syllabus. The four schools could maintain their separate identities but because of the benefits of synergy would have access to first class facilities.

A second scenario could see Clarendon move to a new school at Pysons Rd and share facilities with Ellington. Hereson could the move back into the centre of Ramsgate and share facilities with Chatham House.

Either of these scenarios would maintain diversity, improve facilities for students and help break down the social and educational barriers that exist between Grammar Schools and Secondary Moderns in Thanet. These valid options are, therefore, not being openly discussed because of the nature of the consultation and should a decision on merger be taken without the consultation being opened to consider these options then I will ask the Schools Adjudicator to overturn the decision and insist the consultation is re-opened.

Finally, my post bag indicates massive local opposition to the current proposal. Having spoken privately to teaching staff I find they are equally opposed to the proposal but they feel that KCC is restricting their ability to comment. If KCC was serious about a proper consultation it should write to all the teachers and Governors of local schools authorising them to speak openly on the subject and allow them to advise parents based on their personal view.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen Ladyman MP
Member of Parliament for South Thanet
Dictated by Dr. Ladyman, signed in his absence

Dr.S.J.Ladyman MP
Office Manager: Ms. J.Ladyman Caseworker: Mr. R.Griggs Office Administrator: Ms. V.Holden
Constituency Office: 28 Newington Rd., Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 6EE.
Tel: 01843 852696 Fax: 01843 852689

PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF THE HERESON SCHOOL AND ELLINGTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents distributed: 1250

Responses received:48

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Hereson	4	16		20
Members of staff at Hereson School	4	6		10
Governors of Hereson	1	1		2
Parents/Carers of pupils at Ellington	3	11		14
Members of staff at Ellington		1		1
Governors of Ellington	1			1
Interested party	3	1		4
Total	14	34		48

Note: Some respondents have children attending both Hereson and Ellington and their views are counted in both sub categories although the overall totals are the sum of the different respondents.

In support of the proposal

- Both schools do well and the new school will build on the strong aspects of each school
- Doing nothing is not an option
- The move of Hereson to Pysons Road will bring it closer to Ramsgate, its traditional base. Broadstairs is well catered for.
- The new site is a better location
- The community would be better served by amalgamation
- Would rather see the schools amalgamate than disappear
- There is no alternative to amalgamation as falling rolls dictate events

Against the proposal

- Girls perform better in single sex schools
- There is no reason to join the schools apart from falling rolls
- The amalgamation will remove the choice of single sex schooling
- Hereson should not be moved as it is a successful school
- House building will bring more pupils to the area
- The new surrounding for boys would affect their education
- The removal of single sex education is positive discrimination
- Amalgamation would negate single sex choices which have already been made.
- The proposal may make financial sense but boys are more aggressive and badly behaved than girls.
- Two smaller schools on the same site is a possible option.
- The filling of the Marlowe Academy has distorted the figures
- Too many teenagers are becoming parents and amalgamating the schools will only increase this figure.
- The new building has been a great asset for the girls in place of the drab and uninspiring building it replaced. Why should they share their building with boys?
- The decision should be deferred until next year

- Clarendon should be amalgamated with Ellington as Calrendon's buildings are so poor.

PROPOSED AMLAGAMATION OF THE HERESON SCHOOL AND ELLINGTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Summary of points made at the public meetings held on 20th November 2007 at the Thanet Skills Centre and 27th November at Clarendon House

NB. This is not intended to be a verbatim record and does not include personal attributions. Officer responses as given at the meeting are italicised.

The headteachers want to take the strengths of the existing schools to provide choice for the children of Ramsgate. Achievement at both schools is good underpinned by a set of core values and clear expectations. Discipline is firm but fair and at the heart of each school is learning and respect in a safe environment. The every child matters agenda is also each schools agenda. The proposal offers a unique opportunity to secure the future. The alternative is not good as lower numbers impact on finances and inevitably the viability of the schools will be in jeopardy.

(parent) I chose single sex education for my child. This proposal removes that option.

(parent) Wants the option of single sex education. The reason behind this proposal is to sell Thanet College and Hereson and make a lot of money. The proposal will also disrupt the education of the boys.

(parent) The national birth rate is rising and more housing is being built. There will be no surplus in the system in the future. Accepts that there is no real educational benefit for single sex education, but socially boys and girls do better separately. With considerable special needs in both schools smaller schools will be better for those pupils. One solution is to reduce the rolls of the other schools in Thanet which will ensure the survival of Hereson and Ellington.

Schools of 250 to 300 pupils would not be viable. The Office of National Statistics supply data on a regional basis on which Kent County Council base forecasts. Housing is also factored into the calculations. It is estimated that there will be 1700 surplus secondary places in the future if nothing is done. Reducing the number of places at popular schools runs counter to the Government's policy and is not a realistic solution. Thanet College is independent of Kent County Council and KCC would not benefit from any sale.

(member of staff) Other schools have had large investments. Numbers are increasing.

(county councillor) We should be looking at Chatham House and Clarendon as well. All 4 schools could co-exist in a shared facility at Pyson's Road. The current proposal removes parental choice.

(parent governor) How can the schools manage to cope with extra numbers by 2013? There are 5 schools in a 2-mile radius. Why not close King Ethelbert and Hartsdown? Why not merge Clarendon and Chatham House? Then Hereson and Ellington would be able to stay as they are.

Compulsory education up to 18 is somewhat of a myth. This will have a greater impact on Colleges of Further Education than schools. The lower numbers are having a greater impact on Hereson and Ellington rather than the other schools because fewer parents are choosing to send their children there than to other schools.

(governor) In order to have an identity we have to go along with the proposal. But it is not really single sex. This should be guaranteed. Who owns the building? What about

6th Forms? More special needs children are being taken out of special schools and sent to mainstream schools.

The governing body would run any new school. KCC cannot insist on any particular approach to management. The new Ellington buildings were constructed as part of a PFI contract and there are some restrictions on use of the buildings. Size means that 6th Forms are currently out of the question. There are as many children in Special schools now as 5 years ago.

(member of staff) One of the reasons for low numbers is that Thanet people think Hereson is closing and so are reluctant to send their children to the school. There are many children with special needs at the school and staff have chosen to work in an all boys environment and do not wish to teach girls. The school should be given the chance to increase their numbers and if this does not happen resume the consultation at a later date.

(Cabinet Member) BSF comes with rules and regulations and a loose federation of 3 or 4 schools might have one paid for through BSF while the remainder may have to be paid for out of council tax payer's money for the foreseeable future. The reality is that we are required to reduce the number of surplus places and to do something about changing a situation where some schools are likely to be in dire financial difficulties. We should go forward rather than look back. We cannot have two schools withering away. There is a commitment to find the best single sex option we can for the students of Hereson and Ellington.

(member of staff) Why did schools expand in the past and an Academy built?

There was a need in the past to provide school places for the larger numbers that were in the system and to respond to parental concerns on standards. The Marlowe Academy originated as a result of the difficulties of the Ramsgate School. Putting schools that are becoming smaller side by side with the same structure costs will not solve the problem.

(parent) It is discrimination that there are no 6th Forms at these schools.

It is not discrimination. It is easier from a numbers position to generate a 6th Form in grammars than high schools

(member of staff) Staff are behind the heads

(governor) It is essential to amalgamate to provide depth and breadth. Both schools have served society well with value added above the national average. With falling intakes there is a need to compromise. The schools are starting to work together but it needs more than modest adaptations to get the boys and girls together. There must be parity of funding and facilities with other schools.

(parent) Parents should have a choice. Merge the four schools. Generate money by the sale of property. Pull down the Marlowe or St George's or Charles Dickens.

(parent) Rolls at Clarendon and Chatham House are only marginally more than Hereson and Ellington. Opposed to selective education. It is discrimination. Is the new school to be an Academy?

Parental preference determines how popular schools are. The new school will not be an Academy and the Schools Adjudicator will make the ultimate decision. If nothing happens BSF will not fund Hereson as it stands. Central government controls capital funding and certain conditions need to be met to secure BSF funding.

(parent) The population of the UK is rising and housing is increasing. One solution would be to reduce every other school by 200 and close the Marlowe. Hereson could then take over the Marlowe buildings.

The adult population is increasing as a result of people living longer. Housing has been included in the forecasts. Schools cannot survive on low numbers. Government requires the expansion of popular schools. We cannot close the Marlowe; it is Government funded. The smaller rolls already in the primary schools will work their way into the secondaries.

(parent governor) There are very few surplus places. If the 164 children not in school were given a school place there would be no surplus.

(member of staff) If the proposal was suspended numbers would pick up. Parents would send their children if nothing happened. Jobs are going to be lost.

The heads and the LA believe that amalgamation is the way forward. The schools will not be viable because they are not the schools of choice.

(parent) Girls do better in single sex schools.

Evidence on single sex education is not conclusive. The motivation behind the proposal is to secure both schools as one body.

(councillor) How much money will BSF provide for both schools? Co location of both schools could include Clarendon.

As it stands BSF will not provide any funding for Hereson or Ellington. No bid has been made yet. The Hereson site will not generate much money.

(county councillor) There will be a loss of single sex schooling. There has been no investment in Hereson and there is a lack of facilities for boys. Would like to see schools on the new site. There is a need to look at the Freedom Bus Pass. Concerned about BSF as the bid was made 4 years ago. There is no choice of proposals on offer. There could be staggering of school hours to facilitate movement.

Staggering school hours is not in the gift of KCC. The Freedom Bus Pass is being rolled and Thanet should be prioritised. Under BSF a 4fe school could attract additional funds.

(member of staff) Would like to move to new buildings. Ramsgate is the only town in the country with 4 single sex schools. It is necessary to move on and the only way to stop the grief. Getting money into the schools to prevent redundancies would be useful.

Schools have to manage with set budgets. Funding follows the children and KCC is not allowed to depart from the agreed formula.

(parent) Wants single sex schooling. Marlowe was pushed forward with publicity.

(former pupil) Concerned by the PFI option. Co-locating is the best option. What would happen to the school badges? Need to know how much the land is going to be sold for.

If the amalgamation proceeded the PFI contract would be renegotiated. No decisions have been made on the sale of land. Decisions on uniform and badges would be with the governors.

(governor) The creation of the Academy added a new dimension to the pattern of pupil choices. More children went there and consequently fewer chose Hereson and Ellington.

Falling roll numbers will result in reduction in funding for each of the schools which in turn will impact on their ability to deliver quality education

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 January 2008

Subject: THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF PORTAL HOUSE SCHOOL, DOVER TO THE SITE OF THE FORMER NEWINGTON INFANT SCHOOL, THANET.

Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: This report proposes the relocation of Portal House Special school in Dover to the site of the former Newington Infants School in Thanet. The report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on undertaking a public consultation on the possible relocation of the school.

Introduction

1. (1) As part of the review and reorganisation of special schools in Kent, Portal House School in Dover was re-designated from a 9-13 residential school catering for 45 children with emotional and behavioural difficulties to an 11-16 school making day provision for 60 pupils with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Developments Needs.

(2) The school is currently located on a compact site in the village of St Margaret's-at-Cliffe near Dover, very close to St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School. Portal House School has enjoyed a harmonious and constructive relationship with the neighbouring primary school over many years. However, the existing accommodation at Portal House is unsuitable for its secondary age designation and the increase in the overall size of the school from 45 – 60 students.

(3) Funding is available through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme to provide new purpose built accommodation. However, the existing site is unsuitable for development and a new site must be secured.

(4) There are currently 41 Pupils on roll at Portal House. Of these 14 come from Thanet, including the Newington Estate. The residential profile of the existing pupils by district is set out below.

Dover – 7, Shepway – 3, Ashford – 3, Maidstone -2, Thanet - 14, Canterbury – 9
Swale – 3.

Background

2. (1) A number of alternative sites within the Dover district and one in Thanet were explored as possibilities for relocation but these all proved to be unsuitable for a variety of reasons, including difficulties associated with location, access, geographical issues, acquisition of land and potential planning difficulties.

(2) The site of the former Newington Infants School became vacant when the Infant and Junior schools merged with effect from 1 September 2007 and were consolidated on the former Newington Junior School site from that time.

(3) The former Newington Infants School site provides the potential for development as a suitable site for Portal House. Development would require major new build on the footprint of the existing school building. It would also be necessary to use a small portion of the adjacent playing field site which currently belongs to Clarendon House.

(4) Early discussions were held with the interim governing body (IGB) of Newington Primary School about the possibility of relocating to the former infant school site. The headteacher of Portal House met with the IGB to discuss this issue, early in 2007 before the Newington Primary School was established.

The Proposal

3. (1) The proposal is to relocate Portal House School from its existing site at St Margaret's-at-Cliffe near Dover to the site of the former Newington Infants School, on the Newington Estate in Thanet with effect from 1 September 2009.

(2) Potentially, staff at Portal House would transfer to the new location. There would be no compulsory redundancies. However, given the distance between the existing site and the proposed new location, some staff may feel unwilling or unable to relocate. In those circumstances, in determining whether an employee is entitled to a redundancy payment, the determining factor would be whether or not an individual has unreasonably refused an offer of suitable employment. Each case would be considered on its merits against agreed criteria established in consultation with the Schools Personnel Service (SPS).

Site Issues

4. (1) The Newington site has a number of significant advantages which commend its suitability for the relocation of Portal House.

- It is available and already owned by KCC.
- It is sufficient in terms of space and provides a pleasing environment for students. The site can accommodate state of the art new buildings, as envisaged under the BSF scheme.
- A significant number of pupils (14) come from the Thanet area and approximately half of these come from Ramsgate. Travelling distances would therefore be reduced and parental contact with the school potentially eased by closer proximity to home.
- Use of the Newington site will allow Portal House to benefit from participation in Wave 4 of the BSF programme generating major capital investment by 2009.

(2) A site map showing the proposed new location of Portal House and its potential proximity to Newington Primary School is attached at Appendix 1.

Resource Issues

Capital

5. (1) Major investment of c. £7.7m is planned to provide state of the art facilities through the BSF programme. The site is already owned by KCC and there would be no costs in relation to site acquisition.

Human

(2) The human resource implications are referred to in S.3. In addition, staff who did transfer to the new site would be eligible for assistance with travelling expenses through the Appendix E scheme of allowances.

Views of the Local Members

6. (1) The local Members are Mrs E Green (Lab) and Mr A Poole (Lab).

(2) *Comments from Mr Poole*

“Portal House school is designated for children with Behavioural, Emotional & Social Development Need (BESD) and caters for up to 60, aged 7 to 13 year old children. The school is currently situated at St Margaret’s at Cliffe, Dover, and serves East Kent.

I understand that the proposal is for the school to be rebuilt on the currently vacant Newington Infant School site in Ramsgate, Thanet, and will cater for up to 60, aged 11 to 16 year old children.

The Newington Housing Estate has considerable social and economic problems and great efforts are currently being made to reduce anti-social behaviour and related problems.

I have been contacted by the District Ward Councillors and residents expressing the concern that siting a school for children with behavioural problems could have a detrimental effect on these efforts; I agree totally with these concerns.

As the school catchment area is East Kent, covering Thanet, Dover, Canterbury, Swale, Ashford and Shepway, I feel a more centrally situated site should be sought which would benefit the children by reducing travelling time. I believe it would be much more logical to site the new school in the Canterbury area which would also have the advantage of reducing travelling costs.”

(3) *Comments from Mrs Green*

“I wish to object to the Portal House School planned relocation to Newington Estate on the grounds the travelling time is totally unreasonable.

I understand this is an excellent well run school for children with Social, Behavioural and Emotional difficulties and am perplexed as to what motivates this planned move specifically to Newington Estate in Ramsgate. There have been a huge number of objections expressed to me by local residents and concerns expressed by local District Councillors who have fought hard to raise the profile of the local estate. There are great concerns that this school is being placed on Newington Estate as it is seen as a "problem area". I do hope this local perception is not correct as it would be very unfair on the school too, when we need to raise the profile of both.

I found the argument that most of the children came from the area did not tie up with the statistics I obtained at the end of June - obviously there may be some changes since. With the older age range now included, the number of pupils set to almost double to 60 and with such a wide catchment area this must be difficult to foretell.

Notwithstanding my representations on behalf of residents, my overwhelming concern is the welfare of the children. The prospect of sending children from places as distant as Folkestone, Sheppey, Maidstone, Ashford and Sittingbourne totally horrifies me. I have been asking why a site more central cannot be found to prevent this dreadful twice daily journey for our young people. Somewhere in the vicinity of Canterbury would seem to me to be more sensible as it is more central and a high proportion of pupils did come from the area. When this proposal first came forward I asked what sites had been investigated and was told only the Newington Estate site and one in Margate (which had been dismissed) had been considered.

At a recent SOAB meeting there was much justified concern about the distance children with disabilities would have to travel and it was stated it was important to reduce travelling time as much as possible. This move would involve the vast majority of pupils travelling an enormous distance twice daily, so please consider these children too, when making any decision.”

School Improvement Implications

7. Relocation to the Newington site would provide the opportunity to develop superb facilities within a vibrant educational community combined with a reduction in travelling distances for many students, the move would have a beneficial impact on standards by allowing students to be educated and supported in a first class learning environment with strong community connections.

Equality Issues

8. The existing site and accommodation inhibits delivery of an appropriate curriculum offer over the long term. The new site would allow for all students to have access to their full educational entitlement in purpose-built facilities.

Transport & Environmental Impact, including Community Implications

9. (1) The largest number of students currently at Portal House School, come from Thanet. Given the residential profile of existing students, the overall impact of relocation is likely to be that travelling times would be reduced. Even with Portal House full at 60 pupils, the overall number of pupils is small and many live in the locality. It is not anticipated that the relocation would generate significant problems with traffic or congestion locally. Certainly, the situation in St Margaret's-at-Cliffe would be improved significantly, given the narrow road and difficult access to the existing school site.

(2) The plan is to create new purpose-built accommodation on the footprint of the existing Newington Infants School replacing the existing architecture with aesthetically pleasing functional accommodation, designed in sympathy with the surrounding natural environment.

(3) Development of the former Infant school site to include a new school for Portal house would serve the local community which already provides a significant contingent of the student body.

Proposed Timetable

10. (1) The following timetable would apply, subject to the proposal going forward to public consultation.

Report to SOAB seeking views of public consultation	10 January 2008
Public consultation commences	24 Jan – 6 March
Public meeting(s) in St Margaret's-at-Cliffe And Newington	Mid February
Report back to SOAB	7 May
Public Notice Issued (subject to Cabinet Member decision)	23 May
Public Notice Expires	4 July
Determination by Local Authority	Mid July
Adjudication (if required)	September 2008
Building work commences	
Implementation	September 2009

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to give their views on whether there should be a public consultation on the possible relocation of Portal House School from its existing site at St Margaret's-at-Cliffe to the former Newington Infants School in Thanet.

Martyn Doole
Area Education Officer
(Thanet & Dover)
Tel: (01227) 284461

Background Documents:

None

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Portal House School

The drawings are based on the information received from Kent County Council. Gensler takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information received from Kent County Council. Gensler takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information received from Kent County Council. Gensler takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information received from Kent County Council.

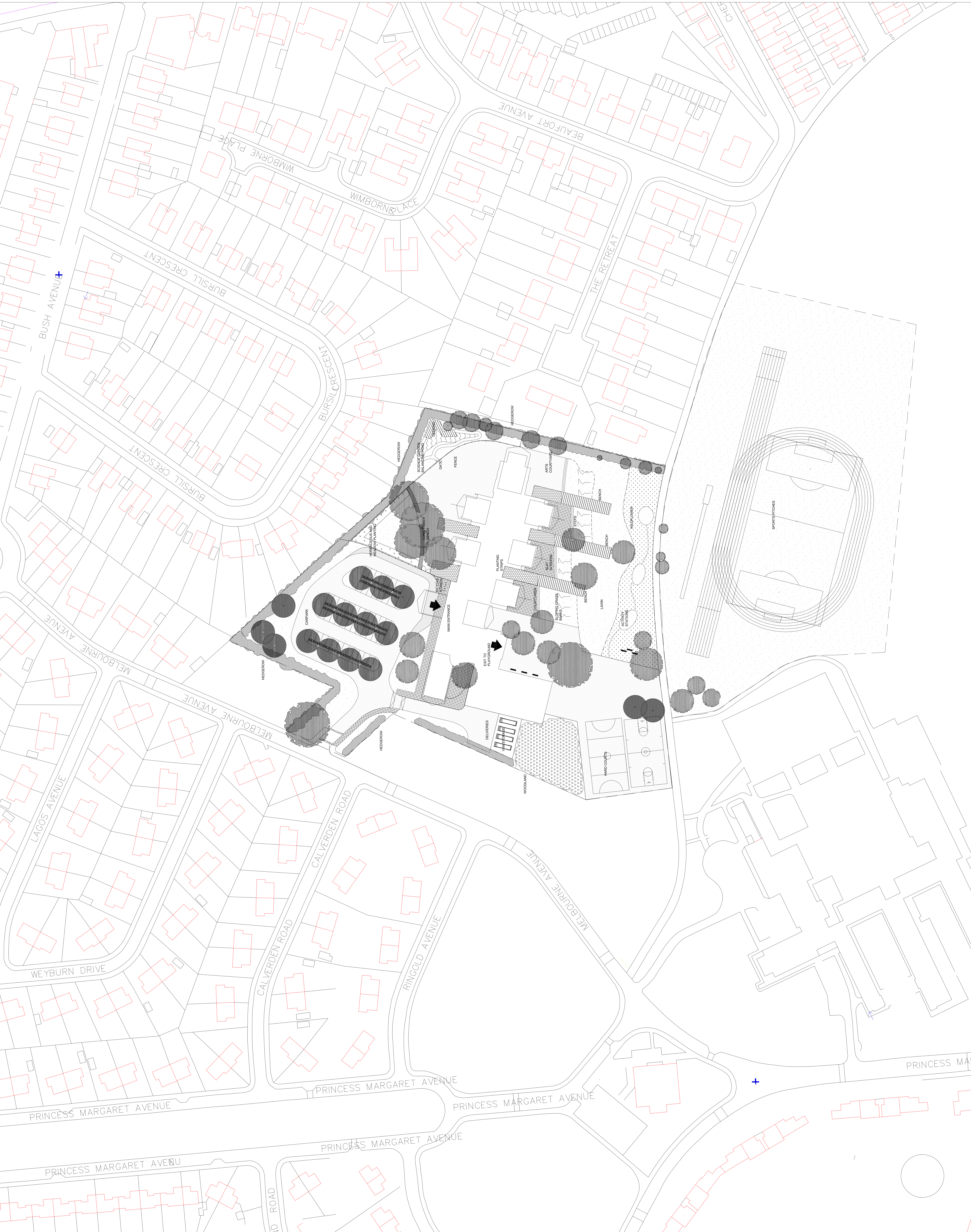
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Gensler
 Boston, MA
 Wood Street
 London, UK
 Tel: (020) 7338 9000
 Fax: (020) 7338 9001

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By: Director - Operations
To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 January 2008
Subject: NEW SCHOOL COMPETITIONS
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To report back to Members with a revised procedure for opening new schools via competition process.

FOR INFORMATION

Introduction

1. At its meeting of 14 November 2007, this Board considered a proposed procedure opening new schools via a competition process. Member's comments have been incorporated into the revised procedure that is attached as Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

2. Members are asked to note the revised process contained at Appendix 1.

David Adams
Area Education Officer, Ashford & Shepway
Tel: (01233) 898559

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 November 2007

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New School - Competition Timeline

Appendix 1

Time Line

Week 1 - To agree proposals, specification, funding availability, whether KCC will promote and apply for an exemption

Weeks 2 to 10 - Allow time for SOAB briefing etc. Add proposal to forward planner.

Weeks 10 to 12 - Sign off decision to proceed. **Await decision on scrutiny.**

Weeks 14-20 - Issue document. Hold public meeting

Week 24

Week 25 -30 - **Allow 3 weeks for scrutiny** and 2 weeks to get notice in paper.

Week 30- 45 - 4 months for bids

Week 46

Week 48

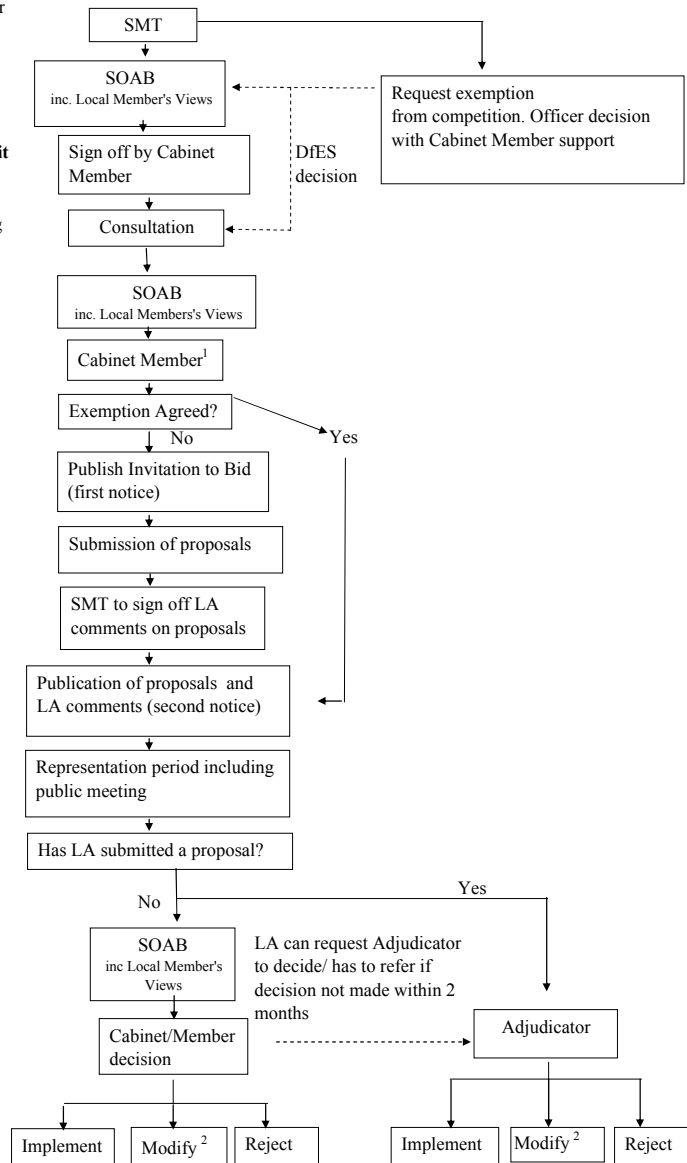
Week 49

Week 49 - 55 - Must have public meeting within 2 weeks. 6 week representation period mainstream, 2 months for special schools.

Week 60 (mainstream) - Report to include views of statutory applicants. Decision must be made within 2 months of close of representation period.

Week 63 - **To allow for scrutiny**

Process



¹ Key decision:

- a) Invite bids, commits to expenditure etc
- b) Determine whether KCC will also promote
- c) Agreeing specification

² Modification requires decision maker to undertake supplementary consultation

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 January 2008

Subject: SCHOOLS APPLYING FOR FOUNDATION/TRUST STATUS

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To inform Members of SOAB of the current situation regarding Foundation/Trust proposals

FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. (1) A paper was presented to SOAB on 17 October 2007 informing Members of the Government's encouragement of all schools to consider Foundation/Trust status, and of the 'fast track' procedures to achieve it. These procedures require a governing body to consult 'interested parties' (including the LA) over a minimum of a four week period, before determining themselves.

(2) Unless there are very good reasons not to do so, the change of status will be approved.

(3) At SOAB, it was agreed that as the consultation period will not normally allow the LA time to prepare paperwork for SOAB for a view, that:

- (a) Unless there are very good reasons to the contrary the presumption will be that the LA will not oppose any governing body wishing to move to Foundation or Trust status;
- (b) The Director (Operations) will consult with the Cabinet Member and local Member(s) before responding to a consultation on Foundation or Trust status;
- (c) Responses will be reported to the next available SOAB.

Determinations

2. (1) The LA was informed on 15 November 2007 that **Broomhill Bank Special School, Tunbridge Wells**, has assumed Foundation status, with effect from 13 November 2007. Cabinet Members and the local Member, Mr Davies, have been informed (on 15 November).

(2) There are now 58 Foundation schools in Kent (13 Primary, 44 Secondary and 1 Special) and 91 Aided schools (78 Primary and 13 Secondary) – a total of 149, and in addition, 7 Academies = 156.

(3) For the sake of simplicity, Aided schools should be considered as having the same status as Foundation/Trust schools.

Consultations

3. The LA was informed on 19 December 2007 that **Borden Grammar School, Sittingbourne** has begun a consultation on Foundation status, running from 14 January 2008 to 10 February 2008. The Cabinet Member, Mr Dance, and the local Members Mrs Simpson and Mr Truelove have been informed (19 December) with a view that we should not oppose.

Recommendations

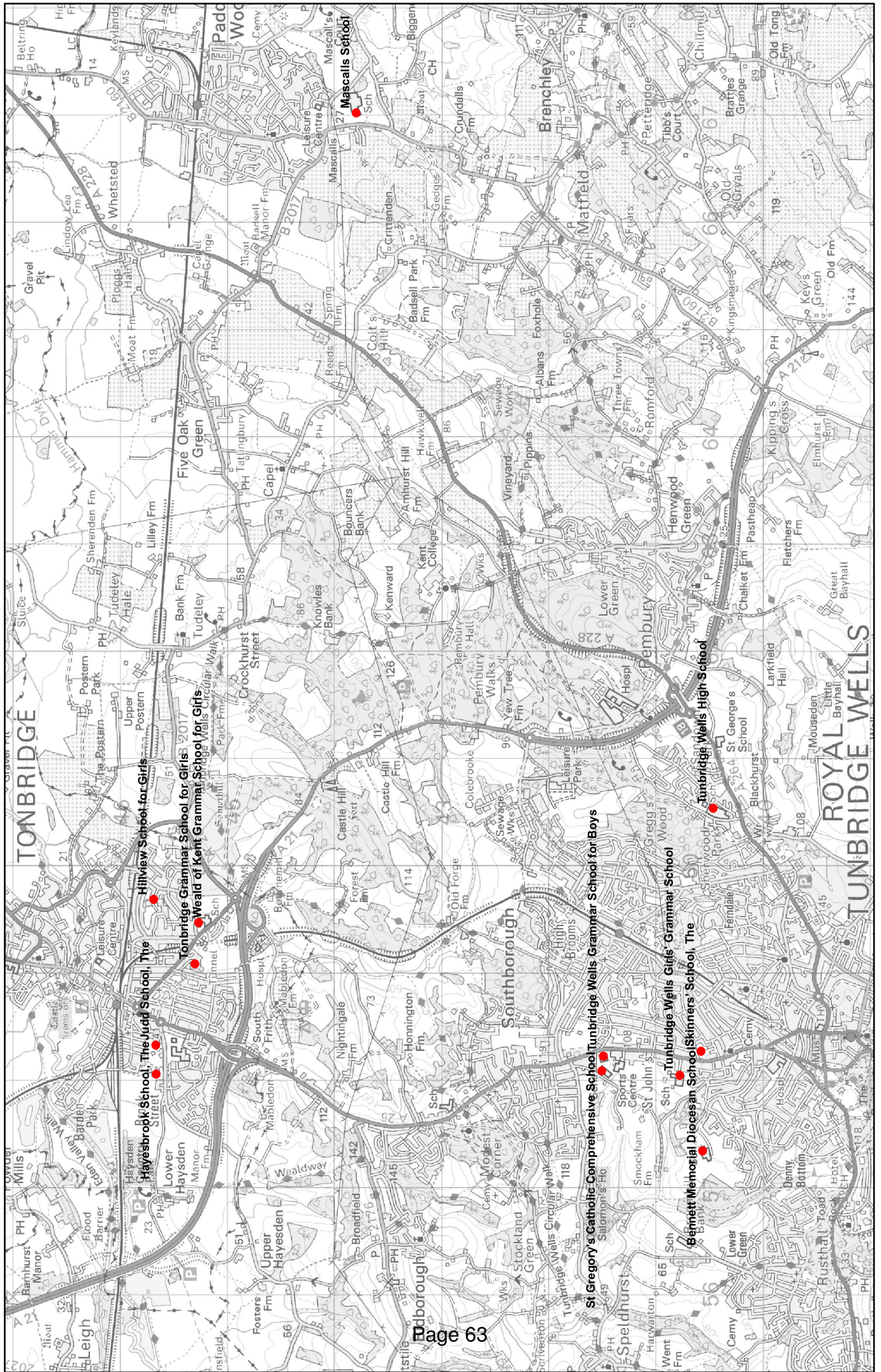
4. Members are asked to note the report.

Ian Craig
Director (Operations)
01622 694173
ian.craig@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:

- School Standards and Framework Act; DFES 1998
- Education and Inspection Act; DFES 2006
- Changing Category to Foundation; DCSF 2007
- School Organisation; Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools in England Regulations; DCSF 2007
- Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status;
SOAB - 17 October 2007/14 November 2007

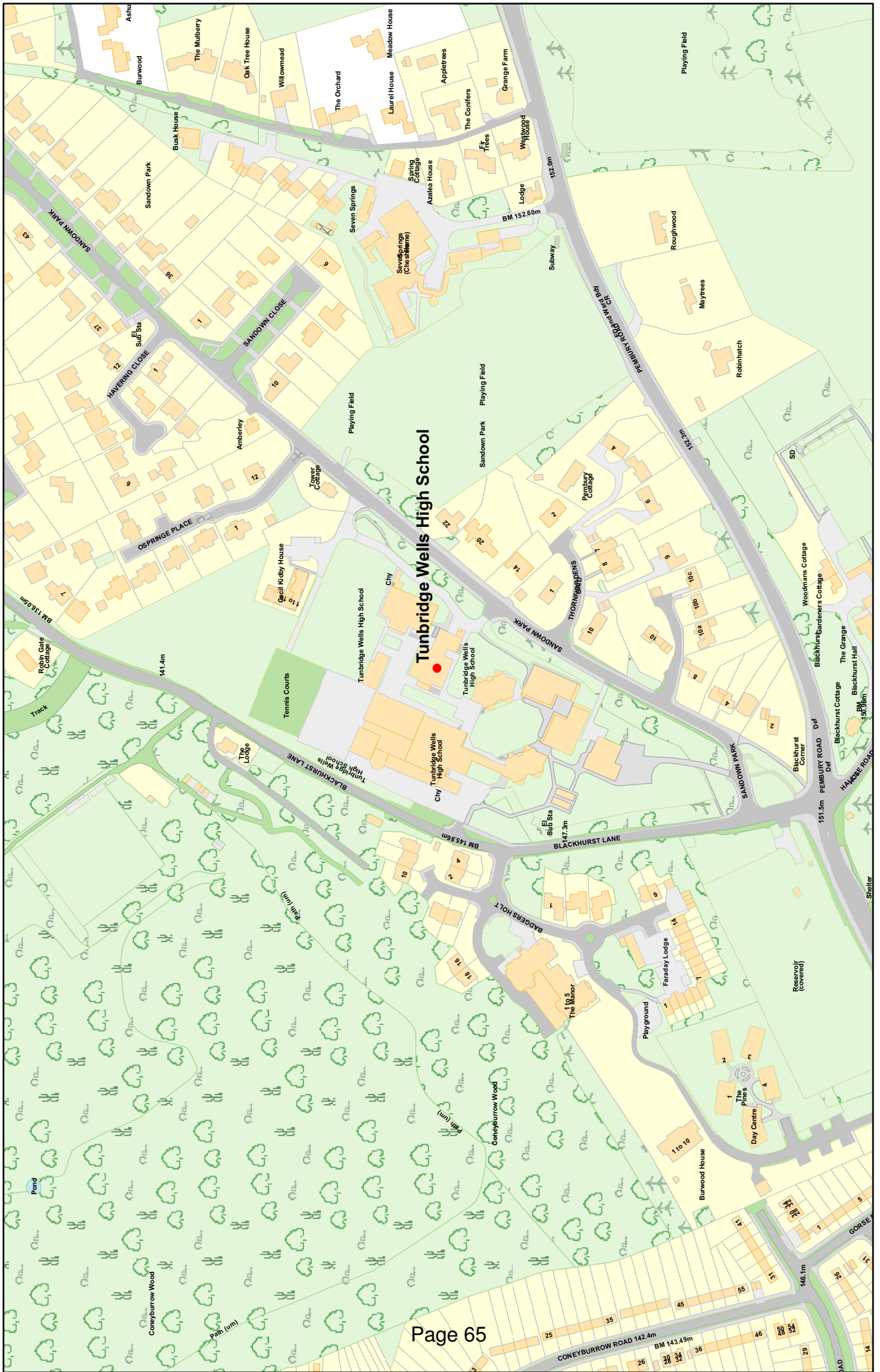
Location of Tunbridge Wells High School



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Site plan of Tunbridge Wells High School



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