



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 5 November, 2008, at 10.30 am

Ask for:

**Geoff Mills/
Karen Mannering**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone**

Telephone **(01622)
694289/694367**

Tea/Coffee will be available from 10.15am outside 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 - 11 September 2008 (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Dates of Meetings - 2009

Thursday, 8 January – 10.30am	Thursday, 16 July – 2.00pm
Thursday, 5 February – 10.30am	Thursday, 10 September – 2.00pm
Thursday, 12 March – 2.00pm	Thursday, 8 October – 10.30am
Thursday, 23 April – 10.30am	Wednesday, 4 November – 10.30am
Thursday, 21 May – 10.30am	Wednesday, 9 December – 2.00pm
5. Proposed Closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and its replacement as a Primary School within the Folkestone Academy (Pages 3 - 12)
6. Proposed Closure of Tunbridge Wells (Community) High School to replace with a Government Funded Academy (Pages 13 - 22)
7. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status (Pages 23 - 24)

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)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 28 October 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.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD HELD AT SESSIONS HOUSE, COUNTY HALL, MAIDSTONE ON THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2008 COMMENCING AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mr R B Burgess (In the Chair), Mrs C Angell, Mr A D Crowther, Mr M J Northey and Mr G Rowe (substitute for Mr M Vye).

Cabinet Member: Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE) was in attendance.

Church Representative : Canon J Smith

Other Members Present: Mrs V J Dagger.

Officers: Mr I Craig, Director – Operations and Mr C Jones, Area Education Officer Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling.

The Proposed Relocation of Grange Park School, Leybourne, West Malling to the Wrotham School Site

(Item 4 -)Report by Director – Operations)

(1) The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 12 June 2008 supported a recommendation to consult on a proposal to relocate Grange Park School, Leybourne to a site within the grounds of Wrotham School. Mr Jones reported on the consultation process which had since been undertaken which included a public meeting being held as well as a consultation process with approximately 2,400 copies of the consultation document being circulated. In all 75 responses were received of which 72 were in favour. One was undecided and two were opposed to the proposal. The proposal was also supported by the Governing Bodies of both schools, The Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, the Wrotham Parish Council, Borough Green Parish Council, the two local members Mrs Hohler and Mrs Dagger and the Local Member of Parliament.

(2) Mrs V J Dagger attended the meeting as the local Member for Wrotham School. Mrs Dagger said that at the public meeting there was warm support for this proposal and it gave an excellent opportunity for the two schools to share good practice. Mrs Dagger also spoke about the importance of the siting and design of the new buildings which would need to be of high quality and design because of their location within the Green Belt. Mrs Dagger said that the current buildings at Wrotham are poor and therefore she hoped KCC would make every effort to get the new buildings constructed as soon as possible.

(3) Mrs Angell asked a question related to the gender mix at Grange Park School on which the Head Teacher who was present gave a reply. Mrs Angell spoke about the issue of building within the Green Belt and also about the timing of the proposals so both schools could plan ahead with some certainty. Mr Jones said that the planning application did not have to be accompanied by an environmental appraisal but that

because the new buildings would be in the Green Belt the County Council had employed consultants to give expert advice on their design and construction. With regard to the timetabling of these proposals Mr Jones said that there was not sufficient funding within the current financial settlement to proceed immediately but he would hope that the next settlement would see sufficient resources allocated in order to proceed with the proposal in 2011. Mr Jones also said that the land at Grange Park was leasehold and so it would depend on negotiations at the time how much the County Council would get for the remaining value of the lease.

(4) Mr Rowe said that in his view the proposals should be taken forward as soon as possible but at the same time steps needed to be taken to ensure the minimum of disruption to the current cohort of students both at Grange Park and Wrotham and that would need careful management. Mr Rowe also said that the Leybourne Grange site was designated for housing development and therefore that would need to be supported by appropriate infrastructure. He also asked whether this expansion in housing would at some stage in the future lead to there being a need for new education provision being provided in the area. In reply Mr Jones said that disruption to pupils was something that the Council was very conscious about and he recognised the need for this to be very carefully managed. He also said that the current housing proposals for the Leybourne Grange site was for 700 to 800 units but it was difficult to calculate at this stage to say exactly how many pupils that would generate. However the current view was that it was likely that any increase could be met by expanding existing schools.

(5) Dr Craig said that the County Council recognised the good quality of education at Wrotham and its central role in the community. At the same time it was also recognised that the current buildings were of poor quality and therefore the Council would do all it could to bring forward their construction through the Building Schools for the Future programme. Mr Dance said that he would like to put Wrotham at the top of the programme but that at present that was not possible. However he would look at its needs very favourably as soon as he possibly could. Mr Dance also said that with regard to the Grange Park this was held by the County Council on a long lease and it was likely it would wish to retain that for the foreseeable future and to see what could be done to maximise income from the site.

(6) Mr Northey said that given the overwhelming support that there was within the community for these proposals the only question that remained in his mind was the actual location of the new buildings within the Wrotham site. He therefore proposed, supported by Mr Crowther that the recommendations in the report should be accepted with the Council then proceeding on the basis of Option 1. Mrs Angell and Mr Rowe both said that they agreed to the relocation but had reservations about expressing at this stage a preference for one option over another as that could cause problems at detail design stage.

(7) At the conclusion of further discussion the School Organisation Advisory Board decided to unanimously support the proposal to issue a public notice for the relocation of Grange Park School to a site within the grounds of Wrotham School as detailed in paragraph 12 of the report. However in reaching this decision Mr Burgess, Mr Northey and Mr Crowther wished it to be recorded that they expressed a preference for the relocation to be in accordance with Option 1.

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 5 November 2008

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PARK FARM (FOUNDATION) PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ITS REPLACEMENT AS A PRIMARY SCHOOL WITHIN THE FOLKESTONE ACADEMY.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a public consultation, in conjunction with the governing body, on the closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School. The school would be replaced by a new primary provision within the Folkestone Academy.

Introduction

1. (1) Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School in Folkestone admits 60 boys and girls per year. Its age range is 4-11 years. As of January 2008 it had 416 pupils on roll. Attached as Appendix 1 is a map showing the location of the school. The school site adjoins KCC land which was formerly part of the Channel School. In turn this land adjoins the Folkestone Academy site.

(2) The school serves a local urban community (see Appendix 2 for pupil distribution) of which the majority of pupils live in eastern Folkestone and the remainder travel in from the surrounding Folkestone area and Hawkinge. The school's Mosaic profile indicates that Park Farm Primary is the 9th most challenged school out of 18 primaries in the Local Children's Services Partnership area.

(3)¹ The proportion of students with a statement of Special Educational Needs is 0.5% while the average in Kent is 1.1% and nationally is 1.4%. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals¹ at Park Farm is 15.4%, which is above the Kent average of 11.0%, but below the National average of 15.6%.

The Proposal

2. (1) The proposal is that the Local Authority ceases to maintain Park Farm School (i.e. closes the school), and the Folkestone Academy enters into a new/amended funding agreement with the Secretary of State enabling it to deliver education to pupils aged 4-18 years, rather than the current 11-18 years (i.e. extend its age range). It is proposed that the Park Farm Primary School buildings will be replaced by new provision. These new buildings may be located on Kent County Council's surplus land adjoining The Folkestone Academy. This land was formerly part of the Channel school site (see appendix 3). This would free up the existing Park Farm site for disposal. In effect this may be a land "swap" between the County Council and the Governing Body of Park Farm Primary School.

(2) The Folkestone Academy will become an "All-age" school. It will admit 60 pupils per year group in its primary phase, and 240 pupils in the secondary years. It will continue to offer 250 post 16 places.

¹ Data for Park Farm Primary and Kent is from the May 2008 Census (most recent data we hold), data for National is from January 2008 Census (most recent data available).

(3) The all-age school concept intends to ensure continuity of education for pupils. While it is envisaged that the primary and secondary elements of the school will be discrete, with separate identities, opportunities exist for expectations and structures to be common throughout, thereby supporting transition through the phases. Crucially, the all-age school has the ability to take the best practice from the primary sector into the secondary sector and vice versa. This affords significant benefits to help raise standards for all pupils. This practice and expertise would need to be shared and developed with other feeder primary schools in order to raise standards across the area and ease transition from primary to secondary school for all pupils. An all-age school offers enhanced development opportunities for staff, and increased flexibility to support personalised learning. It also affords possibilities to share resources and reduce costs which can be diverted to support pupil learning.

Resource Implications

Capital

3. (1) KCC's capital programme includes £1.4m for investment in Park Farm School to replace its Key Stage 1 building. This funding will instead be contributed to the cost of rebuilding Park Farm School as part of the Folkestone Academy. The DCSF have already committed £1m toward the developments. Further funding will also be contributed from Roger De Haan (sponsor of The Folkestone Academy) and from the capital receipt of the Park Farm site.

Revenue

(2) The Academy will receive its revenue funding directly from the DCSF each year. It will be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent schools, plus an allocation to cover central LA costs. A corresponding amount will be deducted by DCSF from KCC's Dedicated Schools Grant.

Human

(3) The Governing Body are the employers of staff at Park Farm School. The Folkestone Academy Trust are the employers of staff in The Academy. Consultation with Park Farm's staff will take place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE. Discussions are ongoing with DCSF regarding funding for TUPE costs and funding for any necessary redundancies.

Transport and Road Safety Implications

4. (1) Park Farm Primary School is accessed from Park Farm Road. The proposed site is about one quarter of a mile from the current primary site and has better access. There is no reason why the relocation should alter pupils' mode of travel to school. Early discussions will take place with Shepway District Council and Kent Highways. They will be fully consulted as part of the design and development phase of the new school and a travel plan will be produced prior to the opening.

School Improvement Implications

5. (1) The closure of Park Farm School and its inclusion in the Academy would allow for new facilities, flexibility of curriculum and the recruitment and

retention of high quality staff. These plus the efficiency savings that the proposal would bring are expected to have the positive impact on standards.

(2) Park Farm School was last inspected in March 2008 and was found to be satisfactory.

Views of the Governing Body

6. (1) The governing bodies of Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy are in full support of this proposal.

Views of the Local Member

7. (1) Mr Richard Pascoe, Member for Folkestone North East, is fully supportive of the proposal and the intention to consult.

Views of the Area Children's Services Officer

8. The Area Children's Services Officer considers that this is an innovative proposal, designed to enhance the life opportunities of young people in the Shepway district. Therefore it is appropriate to conduct a public consultation for the closure of Park Farm Primary School.

Proposed Timetable

9. Should public consultation be agreed, the following timetable is proposed:

School Organisation Advisory Board	5 November 2008
Publication of consultation document	14 November 2008
Public meeting	w.c. 1 December 2008
Closing date for responses	19 December 2008
Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	8 January 2009
Cabinet Member decision	January 2009
Issue public notice	21 January 2009
End of public notice period	20 March 2009
Decision by Local Authority	End of March 2009
Implementation	31 August 2009

Recommendation

10. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on the proposal for a public consultation to be undertaken in conjunction with the governing body on the proposal for the closure of Park Farm Primary school, and its replacement as part of The Folkestone Academy.

David Adams
Area Children's Services Officer
Ashford and Shepway
Tel: 01233 898559
The Local Member is Richard Pascoe.

Background documents: None

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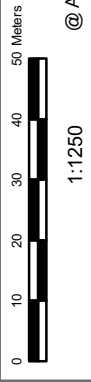
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County Hall, Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ
Tel:08458 247247

Drawing Title

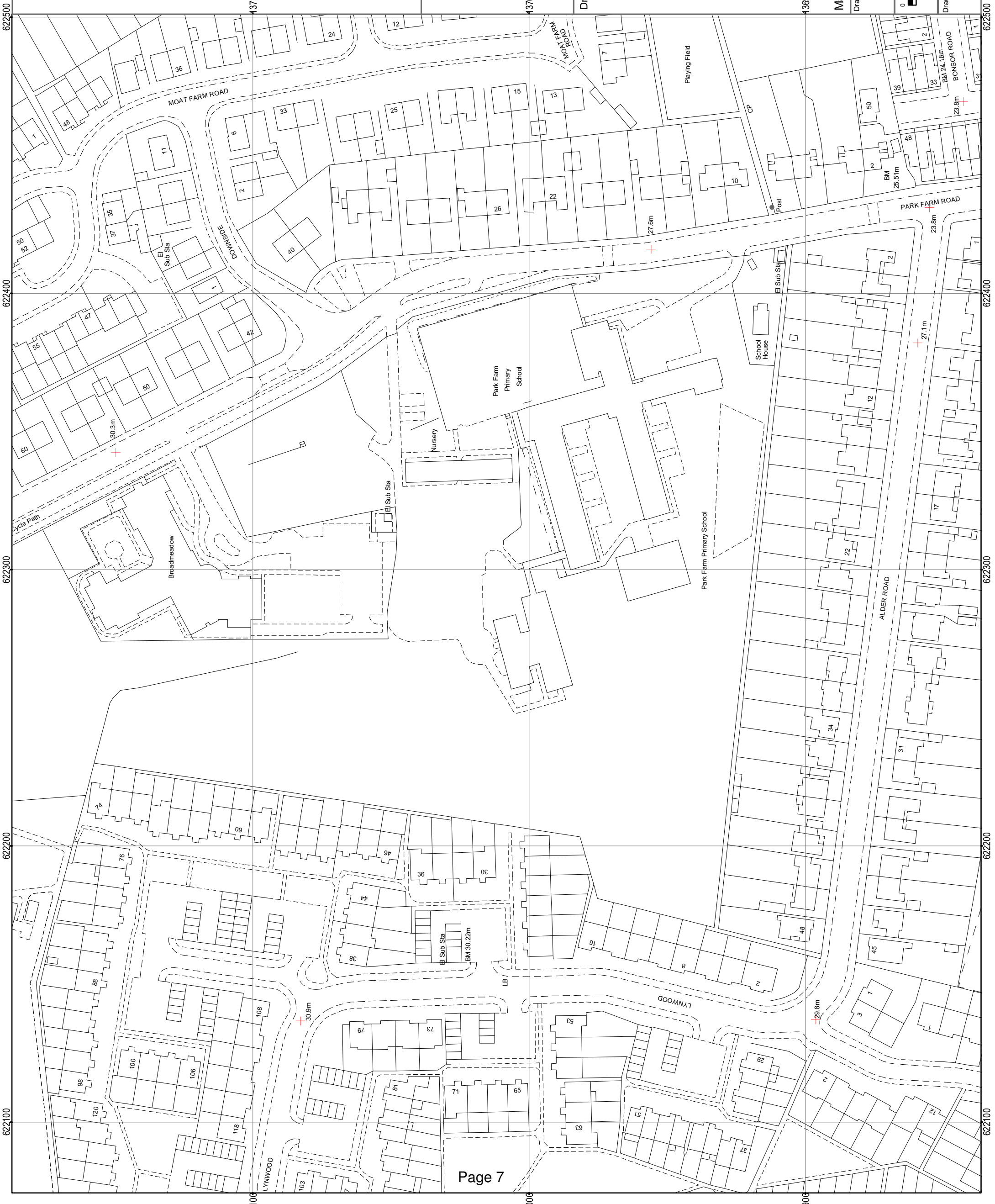
**PARK FARM PRIMARY
SCHOOL CT19 5DN**

MasterMap

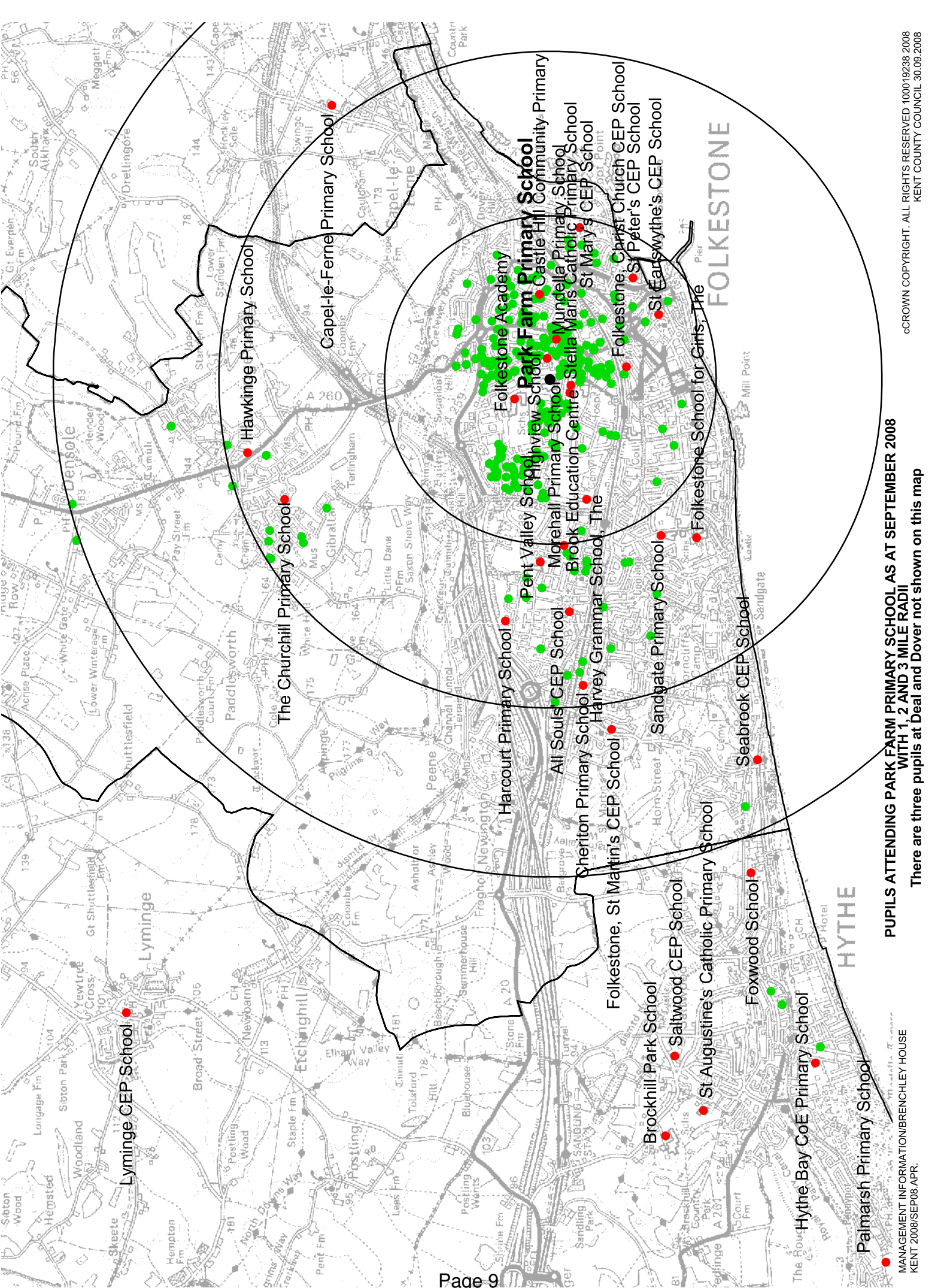
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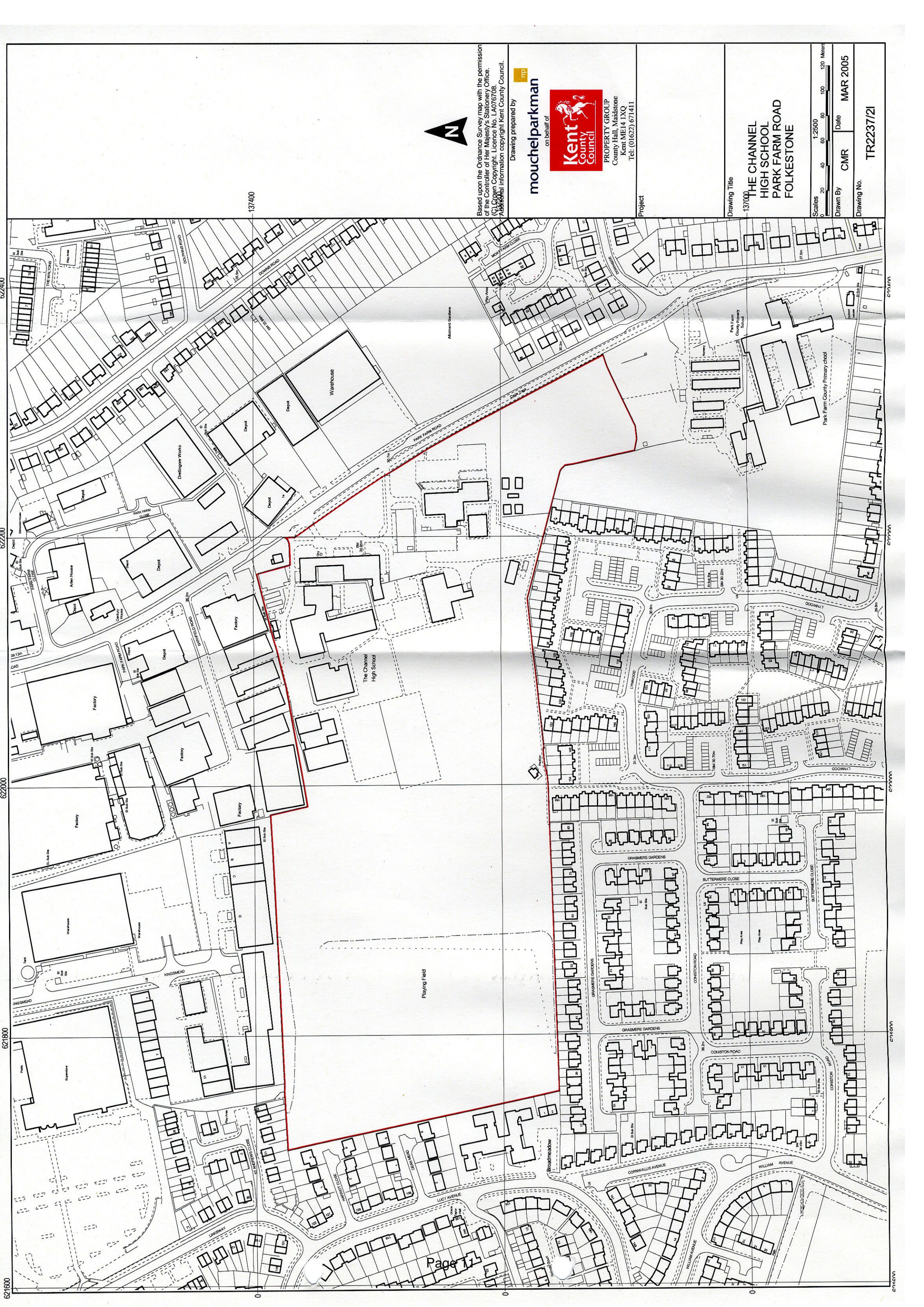
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Project
**THE CHANNEL
 HIGH SCHOOL
 PARK FARM ROAD
 FOLKESTONE**

Drawing Title
 137000
**THE CHANNEL
 HIGH SCHOOL
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Scales
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By: Director – Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 05 November 2008

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS (COMMUNITY) HIGH SCHOOL TO REPLACE WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a Public Consultation on the closure of Tunbridge Wells High School, in order that it may be replaced with a government funded Academy.

Introduction

1. (1) Tunbridge Wells Community High School is a small, co-educational, non selective, secondary school located to the east of Tunbridge Wells town. A location map and a site plan are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. The school's age range was revised from 11-19 to 11-16 in September 2008, following a formal process. Most students currently access post 16 provision at West Kent College (which is a co-sponsor to this Academy proposal). The school had a roll of 404 students in Years 7 to 11, on PLASC 2008.

(2) The school serves an urban community within Tunbridge Wells town and very few students are drawn from further than 3 miles of the school (Appendix 3 comprises a student distribution map). Students come from an area which is marked by unexpected levels of social disadvantage within the Royal Borough, with the majority living on the Sherwood Park estate, the most deprived ward in the Borough, recognised as one of the 20% most deprived wards in Kent and Medway.

(3) The socio-economic profile of the current student intake, at Tunbridge Wells High School, is well below national and Kent averages. The proportion of students identified as having Special Educational Needs is very high at 62.9%. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is 24.3%, which is considerably above the National average of 13.6% and Kent average of 7.9%. In 2007 9.4% of students had English as an additional language and nearly 20% of the school roll is admitted at varying times throughout the school year.

(4) In terms of attainment, 43% of students gained 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C in 2007. This had risen from 24% in 2003. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C, including English and Maths, had risen from 10% in 2003, to 22% in 2007. This led to the school being included in the DCSF 'National Challenge', earlier this year, despite its Contextual Value Added being consistently so high as to place Tunbridge Wells High School in the top 6% of schools nationally for four successive years. 2008 GCSE results are, as yet, provisional. The disappointing GCSE A*-C results, including English and Maths, also make the school eligible for inclusion in the Academy programme.

(5) This provides a 'one off' opportunity to transform life chances for young people in Tunbridge Wells, many of whom are currently choosing to travel outside of Tunbridge Wells for their secondary schooling. The vision for The Tunbridge Wells Academy is to create an exceptional school which embeds an ethos of high academic standards reflected in good student attainment, increased levels of post-16 participation, together with a highly innovative, vocationally based, curriculum that utilises the expertise of all sponsors. There will be an unremitting focus on tackling low levels of prior attainment and on raising standards to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills and knowledge to access higher level learning.

(6) The Tunbridge Wells Academy will specialise in Science and Engineering with a strong priority being given to the Academy's profile in Technology and Mathematics. The Academy will also be a centre of excellence for the development of business skills and enterprise. There will be a focus on the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for children and young people within the context of Children's Trust arrangements in Kent.

Academy Proposal

2. (1) The Tunbridge Wells Academy will be established following the necessary closure of Tunbridge Wells High School. The lead sponsor for The Tunbridge Wells Academy will be the Skinners Voluntary Aided Grammar School, while co-sponsors will be West Kent College and Kent County Council (KCC).

(2) The Tunbridge Wells Academy will be an 11-18 co-educational school for all abilities. It will have 6 forms of entry and admit up to 180 students into Year 7. The number of post 16 places available will be 250, taking the roll to a possible 1,150 by 2015. It is proposed that the Tunbridge Wells Academy will open in September 2009, in existing buildings and move into new buildings in September 2012.

(3) Sponsors intend that the Academy will be a place in which all learners have a sense of identity, worth, aspiration and belonging, so that they can develop to the extent of their capabilities and achieve the 5 ECM outcomes for children and young people. The Academy will adopt and adapt the key transferable features that constitute a stable, supportive home life and a healthy, successful working life. The Academy should resemble a village rather than a school.

[4] Collectively, the Sponsors are able to draw upon considerable skills and expertise in the fields of learning, school and college management and the new learning technologies. The Academy will bring about a culture change and raise the attainment, ambition, thrill of creativity and aspiration for all the young people in its care, building on everything that makes Tunbridge Wells High School a high achieving school.

Resource Implications

Capital

3. (1) Following a recent change in regulations the LA is no longer expected to make a £1m donation to the Academy's Endowment Fund. Should any part of the current Tunbridge Wells High school site be disposed of, however, the DCSF would expect a contribution to the capital costs of the Academy and this would be negotiated at a corporate level within the context of Kent's BSF programme.

Revenue

(2) The Academy will receive its revenue funding directly from the DCSF each year. It will be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent specialist schools, plus an appropriate share of the central LA costs.

Human

(3) Consultation will take place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE. Costs of new staffing (TUPE applies to current staff) and costs associated with TUPE, including any valid redundancies of staff which cannot transfer or be deployed elsewhere in Kent schools, would be negotiated with the DCSF on a case by case basis.

Equality Issues

4. There are no specific equality implications arising from this proposal

Transport and Road Safety Implications

5. Securing sustainable methods of travel for students is central to the establishment of an Academy in Tunbridge Wells. With the increase in the numbers of students on site envisaged, it will be crucial to ensure that an appropriate school travel plan is in place upon the opening of the Academy. Students will be encouraged to travel to school through the most sustainable methods possible including encouraging a good uptake of the Kent Freedom Pass.

School Improvement Implications

6. (1) The closure of the current school to provide for the establishment of an Academy will lead to new 'state of the art' facilities, curriculum innovation, together with the recruitment and retention of high quality staff. It is intended that the investment in facilities, curriculum and funding flexibility that the Academy will bring, would have a positive impact on current standards of attainment, and for improved life opportunities for the local community.

(2) Tunbridge Wells High School was last inspected in February 2005 when it was found that 'Tunbridge Wells High School is a good school. The school has a strong caring ethos and pupils are proud of it and feel valued and supported.....Overall, pupils achieve well, in relation to their standards on arrival at the school'.

View of Local Member

7. The Local Member, Mr Kevin Lynes, supports this proposal.

Views of the Governing Body

8. The Governing Body of Tunbridge Wells High School is in support of proposals for the establishment of an Academy.

Views of the Area Children's Services Officer

9. The Area Children's Services Officer considers that this proposal provides an excellent 'once in a life time' opportunity to secure transformational educational facilities for students of all abilities living in Tunbridge Wells.

Proposed Timetable

10. Should Public Consultation be agreed, the following timetable is proposed:

School Organisation Advisory Board	05 November 2008
Publication of consultation document	10 November 2008
Public Meeting	w.c. 24 November or 1 December 2008
Closing date for responses	19 December 2008
Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	8 January 2009
Cabinet Member decision	Mid January 2009
Issue Public Notice	End January 2009
End of Public Notice period	Mid March 2009
Implementation (subject to outcome)	31 August 2009

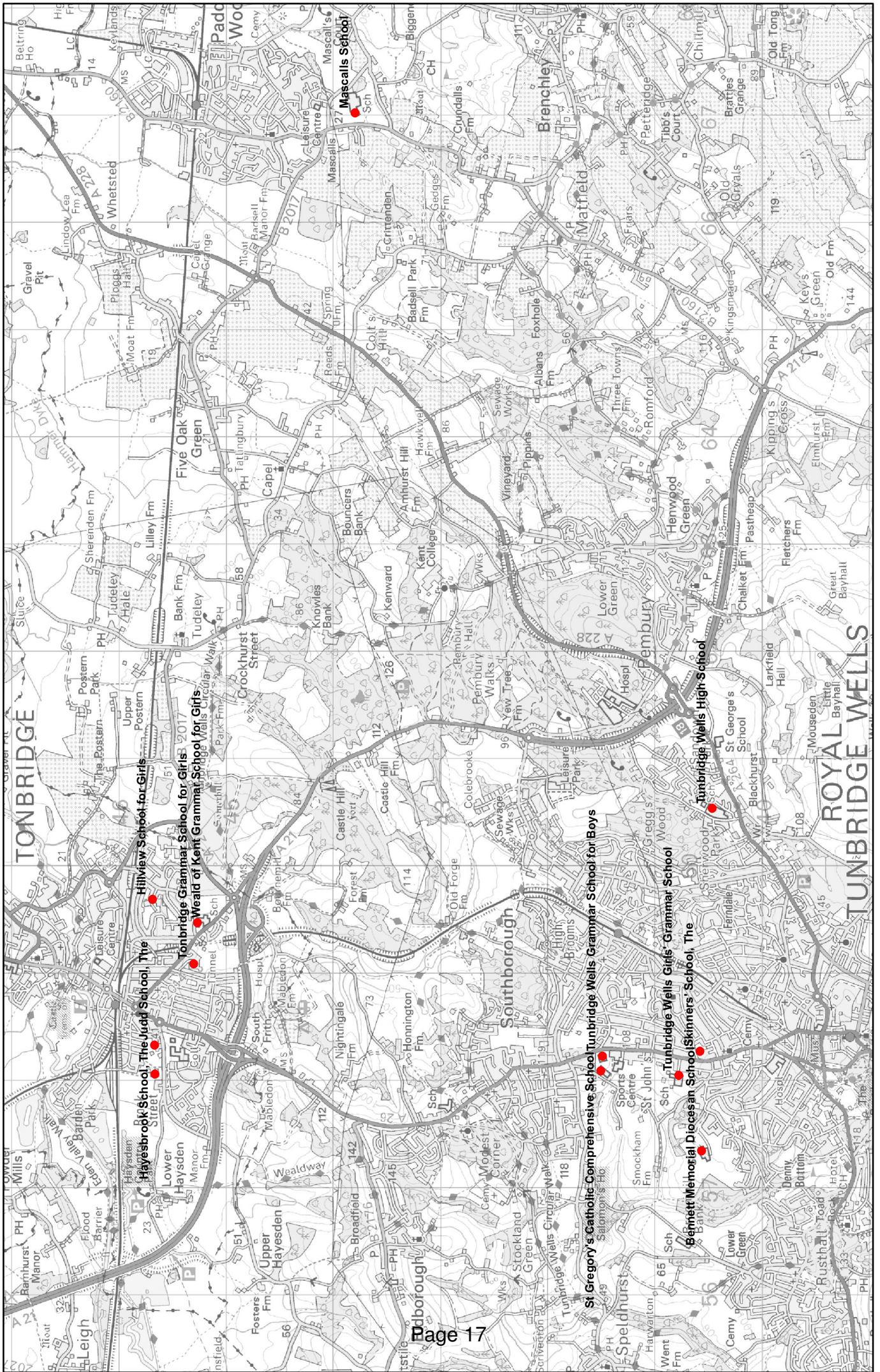
11. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on this proposal for a Public Consultation to be undertaken, in conjunction with the Governing Body, on the proposal for the closure of Tunbridge Wells High School in order for it to be replaced with a government funded academy.

Chris Lay
Area Children's Services Officer
Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells
Tel: (01732) 525107

Background Papers:

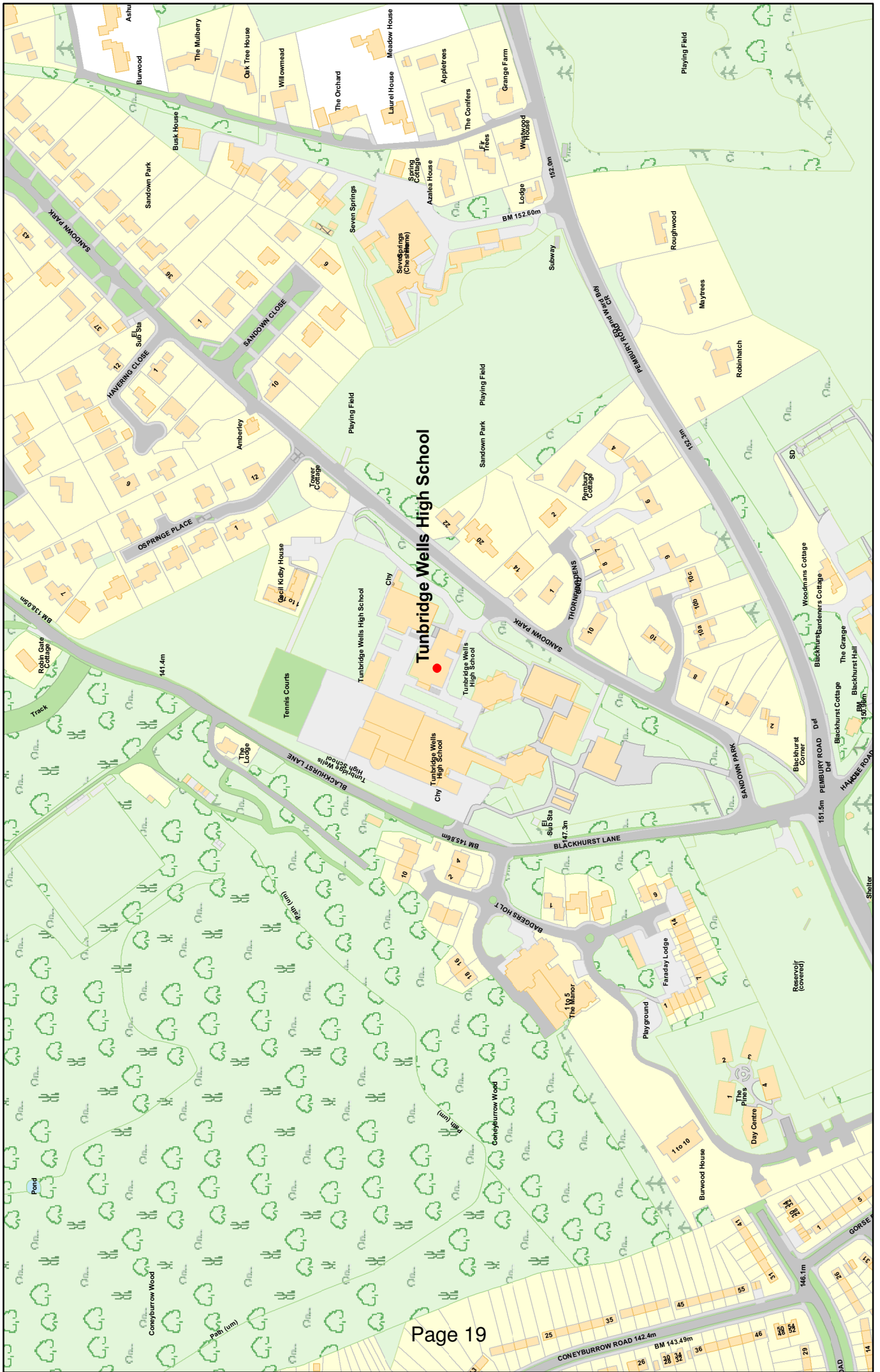
Report to SOAB of 10 January 2008: TUNBRIDGE WELLS HIGH SCHOOL-PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE TO REMOVE THE SIXTH FORM FROM THE SCHOOL'S FORMAL DESIGNATION

Location of Tunbridge Wells High School

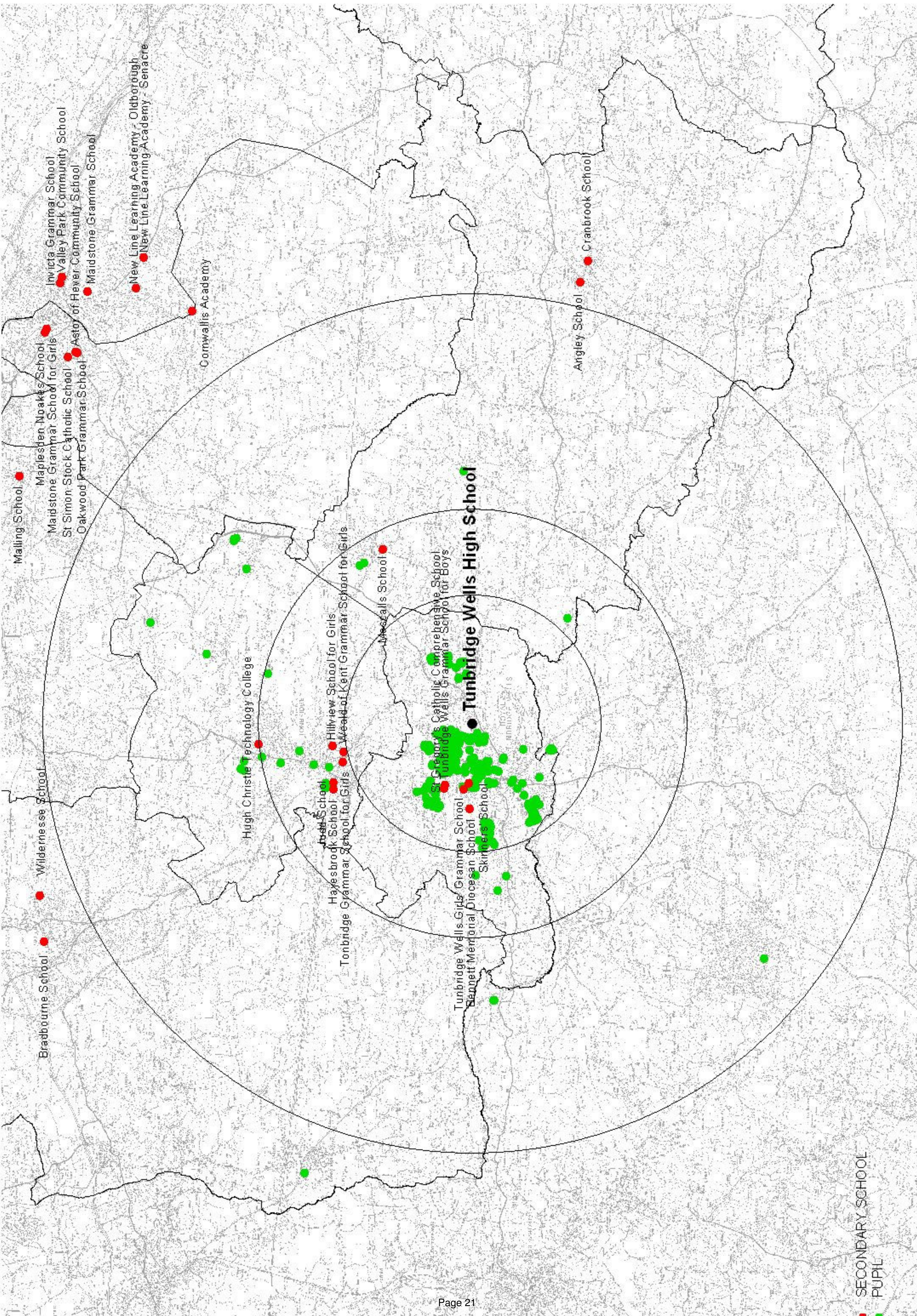


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Site plan of Tunbridge Wells High School



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● SECONDARY SCHOOL
● PUPIL

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 5 November 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) 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) Since the last report to the Board there has been one new determination reported to the local authority. In August it was agreed that **Axton Chase School, Longfield** should be discontinued, and replaced, with effect from 1 September 2008 with **The Longfield Academy** which has now opened.

Consultations

3. Since the last report the governing bodies of five schools have notified us of their intention to consult on changing their status. **Anthony Roper Primary School, Eynesford, Oakwood Park Grammar School, Maidstone, and Valley Park School,**

Maidstone have all begun discussions on becoming Foundation schools. The Federation governing body of **Holmesdale School, Snodland** and **The Malling School** have begun formal consideration of moving to Trust status. In all instances local Members and both Cabinet Members for CFE were consulted before letters were sent indicating that the local authority would not oppose these moves.

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/
10 January 2008/7 February 2008/2 April 2008/
7 May 2008/17 July 2008