



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, 23rd April, 2009, at 10.30 am

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen
Manning**

**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 - 12 March 2009 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Fleetdown Infants & Nursery and Fleetdown Junior Schools, Dartford - Proposed Amalgamation (Pages 5 - 30)
5. Proposed Closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and its Replacement as a Primary School within the Folkestone Academy (Pages 31 - 64)

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

Wednesday, 15 April 2009

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 in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 12 March 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr R B Burgess (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Angell, Mr C J Capon, Mr A D Crowther, Mr M J Northey and Mr A R Poole

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Adams (Area Education Officer Ashford & Shepway), Mr M Doole (Area Education Officer Thanet & Dover) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
(Item 2)

Mr M J Northey declared an interest in Item 4 on the Agenda – Proposal to add a sixth form to the North (Community School), Ashford and took no part in the discussion on that item.

2. Minutes - 8 January 2009
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2009 be agreed as a true record.

3. Proposal to Add a Sixth Form to the North (Community) School, Ashford
(Item 4 - Report by Director – Operations)

(1) This report presented the results of the public consultation on the proposal to add a sixth form to The North School, Ashford.

(2) Mr Adams said he believed that through extending the age range of the school, the quality of provision, for the 11-16 age group would improve. Younger pupils would have on-site older students to act as role models, be able to access new curriculum pathways to keep them engaged in education and training beyond the age of 16 years and would also have on-site older students to act as role models. The wide range of courses that the school would be able to offer would also enhance the learning experience of pupils and aid their future employment prospects. Mr Adams said that one of the chief concerns which had been raised during the of the public consultation exercise, was around the number of car parking spaces available for sixth form students and the possibility of traffic problems due to an increase in the number of traffic movements within the vicinity of the school. In order to address these concerns, a School Travel Plan would be developed and that would specifically

look at the measures needed to address the post-16 parking issues. There would also be a need to provide residents with information about the possible numbers of post-16 students who might be driving to and from the school and to provide information about the proportionate number of students who would be using cars.

(3) Mrs Elizabeth Tweed attended the meeting and spoke as the Local Member. She said that the case to establish sixth form provision at the school was well made and she was in full support of the proposal. She said The North School would be disadvantaged if it was not able to offer a sixth form together with a wider range and mix of courses. She said she understood the concerns which had been expressed by local residents about parking and possible congestion problems and said she welcomed the fact that these would be looked at as part of the development of a School Travel Plan. She also said that she hoped measures would be taken in order to promote and encourage the use of public transport.

(4) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board spoke in support of the proposal, but raised some concerns around car parking provision and the potential for traffic congestion in and around the school. Members therefore asked officers to look at ways to reducing the traffic impact of the proposal and also to take appropriate measures to promote the greater use of public transport. Subject to these views, the Advisory Board AGREED to the issuing of a public notice to add a sixth form to The North (Community) School, Ashford.

4. The Proposed Relocation of The Foreland (Community Special) School to the Hartsdown Technology College site

(Item 5 - Report by Director – Operations)

(1) This report sought the views of the Advisory Board on the proposed relocation of The Foreland (Community Special) School in Broadstairs to be co-located with Hartsdown (Community) Technology College on the Hartsdown site in Margate. In presenting this report, Mr Doole said that the Foreland School already had well established and thriving links with Hartsdown Technology College. Both schools were in need of improved facilities and accommodation and co-location onto the existing Hartsdown Campus would deliver a cost effective solution with substantial learning benefits for all students. The proposal was strongly supported by the Headteachers' and Chairs of Governors of both schools who had been actively involved in formulating and developing the proposal. Mr Doole said that as part of the consultations, Mr Hayton as one of the local County Members had objected to the proposal on the grounds that he was in principle against the co-location of mainstream and special schools.

(2) Mr Burgess spoke as a local county Member and said that the new buildings would enhance the existing collaborative work whilst at the same time allowing the schools to remain separate, albeit on the same site. Hartsdown had been steadily improving over recent years and progressing up the schools table and as it continued to grow it was providing excellent educational facilities and provision. Mr Burgess saw this as an opportunity for both schools to do even better and he was therefore fully supportive of the proposals.

(3) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of issues to which officers responded. Mr Doole emphasised that the schools would remain discrete with their own governing bodies and Headteacher and

their co-location would simply enable them to share the use of improved and better resources and buildings. Mr Doole also said that there would be provision for a small number of nursery places within the site and he believed those children attending the nursery would benefit by being close to a facility which was able to offer special provision. He also said that The Foreland School was designated a district Special School and was therefore complementary to other local provision.

(4) Following further discussion the Advisory Board AGREED that a public consultation exercise should be undertaken on the proposed relocation of The Foreland School from its existing site at Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs, to be co-located with Hartsdown Technology College on the Hartsdown Site, Margate.

5. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status

(Item 6 - Report by Director – Operations)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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By: Grahame Ward - Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 23rd April 2009

Subject: FLEETDOWN INFANTS & NURSERY AND FLEETDOWN JUNIOR SCHOOLS, DARTFORD - PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report:

(1) provides the results of the Public Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School (subject to an exemption under Section 10 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006).

(2) provides the details of the Secretary of State’s decision on the local authority’s application to publish proposals for a new school, without running a competition, as provided for in Section 10 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006.

(3) seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a Public Notice.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 8th January 2009.

Introduction

1. (1) There are two separate schools, Fleetdown Infant and Fleetdown Junior Schools serving the Brent Ward in Dartford East. Both are Community Schools. Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are maps showing pupil distribution and location of the school.

(2) The Headteachers of both schools have notified their respective Governing Bodies of their intention to retire on 31st December 2009.

(3) The Kent Primary Strategy recommendation for linked Infant and Junior schools, is that when a change of Headteacher is notified then the Local Authority should consider amalgamation.

(4) The local authority has applied to the Secretary of State for an exemption to the need to invite proposals under Section 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006. This exemption procedure is described in Section 10 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the DCSF guide, “Establishing a New Maintained Mainstream School - A Guide for Local Authorities”.

The Proposal

2. (1) To discontinue Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School on 31 December 2009.

(2) To open a new 2 FE (420 place) Community Primary School, retaining in full, the existing provision for children with impaired hearing (subject to receiving an exemption under Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

The Consultation

3. (1) The consultation process began on the 20th January 2009 and finished on the 2nd March 2009.

(2) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 4 was circulated according to the County Procedures for Review. This circulation included Local Members, Dartford Borough Council, local libraries, the Member of Parliament and all Dartford Primary and Secondary School Headteachers. Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School was sent enough copies for all staff, governors, parents and carers to receive one. Attached to the consultation document was a reply form for respondents to express their views. Approximately 1500 copies of the document were circulated

(3) The consultation document can be viewed on the KCC website at:
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations>

(4) A public meeting was held at Fleetdown Infant School on 11th February 2009. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance was Mr Simon Webb, Area Children's Services Officer for Dartford & Gravesham. About 60 people attended.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) 70 responses have been received, of which all are in favour. There were no responses that either did not express an opinion or were opposed.

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

Public Meeting Responses

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting is attached as Appendix 6.

Application for an Exemption under Section 10

5. (1) From 25th May 2007 a new statutory framework applies for the establishment of any new school. The relevant law is described in Section 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI: 2007 No 1288) (as amended). The new provisions will apply in all circumstances where it is intended to establish a new school.

(2) The regulations require the Local Authority to invite proposals for any new school. The process is generally referred to as a "competition".

(3) Alternatively if, after consultation, it believes it to be in the best interests of the school, children, parents and community, the Local Authority may apply to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new school, without running a competition, as provided for in Section 10 of EIA 2006. This process is generally referred to as an “exemption”

(4) Within the Public Consultation process, the Local Authority invited respondents to comment on whether they felt that a competition was necessary or desirable. The results of which were forwarded to the School’s Adjudicator for a decision on whether an exemption can be granted.

(5) The decision was returned on 26 March 2009. The Secretary of State has agreed to grant the Local Authority an exemption. A copy of the decision is attached as Appendix 7.

(6) If the Cabinet Member agrees to submit the proposal to statutory public notice, the Secretary of State’s decision must be referred to in the Public Notice.

Views of Local Members

6. (1) Mrs Christine Angell is the local Member for Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School.

(2) Mrs Angell supports the amalgamation and says, “Care and attention should be given to those deaf/deaf and partially hearing children attending Fleetdown to ensure a space of quiet can be offered in this ‘new’ all through school; perhaps this can come from the two year subsidy to improve provision within the school.”

Views of Local Member of Parliament

7. The Member of Parliament for Dartford, Dr Howard Stoate has been fully informed of the proposal. No reply has been received.

Views of Dartford Borough Council

8. Dartford Borough Council has been fully informed of the proposal. No reply has been received.

Views of the Governing Bodies

9. (1) Mr Michael Kiely, Chair of Governors of Fleetdown Junior School: “The proposal to amalgamate both schools has come about purely as both Headteachers have decided to retire at the same time. Kent County Council encourages schools to amalgamate whenever such a situation arises, as it is considered beneficial to staff, parents and pupils. Both governing bodies have worked closely with Simon Webb (Area Children’s Services Officer) to meet and discuss proposals. The governing body have also met with other Headteachers where schools have amalgamated to try and understand what is involved. The conclusion is the same, everyone believing it is the best decision they have ever made.”

(2) Claire Jones, Chair of Governors at Fleetdown Infant School:

“It has been a privilege to serve on the governing body for eight years, representing staff, parents, pupils and the wider community. The governing body had visited three other schools to seek their views and opinions on amalgamation and was reassured by the positive remarks received. Therefore, the governing body have voted unanimously to agree to the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant and Junior Schools, adding two fantastic schools can be turned into an amazing one”.

Views of the Pupils

10. The pupils have been kept fully informed of developments through assemblies and classroom discussion. Informal question and answer sessions indicate that pupils are in favour of the proposal.

Views of the Partnership Board

11. The Local Children’s Services Partnership Manager fully supports the proposal to amalgamate the Fleetdown schools and feels that it will add extra value to the education that these two good schools already provide for the community.

Views of Highways (if appropriate)

12. There is no change in the location of the site nor is there any anticipated increase in traffic in the area.

Views of the Area Children’s Services Officer

13. (1) This proposal has been led by both governing bodies with support from the Local Authority and has gained universal support from all stakeholders.

(2) The amalgamation will deliver significant organisational and management changes which will benefit the children who will attend the ‘new’ school.

(3) Both of the current schools have been judged by recent Ofsted inspections to be “good”.

(4) The interim governing body will be set up swiftly, to enable a smooth transition for both schools and to ensure that there will be sufficient time to appoint an experienced Headteacher.

Resource Issues

14.

Capital

(1) In order for the amalgamated school to operate effectively, it would be desirable to undertake some refurbishment and refreshment of the existing school buildings. An initial feasibility study has been carried out to ascertain what work may be possible.

(2) The Capital Strategy Unit have advised that some funding may be available from the Primary Capital Programme and would seek to hold discussions with the new Headteacher and the Interim Governing Body to understand the school's priorities.

Revenue

(3) The proposed amalgamation would be eligible for support from the re-organisation fund. The fund has now been formularised and the sum of £47,500 is allocated to merging infant and junior schools as a one-off grant to support the merger policy and offset initial revenue costs associated with a merger. Additional funding will be available, largely based on the pupil roll.

(4) There would be efficiency savings in the senior management structure and support staff and in the maintenance of the schools.

Human

(5) A temporary governing body would need to be established to oversee the amalgamation and with an early duty to appoint a Headteacher. This would ultimately be replaced by a new governing body for the amalgamated school.

(6) Following the retirement of both Headteachers and deputy Headteachers on 31st December 2009 one Headteacher post would be made redundant. The interim Governing Body will agree a new structure. The posts of Headteacher and deputy Headteacher would be advertised locally and nationally.

(7) The staff of both schools would transfer into the new school, with an alignment of posts once the new school is established. The number and grading of posts below that of Headteacher and deputy Headteacher would be determined by the interim governing body within the budget available.

(8) There will also be some impact on support staff, but any adverse impact will be kept to a minimum.

(9) In the event of any redundancies being necessary, full support and advice would be available to all staff in search of suitable alternative employment.

Proposed Timetable

15. The following timetable will be adopted if the proposal progresses:

23 April 2009	School Organisation Advisory Board meets to discuss the results of the Public Consultation and the Schools' Adjudicator decision.
19 May 2009	Cabinet Member decision on whether or not to issue a Public Notice.
21 May 2009	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member.
1 July 09	End of statutory representation period.
3 July 09	Establish interim governing body.
31 December 09	School governing bodies dissolved.

01 January 10 New school opens.

Recommendation

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on the issuing of a Public Notice for the amalgamation of Fleetdown Junior School and Fleetdown Infant School.

Simon Webb
Area Children's Services Officer
Dartford & Gravesham
Tel: 01732 525110

The Local Member is:

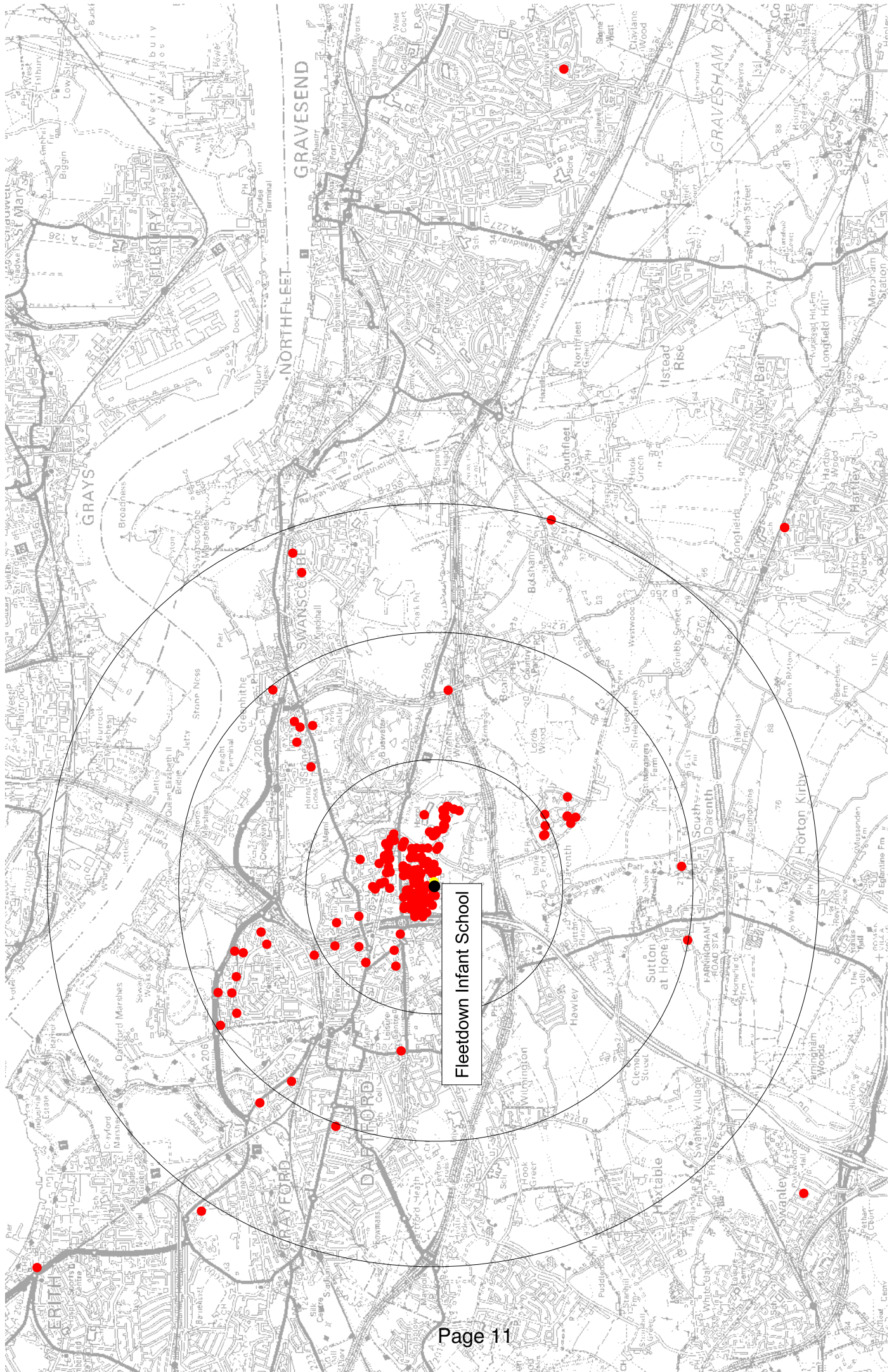
Mrs Christine Angell

Background Documents:

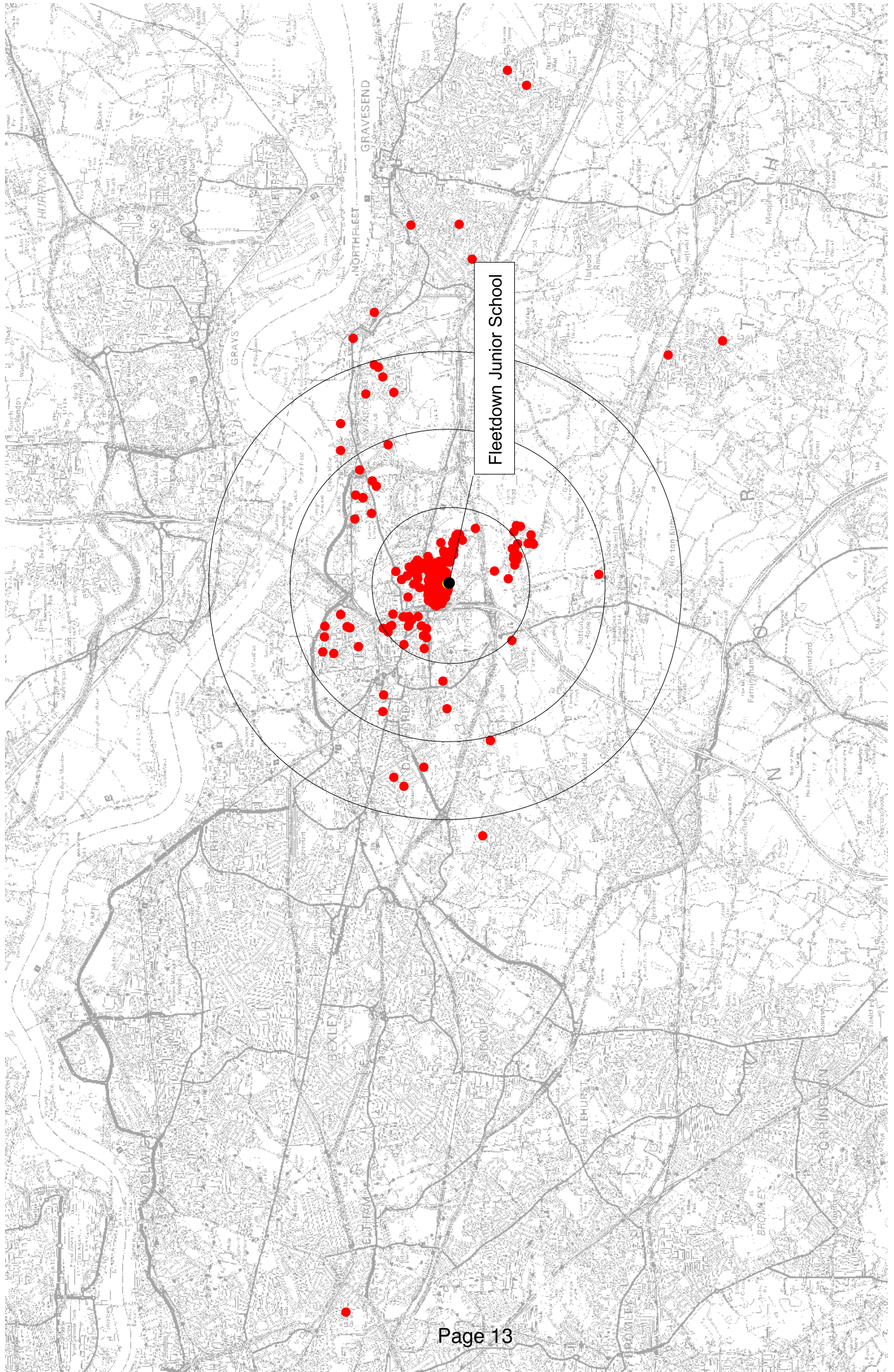
None

Previous Committee Reports:

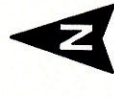
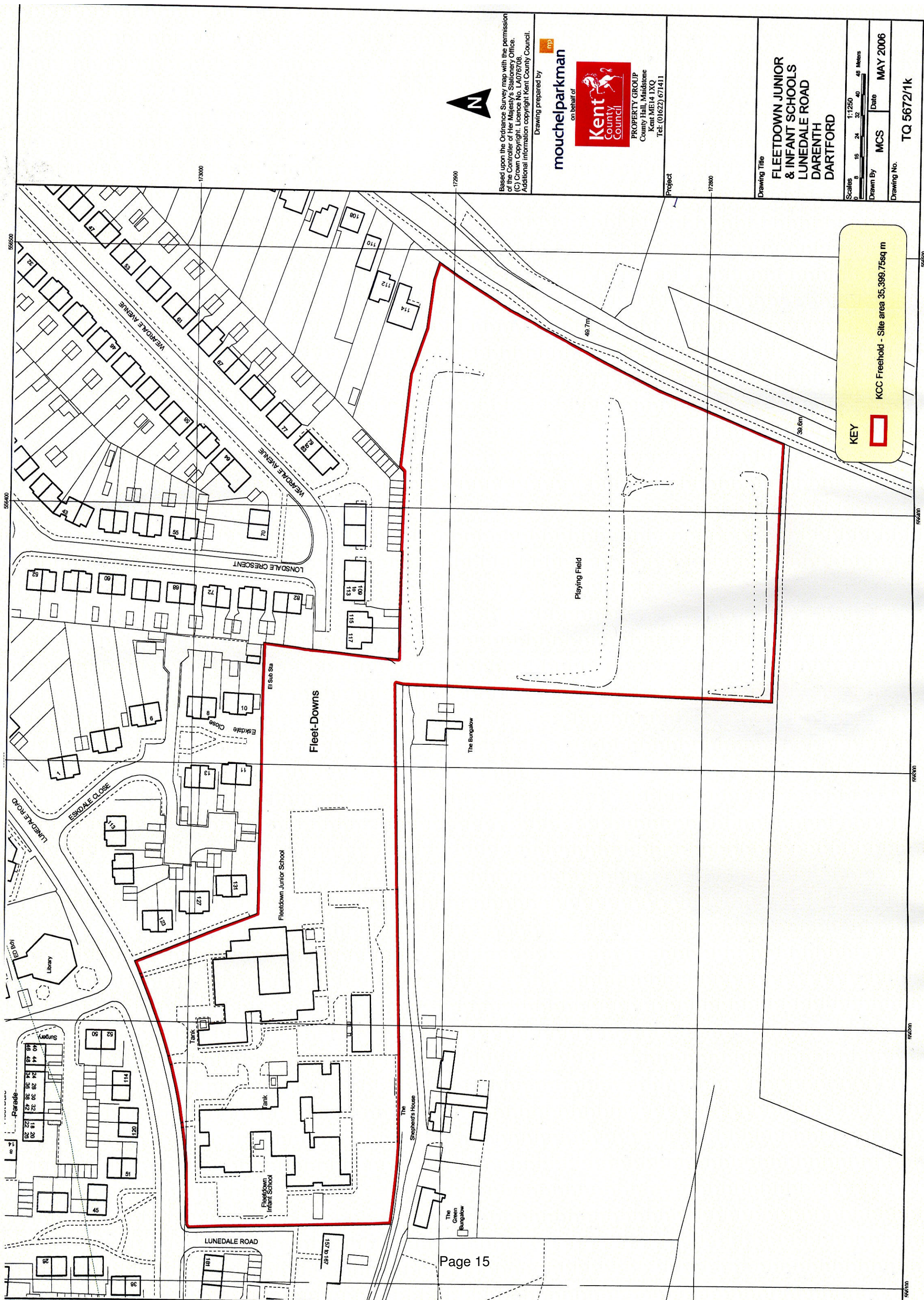
School Organisation Advisory Board - 8 January 2009



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Drawing prepared by
mouchelparkman
 on behalf of



PROPERTY GROUP
 County Hall, Maidstone
 Kent ME14 1XQ
 Tel: (01622) 671411


Drawing Title
**FLEETDOWN JUNIOR
 & INFANT SCHOOLS
 LUNEDALE ROAD
 DARENTH
 DARTFORD**

Scales 1:1250
 0 8 16 24 32 40 48 Meters

Drawn By **MCS** Date **MAY 2006**

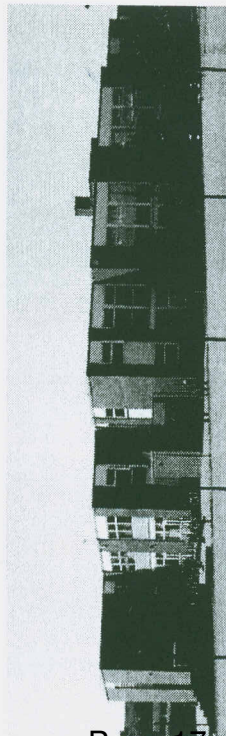
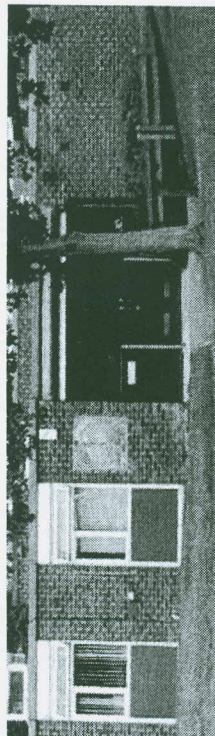
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KEY

 **KCC Freehold - Site area 35,399.75sq m**

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Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School



Page 17

Kent County Council would like to hear your views on a proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School and establish a new primary school on the same site.

Date of Public Meeting: Monday 2 February 2009 at 7pm

Venue for Public Meeting: Fleetdown Infant School

This consultation document is available on:
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations>



INTRODUCTION

Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School are community schools serving the Brent Ward in Dartford East. Both schools are part of the Dartford West Local Children's Services Partnership.

The two schools are on the same site but have separate staffing structures and governing bodies. The schools have well-established, on-site provision for teaching children with impaired hearing. Both schools are inclusive and believe in including the whole family using whichever mode of communication is suitable for that child.

Recently, the headteachers of both schools have notified their respective governing bodies of their intention to retire in December 2009. In 2006, Kent County Council published the 'Kent Primary Strategy'. One of the recommendations for linked junior and infant schools is that when a change of headteacher is notified then the local authority should consider amalgamation of the linked schools.

The governing bodies of both schools have requested that the local authority consult the local community on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools and establish one all through primary school.

This consultation seeks to:

- explain the process for amalgamating the two schools;
- explain the process for opening a new school, including the statutory duty of the local authority under Section 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to invite proposals for the school;
- determine whether local people believe that the amalgamation is in the best interest of the community and in particular, the pupils;
- determine whether local people believe that the local authority proposal to seek exemption from Section 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 is in the best interests of the school and the community.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

(Subject to receiving an exemption under Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

- (1) To discontinue Fleetdown Junior School and Fleetdown Infant School on 31 December 2009.
- (2) To amalgamate the two schools to form a new 2 FE (420 place) community primary school, from 1 January 2010, retaining in full the existing provision for children with impaired hearing.



Page 18

AN EXPLANATION OF THE PROCESS FOR AMALGAMATING FLEETDOWN INFANT AND FLEETDOWN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Prior to the introduction of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, amalgamating an infant and junior school was a relatively straightforward process. It involved closing the two schools on one day and opening a new school on the next.

However, under Section 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, opening a new school requires the local authority to invite promoters to come forward and set up the new school. The process is generally referred to as a "competition". This can add months to the process.

There is an alternative, which is to apply to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new school without running a competition. This process is generally referred to as an "exemption". The Schools' Adjudicator at the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is the statutory body that decides this on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Kent County Council proposes to seek an exemption to running a competition because this amalgamation is between existing infant and junior Schools, with no changes to the education provision.

The first thing Kent County Council has to do is find out whether people feel that amalgamation is in the best interests of the children, parents/carers, staff, and all other stakeholders. The process used by Kent County Council to find this opinion is our Public Consultation process.

Members of the public, the local community and any other stakeholders are invited to offer us their thoughts, suggestions and concerns. In the past, the DSCF has generally agreed that straightforward infant/junior amalgamations may be exempt from a competition, but each case is assessed separately. One of the more important considerations is that the Adjudicator wants to know YOUR opinions on whether a competition is necessary or desirable for the new Fleetdown School. We would therefore like to ask you whether you feel that Kent County Council is right to seek an exemption.

Once the public consultation has closed (5pm, 2 March 2009), Kent County Council will apply to the Schools' Adjudicator at the Department for Children, Schools and Families for an exemption.

The Schools' Adjudicator will then decide whether Kent County Council can be exempted from running a competition. If an exemption is refused then Kent County Council will invite proposals for the new school. Any interested party will be able to submit a proposal to manage the school.

If an exemption is granted, all your views and the opinion of the Schools' Adjudicator are presented to the Kent County Council's School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB). The SOAB considers all the evidence and then advises the Kent Cabinet Member for Education. The Cabinet Member then decides whether or not to issue a public notice.

During this time there will be few, if any, changes at the schools. The governing bodies of both schools have a responsibility to maintain effective governance of the schools and, although they will be keeping a close watch on the ongoing consultation process, they will ensure that both schools continue to provide a high quality education for the children.

WHY CONSIDER AMALGAMATION?

Possible benefits include:

- Eases transition from one school to another.
- Children and parents can build long-term relationships with staff
- The head and governors have more flexibility in how they organise classes and deploy staff.
- Less duplication therefore a reduced administrative burden.
- More consistency in teaching and learning.
- Saving money through economies of scale.
- Headteacher recruitment is becoming an increasing problem.
- Reduction in fixed costs.
- More opportunities for non-curriculum activities.
- Better career opportunities for staff through broader experience.
- KCC offer a two year subsidy.
- Single management team.
- Better co-ordination.
- One Ofsted inspection.

Possible drawbacks include:

- Accommodation issues during any building work.
- IT integration issues.
- Security and telephone systems conflicts.
- Possible uncertainty over jobs for staff. Some posts may be changed and there might not be a suitable post for every member of staff now working at the infant and junior schools.

If there are no objections to the public notice, the amalgamation is agreed and the schools begin their preparation to amalgamate. This process is robustly supported by Kent County Council.

Firstly, an interim (or temporary) governing body is formed, primarily using volunteers from the two existing governing bodies. This is to ensure that both schools are equally represented. The existing governing bodies have already informed the local authority that they are fully committed to amalgamation.

A new headteacher recruitment process will take place. Once a new head is appointed, they will work with the interim governing body to produce a vision statement, an ethos, a staffing structure and begin the work to produce a new school budget.

Finally on 31 December 2009, when all the work is done, the two schools will formally close and the new school will reopen on 1 January 2010.

The local authority will work with the school on whether or not any building work is required to perhaps provide a physical link with the two existing buildings. This will be the decision of the school governors



SCHOOL PLACES

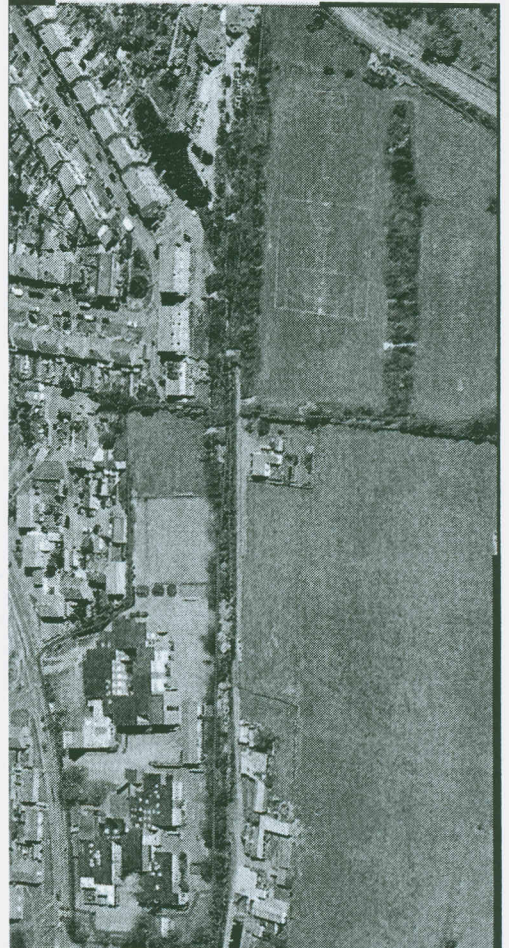
The town of Dartford and its environs is undergoing an era of fundamental change, massive growth and re-development as part of the Thames Gateway.

There are currently 33 primary schools in Dartford. Capacity in schools has been affected by lower birth rates in Dartford over the last ten years. But recently we have seen noticeable increases in primary pupil numbers, due to a forecasted increase in birth rate, the new housing developments and a modest increase in economic migration.

The Fleetdown schools play a vital role in providing a quality education for the community, and wider for children across Dartford. Accordingly, neither the governors of both schools, nor the local authority are seeking a reduction in pupil numbers in the new school and all existing children will be guaranteed a place in the new school.

Page 20

Aerial Photo of the School



HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

We would like to know your views on the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School. Additionally, we would like to hear your views on whether you support the local authority seeking an exemption to Section 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

You can respond to the consultation by either:

Completing and returning the attached response form to:

**Mr Simon Webb
Area Children's Services Officer
17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent, ME19 4UL**

**Deadline for response forms: by 5pm on 2 March 2009
and/or**

**Attending the Public Meeting at Fleetdown Infant School on
Monday 2 February 2009:**

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.

and/or

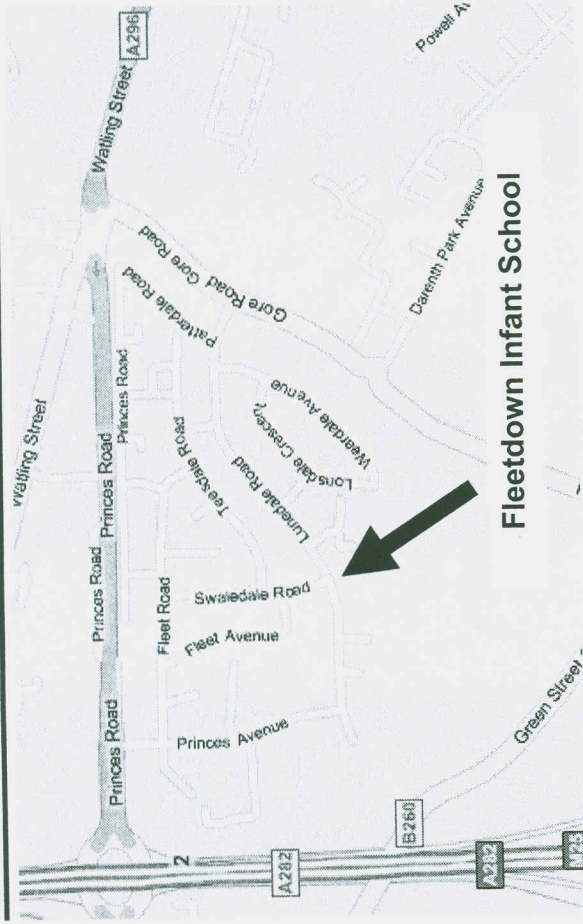
Sending an email to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

**Dr Ian Craig
Interim Managing Director
Children Families and Education
Kent County Council
20 January 2009**

CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

8 Jan 09	School Organisation Advisory Board meets to discuss whether a Public Consultation should be held.
20 Jan 09	Start of Public Consultation.
2 Feb 09	Public Meeting.
2 Mar 09	Close of Public Consultation.
4 Mar 09	Annex D to Schools Adjudication, DCSF to seek exemption under Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
14 Apr 09	Deadline for the Schools' Adjudicator decision.
23 Apr 09	School Organisation Advisory Board meets to discuss the results of the Public Consultation and the Schools' Adjudicator decision and make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member.
early May 2009	Cabinet Member decision on whether or not to issue a Public Notice.
early May 2009	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member.
mid Jun 09	End of statutory representation period.
mid Jun 09	Establish interim governing body.
31 Dec 09	School governing bodies dissolved.
01 Jan 10	New school opens.

PUBLIC MEETING VENUE



Monday 2 February, 7pm

Fleetdown Infant School
Lunedale Road
Dartford
DA2 6JX

This is your chance to put forward your opinions on the proposal to an elected member of the County Council who will listen to your views and report back to the School Organisation Advisory Board.

Public Consultation Response Form

CLOSING DATE FOR RESPONSES: 5pm on 2 March 2009

To: Simon Webb
Area Children's Services Officer
17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent, ME19 4UL.

Fax: (01732) 525223

In order for us to fully understand your opinion, please answer the three questions below and overleaf.

1. Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School and establish a new all through Primary School?

YES NO

If you wish you may use this box to explain your answer, offer suggestions or inform us of any issues that you have with this proposal.
Attach any additional sheets if necessary.

2. Do you agree with the proposal that the local authority and the governing bodies of both schools apply to the Secretary of State for an EXEMPTION to the requirement to invite proposals and run a competition for the new school?

YES NO

If you wish you may use this box to explain your answer, offer suggestions or inform us of any issues that you have with this proposal.
Attach any additional sheets if necessary.

3. Please circle whether you are a:

Infant : Parent Infant school teacher Governor Pupil/Student
Junior : Parent Infant school teacher Governor Pupil/Student
Early Years provider local resident interested party other

If you are a parent or pupil/student, please circle the relevant school phase your child(ren)/you are in:

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.

Summary of Written Responses

	In favour	Opposed	No opinion
Parents/Carers of children at the Junior School	17	0	0
Parents/Carers of children at the Infant School	23	0	0
Parents/Carers of children at both schools	12	0	0
Parent Governors, Junior School	3	0	0
Parent Governors, Infant School	1	0	0
Governors, Junior School	1	0	0
Governors, Infant School	4	0	0
Members of Staff	3	0	0
Local Members	2	0	0
Interested parties/other respondents	4	0	0
Total	70	0	0

Comments Supporting the Proposal

- I feel much happier having attended the meeting and knowing that the headteachers and governing body fully support this proposal.
- I cannot see why this is simply not one school.
- I think it would help the children make the transition
- 100% agree.
- Communication between the schools will improve.
- A good rapport between child + teacher will enhance.
- It would avoid having to re-apply for the Junior school
- Children have a great sense of identity.
- I think this will work very well.

Comments for the Governing Body/Local Authority to Consider

- I would like to emphasize that only if both heads are voluntarily retiring do I support this.
- Care and attention should be given to those deaf/partially children attending Fleetdown to ensure a space of quiet can be offered in this all through school.
- Please can thought go to school uniform. It might be a very costly experience for many parents.
- Would the amalgamation increase the number of students per class?
- Would it be detrimental in any way to overall teaching?
- Retain the name of Fleetdown and its uniform.
- I am concerned that any demolition and rebuilding would be disruptive to the children.
- Would not want to see any redundancies of existing staff as they are all excellent.
- Hope that the news school will be able to attract a headteacher qualified enough to carry the school through the initial difficulties.
- School opening and finishing times – possible problems with human and car traffic.

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PUBLIC MEETING

**Proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and
Fleetdown Junior School**

Chair of Panel:	Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of Schools Organisation Advisory Board
Officers:	Mr Simon Webb, Area Children Services Officer Mr David Hart, Operations Support Officer
Notetaker:	Mrs Ann Drury, Office Services
Headteachers:	Mrs Margaret Moyle, Fleetdown Infant School Mrs Susan Clement, Fleetdown Junior School
Governors:	Mr Michael Kiely, Chair of Governors Fleetdown Junior School Ms Claire Jones, Chair of Governors Fleetdown Infant School

- Approximately 60 people attended the public meeting, including headteachers, staff, governors and parents.
- A minute's silence was held in memory of the teacher from the Junior School who had died tragically in a motor accident.
- Mrs Dagger formally opened the meeting by explaining her role and introduced Mr Simon Webb, who proceeded to lead the presentation.
- Public Consultation meetings are taped so that an accurate record can be kept. The meeting was asked to address any questions or comments to the panel through the microphone.
- The Area Children's Services Manager assured the meeting that all comments received would be carefully considered and used to develop the proposals further.

Mr Simon Webb:

- Both headteachers of the school have informed their governing bodies of their intention to retire in December 2009.
- The Local Authority is supportive of amalgamating schools, as part of KCC's policy of "Children First – A Primary Strategy for Kent". It also states that all-through primary schools are generally preferred, as they help to eliminate barriers to children's learning by providing continuity of experiences, which in turn leads to an overall higher quality of educational achievement.
- The amalgamation of separate schools should be considered when it becomes known that one headteacher is about to leave.
- The proposal is to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School and open a new all-through 2 FE Community Primary School with approximately 60 pupils in each year group.
- The new school will have two forms of entry (i.e. an intake of 60 pupils in the reception year) giving it a capacity of 420 pupils.
- All pupils who currently attend the school will be guaranteed a place. The admission rules regarding siblings will also continue.
- The amalgamation process will be completed by December 2009 and the new Community Primary School will open on the same site on 1 January 2010.

- The new school would be on the same site, housed in the existing buildings. A feasibility study will be undertaken to see whether it is possible to physically link the two buildings together.
- Advantages to amalgamation include:
 - Recruitment of new headteacher may be easier
 - Reduction in fixed costs
 - The Local Authority offer a two year subsidy
 - More opportunities for non-curriculum activities
 - Transition from one school to another
 - Single management team
 - More consistency in teaching and learning
 - Long term relationships can be built
 - More flexibility in organising classes and deploying staff
 - Less duplication
 - One Ofsted Inspection
- Disadvantages to amalgamation include:
 - Possible uncertainty over jobs for staff.
 - Accommodation issues
 - Disruption
- Changes to government legislation mean that the local authority invites any interested party, group or organisation, who believes they can run the school, to submit a tender. If a tender is received the local authority must set up a competition to decide upon the best tender.
- The law offers an exemption to this rule and the local authority is entitled to apply for it. Kent County Council is seeking an exemption as it believes this process is not important as this amalgamation is straightforward. The exemption could delay the process.
- The consultation is therefore asking whether the local authority is right in seeking an exemption. It is therefore important to indicate whether the local authority should apply to the Secretary of State for an exemption to competition. Public opinion is very important.
- The Public Consultation period closes on 2 March 2009.
- Following this consultation, the outcomes will be reported to the School Organisation Advisory Board on 23 April 2009.
- At that stage a decision will be made on whether to proceed with amalgamation.
- If so, a Public Notice will be published in early May for a further 6 weeks. Further representations can then be made to the proposal.
- A determination will be reached on whether the proposal progresses.
- June 2009 will mark the end of the statutory consultation period.

Governors Statements

<p>Mr Michael Kiely, Chair of Governors of Fleetdown Junior School:</p>	<p>“The proposal to amalgamate both schools has come about purely as both headteachers have decided to retire at the same time. Kent County Council encourages schools to amalgamate whenever such a situation arises, as it is considered beneficial to staff, parents and pupils. Both governing bodies have worked closely with Simon Webb to meet and discuss proposals.</p>
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	The governing body have also met with other headteachers where schools have amalgamated to try and understand what is involved. The conclusion is the same, everyone believing it is the best decision they have ever made.”
Claire Jones, Chair of Governors at Fleetdown Infant School:	“It has been a privilege to serve on the governing body for eight years, representing staff, parents, pupils and the wider community. The governing body had visited three other schools to seek their views and opinions on amalgamation and was reassured by the positive remarks received. Therefore, the governing body have voted unanimously to agree to the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant and Junior Schools, adding two fantastic schools can be turned into an amazing one.”

Questions and Answers

Mrs Hargreaves, parent asked: 1. Whether the name ‘Fleetdown’ will be retained in the new school name. 2. Whether there would be any change to school uniform. 3. Whether nursery currently on site would still be accommodated	The answers to Q 1 and 2 will be down to the School Governors. The nursery provision is not expected to change
Mr Mangat, parent sought more information from the Governing bodies Representatives who visited three local schools to find out the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of amalgamation.	Although each school had described it as a challenging experience, the overall perception was that it had been worthwhile with definite advantages to the school
Mr Miller, parent asked about the impact that amalgamation will have on the school budget?	Simon Webb explained the budget including the two year additional funding.
Mrs Hargreaves, parent Returned to her original question, adding there were two nurseries on the Fleetdown site and would they both still remain there?	There are no plans to change the nursery provision on site.
Mrs Bernard, parent. Will the school starting and finishing times would be the same.	The decision will be down to the School Governors.
	Ms Jones, chair of governors of Fleetdown Infant School asked parents to make a note

	of such questions so they could be taken into consideration before the opening of the new school in January 2010.
Ms Patterson, parent asked whether class sizes and catchment area were likely to remain the same.	Class sizes were decided by national legislation rather than individual school decision. Catchment areas were not in use by KCC but the admission arrangements remained unchanged

Meeting concluded at 8pm.

Simon Webb
Area Children's Services Officer
Dartford & Gravesham
17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4UL

Direct line: 01325 391274

26 March 2009

Dear Simon

Thank you for your application, received on 5 March 2009, for consent to publish proposals under section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), to replace Fleetdown Infant and Junior community schools with a new Primary school, on 1 January 2010.

The Secretary of State has considered the application very carefully and in exercising the powers conferred on him by section 10 of the EIA 2006, for reasons explained below, has decided to grant consent to publish the proposals for a new 4-11 community primary school.

Section 10 of the EIA 2006 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 Mainstream 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. However, the guide also confirms that Ministers have indicated, during debates in Parliament, that they may be prepared to give consent, to publish without a competition, where the proposals are for the amalgamation of an infant and junior school.

Accordingly, the Secretary of State has looked very 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 as 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 the levels of local diversity

The Secretary of State recognises the wish of Kent LA to bring a unity of leadership and good practice across the two key stages, by creating a new community Primary School. He notes that the proposal will not increase local diversity of provision or parental choice.

2. Views of interested parties

It is noted that the Governing Bodies of both schools have been actively involved with this proposal. Initial consultation with parents and the learning community has been positive, and that both headteachers are retiring in December 2009.

3. The prospect of other proposer interest

The Secretary of State understands that potential proposers, including both Church diocese and community and parish groups were included in the public consultation document mailing, but no representations were received from potential sponsors.

4. Local standards

Both existing schools are currently demonstrating above average standards and good pupil progress. The Secretary of State expects that the establishment of a new primary school will continue to build on the best practice and strengths of the predecessor schools.

In summary, taking into account all the above factors, and the fact that Ministers have previously indicated they would be prepared to give consent in such cases, the Secretary of State accepts that holding a competition would not be appropriate in the particular circumstances of this application.

You may now proceed to follow the statutory process as set out in section 10 of the EIA 2006. Further guidance and information is available on the Department's website www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg .

I must emphasise that this consent does not provide approval for the establishment of the new school that you propose. The final decision on your proposals will be a matter for the Schools Adjudicator.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynne Pape

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 23 April 2009

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 presents the results of a public consultation on the proposal to close Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and replace it with a primary phase within the Folkestone Academy.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 5 November 2008.

Introduction

1. (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 5 November 2008, supported a recommendation to consult (in conjunction with the governing body of Park Farm Primary School) on the proposal to close Park Farm Primary School, and replace it as part of the Folkestone Academy.

(2) This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place in February and March 2009.

The Proposal

2. (1) The proposal is that the Local Authority ceases to maintain Park Farm School, and the Folkestone Academy enters into a new/amended funding arrangement with the Secretary of State enabling it to deliver education to pupils aged 4-18 years, rather than the current 11-18 years (ie 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 Academy. This land was formerly part of the Channel School site. 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. Attached as Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are maps showing the location of the school and pupil distribution.

(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 year groups. It will continue to offer 280 post 16 places.

(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 professional 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.

The Consultation

3. (1) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 4 was circulated according to the County Procedures for Review. This circulation included Local Members, Shepway District Council, the Member of Parliament, the Learning and Skills Council, South Kent College, the Canterbury diocese and head teachers within a radius of 3 miles. Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy had enough copies for all staff, governors, parents and carers to receive one. Approximately 4,000 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. Unusually this was a joint consultation with the Academy.

(2) A public meeting was held at The Folkestone Academy on 9 March 2009. Mr Robert Burgess, KCC Member, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Mr David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer; Mr Ian Johnson, Principal of Marlowe and Spires Academies; Mr Trevor Minter, Trustee of the Folkestone Academy Trust and Mr Michael Pearce, Chair of Governors of Park Farm Primary School. Approximately 115 people attended. A summary of the main issues raised is attached as Appendix 4.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) 37 responses have been received, of which 23 are in favour, 2 are unsure, and 12 are opposed.

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

Public Meeting Responses

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting is attached as Appendix 6.

Views of Local Members

5. (1) Mr Richard Pascoe, Member for Folkestone North East is supportive of the proposal as it will be of great benefit to the primary school, good for the Academy and good for the pupils.

Views of Local Member of Parliament

6. The local Member of Parliament, Mr Michael Howard has been consulted on the proposal. A response is awaited.

Views of Shepway District Council

7. Shepway District Council has been consulted on the proposal. A response is awaited.

Views of the Parish/Town Council

8. Folkestone Town Council has been consulted. No comment has been received.

Views of the Learning and Skills Council (if appropriate)

9. The Learning and Skills Council have been consulted on the proposal. However, as this proposal does not alter provision for children aged 14 plus, it is not expected that the Council will comment.

Views of the Governing Bodies

10. The governing bodies of Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy are the driving forces of this proposal and brought it to the Local Authority. They are in full support.

Views of Headteacher

Park Farm

11. (1) I am very keen to see the merger go ahead. This will provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference to the life chances of children this school serves in Folkestone.

(2) Park Farm has a clear aspiration to become an outstanding school. I see the merger as a way to make rapid improvements in the standards of education we provide and so meet our aspirations to be outstanding.

(3) The merger will also provide a much more child-centred transition process from the primary into secondary age phases of education. It will go a long way to eradicating the dip in performance and progress that children go through when they move to their secondary school.

(4) This can happen whether or not we get a purpose built, state of the art new school building. However, if this is achieved, such a building will provide a significant boost and improvement to the learning environment for our children.

Views of the Pupils

12. Pupils of Park Farm Primary School and The Folkestone Academy have been consulted on the proposal. The Park Farm Primary School student council have gathered the views of the pupils. The majority (72%) are in favour of the proposal.

Views of the Partnership Board

13. The Shepway 1 Partnership Board welcome this consultation on the proposal to open an all age Academy in Folkestone. We feel it would offer parents greater choice of

provision on age 11 transfer as well as providing continuity of support for pupils. Primary schools in the partnership would be willing to work alongside the Academy to ensure quality of provision across all schools.

Views of the Area Children's Services Officer

14. (1) The proposal has been generated by the schools involved because they are confident that it is in the best interests of their pupils. I support this view.

(2) The enhanced learning opportunities available to pupils will be significant, the cross fertilisation of professional practice will benefit learners and the good practice developed will support pupils in other primary and secondary schools.

Resource Issues

Capital

15. (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 development. 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 the 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 is the employer of staff in the Academy. Consultation with Park Farm's staff has taken place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE. Discussions are ongoing with the DCSF regarding funding for TUPE costs and funding for any necessary redundancies.

Proposed Timetable

16. If it is decided that a public notice should be issued in respect of this proposal, the following timetable is likely to apply:

Issue public notice	wc 11 May 2009
End of representation period	wc 22 June 2009
Decision by Kent County Council	July 2009
Implementation (earliest date)	1 September 2009

Recommendation

17. The views of the School Organisation Board are sought on the issuing of a public notice to close Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School, subject to the replacement within Folkestone Academy.

David Adams
Area Children's Services Officer
Ashford and Shepway
Tel: (01233) 898559

The Local Member is Mr Richard Pascoe

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board – 5 November 2008

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Drawing Title

PARK FARM PRIMARY
SCHOOL CT19 5DN

MasterMap

Drawn By CC Date AUG 2008

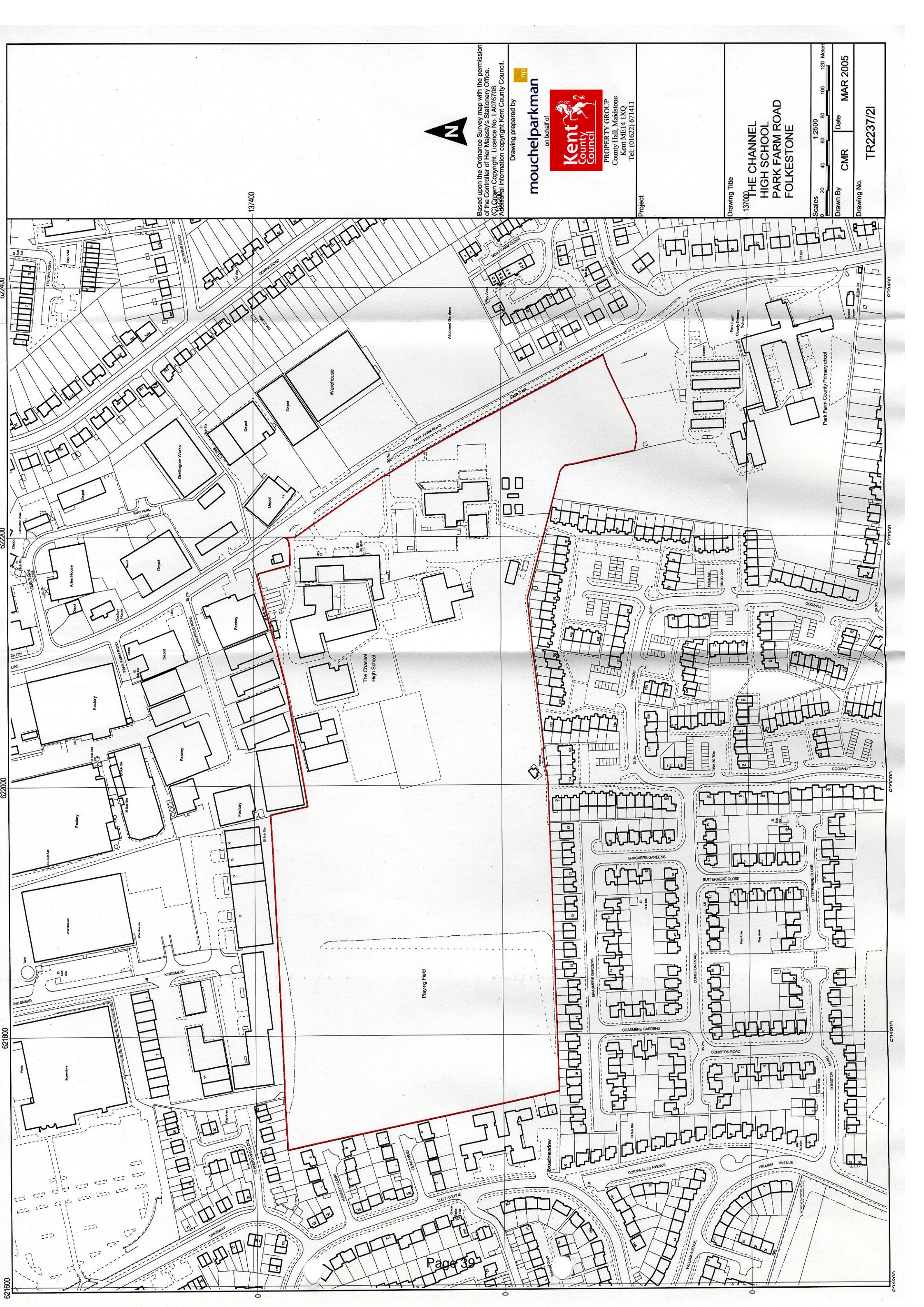


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Project

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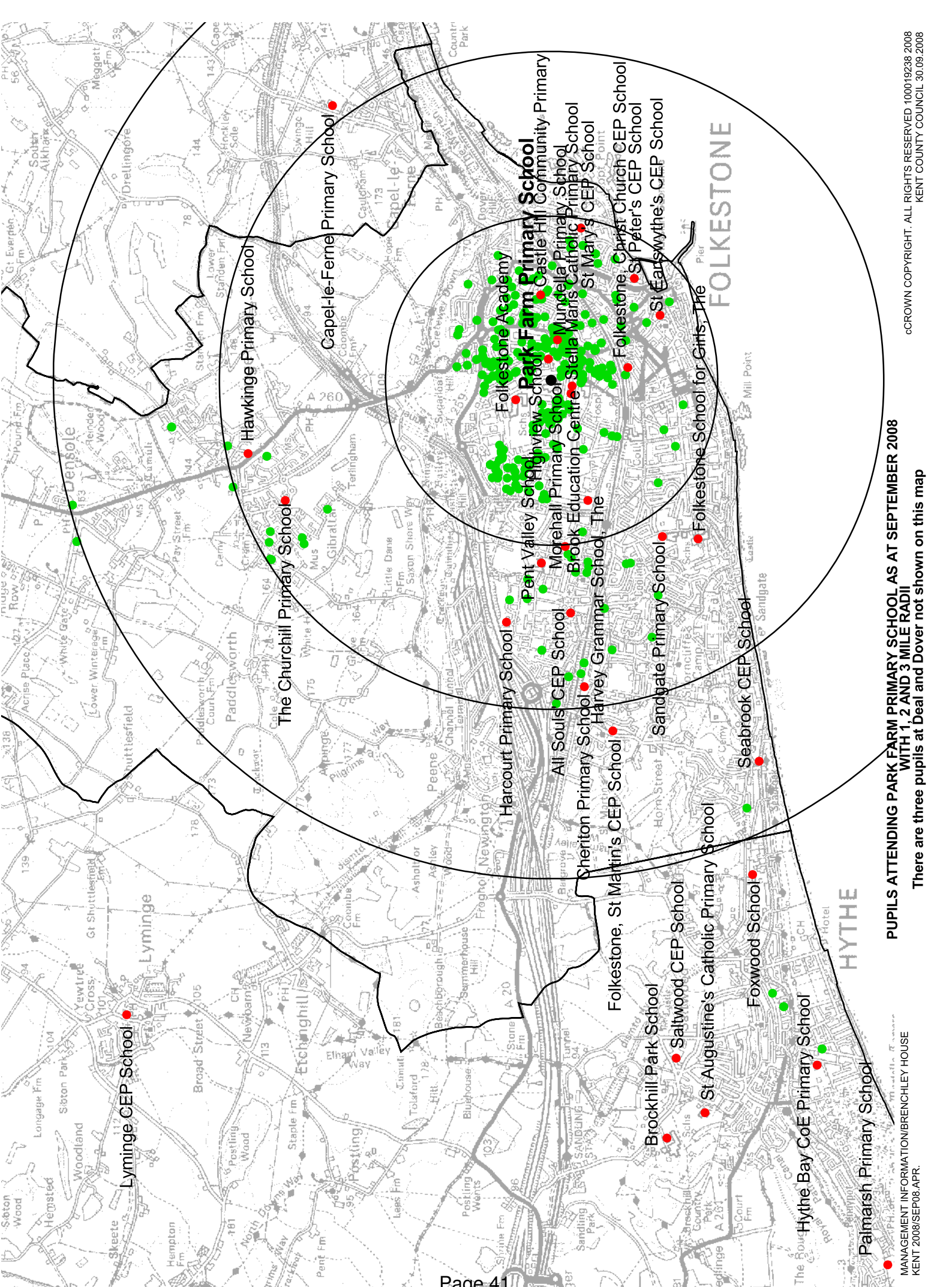
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**THE CHANNEL
 HIGH SCHOOL
 PARK FARM ROAD
 FOLKESTONE**



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Folkestone All Age Academy

*The only school
you'll ever need*

Proposed merger of
**Park Farm (Foundation) Primary
School and Folkestone Academy**
to create Kent's first Academy
for 4 – 19 year old students



Public consultation Document

A proposal to create an all age academy for Folkestone

This document explains the proposal to merge **Park Farm Primary School** and **Folkestone Academy** to create an all age academy. Academies are state funded independent schools, which means they are free for pupils to attend and are funded directly by central government. For this merger to happen, two things need to happen - (1) if the proposal is agreed funding would need to be available from a number of sources, including Government, Kent County Council and the sponsor, and (2) Kent County Council would need to agree to "cease to maintain" Park Farm School (a process known as closure). This consultation explains more about the proposal and seeks your views about it. Your views will help the Governing Bodies of Park Farm School and Folkestone Academy, Kent County Council and the Secretary of State to decide if the proposal should go ahead.

Foreword by Roger De Haan CBE, Sponsor of the Folkestone Academy

The Folkestone Academy, an all-ability secondary school for girls and boys, opened in September 2007. It replaced a school that ten years ago struggled near the bottom of academic performance measurement tables. The challenge for the new academy was to help to create a brighter future for its pupils and the broader community, and it has already made impressive progress.

There is a great deal more that can be done, however, to improve access to education in Folkestone, and to raise aspirations for children and young people in the town. Park Farm Primary School has enjoyed considerable success in the recent past, with around 45% of its children gaining access to grammar schools. Nevertheless, the transition to secondary school can be disruptive to children's education and there are strong arguments for examining ways by which children could benefit from improved continuity.

The creation of an inclusive all age academy will considerably enhance the opportunities that can be offered to children and students during the course of their school life. By sharing resources, good teaching practice and above all ethos, we shall be able to offer the highest quality of education to a broad community, and particularly to those who have been denied opportunities in the past.

The new school would further develop the emphasis placed on welfare and pastoral care at the Academy, and would endeavour to strengthen relationships with parents in order that children and students feel both secure and supported. The Academy's innovative approach would also help to create a sense of personal responsibility amongst children that develops as their school career progresses.

An all age academy would be well-placed to support academic progress over a sustained school career, and to guide children towards specific areas of the academic or vocational curriculum, according to each individual's needs, aptitudes and abilities. All these aspects can be much better assessed where an individual's development has been monitored over a longer period of time.

If these proposals succeed, the result will be the creation of a school that will focus on raising aspirations and improving levels of achievement. This will lead in turn to a more confident community, where equality of opportunity and excellence in education will have played a key part.

**Statement from Michael Pearce,
the Chair of Governors of Park Farm School,**

I see the proposal to merge Park Farm Primary School with the Folkestone Academy as a welcome opportunity to take the best practice from each sector and share it with the other, making more efficient and effective use of our joint resources to build on the recent achievements of both schools. An all age academy will give us the chance to raise standards at all levels by working together not only at a strategic level, but also in the classrooms, to give the children in our community the best education and choices available.

**Statement from Dr Ian Craig,
Interim Managing Director, Children Families and Education,
Kent County Council**

Academies are state funded independent schools that are free for pupils to attend. They are not “maintained” by the Local Authority; instead they receive their funding direct from central government.

In order for the merger of Park Farm School and Folkestone Academy to go ahead, KCC will need to agree to “cease to maintain” Park Farm School (a process known as closure), and funding would need to be available from a number of sources, including Government, Kent County Council and the sponsor, for a replacement primary school within Folkestone Academy. Understandably there is a legal process the County Council has to go through before it can close a school, and this includes public consultation.

It is important that you know what the replacement school might be like in order for you to make an informed response. Therefore, the County Council and the Governors of Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy are jointly consulting you on the proposal to merge the two schools. This document explains the proposal, the reasoning behind it, and how the consultation process will work.

We welcome your thoughts on this ground-breaking proposal and encourage you to respond to this consultation.

No final decision has been made and will not be made until the consultation process is complete and the views of all interested parties have been considered.



The Proposal – an exciting All Age Academy for Folkestone

Working closely with Primary Schools is seen by the Folkestone Academy Trust as a key strategy in its efforts to meet the National Challenge to improve pupil achievement.

Park Farm Primary School is currently located around 300 metres south of the Academy's eastern boundary. Governors of both schools are keen to close the primary school on 31st August 2009 and re-open it on 1st September 2009 as part of the Folkestone Academy. The two schools serve pupils in very much the same catchment area, and it is felt extremely advantageous to work together to help boost standards, particularly in key skills, raise aspirations and improve life chances for young people in East Folkestone.

Parental choice

Around 50% of Park Farm's students move onto the Academy, most of the others gaining grammar school places. Maintaining parental choice at 11+ would remain central to the new arrangements, but underpinning the creation of an all age academy is the desire to share good practice, facilities and staffing across the two sectors.

Governance

The all age academy would be run by the Folkestone Academy Trust and would have a single governing body, that would include representation from both primary and secondary sectors. It would have one Executive Principal who would work closely with the Head of School of the primary school. The Head of School would be responsible for the primary phase of the all age academy.

For this to happen, there would be:

- a formal closure of Park Farm Primary School, Park Farm Road, Folkestone, CT19 5DH on 31st August 2009 and
- the opening of the Folkestone All-Age Academy for pupils age 4 – 19 years with effect from 1st September 2009

Pupil numbers

The two-form entry primary school would have 60 pupils in each year group, achieving a total roll of 420. The secondary school would remain at eight-form entry, with 240 in each of years 7 -11 and 280 sixth formers, giving a total of 1,480 and an overall total of 1,900.

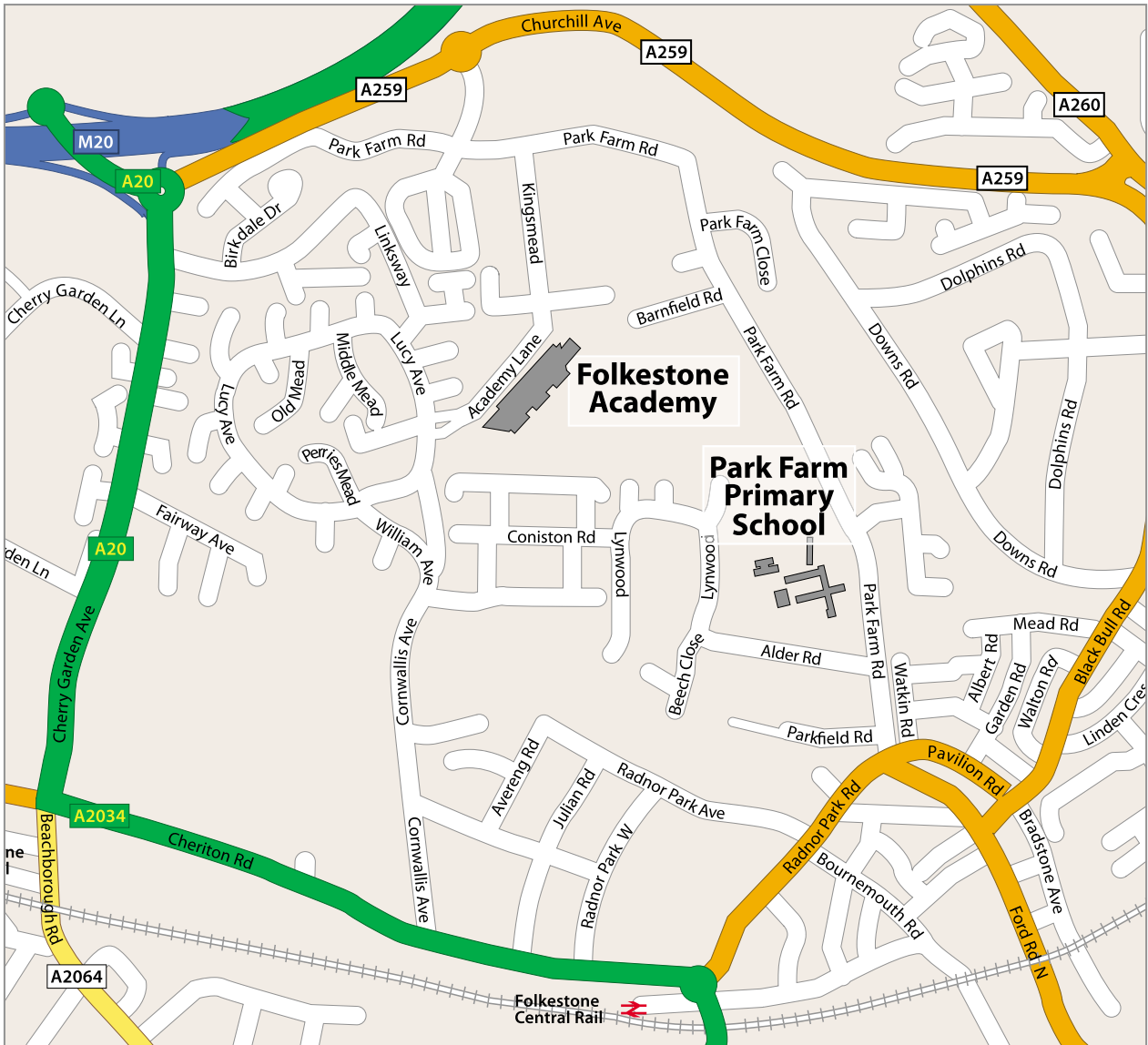
Location

The secondary pupils would continue to occupy their present site on Academy Lane, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5FP. The primary pupils would remain on their current site initially and would be able to use the science laboratories, sports facilities, theatre and studios in the main academy building.

The Academy site is large enough to host new premises to accommodate the primary school, and given the current school building is suffering with subsidence, Trustees would hope to undertake a building programme to construct a new primary building on or very near to the secondary campus by 2011.

Admissions

Park Farm Primary school's admissions are currently organised through a clearly defined catchment area. The catchment area for the Folkestone Academy is of course much larger. We intend to publish an Admissions Policy for September 2010 that affirms the concept of catchment areas within its criteria for admission and identifies the catchment areas applying to both the primary and secondary provision. Priority in the primary phase will be given to siblings of children who attend the primary element of the Academy at the time of admission. We are determined that other local primary schools and their children are not disadvantaged by our proposals and the move onto the Academy site would preserve the current pattern of admissions. We do not want to disadvantage other secondary schools either. Our proposal that children in the primary phase of the all-age academy would be able to move to Year 7 without being subject to other admissions criteria will not impact detrimentally elsewhere as nearly all pupils at Park Farm currently either go on to the Academy or to local grammar schools. We anticipate this pattern continuing.





PARK FARM
PRIMARY



What are the benefits of an all age academy?

The Folkestone Academy has begun to have a major impact on improving secondary education for children in East Folkestone. In 2008 it was significantly oversubscribed. A very successful open evening at the end of September suggests that the Academy's popularity is set to rise even further.

An all age academy is proposed for a number of reasons:

i. To provide a seamless education for young people from the start of their schooling through to university.

The Folkestone Academy has excellent links with further and higher education institutions in Kent including Canterbury Christ Church and Kent Universities, both of whom are represented at Trustee level. In addition there are good links with Further Education. Park Farm School has a private nursery on site, and if this link continues, the Academy really would be at the heart of life-long learning in its community.

ii. To share ideas, expertise and teaching more between colleagues in the primary and secondary school sectors. Both Park Farm Primary and the Folkestone Academy have already put in place a number of strategies to raise levels of achievement. These include:

- giving executive responsibility to an experienced academy leader until a new Principal is in post - Ian Johnson has significant experience at the Marlowe and Spires Academies
- raising the quality of teaching, and working directly with targeted youngsters to achieve higher end of Key Stage SATs and GCSE grades
- introducing termly Ofsted style lesson observations so that everyone is familiar with good practice and involved in a systematic approach to improving the quality of provision
- improving the support and guidance available to students
- intensive staff training to raise literacy and numeracy standards
- networking with colleagues locally and at both Spires and Marlowe Academies to ensure that the very best practice is disseminated in all three institutions
- and setting challenging targets for the current academic year – early indications are that the Academy can achieve an overall 5A*-C at GCSE above 50%, with between 25 and 30% of students achieving the mark with English and Maths

However, for long term development and sustainability, the Folkestone Academy Trust and Park Farm Governors are convinced that closer working relationships between the primary and secondary sectors are crucial. In the proposed new all age academy:

- some teachers could be teaching across the two phases from September 2010
- literacy and numeracy strategies begun in the primary school would be more easily continued through to Key Stage 3 and beyond
- Sixth Formers would be trained to serve as mentors to the youngest children first learning to read; the benefits to all concerned are just becoming apparent in Ramsgate where the Marlowe Academy has this year begun a pilot reading project with Newington Community Primary School.

iii. To provide primary school children with access to excellent specialist facilities at the Folkestone Academy. Like other secondary schools, the Folkestone Academy can provide the science laboratories, teachers and technicians so often lacking in the primary sector. As a specialist Visual and Performing Arts school, the Academy also has its theatre and specialist studios. It is quite possible for age 14-19 students on vocational courses to coach or mentor younger students as part of their own courses. The same applies to Physical Education where once again the Academy has excellent facilities with its sports hall and playing fields. Careful timetabling could make all of these facilities available for primary school use at various times in the week or year.

iv. To continue to drive forward with the community schools agenda, developing links with parents over a longer period of time. With the development of Children's Trusts in Kent, it makes good sense to link schools together to access specialist support, such as Educational Psychology and Speech & Language, for longer periods of time. Links with other agencies as well as the voluntary sector also become easier to develop. For parents to have a link with their school that lasts from 4 to 19 makes accessing such provision and raising aspirations all the easier.



v. **To avoid the dip in performance that can happen as students change schools.** Attending an all age academy takes away the hiatus that seems to exist between the end of Year 6 and start of Year 7, a break in continuity that has traditionally led to a dip in performance as well as emotional trauma for many youngsters.

vi. **To open up the possibility of creating new purpose-built accommodation** Park Farm's building was originally designed to host secondary school students shortly after the end of the Second World War and has presented an increasing number of issues in latter years

A new primary school building is long overdue. Our intention is to open the all age academy using the existing Park Farm buildings in September 2009 and to move to purpose built new accommodation by September 2011

vii. **To develop even better links with the community** by opening up to: Sports clubs who might use the facilities; theatre groups; adult education; special interest groups; parent support groups across the primary and secondary provision; local residents groups

viii. **To share good practice with other primary schools**
We would expect that the good practice achieved in the primary and secondary schools working together could be extended and shared with other local primary schools.

Frequently asked questions

1. Will my child still be supported for the 11 plus exams?

Yes, pupils whose parents wish them to sit the 11 plus exams will be supported through the process exactly as they are at the moment.

2. The Folkestone Academy day runs from 8.30 am to 5 pm. Will my primary age child be expected to stay at school until 5?

No, although we will be asking for your views on the type of school day we could offer to primary age pupils.

3. The Folkestone Academy serves breakfast to all its students. Will primary age pupils get breakfast too?

Park Farm currently runs a breakfast club and we will be asking you if you would like all the primary pupils to be served breakfast.

4. Will the Park Farm teachers and other staff still be at the new all age academy?

We would envisage that most of the staff would remain in post. There will, however, be a new Head of School.

5. How can I be sure my child will be safe from bullying?

Students will have separate play / recreational facilities. The sports and other facilities used by students of all ages will only be accessed with adult supervision. It is most likely that the link with a secondary school will reduce bullying for younger students through mentoring and coaching activities.

6. Won't there be a lot of traffic, dropping children at one site?

We will work closely with Highways and the planning authorities to ensure traffic congestion is minimised .

7. What about pupils with special educational needs (SEN)?

More than any other students, those with SEN require good transition arrangements and continuity of support. Park Farm already has a good record with supporting SEN pupils but the all-age academy would be able to place additional resources into SEN at the primary level, boosting youngsters' literacy and numeracy skills, address emotional issues at a younger age, and work in partnership with other agencies to support families with several children with a joined up approach. The good practice and expertise already established in the primary phase could also be extended to support colleagues and pupils in the secondary phase.





How to tell us your views

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal and how the consultation period will run. No final decision has yet been made and will not be made until the consultation process is complete and the views of all interested parties have been considered.

Kent County Council, Trustees and Governors would like to hear your views on the proposal. All your comments will be carefully considered and will be used to develop the proposal for the new all age academy.

You can respond to the consultation in one of the following ways:

- By attending a public meeting to discuss this proposal, to which you are invited. The meeting will be held at:
**Folkestone Academy, Academy Lane, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5FP
on Monday, 9th March 2009.**

There will be guided tours of the Academy between **5.45 pm** and **6.45 pm**
The public meeting will start at **7.00 pm**

Representatives of Kent County Council, Park Farm Primary School and the Folkestone Academy Trust will be present to answer your questions and to explain the implications to you.

- By completing and returning the attached response form (see Appendix 2) to: David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer, Mid Kent Education Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU
- By sending an email to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk
- By handing in the response form (see Appendix 2) at Park Farm Primary School or the Folkestone Academy

All your comments will be carefully considered and will be used to develop the proposal for the new all-age academy.

Deadline for responses is Friday 3rd April 2009



Appendix 1

About Park Farm Primary School and Folkestone Academy

Park Farm School

Park Farm Primary School is a foundation primary school. There are fourteen classes in the school, two in each Year Group. There are currently 412 pupils on roll.

Park Farm is well regarded locally and it has been oversubscribed in recent years. It works collaboratively with a family of local primary schools to share good practice.

Around 45% of Park Farm pupils progress from the school to grammar schools each year. 50% go to Folkestone Academy. The remaining 5% of the pupils move to other secondary schools in Shepway. The new primary department of the Folkestone All Age Academy would continue to support children whose parents wish them to go to grammar school.

Folkestone Academy

An academy is a new kind of school. It is a publicly funded independent school, accountable directly to central Government. It provides free education to the local community.

The Government intends to open 400 academies. All will have sponsors who bring outstanding drive and innovative ideas to the new schools.

The Folkestone Academy is sponsored by former Saga Chairman, Roger De Haan CBE DL, and by Kings School Canterbury, one of the country's leading independent schools. It is also strongly supported by Kent County Council which is actively involved in the Academies programme. Kent University and Canterbury Christ Church University are represented on the Board of Trustees.

Designed by international award-winning architects Foster and Partners, the Academy buildings are amongst the finest in the country. The design provides a state of the art learning environment at the heart of which are eight house blocks. These are the focus of the very high quality care and support for students to which the sponsors are committed. Folkestone Academy specialises in Art, Media and European Culture. Its facilities include:

- outstanding ICT facilities including laptop computers with internet access in all classrooms
- 9 science laboratories
- 8 specialist rooms for art, textiles and graphics
- dance, drama and recording studios
- large and flexible performance space
- sports hall with viewing gallery and retractable assembly seating for 800 pupils
- vocational training suites



Appendix 2

The Folkestone All Age Academy Consultation Questionnaire

Your details

1. Which group do you represent?

- I am a pupil/student
- I am a parent/carer
- I am a member of staff
- I am a governor of Folkestone Academy or Park Farm School
- I am someone else with an interest in the proposals

2. Which school(s) are you involved with?

- Park Farm Primary School
- Folkestone Academy
- Another Folkestone primary school
- Another Folkestone secondary school
- or
- I am someone with an interest in the proposal

Please state your interest or connection

All respondents:

Your contact details are optional, but if you would like to do so, please provide your name and/or address in the space below:

Name:

Address:

Questionnaire

3. Are you in favour of merging Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy to form an all-age academy?

Very much To some extent Not very much Not at all Don't know

4. Please use this space, or attach a separate sheet to this questionnaire, to give any further comments you may have on the proposed Folkestone All-Age Academy

Please return your form:

- By post to David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer, Mid Kent Education Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU
- by email to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk
- by handing in your response at Park Farm Primary School or the Folkestone Academy

Deadline for responses is Friday 3rd April 2009



The Folkestone Academy
Academy Lane
Folkestone
Kent
CT19 5FP

www.folkestoneacademy.com

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE PARK FARM PS AND REPLACE IT AS A
PRIMARY SCHOOL WITHIN THE FOLKESTONE ACADEMY

Summary of Written Responses

Consultation documents distributed 4,000
Consultation documents received as of: 03.04.09 34

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
• Parents/carers of pupil at Park Farm Primary School	9	2	1	12
• Parents/carers of pupil at Folkestone Academy	2	1		3
• Members of staff at Park Farm Primary School	3			3
• Members of staff at Folkestone Academy				
• Governors of Park Farm Primary School	7			7
• Governors of Folkestone Academy				
• Pupils of Park Farm Primary School				
• Pupils of Folkestone Academy		7	1	8
• Other interested party	2	2		4
TOTALS	23	12	2	37

In support of the proposal:

- Support the proposal wholeheartedly. Concerned that the local roads will become busier and would like to see off-street parking made available to enable parents to stop when bringing or collecting students.
- Broadly in favour but would like to know how Folkestone Academy will ensure that objective advice is given to parents so that students are encouraged to sit the Kent test and attend the local grammar schools where appropriate.
- Really excited about this proposal. Children will benefit educationally with all-through education. They will have better prospects.
- Believe this is the way to go for Park Farm.
- The merger of Park Farm and the Academy would benefit both pupils and parents.
- The schools will have an opportunity to share best practice and resources to raise standards of learning and to develop a consistent strategy for education for East Folkestone.
- Seamless transition and cross-phase sharing of expertise will support those most in need.
- The prospect of a new purpose-built school will provide the right environment to support learning.

- With the Academy offering courses in Arts & Sports etc this will benefit those scholars who may not excel academically.
- We are all for the go ahead and think this will be a great opportunity for the children and the town.
- The merger will provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference to the life choices of children the school serves in Folkestone.
- The merger will go a long way to eradicating the dip in performance and progress that children go through when they move to secondary school.
- Park Farm School has often closed due to problems with the heating system. The link up to the Academy and particularly the prospect of a new building is appealing.
- Park Farm School needs a completely new direction and break from the past, which we believe the link up to the Academy would do.
- Really excited by the proposal. There is a real need for a new school building. Standards have fallen and a new school will benefit the children and all-through education will provide better prospects.

Governors' views (Park Farm):

- Can see very little detrimental effect for the children and very many positives to be gained from the merger.
- The creation of an all age academy would have a positive educational impact for current Park Farm children and for future children coming through the primary phase of an all age academy.
- Super opportunity to use/share really good facilities.
- Sharing of knowledge with specialist teaching eg maths, science, literacy.
- Existing good practice in SEN/AEN at Park Farm should enhance prospects of those with special needs at senior level
- Prospect of new school building for primary pupils.
- Very much in favour but concerned that proposed governance structures may be too far removed from the local community.

Pupil views (Park Farm):

- We will have a new and bigger building and a bigger PE hall. More space.
- New experience.
- New uniform.
- We will be able to learn better and would learn other things.
- We will be able to share equipment and use the playing field.
- We would make new friends.
- Some of us have brothers or sisters at the Academy.

Against the proposal:

- Not convinced that this is the best move forward for Park Farm as unimpressed by the Academy.
- Park Farm needs a new building but I am sure there is another way.
- There is insufficient time for any serious consultation process.
- Not in favour of putting my children through an experimental educational process.
- Re seamless transition – this is also a time that children look forward to with great excitement, a “rite of passage”
- Cannot find any overwhelming argument to support the idea of seamless education being superior to the existing system.
- Strongly disagree with the proposal that 14-19 year olds act as mentors for primary age pupils.

- Proposal appears to be heavily weighted on the benefits that could be provided to the Academy.

Pupil views (Academy):

- Children need to learn to deal with being in a new place with children they have never met. It's an important part of growing up.
- Leave the Academy the way it is.
- The combination of being in a big school and being 4+ would be too scary. Plus secondary age children are very intimidating for small children.
- We find the Behaviour Policy at the Academy very restricting at times and do not feel that a similar Behaviour Policy for primary age pupils would be right.

Pupil views (Park Farm):

- It might be stricter and lessons will be harder.
- Might ruin a good school. Park Farm is Park Farm and people want to keep their memories.
- Too wide an age gap. Don't want to be with bigger children. There might be fighting and bullying.
- No choice of secondary school.
- Don't like the new uniform – wasted resources.
- Might get muddled. Don't want to change.

Residents' views:

- The Academy should not have been built so close to housing and the entrance should not be in Lucy Avenue. The local roads were not built for this volume of traffic. Suggest you close the Lucy Avenue entrance and have all traffic and pedestrians using Park Farm and Kingsnorth which are industrial areas and far more suited to entrances to a school of this size.
- There have been well-publicised issues surrounding current levels of traffic, noise, litter and light pollution directly related to the Academy for residents of Lucy Avenue and Broadmead Village as a whole. If a further school is built on the site then this will make an already unbearable situation worse for residents in terms of current access arrangements.

Neither for nor against:

- Concerned that Park Farm children will be given priority over children from other primary schools which are further afield. These children may therefore have to travel long distances to school.
- Concerned that a daily timetable of 8am-5pm might be imposed on the primary pupils.
- Would not be happy if the provision of breakfast within the Academy were to be compulsory.
- Have concerns re contact with some of the older students in the Academy. Some Academy pupils on their way to school could not be considered a credit to the establishment. Concerned therefore that some of these children could be considered as “mentors” to primary pupils.
- Historically a large number of Park Farm year 6 children have gone to grammar school so the seamless transition would only benefit a small minority of children in Folkestone.

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PROPOSAL TO CLOSE PARK FARM PS AND REPLACE IT AS A PRIMARY SCHOOL
WITHIN THE FOLKESTONE ACADEMY

**Summary of points raised during the Public Meeting
held on 9 March 2009 at The Folkestone Academy**

Issue or Comment	Response
Good to hear that the new Academy would support children who want to transfer to grammar schools.	
If you close Park Farm PS parents would not have a choice of secondary school for their child. Would you help parents move their child?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC will help where they can. Although KCC cannot create spaces that do not exist or where other schools are already full.
When was the idea thought of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of KCC consultation process, initial point was SOAB meeting before Christmas 2008. • Initial idea was June-July 2008 between the two governing bodies. A lot of background work was done before reaching this point.
Where will the new Park Farm PS be built?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the boundaries of the Academy site, the Park Farm site and the old Channel School site.
Is there going to be one entrance for all?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry to the primary school is likely to be on Park Farm Road as that is where the land is.
To what extent will primary age children use the Academy building? Thinking of Health & Safety issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary children using, say, this facility for a production would be brought into the building in a supervised way.
Would the hours for primary children be 8.30am to 5.00pm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No plan to introduce long hours for primary children.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the primary age uniform be the same as the Academy uniform? • The Academy uniform costs £300 concerns that parents of primary children could not afford this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot imagine it would be the same but this decision would be for the new head of the primary school. • The uniform will not be as expensive as £300. New headteacher will review the uniform policy.
Will you finish this part of the Academy before you start on the new building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some landscaping to be completed. This will be done well in advance of building the new school. • There is a meeting arranged with local residents to discuss this.
<p>What was the implication of advertising for a new headteacher for the primary school?</p> <p>Why was the primary headteacher role advertised if this is not a done deal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the proposal to create the merger, we advertised for a new headteacher for the primary phase. Current headteacher of Park Farm PS is fully supportive of proposals. • We have interviewed, but not yet appointed. Whatever happens with this proposal, 420 primary children would otherwise be without a headteacher in September.
Will the new Academy teach the National Curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academies are required to report pupil progress in agreed assessment procedures. Pupils will complete Standard Assessment Tests in primary school.
What was the view of Jim Knight, the Schools Minister?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He thought it was a very good idea to have an all age academy. The final details are with him for the final decision to proceed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would there be support from secondary school teachers in the event of illness of colleagues at primary school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both headteachers will be keen to use and share resources. • Collaboration across primary and secondary happens

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re staff cover for next year – staff will not be allowed to cover across primary and secondary. • Will secondary staff be required to teach in primary school? 	<p>– in shows, PE and coaching sessions etc. There are positive development opportunities for staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist secondary schools already have staff who teach in primary schools.
<p>What stage do you need to be to clarify Board of Governors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Review of governance happening at the moment. Likely to divide the task between two groups.
<p>Will the Academy Behaviour Policy be extended to the primary school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school will have its own Behaviour Policy. Not appropriate to have the same Policy for small children and teenagers.
<p>Cannot see how there will be a seamless transition if the policies are not the same?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteachers of both schools will work together on developing policies and understanding. There can be a common approach, but, for example, the sanctions for and expectations of a 4 year old would be different to those of a 16 year old.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will happen if this proposal is declined? • What will KCC do to improve Park Farm PS? • Would the available money go into the Park Farm PS if the proposal does not go ahead? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no statutory appeal, but there is a growing move to all-age academies. We will be guided by the outcomes of the consultation. • We do want to rebuild the school. The government will provide £1m, KCC will provide £1.4m, Academy Trust £1m and the land deal will pay the remainder. • The KS1 block would be replaced – KCC have pledged money to this. The primary school version of Building Schools for the Future (Primary Capital programme) starts in areas of highest deprivation. Park Farm is not the most deprived school. Do not know when the capital programme will get to Park Farm PS.
<p>Re the public consultation process – concerned that not enough public notice had been given – no mention on the website, or in the local press.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC normally produce 2,000 public consultation documents. In this case 4,000 had been produce. Legal requirement is the statutory Public Notice period. KCC hold a public meeting during the process. This is not a legal requirement and KCC could argue that they have done more than is legally required.